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dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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Iranian President Raisi, FM killed in helicopter crash

Helicopter completely destroyed in crash; Funeral procession to take place today; Supreme Leader Khamenei confirms Mohammad Mokhber as interim president, declares five days of public mourning; Iran's military chief of staff Mohammad Bagheri ordered a probe into the cause of a helicopter crash that killed President Ebrahim Raisi

TEHRAN (INP): Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and the country's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian have died in a helicopter crash, the country's Mehr news agency said on Monday. A senior Iranian official, requesting anonymity following the sensitivity of the development, told a foreign news agency: "President Raisi, the foreign minister and all the passengers in the helicopter were killed in the crash."



Governor Balochistan calls Iranian ambassador; expresses grief over death of President Raisi, others

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail telephoned Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan, Reza Amiri Moghaddam and expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his companions in the Helicopter crash. In his telephonic conversation with Iranian ambassador on Monday, the Governor Balochistan said that he is grieved over the martyrdom of President Ebrahim Raisi, Iranian FM and other personalities in helicopter crash. The Governor said that Pakistan and Iran are two brotherly Islamic countries. He paid rich tributes to the late President Raisi for making sincere efforts for strengthening the relations between the two countries further.

Iran's Mehr news agency also confirmed that "all passengers of the helicopter" were "martyred". The chopper that carried President Raisi and Iran's foreign minister crashed on Sunday while flying through a mountainous terrain amid heavy fog in the Varzaqan region of the country's East Azerbaijan province. According to Iranian state media, bad weather caused the crash and was complicating rescue efforts in the country's northwestern region. Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Raisi was flying in a US-made Bell 212 helicopter.

Iran Red Crescent Society chief Pir-Hossein Kolivand, in an interview to semi-official Tasnim news agency, said: "No trace of survivors has been seen after the discovery of the site of the crashed helicopter."

He further revealed that rescue teams found the chopper's crash site after "hours of extensive search in a mountainous region" in Iran's East Azerbaijan province.

President Raisi, FM Amirabdollahian and other high officials were returning to Iran after attending an inauguration ceremony of a dam on Iran's border with the Republic of Azerbaijan when the ill-fated chopper crashed Sunday afternoon. Following the death of the Iranian President, the Islamic Republic's First Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber is set to assume power after the Supreme Leader's issues an approval, as per Article 131 of Iran's Constitution.

Who was Ebrahim Raisi? From Qom to Tehran Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who represented conservative forces in the country, had died after a helicopter carrying



Announces a day of mourning PM visits Iranian Embassy to condole deaths of President Raisi & FM in tragic incident

Great loss for Muslim Ummah: President Zardari condoles death of Iran's Ebrahim Raisi
ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday visited the Embassy of Iran in Islamabad to condole the deaths of President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in a tragic incident on Sunday. "I am deeply shocked and saddened by the tragic news of the martyrdom of my brother, President of Iran, Dr. Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir Abdollahian, in a helicopter crash," the prime minister said during his visit. He expressed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the time of sorrow and grief. "Our sympathies and prayers are with the family members of the martyrs and the people of Iran."

him and other officials crashed in a mountainous and forested area of the country in poor weather. World media is remembering him in conflicting manners, with the Western outlets, especially those from the US, presenting him as ruthless leader. However, others have more realistic approach.

According to Al Jazeera, Raisi, 63, who previously served as a chief justice, appeared on track to run for re-election next year and was touted as a potential successor to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the 85-year-old supreme leader of Iran. Born in Mashhad in north-eastern Iran, a religious hub for Shia Muslims, he underwent religious education and was trained at the seminary in Qom, studying under prominent scholars, including Khamenei.

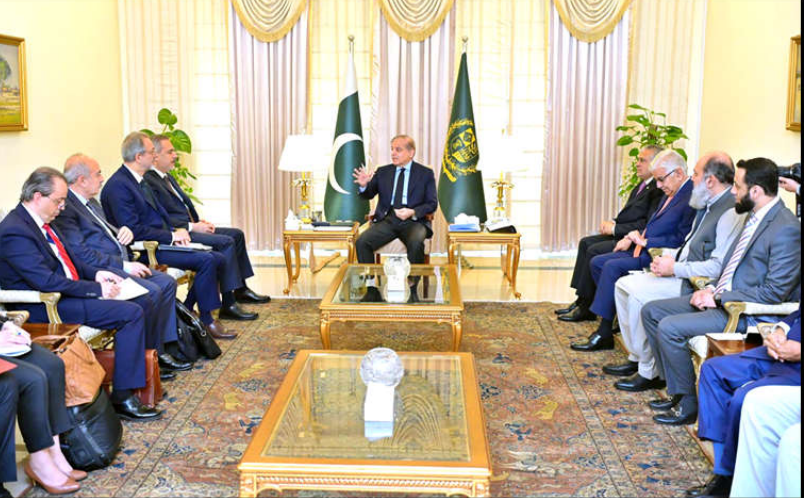
Also like the supreme leader, he wore a black turban, which signified that he was a Sayyid - a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, a status with particular significance among Twelver Shia Muslims. Raisi racked up experience as a prosecutor in multiple jurisdictions before coming to Tehran in 1985. It was in the capital city that, according to human rights organisations, he was part of a committee of judges who oversaw executions of political prisoners. The late president was a long-time member of the Assembly of Experts, the body that is tasked with choosing a replacement for the supreme leader in the event of his death. He became attorney general in 2014 for two years, when he was appointed by Khamenei to lead the Astan Quds Razavi.

strengthening of Pakistan-Iran relations and regional cooperation would always be remembered. He said President Raisi's visit to Pakistan last month helped further strengthen bilateral relations. May Allah grant the departed souls a high place in paradise, the prime minister prayed.

Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghaddam thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Pakistani nation for standing with his country during the difficult time.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif recording condolence remarks in the visitor's book of the embassy in honor of the Iranian President.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Türkiye Hakan Fidan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Media persons ends boycott of coverage of BA session: CM constitutes committee for talks with media persons over issue of lockdown of QPC

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti formed a committee to hold talks with the protesting media persons on the issue of lockdown of Quetta Press Club. The committee comprised the provincial Minister Planning and Development, Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi and Provincial Minister for Finance, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani and members of provincial assembly, Mir Rehmat Saleh Baloch and Mir Zabid Reki. Meanwhile, the government committee held talks with the media persons outside the provincial assembly. The members of committee condemned the incident of lockdown of Quetta press club by local administration. They said that there's an important role of media persons in highlighting the issues of Balochistan. They assured that the action would be taken against those responsible for lockdown of the Quetta Press Club. Afterwards, the media persons ended their protest and boycott of the proceedings of assembly.

CM along with Ministers, MPs visit Iranian consulate; expresses grief & condolence over tragic mishap



Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti visited the Iranian Consulate in Quetta on Monday afternoon, to personally express condolence to the Iranian diplomats deputed there over the death of President Ebrahim Raisi and his companions in the Helicopter crash. He was accompanied by the Provincial Ministers Ali Madad Jatak, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani, Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa, Mir Zahoor Ahmed Khosa and Sardarzada Faisal Jamali, Mir Asghar Rind and Mir Barkat Rind and MPA, Mir Zabid Reki.

PM urges Turkish firms to expand investment, relocate industries to Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday invited Turkish companies to further expand their investment portfolio in Pakistan, also urging them to consider relocating their industrial units to the country. The prime minister, talking to Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, who called on him here, said that the current level of bilateral trade was not commensurate with the existing potential. He emphasized to undertake concerted efforts for achieving the bilateral trade target of US\$ 5 billion in the next three years as already agreed by the leadership of the two brotherly countries. While underscoring the special bonds of brotherhood between Pakistan and Türkiye, the prime minister expressed satisfaction over the positive momentum in bilateral relationship. He reaffirmed

Pakistan's firm commitment to further expansion of bilateral cooperation, in all areas of mutual interest, including trade, investment, technology and defence. Regional and global developments, particularly the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza were also discussed in the meeting. Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's staunch advocacy for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and lasting peace in the Middle East. He stressed the urgency and importance of the realization of the two-state solution as the key to attainment of durable peace in the Middle East. The prime minister also reiterated his invitation to President Erdogan to undertake an early official visit to Pakistan for co-chairing with him the 7th meeting of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir exchanging views with Hakan Fidan, Turkish Foreign Minister during meeting held in Rawalpindi.

Jamaldini visits various development schemes in Hub

Independent Report
HUB: The Chairman of the Chief Minister's IT Department, Dostain Jamaldini, visited various development schemes in Hub, Balochistan on Monday. He inspected the Girls' and Boys' Degree College and Ghulam Qadir Hospital. During the visit, he also inaugurated an examination center at the Degree College Hub. The Deputy Commissioner, Rohana Gul Kakar, and officials from the Communications and Works Department briefed the chairman on the progress of various projects. The chairman emphasized the need to provide basic facilities, including electricity and water, to the Girls' Degree College. He also visited the College of Nursing and Teaching at Ghulam Qadir Hospital and assured that a mechanism would be developed to provide better health facilities to the people. The chairman also announced plans to collaborate with the corporate sector to ensure the availability of resources.

BA adopts resolutions about installation of LPG plants & preparation of Health Dept.'s budget as per NFC Award

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Balochistan Assembly adopted resolutions about installation of LPG Plants in districts of the province, which are lacking the facility of natural gas. The Provincial Assembly also adopted the resolution which demand steps for preparing the budget of Health department according to the NFC Award. The resolutions were adopted in the sitting of Provincial Assembly held with Speaker Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai in the chair on Monday. The resolution regarding installation of the LPG plants in the districts which are deprived of the facility of natural gas was presented by the Opposition member, Mir Asadullah Baloch in last sitting of provincial assembly. The resolution was adopted after debate on it. Similarly, the resolution demanding steps for preparation of the Health department budget as per the allocations of NFC Award was tabled by the Opposition member, Khair Jan Baloch. It was pointed out that in the resolution that the Health sector is deteriorated for long in the province mainly because of shortage of funds. Through the resolution, it was demanded of the authorities to allocate funds for provision of medicines in all hospitals of the province.

CONDOLENCE

Daily Independent Group of Newspaper expresses its profound grief and sorrow over the tragic demise of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash and extended heartfelt condolences to the government of Iran, the families of the president, the foreign minister, and all others who lost their lives in the incident, as well as to the people of the brotherly nation of Iran over the martyrdom of Iranian leadership in the helicopter crash.

President Raisi was a strong proponent of Pak-Iran partnership for regional development and was a great friend of Pakistan.

It a great loss not only for Iran but for the entire Muslim Ummah. The Islamic World had lost a remarkable leader who always supported the Muslim cause.

Late President Raisi would be dearly missed and fondly remembered in Iran, Pakistan, and the Islamic World for his efforts to enhance relations with regional and Islamic countries.

We pray to Allah Almighty to bless the departed souls with peace and grant patience and strength to their families and the people of Iran in this time of irreparable loss

Chief Editor
Independent Group of Newspapers

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Wheat price crash

What the government has done to Punjab's small-holder wheat growers by staying out of the market amid crashing prices is deplorable. The majority of farmers were forced to sell their crop to middlemen at throwaway prices.

When some protested against the government for leaving them in the lurch, they were beaten by the police and detained. Their plight was finally voiced by some lawmakers in the National Assembly recently, with PPP chairperson Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari calling it 'economic murder' of the farmers. Last Thursday, lawmakers from both the treasury and the opposition raised the issue of the arrests of farmers. PPP's Shazia Marri urged the government to accept the demands of protesting growers, while calling for excesses against them to be brought to an end. PTI's Amir Dogar pointed out that it was for the first time in the country's history that the government had refused to purchase wheat from farmers.

The Pakistan Kissan Ittehad, a body representing small- to medium-sized farmers from across Punjab, claims that wheat farmers had lost Rs1.1tr due to a steep drop in grain prices as they were compelled to sell their harvest at around Rs3,000 per 40kg or even less, which is far below Rs3,900 promised by the government. Indeed, the government could not have purchased the entire tradable surplus of 10m tons this year. However, its presence in the market would have kept prices from crashing.

Punjab's farmers are going through difficult times, exacerbated by policy failure and the import of over 3.4m tons of wheat shortly before the bumper harvest on the direction of the caretaker government. The imports had facilitated traders to make quick bucks at the cost of both farmers and urban consumers who paid higher prices for low-quality imported wheat.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was quick to set up a probe committee to pin responsibility for the decision to import at a time when the country had adequate stocks from the last harvest and authorities were expecting a record wheat output on the back of a significant increase in the area under cultivation. Nonetheless, the media reports suggest, the terms of the inquiry were changed later and it was stopped from looking into the questionable role of the caretaker administration in allowing heavy imports for some inexplicable reasons. The committee's mandate is now limited to investigating imports during March.

It remains a mystery why the premier does not want to probe the role of caretakers in wheat imports despite the negative impact of the 'crisis' on the position of the ruling PML-N among farmers. So far, the formation of the probe committee appears to be an attempt to sweep the issue under the carpet, unless it is allowed to hold a thorough inquiry and pin responsibility for reckless imports.

Serving digitally

Abdullah Khalid

Pakistan's digital landscape is undergoing a seismic shift. From vibrant, swarming urban tech hubs to remote villages buzzing with mobile internet connectivity, a digital revolution is reshaping the nation. Yet, its potential to empower local governance remains largely untapped. While federal and provincial governments have embarked on ambitious digital initiatives, true transformation lies in taking these efforts to the grassroots level. This is where the power of pixels — building blocks of the digital world — can be bound to build stronger, more responsive local government structures.

Pakistan's digital landscape is a canvas of opportunities, which boasts a vibrant ecosystem of start-ups, tech giants and a burgeoning freelance community. The mobile teledensity rate exceeds 70 per cent and internet usage is also witnessing a rapid rise in rural areas. As per the Pakistan Economic Survey 22-23, during July to March in FY2023, IT exports reached \$1.94 billion as compared to \$1.95bn in the previous year. The IT export contribution is projected to reach \$3bn in FY24 and \$16bn by FY33. This growth offers a unique chance to enhance citizen-local government connections through e-governance, such as online tax and complaint systems, streamlining services, restricting bureaucracy and boosting efficiency.

Government initiatives, such as Digital Pakistan, Digital Punjab and digitalisation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, aim to streamline public services and foster digital inclusivity across public sectors. These programmes are laying the groundwork for a

digitally connected ecosystem where information flows seamlessly, empowering citizens to participate actively in local decision-making.

The true impact of digital transformation in Pakistan hinges on its implementation at the grassroots level by local governments. While digitalising local governance can revolutionise service delivery, citizen engagement and governance through improved transparency and accountability, local bodies often lack the resources and technology to serve effectively. Digitalisation, supported by necessary legislative and financial empowerment, can modernise services, facilitate citizen feedback and promote accountability, ensuring that every citizen benefits equally from digital advancements through superior access and digital literacy.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming governance globally and that is why achieving a pixel-perfect future should feature prominently on our wish list. Let's imagine Pakistan leveraging AI to analyse large datasets. Undoubtedly, AI can help local governments identify trends, predict resource requirements and optimise service delivery.

Personalised citizen experiences via AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can make personalised information and support available to citizens. More importantly, AI-driven fraud detection systems can help local governments identify and prevent misuse of public funds and combat corruption, along with AI-powered surveillance systems, which enhance public safety by monitoring sensitive areas.

transformed economies around the world and led nations to prosperity. "Our success lies in the positive impact on economic growth and sustainability, and the society," he remarked. Rana Tanveer Hussain said that all possible resources were being utilized to increase exports of agriculture and industrial sectors. Increased industrial production leads to more foreign exchange income of a country. The development of a country is hinged on industrial development, he said and vowed to develop this vital sector by taking measures to attract foreign investments and increase export capacity.

To maximise digital transformation in local governance, Pakistan must formulate comprehensive policies and regulatory frameworks, which facilitate interoperability and consistency in digital initiatives. It is crucial to foster collaboration across government levels, secure data privacy and engage with the private sector and civil society for innovative solutions. Moreover, an inclusive digital infrastructure across all areas provides equal access to digital services and opportunities.

Pakistan can learn from global leaders in digital governance to accelerate its transformational journey. Estonia has a highly digitised government with almost all services accessible online and Singapore, with its "Smart Nation" initiative, leverages AI and data analytics for efficient urban management.

Our country's digital revolution centres on a collaborative, inclusive, and localised approach — local governments, empowered with resources, and knowledge necessary to navigate the digital landscape, pave the way for sustainable and equitable development. As the nation charts the course for a modern digital future, prioritising local governance has to be seen as a strategic imperative because it promises a resilient, connected and empowered nation.

This is not just about pixels and servers. It is about building a future where every citizen feels heard, empowered and actively involved in shaping communities. Let us embrace this path and create a future where local governance is able to serve every citizen.

Land of opportunity

Zarrar Khuhro

First: it's not necessary that every investigative story like Dubai Unlocked can or will, in and of itself, cause the government to fall or the prevailing order to be unsettled. Sometimes, such journalistic works only confirm what we already know to be true which, in this case, is that Pakistan is a poor country with some very rich people.

And that, more often than not, those people are the very ones who tend to control the levers of power, often using them like the lever of a slot machine in Las Vegas, except with a near-guarantee of a massive payout.

All told, as per the data on record Pakistanis own about \$12.5 billion worth of properties in Dubai, although former FBR chairman Shabbar Zaidi thinks the actual value is closer to, or possibly in excess of \$20bn. Now, this may not be a huge sum by global standards but given the perpetual penury of Pakistan, it's pretty darn staggering.

Also bear in mind that there are a lot of prominent and not-so-prominent Pakistanis who happen to be clearly resident or partially resident in Dubai but do not show up on this list, leading one to believe that the properties they 'own' are not in their names or the names of their relatives.

That said, some important disclaimers are necessary: owning property in Dubai or anywhere else in the world is not an illegal act or — in and of itself — evidence of any kind of financial fraud or wrongdoing as has been repeatedly stated by all the publications who have reported on

the uncovered data.

Certainly, many of these properties have been declared with Pakistani tax authorities and are above board, but at the very least we must expect the FBR to inquire as to whether that is so for all the names listed in the leaks. Thus far, we have been promised that this will indeed happen with the FBR chairman promising that if he has access to the data as well as information on residence status, and if the political will is present, he will certainly go after tax evaders.

While that's a lot of ifs and buts it would certainly be a more worthwhile use of the FBR's time than trying to block the SIMS of non-filers. If nothing else, such data can prove to be the starting point for a deeper investigation in Pakistan, provided anyone has the will to do so.

And therein lies the rub: accountability, when it comes, usually tends to target politicians and that too, those politicians it happened to be convenient to target. In the not-so-distant past we have seen that an Iqama or an unpaid salary is enough to have a prime minister knocked out by using Black's Law Dictionary as a cudgel.

We have seen a watch prove sufficient to imprison another former PM when the need arose, and at the same time we have seen much larger crimes go ignored and unpunished (or even rewarded) when it is expedient to do so.

An investigation, if one were to take place, must then also include those former military personnel who have such properties as well because while our civilian rulers do

now and then find themselves at the receiving end of the authorities' ire — selective as that may be — this part of our ruling elite is usually beyond any sort of reproach or accountability.

But despite all the hoopla and hand-wringing, Dubai is and will remain a safe haven not just for one's wealth but also for one's self; after all where better to flee to if the heat gets turned on here at home as it so often does?

Another thing that the leaks prove is that — contrary to popular opinion — Pakistan is truly a land of opportunity where one can rise from the humblest of backgrounds to be able to acquire pricey foreign properties, and all by dint of hard work.

There's no better example of this than former SSP Rao Anwar himself who, despite having a salary of some Rs95,000, has managed to provide his wife with some five properties (unless of course she has the resources to acquire them herself) with two of those properties jointly owned by their son. One must, of course, appreciate a family man, as Mr Anwar so clearly is.

Then of course there's Dr Mukhtar Hamid Shah, a highly successful doctor specialising in illegal kidney transplants, who is also listed as the owner of nine Dubai properties. Then there's Hamid Samoo, whose profession is listed as a driver but who apparently drives so darn well that he can afford a property in Dubai.

Now, some may accuse these worthies of having gained their wealth illegally but I feel that's just jealousy.

Commerce News

Rana Tanveer says: Economic revival top priority of PML-N govt

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister of Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain said on Monday that economic revival was the mission and top priority of the Muslim League (Nawaz) government. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of a special economic zone (SEZ) at Rachana Industrial Park, Sheikhupura, he added that Pakistan had now been on the path to development due to the best economic policies, asserting that private sector also had to play its role for development of the economy. Chaos and politics of alteration had always harmed the country.

The PML-N government does not believe in the politics of anarchy and hatred but in the practical measures and not in mere hollow slogans. "We have strengthened the country economically. We have founded the CPEC that is a game changer project to improve the economic condition of the country," he maintained.

The federal minister said, "I am happy to inaugurate the Special Economic Zone in Rachana Industrial Park." He hoped that Rachana Industrial Park and other special economic zones would prove to be important milestones for economic development. The SEZs have

transformed economies around the world and led nations to prosperity. "Our success lies in the positive impact on economic growth and sustainability, and the society," he remarked. Rana Tanveer Hussain said that all possible resources were being utilized to increase exports of agriculture and industrial sectors. Increased industrial production leads to more foreign exchange income of a country. The development of a country is hinged on industrial development, he said and vowed to develop this vital sector by taking measures to attract foreign investments and increase export capacity.



Italian Ambassador Marilina Armellini met with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb in Islamabad.

Italian Ambassador meets Finance Minister, discusses bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan Marilina Armellini Monday called on Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, to discuss the cooperation and longstanding relations between the two countries.

The minister welcomed the ambassador and highlighted the significant improvements in Pakistan's economic landscape, said a news release here.

Muhammad Aurangzeb discussed the government's achievements, in decreasing current account deficit, globalization of currency, the stock market reaching an all-time high and the successful completion of the nine-month Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He further mentioned that the ministry was currently in engagement with the IMF

mission for a new program on longer term basis. The minister also outlined the government's strategic initiatives aimed at broadening the tax base by targeting previously untaxed and under-taxed segments. Additionally, he reiterated the government's commitment to privatize various State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), starting with Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) also followed by major airports.

Shaza invites Swedish tech companies to invest in Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Monday said that environment for foreign investment in Pakistan was conducive and urged the Swedish tech companies to invest in the country.

She was talking to Ambassador of Sweden Henrik Persson, who called on her. Director General International Coordination Syed Jawwad Ali Sherazi also attended the meeting.

They discussed matters of mutual interest and boosting cooperation in the IT and telecommunication filed. Shaza Fatima said that the present government

was fully focused upon the IT and telecommunication sector. She noted that the IT exports of Pakistan were increasing, saying it wanted to increase its IT exports to Sweden, and business-to-business relations.

"We also want branding of Pakistan in the Swedish ICT market," she maintained.

She said both Swedish and Pakistan's tech companies could jointly organise roadshows.

Shaza further said that the collaboration in BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) sector would strengthen bilateral relations of the two countries.



Director General Audit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Siraj ul Haq calls on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor's House.

Jazz sees over 19% USD Revenue Growth in 1Q24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz has reported a notable 19.2% revenue increase in USD for the first quarter of 2024, marking a significant reversal from eight consecutive quarters of negative USD growth despite consistent growth in Pakistan rupees terms.

With nearly 72 million cellular subscribers including 46 million 4G users and 67 million digital monthly active users (MAUs), Jazz holds a massive nationwide

footprint said a news release. Since its inception, the telco has invested USD 10.6 billion in Pakistan, with the most recent investment of over Rs 5.3 billion in 1Q24 showing its focus on strengthening its digital presence and transitioning into a tech-focused company. Describing the development as the first sign of Pakistan's recovering economic climate in a recent post on X, Jazz CEO Aamir Ibrahim emphasized that to sustain this growth.

Businessmen & industrialists of Pakistan & USA making efforts to increase the volume of trade

INDEPENDENT REPORT
KARACHI: The first meeting of the Pakistan USA Business Council 2024-25 was held at the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). In which top business personalities of

Planning Commissioner and Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce Director Imran Niazi was the guest of the event.

While on this occasion, Senior Vice President FPCCI Saqib Fayaz Magon also



graced the meeting with his valued suggestions and on behalf of FPCCI he expressed his full support for the Council and voiced his commitment to ensure close liaison between the FPCCI Chamber and the Trade Missions of Pakistan abroad.

There are 10 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships, Tucapel, Maersk Durban and OM carrying Container and LPG, berthed at Container Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile another containership 'MSC Mumbai-VIII' also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on today morning.

A total of ten ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Tucapel and Pan Ivy left the port on today morning, while four more ships, Maersk Durban, Rigel, Hafnia Excel and OM are expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 144,554 tonnes, comprising 126,123 tonnes imports cargo and 18,431 tonnes export cargo carried in 4,099 Containers (3,202 TEUs Imports and 897 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 10 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim.

POL import bill decreases by 1.53%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of the overall petroleum group decreased by 1.53 percent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of the last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The total imports of the petroleum group during July-April (2023-24) stood at \$13,761.071 million, as against the imports of \$13,974.609 million during the same period of last year, according to PBS

data. Among petroleum commodities, the import of petroleum products declined by 14.09 percent, from \$6,149.116 million last year to \$5,283.001 million during the time period under review.

However, the imports of petroleum crude increased by 10.40 percent, from \$4,137.725 million to \$4,567.954; natural gas liquefied by 4.56 percent, from \$3,110.837 to \$3,252.812, whereas the imports of petroleum gas liquefied went up by 13.96 percent.

Gold rates up by Rs 2,300 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 2,300 and was sold at Rs 250,400 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs 248,100 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 1,972 to Rs 214,678 from Rs 212,706 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 196,788 from Rs 194,980, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.



Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi addresses to Peshawar Division representatives delegation at Governor's House, Peshawar.

Punjab on way to progress: Minister

SIALKOT (APP): Minister for Local Government Punjab Zeeshan Rafique has said under the leadership of Punjab chief minister, the province has been put on the path to development and progress. He stated this while addressing a public gathering on the inauguration of Road in Old Daska, here on Monday.

He said the local government department was going to implement the largest and most comprehensive solid waste and sanitation system to provide a clean environment to people of

the province. He said garbage dumps would not be seen any where, while energy and reusable materials would be recycled from garbage which will clean the environment as well. "We will not deviate from the promises made in the election and we will reconstruct Daska", he added. The minister said the PC-1 for construction of five new roads in Daska were ready and work on these projects will be started in a few weeks while the construction of sewerage Naullah will resolve problem of drainage.

Seminar held to increase employment provision for women

SIALKOT (APP): Women Development Punjab Secretary Sumaira Samad has said the dream of social and economic development can not be materialized without making women economically independent. "Our women are courageous and high spirited who are making full use of their talents in every field of life. There is a need to provide equal opportunities for women in the society and it is the joint responsibility of the state and the society to remove

obstacles in this regard, she added. She was addressing a seminar organized in collaboration with South Asia Partnership Pakistan, GIZ and Siddhar Society in connection with the ongoing declaration to increase employment provision for women and disabled persons in the textile sector. Director General Social Welfare and Baitul-Mal Punjab Amina Muneer said that there was an ample scope for dignified employment for women and disabled persons in the textile industry in Punjab.

SHO sustains bullet injuries in exchange of fire with dacoits

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A station house officer (SHO) received bullet injuries following an exchange of fire between a police team and unknown dacoits held here in the limits of Yarik police station late Sunday night. According to a police spokesman, the Yarik police station received information about a bike-snatching incident. In a quick response, a police team led by Yarik police station SHO Khubab Wali rushed to the site immediately.

ANF recovers 43 kg drugs in nine operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover 43 kg drugs and arrested 11 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that 121 Ice-filled capsules and 13 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from a Doha-bound passenger arrested Peshawar Airport. In two operations at a courier office in Rawalpindi, 470 intoxicated tablets were recovered from two parcels booked for England. 20 kg Ketamine was recovered from three suspects held in Sohrah Goth Karachi.

MNA Iqbal Channar inaugurates Clinic on Wheels in Islamia Colony

BAHAWALPUR (APP): MNA Malik Muhammad Iqbal Channar on Monday said that under the Punjab Chief Minister's healthcare vision, residents of the city's slums should be provided with healthcare facilities at their doorsteps under the Clinic on Wheels program. He expressed these views while inaugurating the Punjab CM's Clinic on Wheels program in Islamia Colony. CEO Health Dr. Syed Tanvir Shah, DHO Dr. Zeeshan Rauf, District Coordinator Dr. Khalid Mahmood Arain, relevant officers, and local residents were present on the occasion.

Admissions for fall 2024 semester open at IUB

BAHAWALPUR (APP): The admission campaign for fall admission 2024 has started in all campuses of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) including Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Rahim Yar Khan and Liaquatpur. Dean Faculty of Management Sciences and Commerce, Director Academic and Chairman Admission Committee Prof. Dr. Jawad Iqbal has said in his message that the Islamia University of Bahawalpur is among the top 10 universities of Pakistan and 1000 best universities in the world. Under the direction of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar, many new educational programs have been started at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur in line with the needs of domestic and foreign markets. Among them, there are many educational programs which are not taught in other universities of South Punjab.

PID Peshawar holds seminar for KP journalists on countering fake news

PESHAWAR (APP): Press Information Department (PID) Peshawar, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Monday organized a two-day workshop for journalists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on countering of fake news and disinformation in present era of social and digital media.

The seminar titled "truth in the digital era: strategies for countering fake news in Pakistan" held here at a local hotel. The seminar was addressed besides others by President Peshawar Press Club (PPC), Arshad Aziz Malik, senior journalists Asif Nisar Gayasi and Maeraj Farooq. On the first day of the workshop, the

participants were engaged in brainstorming and an extensive interactive session to combat challenges of negative propaganda, fake news and disinformation, which is spreading fast on social and digital media before verified by the journalists. PPC President, Arshid Aziz Malik said that journalism was a sacred profession and 4th pillar of the state and credible news and accurate information is the right of people of Pakistan.

He said that fake news and misinformation have posed serious threats to society in the present era of digitalization and great responsibility rests on media outlets, journalists

and editors to ensure that the provided information was true before its publication or airing on TV channels.

The speakers highly appreciated the endeavours of PID Peshawar, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for conducting such an important workshop on key topic for journalists of KP. Enlightening the participants on the importance of countering fake news and negative propaganda, senior journalist, Asif Nisar Ghayasi said that journalists are eyes and ears of society and for the sake of honour and prestige of reporters and anchors should ensure that their filed stories.

CMKP condoles death of Iran's President in helicopter crash

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan Monday expressed shock and sorrow over the death of Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He extended his condolences to the bereaved families of the Iranian president, the foreign minister, and others who died in the helicopter crash.

He prayed that Allah grants the martyrs a high place in Jannat al-Firdous and gives patience to their families and the Iranian nation for this tragedy. The CM said the government and people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stand with them in this difficult time and share their sorrow.

The CM extended his condolences to the bereaved families and the Iranian people over the precious loss of lives in the crash and prayed for their comfort and patience in this difficult time.



KARACHI: Residents of Jehangir Road, Jamshed Road, Martin Quarter are protesting outside the office of K Electric at Tipu Sultan.

Irshad for provision of healthcare facilities to masses without interruption

MULTAN (APP): Special Secretary Primary and Secondary Health Care, South Punjab, Rashid Irshad Hussain on Monday urged upon all officers and staff to dedicate their full energy to provide comprehensive medical facilities to the people.

There should be no interruption or hindrance in the provision of public health services. He made these remarks while addressing the introductory meeting after his

appointment in South Punjab. During the meeting, he was briefed in length about the department's procedures and other matters. He emphasized that all available resources, workforce, and capabilities should be utilized to ensure the provision of medical facilities at the doorstep of the people. The special secretary stated that effective and continuous monitoring of the service delivery at all hospitals and health centers in South Punjab should be carried out.

International News

Israeli strike on Nuseirat refugee camp kills 31

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: An Israeli strike killed 31 more Palestinians and wounded 20 others in a home in the central Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza on Sunday, the Palestinian civil defence agency said, as US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan visited Israel for talks on the conflict. Witness Yasser Abu Oula said an entire residential complex "was destroyed" and "there are still bodies under the rubble". Israel has bombed northern and central areas of the coastal territory, sparking US warnings that it could become mired in a lengthy counterinsurgency campaign. Also, Israeli troops have moved in on the Gaza Strip's far-southern city of Rafah, where the US says 800,000 civilians have been recently displaced. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

who has vowed to keep fighting Hamas has faced intense opposition and calls to announce a plan for Gaza's post-war governance — from top ally Washington and from mass street protests, and now also from members of his war cabinet. Centrist politician Benny Gantz threatened him to quit the hard-right coalition unless Netan-yahu approves a post-war "action plan" by June 8.

Since the escalation in Israeli strikes on Gaza, at least 35,456 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza. Israel has imposed a siege on the long-blockaded Gaza Strip, depriving its 2.4 million people of normal access to food, water, medicines and fuel, the suffering eased only by sporadic air shipments. "We are living through a humanitarian catastrophe in every sense of the word,"

said Rafah resident Rinad Joudeh, 41, decrying "destruction, fear and terror" nearly two weeks into the Israeli incursion into the city. The head of the UN agency helping Palestinians said that "despite all the calls by the international community not to launch an offensive in Rafah, in reality an offensive started on May 6".

Since then, "we have again about half of the population of Gaza being on the road forced to flee" for safety once more, though "we keep saying there is absolutely nowhere to go." UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini told reporters in Amman. Warning of famine in the besieged territory, UN's humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths said on Sunday the stranglehold on aid reaching Gaza threatens an "apocalyptic" outcome.



Volunteers prepare food for displaced Palestinians in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.

Russia says Ukraine makes 60-drone attack on Russia, oil refinery halted

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Ukraine fired nine US ATACMS at Crimea and attacked Russian regions with at least 60 drones in a major attack that forced one oil refinery in southern Russia to halt operations, Russian officials said on Sunday.

Russian air defences shot down nine ATACMS missiles over Crimea along with 57 drones over Russia's Krasnodar region and three drones over

Belgorod region, the defence ministry said. Local officials said six drones crashed onto the territory of an oil refinery in Slavyansk in Russia's southern Krasnodar region. Interfax news agency said the refinery halted work after the attack. TASS quoted an official at the refinery as saying the charges carried by the Ukrainian-launched drones were bigger than previous attacks and that they included steel balls.

India begins voting in fifth phase as Mumbai, Gandhi family boroughs head to polls

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India began voting in the fifth phase of its mammoth general elections on Monday, with seats in the financial capital Mumbai and the opposition's Gandhi family bastions set to be sealed in the last few legs of the seven-phase vote. The world's largest election began on April 19 and will conclude on June 1, with votes set to be counted on June 4.

Monday's phase features the smallest number of seats being contested, with 89.5 million voters set to choose representatives for 49 seats. Several high-profile candidates are in the fray on Monday — including defence minister Rajnath Singh from Lucknow and trade minister Piyush Goyal from Mumbai — cities which have suffered from a dismal voter turnout in the past.

Russia stresses strong ties with Iran

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin phoned Iran's new interim president on Monday as Moscow made clear its desire to preserve and build on its deepening relationship with Tehran despite the sudden death of President Ebrahim Raisi. The Kremlin said Putin expressed his condolences to interim president Mohammad Mokhber and the whole Iranian people over Raisi's death in a helicopter crash, describing Raisi as a "reliable partner who made an invaluable personal contribution" to bilateral relations. "Both sides emphasised their mutual desire to further consistently strengthen comprehensive Russian-Iranian interaction for the benefit of the peoples of the two countries," the Kremlin said in its readout of the

Putin-Mokhber call. State news agency RIA quoted Sergei Shoigu, secretary of Russia's Security Council, as saying Moscow could assist Iran in its investigation of the crash. Since the state of the war in Ukraine, Russia has moved to strengthen its political, trade and military ties with Iran in a deepening relationship that the United States and Israel view with concern. In January, Russia's Foreign Ministry said a new interstate treaty reflecting the "unprecedented upswing" in Russian-Iran ties was in the final stages of being agreed, and Putin and Raisi were expected to sign it soon. Putin held five hours of talks with Raisi in the Kremlin in December and had spoken to him by phone in March and April, according to the Kremlin website.



People attend a protest outside the High Court on the day of an extradition hearing of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, in London, Britain.

Ukraine says Russian shelling targets civilians in Kharkiv region

Monitoring Desk
KHARKIV: Ukraine said Russian shelling targeted civilians in two cities in the northeastern region of Kharkiv on Saturday while President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reported successes by troops fighting a renewed Russian assault there. Ukrainian prosecutors said they were investigating as a potential war crime a Russian air strike on a residential area of the

regional capital Kharkiv in which six civilians were wounded, including a 13-year-old girl, 16-year-old male and an eight-year-old. Moscow denies deliberately targeting civilians but thousands have been killed and injured since its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. About 70 km (45 miles) to the northeast in Vovchansk, a city just 5 km (three miles) from the Russian border.

Taiwan ramps up island patrols ahead of inauguration

Monitoring Desk
KINMEN: Taiwan's coast guard ramped up patrols over the weekend around outlying islands that have seen increased presence of Chinese vessels, the agency said on Sunday, the day before Lai Ching-te's inauguration as Taiwan's new president. China has also in recent months deployed coast guard ships around Kinmen, an outlying island administered by Taipei located just five kilometres (three miles) from the Chinese city of Xiamen.

Taipei's Coast Guard Administration said it had sent personnel to "patrol all hours of the day and night" around Taiwan's three major outlying islands: Kinmen, Matsu and Penghu. "In order to ensure the security of the sea area and border safety during the inauguration ceremony,

Biden reaches out to Gaza protesters in speech at Martin Luther King's college

Monitoring Desk
ATLANTA: President Joe Biden told students on Sunday at the former university of civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr that he heard their voices over the protests against the war in Gaza that have roiled US campuses.

As one student stood with his back to Biden during the graduation ceremony at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, the president added that he was working around the clock for an immediate ceasefire and lasting regional peace. "This is one of the hardest, most complicated problems in the world. There's nothing easy about it," said Biden, who wore a maroon and black gown in the colors of the historically Black university. "I know it angers and frustrates many of you, including my family, but most of all, I know it breaks your heart. It breaks mine as well."

Student protests, which have engulfed a string of US campuses, have caused political troubles for Biden in an election year in which he is set for a rematch with Republican former president Donald Trump. "I support peaceful non-violent protest. Your voices should be heard, and I promise you I hear them," Biden told the ceremony.

Biden said he wanted an "immediate ceasefire to stop the fighting, bring the hostages home." The 81-year-old Democrat added that he was pushing for a "lasting, durable peace" in the wider Middle East that would lead to an independent Palestinian state, which he called the "only solution." Biden had earlier applauded as the college's valedictorian, DeAngelo Jeremiah Fletcher, also called for an immediate ceasefire in his own speech.

Gilani for further consolidating bilateral ties with Malaysia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Monday called for further consolidating bilateral ties with Malaysia for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries.

Pakistan and Malaysia, he said, enjoyed cordial cooperation at all international fora, which needed to be further strengthened.

The Acting President expressed these views while talking to the Chief of the Royal Malaysian Navy, Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Rahman bin Ayob, who along with his delegation called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf also attended the meeting. During the meeting, the Acting President urged the need to further explore avenues of cooperation in maritime sectors for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries.

He expressed the hope that training and exchange programmes between the two navies would further cement naval cooperation between Pakistan and Malaysia.

The Acting President



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Türkiye Hakan Fidan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

LHC gives Punjab govt ultimatum for judges' appointment

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) has issued an ultimatum to the Punjab government regarding the appointment of judges.

Chief Justice Shehzad Ahmed Khan presided over a hearing on the Punjab government's petition to transfer cases from LHC's anti-terrorism court 1 Rawalpindi to another court.

During the proceedings, the advocate general Punjab informed the court that a government committee had consulted with Punjab Chief Minister on the matter of judges' appointment, assuring that it had been prioritized for the upcoming cabinet session.



QUETTA: Honorary Consul General Germany Murad Baloch meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Abbasi says: Pakistan won't run smoothly without changes in system

KARACHI (INP): Former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Monday said that the hybrid government have no place in constitution.

Talking to media outside the accountability court in Karachi, he said the country will not run smoothly without drastic changes in the system. He urged for handing powers to capable people for solution of the national problems.

He said no steps taken over breach of the consti-

Senator Mushahid says Iranian President 'vibrant voice for Kashmir, Palestine'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed expressed deep grief and sorrow on Monday over the tragic death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his companions in a helicopter crash.

The Senator hailed President Raisi as a "vibrant voice for Kashmir and Palestine" and termed his death as an irreplaceable loss. Speaking to a private news channel, Senator Hussain stated that he had a close friendship with President Raisi and Foreign

Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, whom he met at a recent conference on Palestine in Tehran.

He praised the late president and foreign minister for their support for Pakistan and their respect for the country's national poet, Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal. Senator Hussain also highlighted President Raisi's achievements, particularly the normalization of ties with Saudi Arabia, and acknowledged his efforts as a true companion of Pakistan.

However, Chief Justice Khan inquired about the timeline for the next cabinet session, expressing dissatisfaction with the absence of immediate action.

The Chief Justice ruled that either a special cabinet meeting should have been called or the government committee should have appeared before the court after completing its task.

In response, the advocate general assured that the matter would be resolved in the cabinet session scheduled for Friday.

Expressing dismay over the absence of the government committee in court, Chief Justice Khan deemed it disrespectful.

The Speaker remarked that the news of the crash, which also claimed the lives of Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and other high ranking officials, was deeply heart-wrenching and unfortunate, said a news release.

He expressed his shock at the news of sudden passing away of President Raisi, describing him as a great friend of Pakistan.

PPP chief congrats Qasim Gilani on winning by-polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Monday congratulated Ali Qasim Gilani on his historic victory in the NA-148 by-elections.

In a statement issued here by the party secretariat, he attributed Ali Qasim Gilani's success to the dedicated efforts of the party workers in Multan.

"The victory in NA-148 reflects the people's unwavering faith in the Pakistan Peoples Party," he stated.

He expressed hope that Ali Qasim Gilani will be a strong representative for the people of Multan in the National Assembly.

setup has also come from the same route, earlier used by the PPT's founder to form his government," Shahid Khaqan said.

He said political parties used to form before elections to achieve specific targets. "We talk about people's problems, political parties have adopted the route to win power," he said.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti talking with a delegation of Quetta Press Club and Balochistan Union of Journalists.

CTD arrests two operatives of illegal arms supplier group

KARACHI (APP): In a significant crackdown on illegal arms trafficking, the Sindh Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Investigation Wing successfully arrested two operatives involved in the supply of illegal weapons during two separate operations on Sunday night.

According to a CTD spokesman on Monday, the Investigation Wing received intelligence regarding the delivery of weapons ordered online from Darra Adam Khel, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) to Karachi. Acting on this information, two teams were deployed to apprehend the suspects and seize the illegal arms.

In the first operation, the CTD team targeted the Mubina Town area, leading to the arrest of Syed Bilal, son of Syed Parvez. From Bilal's possession, the authorities recovered four 9mm pistols.

Ayaz condoles Iranian President Raisi's demise

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Monday expressed profound sorrow over the tragic demise of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash.

The Speaker remarked that the news of the crash, which also claimed the lives of Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and other high ranking officials, was deeply heart-wrenching and unfortunate, said a news release.

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Pakistan, Turkiye target \$5b bilateral trade; call for permanent Gaza ceasefire

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Turkiye on Monday, vowing to strengthen bilateral and regional cooperation in multiple spheres, agreed to take the annual bilateral trade from existing \$1 billion to \$5 billion.

In a joint press stake-out following their "extensive" delegation-level talks, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told the media that they had reviewed bilateral cooperation including trade, investment, connectivity and defense.

In his remarks, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar said the bilateral cooperation in all areas, was improving and measures were being taken to take the trade volume to \$5 billion.

Termining Pakistan and Turkiye "two countries and one nation," Dar said the strategic and comprehensive bilateral relations were manifested by elaborate institutional mechanisms and high-level exchanges and visits at the level of political leadership.

He said both sides also discussed the Pakistan-Turkiye High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) scheduled to take place in Islamabad in the near future to carry out a comprehensive review of cooperation including a holistic economic framework. The deputy prime minister said that Pakistan and Turkiye had a history of defense cooperation and that both countries always supported each other on core issues, also during national calamities and disasters. Highlighting bilateral cooperation on Islamophobia, he told the media that consequent to their joint efforts, the OIC,

in its recent summit, agreed to appoint Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Mehmet Pacaci as secretary-general's special envoy on Islamophobia.

Ishaq Dar also thanked Turkiye for its continuous support on the issue of Kashmir and reiterated Pakistan's support for the legitimate struggle of the people of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Discussing the Gaza situation, both leaders agreed on an immediate need for a permanent ceasefire and the establishment of an independent Palestine state to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East. Mentioning the tragic helicopter crash in Iran killing President Ebrahim Raisi along with the country's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and others, Ishaq Dar called it a "very sad day" for Muslim Ummah.

Murad Baloch calls on Governor Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): The honorary Consul General for Balochistan Mir Murad Baloch called on Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandukhel at Governor House here on Monday. A detailed discussion was also held on the overall situation of the region, ongoing development projects in the province and the steps taken by Germany to provide education, health and clean water for the people of Balochistan in the meeting.

The Governor said that we need help and guidance of international organizations along with government institutions for the welfare of the people of the Balochistan.

The assistance provided by German government in terms of education, health and clean water supply to the people in urban and rural areas in the province, modern medical equipment etc are commendable, he said. He said that Germany was a developed country in the world in various fields and it could provide support and guidance in increasing the capacity of officials in government institutions and teaching modern skills to the new generation. Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandukhel said that various sectors of Balochistan, especially information technology, minerals, livestock and education sector would be utilized to develop on modern lines. He said that with the support of giving scholarships to the students of Balochistan, we could develop the hidden abilities of our new generation.

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CM concerned about delay in dev. projects of provincial assembly; directs to expedite work

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed concern about delay in development projects of the provincial assembly and directed to the concerned high ups to expedite work on these projects.

The Chief Minister also directed to complete all the ongoing development projects of provincial assembly within next six months.

He issued these directives during visit of the development projects and a review meeting about these projects in the provincial assembly on Monday. Also present in the meeting were the Speaker, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, Deputy Speaker, Ms. Ghazala Gola, provincial ministers, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, besides other

concerned high ups. The senior officers of Planning and Development, Finance, Communication and Works and Secretary Provincial Assembly briefed the Chief Minister about the progress of different development projects of the assembly.

The Chief Minister directed to appoint a Project Director for effective coordination among different departments engaged in execution of the development projects in provincial assembly.

He noted with concern that the cost of development projects is increasing due to unnecessary delay. He directed to expedite pace of work after removing obstacles in the development work.

Earlier, he visited different development projects and inspected the work going on there.

RAWALPINDI: General Angus J. Campbell, Chief of Defence Forces Australia called on General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, at Joint Staff Headquarters.

Australian Defence Chief calls on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee

RAWALPINDI (APP): Relations (ISPR) news release said. Both sides reiterated the resolve to further strengthen and enhance security and defence cooperation between the two countries. The Australian dignitaries remained appreciative of the high professional standards of Pakistan Armed Forces, their achievements in fight against terrorism and continued efforts for regional peace and stability. Earlier upon arrival at Joint Staff Headquarters, General Angus J. Campbell, was presented "Guard of Honour" by a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent.

Attallah Tarar receives 170 more students at Lahore Airport

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar has assured that all possible measures would be taken to facilitate the students returning from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Talking to the media at Allama Iqbal International Airport, where he welcomed 170 Pakistani students arriving on a special flight from Bishkek on Monday, the minister highlighted the government's proactive efforts. He noted that this was the fourth flight from the Kyrgyz local airline Aero Nomad, bringing the total number of returning students to 540.

The minister highlighted the government's unwavering focus on the well-being of returning students. He expressed gratitude that no Pakistani student was harmed in the recent attacks in Bishkek.

Attallah Tarar acknowledged the alarming situation in Bishkek, which caused significant distress among the students. He thanked Allah Almighty that no Pakistani lives were lost in the incident. He also called for responsible handling of the situation. He mentioned that a special flight is scheduled to bring back injured students. Earlier, at the airport, he greeted the arriving students with flowers and reassured their families that the government would prioritize resolving the students' issues.

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