

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vd: XXV No. 270, Zeeqad 12, 1445 AH Tuesday May 21, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs.15

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."

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, has 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."

The prime minister said Dr Seyed Ebrahim Raisi was a brilliant scholar and a visionary leader. "Today, Pakistan has lost a friend like Dr Raisi, a sincere brother with high qualities."

PM Shehbaz said that his services to his own na-

tion as well as to the 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 Amir Moghadam thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Pakistani nation for

Continued on page 2



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 Amir Moghadam 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.

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

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti recording condolence remarks in the visitor's book during his visit to Iranian Consulate Quetta

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 Faisal Jamali, Mir Asghar Rind and Mir Barkat Rind and MPA,

Mir Zabid Reki.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that every Pakistani is standing with the Iranian nation and government in the time of trial.

He said that the late President Raisi played vital role for strengthening the relations between Pakistan and Iran.

He expressed the belief that the mission of the late President would remain continued even after the big tragedy. He also said that the progress made by the Iranian President for bringing improvement in the relations between the two countries would always be remembered.

PM prays for good health of Saudi King Salman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressing concern over health of Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, prayed for his complete recovery and good health.

"I have learnt with grave concern about the health of His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz. His Majesty is not only a sincere friend of Pakistan but as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, a leader and guide for the entire Muslim Ummah," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline.

"The people of Pakistan join me in praying to the Almighty for His Majesty's complete recovery and swift return to full health," he added.

CM issues orders for assistance of students stranded in Kyrgyzstan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has issued orders for assistance of the students belonging to the province stranded in Kyrgyzstan.

The Chief Minister announced that the students of the province would be brought by the flights of Pakistan International Airlines.

He also announced that the provincial government would bear the expenses of return of the students from Kyrgyzstan.

He said that the Provincial Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar and MPA Mir Zarin Khan Magsi would be the focal persons in the matter.

Both the nominated focal persons would monitor the measures to be taken for return of the students from Kyrgyzstan to Balochistan.

The Chief Minister said that we are fully aware of the anxiety being suffered by the families of students stranded in Kyrgyzstan.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar and Zarin Magsi said that the process of booking has been started for the students in PIA flights.



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

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



QUETTA: Provincial Minister, Mir Zahoor Buledi along with MPA, Mir Shoaib Nosharani, Zabid Reki and others are negotiating with Members of Balochistan Union of Journalists during their protest against the locking of press club by the district administration and police, outside Balochistan Assembly in Quetta.

Turkish FM calls on COAS

RAWALPINDI (APP): Turkish Foreign Minister, Hakan Fidan paid a visit to Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir on Monday and commended the Pakistan Army's role in maintaining peace and stability in the region.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest came under discussion, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

Both sides expressed their satisfaction with the deep-rooted relations between the two countries,

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.

Earlier, they had walked out of the media gallery of assembly as a mark of protest against the lockdown of press club.



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

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

DPM Ishaq Dar in Astana to attend SCO FMs' moot

ASTANA (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday arrived here for the regular meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

At the airport, he was received by Director of the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nursalimuly Yergalym, Pakistan's Ambassador in Astana, Nauman Bashir Bhatti and Pakistan's National Coordinator (SCO) Ambassador Marghoob Saleem Butt.

On the sidelines, Deputy Prime Minister Dar will meet Foreign Minister of Kyrgyz Republic Jeenbek Kulubaev today wherein they will discuss the latest situation in Bishkek with a view to ensure the well-being of Pakistani students.

All institutions should work within their constitutional domains: Azam Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Monday said that all the institutions should work within their constitutional domains. Addressing a press conference, the minister said that the government was ready to provide full assistance to the police for the recovery of the missing poet Ahmed Farhad.

The Defence Ministry had told the court through the additional attorney general that Ahmed Farhad was not in the custody of any institution, he added. The minister said that if rights of anyone were violated he could approach the court which could seek a reply from the respondents.

Then the police were responsible to investigate the matter after registering

a case, he added. Azam Tarar said that self-accountability was essential for a conducive environment in the country, which was at present at a critical juncture due to economic and security challenges.

No one take a risk to invest in the country with poor law and order situation, he added. He said that the government was addressing the long standing issue of missing persons with the consultation of all stakeholders.

The minister said that the government had constituted a committee with representation from the Pakistan Peoples Party, Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and other parties to chalk out recommendations for setting up an authority for social media.

Bilawal grieves over tragic death of Iranian President

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed his deepest grief and sorrow over the tragic death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and their fellow passengers in a helicopter crash.

The PPP Chairman said that every Pakistani is deeply grieved over the saddest incident and stands in solidarity with their Iranian brethren.

He also offered heartfelt condolences to the government of Islamic Republic of Iran and citizens.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti expressing his views during Balochistan Assembly session

PTI founder, others acquitted in Azadi March vandalism case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The sessions court on Monday acquitted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan, lawmaker Zartaj Gul and others in the Azadi March vandalism case.

Judicial Magistrate Mureed Abbas Khan conducted Monday's hearing and announced the reserved verdict.

In 2022, vandalism cases were registered by the Karachi Company police against PTI founder Imran Khan, lawmaker Zartaj Gul, former PTI leader Asad Umar, Faisal Javed, Ali Nawaz Awan and Saifullah Niazi in connection with Azadi March.

During the proceedings, Naeem Panjotra, the counsel for the PTI, argued before the judge that the FIR had been filed by an unauthorised person, adding that if the basis of an FIR was wrong, how the case could proceed.

The lawyer contended that the authority to file the case rested only with the person who imposed Section 144.

He argued that no video evidence could be presented against Imran Khan in the instant case.

The counsel maintained that FIRs were registered against peaceful protesters and 19 cases of the same nature were registered against Khan in different police stations.

Panjotra requested the court to acquit the PTI founder since the allegations made against him were baseless. He also informed the court that the cases instituted against Imran Khan were all politically motivated.

The counsel insisted that the protest called by Khan was peaceful. He said trees had caught fire due to the police shelling and were not torched by any protester.

He requested the court to honourably acquit the PTI chief and other accused.

After the arguments were completed, the court reserved the verdict on the acquittal pleas.

Tarar rules out unilateral legislation for establishment of Digital Media Authority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Monday that the government had no intention of unilateral legislation regarding the establishment of Digital Media Authority in the country.

"All journalist organizations and press clubs will be taken into confidence on the matter", Attaullah Tarar said while talking to a delegation of National Press Club (NPC) Islamabad which met him here.

The minister assured the NPC delegation that health insurance scheme for journalists would be started soon.

Attaullah Tarar said that necessary steps would be taken for the construction of the permanent build-

ing of the NPC and the improvement of the existing building.

The minister assured that provision of annual grant for NPC will be ensured.

The government was well aware of the problems of the administration of the National Press Club regarding the improvement of the National Press Club, he remarked.

The Government intended to ensure continuous grant provision to NPC, he said adding he will meet the finance minister and discuss the issue of annual grant allocation for the press club in the financial budget.

President Azhar Jatoi said that the government should solve the problems of the press club on priority basis. He said that journalists were facing many challenges in the present era.

Acting Secretary NPC Aun Shirazi said Media Town Phase II was very important for the journalistic community of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Shirazi said making government advertisements subject to timely payment workers salary will be a major step. Principal Information Officer Mubasher Hassan was also present in the meeting. Besides, President NPC Azhar Jatoi, Acting Secretary Aun Shirazi, Secretary Finance Waqar Abbasi also attended the meeting. Members of the governing body of NPC were also present in the meeting.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran and Sehar Gul Khilji meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Govt tables defamation bill in Punjab Assembly amid strong opposition protest

LAHORE (INP): The Punjab government on Monday tabled "The Punjab Defamation Bill 2024" in the Punjab Assembly amid strong protests from the opposition and the journalist community.

The session of Punjab Assembly started after the delay of more than two hours with speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan

in the chair. The opposition and journalists protested against the bill which aimed at preventing the spread of false, fabricated and fictitious news through print, electronic and social media in the province.

During the session, PML-N senior leader and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mujtaba Shujaar Rehman presented the bill

in the House.

Led by Opposition Leader Malik Ahmed Khan Bhachar, the opposition created an uproar in the House, with members chanting slogans against the bill. The opposition shouted slogans such as "Black law unacceptable" and displayed placards against the bill at their seats. The opposition rejected the bill.

Amendments proposed by the opposition to the defamation bill were discussed in the House. Opposition Leader Ahmed Khan Bhachar argued in favour of his amendment, stating that the Defamation Bill 2024 is a black law and that they would not support it.

Mujtaba Shujaar Rehman opposed sending the bill back to the select committee, stating that satisfactory discussions had already taken place in the committee and there was no need for further review.

Journalists also strongly protested against the defamation bill, boycotted the assembly session and chanted slogans outside the Punjab Assembly.

Lahore Press Club President Arshad Ansari said that what happened in the House today was not a democratic process and that the bill was not a democratic one.

BA adopts...

Continued from page 1

Through the resolution, it was demanded of the authorities to allocate funds for provision of medicines in all hospitals of the province.

The MPA Mir Rehmat Baloch supporting the resolution stressed the need to allocate maximum funds for the Health department.

MPA Ghulam Dastagir Badini also stressed that life saving drugs should be made available in the emergency departments of all hospitals.

Speaking on the resolution, the Provincial Minister Planning and Development, Mir Zahoora Ahmed Buledi said that the Health department is not running well in the province.

However, performance of the Health department can be improved by resolving the issues being faced by it, he added.

He also stressed the need to take basic and concrete steps in the Health department.

Meanwhile, another resolution tabled by the member of provincial assembly, Mir Zabid Reki was disposed of on assurance of the Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti for implementation on it.

The resolution demanded of the House to approach federal government for metting of the Kharan-Basima road after including in the National Highway Authority.

Later, the session was adjourned till 11:00 AM on May 23, 2024.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Turkey, Hakan Fidani being received by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

PM visits Iranian Embassy to...

Continued from page 1

standing with his country during the difficult time.

President Dr Raisi also considered Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif as the best human being and a friend of Iran, he remarked.

He said he respected the sentiments and words of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the late President Raisi.

The late President Ebrahim Raisi's vision of strengthening and promoting Pakistan-Iran relations would continue, the ambassador said.

The prime minister also recorded his condolence message in the condolence book.

Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday expressed profound shock and sorrow over the tragic death of Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, calling it a great loss not only for Iran but for the entire Muslim Ummah.

"Today, Pakistan mourns the loss of a great friend. Just last month, we had the honor of hosting him in Pakistan. During our discussions, I found him very keen on strengthening our bilateral relations. Agha Raisi always had a special place for Pakistan and its people, in whichever position he served whether as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran or as Custodian of Imam Raza's (A.S) Shrine," Shehbaz Zardari said in a statement.

He described Raisi's passing as a great loss not only for Iran but for the entire Muslim Ummah.

President Zardari extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families of the Iranian president, the foreign minister, and

others who lost their lives in the accident.

He paid tribute to late President Raisi's dedicated services to the Islamic world, highlighting his steadfast advocacy for the unity of the Muslim Ummah.

He emphasized that the Islamic World had lost a remarkable leader who always supported the Muslim cause and deeply felt the sufferings of the Muslims globally, particularly the Palestinian and Kashmiri people.

President Zardari remarked that 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.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to bless the departed soul with peace and grant patience and strength to his family and the people of Iran in this time of irreparable loss.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif declared a day of mourning after Iranian media reported that President Ebrahim Raisi had died in a helicopter crash.

"Pakistan will observe a day of mourning and the flag will fly at half mast as a mark of respect for President Raisi and his companions and in solidarity with Brotherly Iran," Shehbaz posted on X, formerly Twitter.

"I along with the government and people of Pakistan extend our deepest condolences and sympathies to the Iranian nation on this terrible loss," he added. "The great Iranian nation will overcome this tragedy with customary courage."

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.

Significant honor for Islamia College: Prof. Dr. Muhammad Abrar selected to lecture at International Physics Conference

By M. Ilyas PESHAWAR- Prof. Dr. Muhammad Abrar, the former registrar of Islamia College University, Peshawar, has been selected to lecture at the Department of Physics during the second international conference on emerging trends in physics.

The conference, with a theme focused on Energy Storage Devices, was hosted by Islamia College University in Bahawalpur, Pakistan. This prestigious event was organized in collaboration with Queen Mary University of London, UK, and Islamia University, Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

Among the notable participants were Prof. Dr. Muhammad Abrar, Prof. Alan Drew from the UK, Prof. David Dunstan, and Prof. Elizabeth. The collaboration between the universities underscores the importance of international academic partnerships.

Dr. Muhammad Abrar, who earned his PhD from Queen Mary University of London under the joint supervision of Prof. David Dunstan, was invited as a guest speaker.

His lecture on "Magnetic Junctions in Nanowires for Energy Saving and Environmentally Friendly Magnetic Refrigeration" offered groundbreaking insights into the field of nanotechnology. Both collaborating universities expressed their pleasure in hosting Dr. Abrar, whose expertise significantly contributed to the discourse on advanced energy storage solutions and sustainable technologies at the conference.

who earned his PhD from Queen Mary University of London under the joint supervision of Prof. David Dunstan, was invited as a guest speaker.

His lecture on "Magnetic Junctions in Nanowires for Energy Saving and Environmentally



Friendly Magnetic Refrigeration" offered groundbreaking insights into the field of nanotechnology. Both collaborating universities expressed their pleasure in hosting Dr. Abrar, whose expertise significantly contributed to the discourse on advanced energy storage solutions and sustainable technologies at the conference.

TENDER NOTICE

TSE-232405418833 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Forest & Wildlife Department - DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER HUB invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates Tender Fee Rs.3370/- and Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1	CONSTRUCTION OF WILDLIFE OFFICE AT DISTRICT HUB	5,000,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 3,500,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee. Deposit at call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 3,370 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 03 June, 2024 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The tenders must be submitted latest by 03 June, 2024 till 11:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00 PM Address: Forest & Wildlife Department - DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER HUB Phone no: 3337860221 Email: mehmoorfo@gmail.com

DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER HUB

PRQ No.2470/20-5-2024

www.dpr.gov.pk @dpr_gob dpr_gob f@dprbalochistan

RE-TENDER NOTICE

TSE-232405419313 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The NIT published in daily newspapers on dated 11.05.2024 under PRQ No. 2243/9.05.2024 having TSE No. TSE-232405410793 is hereby cancelled. The Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Awaran re- invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates. Tender Fee Rs.2000/- and bid Security 3%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1	PROTECTION WALL TOWER ZEELAG JHAO, RAHEEMBUKSH CHAKUL JHAO, KALANCHU NARMAGI JHAO, AND OTHERS AWARAN	45,000,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 2 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 31,500,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-5 and above (Upto 65 million) In Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE04(ii) (Irrigation & Flood Control Systems). Two Work orders of similar nature of work Amounting at least 50% the project cost along with the completion certificates and attested by the client. One Work order of similar nature of work in-hand Amounting at least 50% the project cost and attested by the client. Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee. Deposit at Call of 3% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 2,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 03 June, 2024 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The tenders must be submitted latest by 03 June, 2024 till 09:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 10:00 AM Address: Irrigation office main awaran road awaran Phone no: 0333771751 Email: zafar.pandrani@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIVISION AWARAN

PRQ No.2466/20-5-2024

www.dpr.gov.pk @dpr_gob dpr_gob f@dprbalochistan

"SAY NO TO CORRUPTION"

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
NATIONAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY
(FINANCE WING-REVENUE SECTION)

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

HIRING OF OPERATION, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE (OM&M) CONTRACT FOR 01X PACKAGE OF MOBILE WORKSHOP AND RECOVERY VEHICLE AND AMBULANCE OF BEAT-03 AND BEAT-04 ON CPEC HAVELIAN-THAKOT SECTION (E-35) TILL THE PERIOD ENDING JUNE 30, 2025

- National Highway Authority (NHA) invites bids from the Prospective Bidders Registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax Department and who are on Active Taxpayer List of the Federal Board of Revenue and also registered with Pakistan Engineering Council having valid certificate of Category 0-4 or Above for the Provision Of Operation, Management and Maintenance (OM&M) For 01x Package of Mobile Workshop, Recovery Vehicle and Ambulance of Beat-03 And Beat-04 on CPEC Havelian-Thakot Section (E-35) Till The Period Ending June 30, 2025:

Sr. No.	Package No.	DESCRIPTION	Location	No of Mobile workshops	No of Recovery Vehicles	Ambulance
1	MWRA-(E35)-23-02-2024-25	MOBILE WORKSHOP, RECOVERY VEHICLE AND AMBULANCE OF BEAT-03 AND BEAT-04 ON E-35	Km 97+000 to 174+000	05	02	03

- Bidding Documents, containing detailed terms and conditions, method of procurement (Single Stage- Two Envelopes Procedure), Submission of Bid, Bid security, Bid validity, opening of bid, evaluation criteria etc. will be available on the website mentioned below from May 23, 2024 for downloading free of cost. Prospective Bidders are also advised to follow the said website for updates of schedule and addendum(s), if any.
- Debarred/Blacklisted firms are not eligible to participate in the bidding.
- The Bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions in the Bidding documents, must reach at the address mentioned below, on or before June 10, 2024 till 1500 Hours. Technical Bids will be opened on the same day at 1530 Hours.
- This Advertisement is also available on PPRA website at www.ppra.org.pk.

GENERAL MANAGER (REVENUE)
National Highway Authority
28-Mauve Area, Sector G-9/1, Islamabad
Phone: 051-9262153, 051-9260190 & 051-9032843
Website: www.ebidding.nha.gov.pk

PID(1)7127/23

Mohyuddin Wani says: Progress, development in current era cannot be achieved without focusing on IT, digitalization

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Secretary, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani on Monday highlighted the crucial role of Information Technology (IT) and digitalization in achieving progress and development in the current era.

Speaking at the National Launching Workshop for "Internet Dost and Internet Zabardast," organized by the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) with support from Google.org, Wani underscored that accurate data collection regarding out-of-school children, educational facilities, and health services was unattainable without relying on IT.

The secretary said that the ministry had decided to establish state-of-the-art IT labs in schools in the federal capital to equip youth with the latest skills and increase their employment opportunities.

He said that schools in the federal capital had been upgraded, providing students with the best facilities.

"We are committed to providing the best educational facilities to students in government schools," he said. "Our commitment extends beyond the classroom; it's about creating an ecosystem where every child receives an education that prepares them for the challenges of the modern world. The goal is to erase disparities between government and private education standards," he added.

He asserted that with determination, every challenge could be managed, and the government was dedicated to providing top-quality education in government schools.

The secretary also said that, alongside academic improvements, gym and sports facilities, as well as self-defense classes, would be provided to the students.

He said, the federal government had launched an initiative to provide free lunch meals to primary students in government schools in Islamabad to enhance child growth and encourage schooling.

In the first phase, about forty elementary schools will receive healthy, quality, and hygienic free meals.

CEO of the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Dr. Rashid Bajwa, highlighted that the "Internet Dost, Internet Zabardast" initiative would cover 48 districts across all four provinces—Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Baluchistan—as well as Gilgit-Baltistan and the Federal Capital Islamabad by July 2025.

The initiative will directly benefit over 103,500 underserved women, youth, parents, teachers, and children, aiming to bridge the digital gap and address gender and geographical disparities.

Dr. Bajwa emphasized the government's commitment to ensuring the safety and security of internet users, particularly the youth.

He noted that Google had introduced the "Safe Internet" concept in Pakistan, focusing on students and children.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan at Parliament House.

Khalid emphasis urgent need for climate education

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui while addressing a session on Climate Education at Education World Forum (EWF) 2024 being held at London, emphasized the urgent need for climate education in the country.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that Pakistan, the world's 5th largest nation by population with 252 million people, facing significant educational challenges, said a press release received here on Monday.

He said that currently, 54.2 million children are in

school, but 26.2 million are out-of-school children, prompting the Prime Minister to declare "Education Emergency" in the country.

He underscored that despite contributing less than 1% to global climate change, Pakistan is the 8th most affected country, with severe natural disasters like the floods of 2022 disrupting education of 3.5 million children.

Dr Siddiqui highlighted several initiatives to combat climate challenges through education.

He stated that Clean Green School program aims to enhance climate literacy, while Punjab province has

introduced climate change as a separate subject with the expert-developed Green Book.

Sindh province launched the Climate Crisis Education Data initiative to use data for informed decision-making.

These efforts underscore Pakistan's commitment to integrating climate education and fostering resilience, calling on the global community to join in addressing this critical issue through collective action, he said.

Joint operation to reclaim ICT's public spaces

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon on Monday chaired a high-level meeting for addressing the encroachments issues in the Federal Capital. According to the Spokesman of ICT's Administration, the meeting was attended by the Deputy Director General of Enforcement from the Capital Development Authority (CDA), the Administrator of Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI), and the Director of the Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA). Additionally, Assistant Commissioners and Additional Deputy Commissioners were also present to discuss the comprehensive strategy in the meeting.

IG order to conduct investigation on merit & transparency

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, held a meeting with senior police officers of the Operations Division at the Central Police Office Islamabad, a public relations officer said.

He said that, the meeting was chaired by IG Islamabad, while SSP Operations, SSP Investigation, and SP Dolphin were also present on this occasion.

During the meeting, the IG Islamabad directed the officers to conduct investigations with merit and

transparency, resolve cases promptly, and refer them to the relevant courts.

He also gave directions regarding crime control and effective patrolling, and issued special orders to strengthen the grip on criminal elements and eliminate them. He further said that, special efforts against car and motorcycle theft and other crimes should be intensified. Ensuring the elimination of crime from the federal capital and the protection of citizens' lives and property is our top priority. No element will be allowed to disrupt the peace of the citizens.



ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, chairs meeting of senior police officers of the Operations Division at the Central Police Office Islamabad.

CDA taking steps for uninterrupted water supply to people

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directives of Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Chaudhary Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the Water Supply Wing is taking measures to provide uninterrupted water supply to the citizens living in different areas of the capital.

The CDA water supply wing has been strengthened so that residents of the different localities could not face any kind of trouble during the summer season, said a press release issued on Monday.

According to details, water supply has been increased in the sectoral and non-sectoral areas of Islamabad due to sufficient water reserves. Similarly, problems like leakages in pipelines and reduction in water pressure are also being addressed on priority basis to ensure uninterrupted supply of water to

the local residents. The repair of the damaged tube well is being made within 24 hours. Almost 25 tankers out of 30 are fully functional, similarly 188 tube wells out of 200 and 95 water filtration plants are also working effectively round-the-clock.

The water tests are ensured every month from the laboratories of CDA and PCRW to provide clean drinking water to the people. The field staff and other relevant workers are visiting the filtration plants on the basis of inspection so that defects could be removed in a proper manner.

Moreover, the process of installation of 12 more filtration plants will be started soon by the Water Supply Wing, the press release added. New filtration plants will be installed in sectors I-14, I-16, D-12, I-11 and other sectors.

Chairman PRCS expresses condolence on tragic loss of Iranian leaders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, Monday expressed heartfelt condolence to the government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran following the tragic helicopter crash in which

President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, the governor of East Azerbaijan province, and several other esteemed officials and bodyguards were lost their lives.

On behalf of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari extended his deepest sympathies and words of consolation to the people of Iran, the families of the deceased, the Iranian government, and the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

Psychological test of Islamabad Police officers conducted

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police conducted a psychological test of officials deputed at Special Protection Unit (SPU) to improve the performance and mental capability.

This initiative seeks to enhance the aptitude of officials within the Islamabad Police. The test included a special psychological examination committee, chaired by SSP Security Division, while SP CTD, SP Headquarters, and psychological experts were the members of the committee.

Police Officers from the Special Protection Unit (SPU) actively participated in the test. The conclusion of the workshop saw recommendations formulated for resolving ongoing issues faced by officers.

Islamabad Police officials are always engaged in law and order duties in order to ensure the safety of the citizens. Maintaining the law and order situation in the federal capital, Islamabad is a challenging task, due to which the officials were facing not only physical but also mental difficulties.



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Administration has issued a new route for public transport on the Constitution Avenue from Parliament House, Supreme Court, High Court to facilitate the Employees of important offices and citizens coming to Redzone, the route 142 will start from Serena Hotel to Kohsar Chowk.

Govt to provide all assistance to students wishing to return from Kyrgyzstan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam has said that on special instructions given by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Government of Pakistan will provide all necessary assistance to students wishing to return from Kyrgyzstan.

Welcoming the students who arrived early this morning on a special flight from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, at Islamabad airport, Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam, assured that the government will fully assist in facilitating the return of Pakistani students from Bishkek,

Kyrgyzstan, after mob attacks on foreign citizens, said a press release issued here.

He mentioned that following the incident, the PM of Pakistan instructed national institutions to ensure the safety of Pakistani students.

Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam, also inquired about their well-being. He also inquired about the tragic incident in Bishkek and the challenges faced by the students. He emphasized that Pakistani students in Kyrgyzstan are the nation's children, and it's the government's foremost responsibility to safeguard them.



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters cools themselves off with water at Margalla road on a hot day in the Federal capital.

IHC to hear appeals regarding capital's elections separately

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday instructed the registrar office to fix the appeals regarding elections results in three constituencies of capital in separate days for hearing.

The court sought certified copies of form-45 along with the affidavits of the candidates and witnesses list on next date of hearing.

Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the appeals against the election results notified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

During hearing, the court remarked that one party was claiming that they have complete form-45 and they are winner while the other side was also claiming the same.

Justice Jahangiri said

that let the certified copies come along with the affidavits then the court would view this matter. He said that one who lying would go jail, adding that the court would send these documents for forensic.

He said that the respondents who didn't appear should be advertised on national newspapers, TV and radio.

He said that the returning officer has a final warning, warrants would be issued if they do not come on next date.

The court would record the statements on oath, he said.

ECP's counsel said that these evidences are recorded in the presence of all the candidates. The original Form 45 is given to the presiding officer, he said.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar addressed an important press conference.

Tourism policy forum organizes program in Korea to promote health tourism

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level Tourism Policy Forum (TPF) organized a program at Busan City of Korea under the flagship program of Korean government, and Korean partnership initiative for sustainable Tourism-2024 (KOPIST).

A three member delegation from Pakistan comprising Managing Director Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) Aftab Rana as a head of the delegation, GM KP Tourism Authority Omair Khattak and Manager TIC Mukhtar Ali participated in the event, said a press release issued here on Monday.

A three week training was also part of this program.

Each two delegates from each partner country participated to learn the concepts of "sustainable tourism" and developed an action plan to implement the best practices of sustainable tourism.

A competition to develop the best action plan was also part of the longer training where teams of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Uzbekistan, Uganda, Cook Island, Indonesia participated.

Pakistan team developed a project for the promotion of community-based tourism in "Kalash Valley" and got the second position in this competition.



ISLAMABAD: Citizens suffering from suspension of metro service in the Federal Capital owing to the protest at D Chowk. A large number of citizens were left helpless at the Faiz Ahmed Faiz metro station. Passengers jump on the highway fearing stampede.



ISLAMABAD: Iranian National Flag flies at half mast at the Iranian Embassy in the Federal Capital, in honour of Iranian president Dr Syed Ebrahim Raisi's death in a helicopter crash.

COMSTech International workshop on Drug Design and Development begins

ISLAMABAD (APP): COMSTech International Workshop on "Drug Design and Development: The Art and Science" started at COMSTech secretariat on May 20 with emphasis on indigenous drug development for OIC member countries through academia industry collaboration.

COMSTech Distinguished Scholar, Dr. M. Hafizur Rahman, Professor and Chairman, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Dhaka International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh is delivering this workshop.

In his introductory address, Dr. Rahman said that the drugs are mostly developed in the western world. He pointed out that drugs are developed mostly to cater indigenous needs.

He emphasized the need of developing drugs for the OIC member states indigenously.

Prof. Rahman said that drug development is a multi-disciplinary endeavor which needs collaboration and cooperation of academia and industry.

He expressed hope that this workshop will play an important role for the indigenous drug development initiative. He appreciated the efforts of COMSTech in this direction. This 3-day workshop comprises six technical sessions, each session includes lectures and follow-up question and answer sessions. Importance of drug research, strategy and drug development, ethical considerations, clinical trials, drug design and development, biotechnology and drug discovery.

CDA taking steps for uninterrupted water supply to people

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directives of Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Chaudhary Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the Water Supply Wing is taking measures to provide uninterrupted water supply to the citizens living in different areas of the capital. The CDA water supply wing has been strengthened so that residents of the different localities could not face any kind of trouble during the summer season, said a press release issued on Monday.

According to details, water supply has been increased in the sectoral and non-sectoral areas of Islamabad due to sufficient water reserves. Similarly, problems like leakages in

pipelines and reduction in water pressure are also being addressed on priority basis to ensure uninterrupted supply of water to the local residents. The repair of the damaged tube well is being made within 24 hours. Almost 25 tankers out of 30 are fully functional, similarly 188 tube wells out of 200 and 95 water filtration plants are also working effectively round-the-clock. The water tests are ensured every month from the laboratories of CDA and PCRW to provide clean drinking water to the people. The field staff and other relevant workers are visiting the filtration plants on the basis of inspection so that defects could be removed in a proper manner.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Tuesday May 21, 2024

Wheat price crash

What the government has done to Punjab's smallholder 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.

Maleeha Lodhi |
Ahmad Junaid

Pakistan no longer faces an economic emergency as it did last year when it teetered on the edge of sovereign debt default. It has come out of that crisis and managed to establish a modicum of stability and improve market sentiment. This creates a window of opportunity for the government to evolve an economic vision and craft a home-grown economic plan to drive a robust recovery and prevent the country's slide into another crisis.

To be sure the IMF's bailout package and rollover of foreign loans helped to avert a breakdown. The government is now in discussions with the Fund for a larger, longer-duration loan deal, which will be the country's 24th IMF programme. But meeting IMF conditionalities cannot be the be-all and end-all of economic policy. An IMF package is necessary but not sufficient to achieve durable stabilisation and chart a path to resilient economic growth. A Fund programme should be one component of the

country's own long-term plan and strategy. It cannot serve as its substitute.

A credible plan should address the country's weak macroeconomic fundamentals, which persist and make the nascent recovery very fragile. Unless they are tackled head-on, they will spark another crisis. This has been the experience so far as unresolved external and internal financial imbalances have fuelled chronic balance-of-payments and budget crises. Much reliance is being placed on promises of investment from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. But the strategy to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and translate promises into reality should be part of a broader, coherent economic plan and not operate in a policy silo. Significant foreign investment will be elusive unless macroeconomic stability is established and political uncertainty ended. This requires a de-escalation of domestic political tensions and a calmer environment.

Even though the country has stepped back from the brink, the structural sources of persisting financial imbalances have not dis-

appeared. Risks are high as the trends are all negative. The fiscal deficit remains high with the economy expected to grow by only 1.8 per cent this fiscal year. Foreign exchange reserves are fragile, domestic and foreign debt have reached unsustainable levels, large external financing is needed to meet debt payments, inflation is at a record level, the current account and trade deficits remain wide, FDI remains low while business confidence is weak. The poverty level has risen to 40pc.

Unless structural issues are tackled to reverse these trends, the country will not escape from the trap of anaemic growth, high deficits, heavy borrowing, growing indebtedness and soaring inflation. The choice is stark. Either the government can steer the economy out of its present predicament by the same fire-fighting response witnessed in the past — more borrowing and accumulating greater debt while postponing reform and creating no capacity to repay higher levels of debt. This, however, will do nothing to spur growth and investment or contain record inflation. It

will only guarantee a crisis down the road. This band-aid approach is, in any case, untenable. Or, the government can embark on wide-ranging structural reforms that can help the economy break out of the vicious cycle it is mired in. What should be the key elements of a comprehensive reform programme? Long-term economic progress rests on action in at least five fundamental areas. The most urgent is curbing the fiscal deficit. This involves instituting an equitable and simplified tax system, bringing untaxed and undertaxed sectors into a wider revenue net, ending exemptions and ensuring tax compliance. It entails squaring the circle between overtaxing certain sectors and under-taxing others. Expenditure must be rationalised to meet development imperatives and untargeted subsidies should be eliminated. What will contribute significantly to reducing the fiscal burden is privatisation of loss-making state-owned enterprises. Financially haemorrhaging SOEs have long been bloating budget deficits and need to be disinvested by a transpar-

ent process.

The second area is creating a business-friendly environment. The government should act as a facilitator to promote business growth and take substantive actions to reduce the cost of doing business. The economic plan should aim to establish a single business regulatory framework for the country, reduce the regulatory burden, cut bureaucratic red tape that inhibits private sector activity and remove barriers that deter foreign investment. The business community should be accorded a key role in the process of formulating economic policy and reform measures. Policy continuity and certainty is also crucial to build and sustain investor confidence.

The third area concerns creating the conditions for export-led growth, which should be a core part of the economic plan. For this, Pakistan must identify its competitive advantage and then work towards export diversification, both in terms of products and markets. The goal should be to achieve greater integration of the country into the global economy and markets;

at present Pakistan's share of global trade is minuscule. An export-oriented industrial and trade policy framework will need to be put in place. This means ending the anti-export bias in trade policy, which requires tariff rationalisation and review of export subsidy schemes.

The fourth area involves leveraging Pakistan's promising potential in digital technology, a dynamic sector, which is growing fast and can be a vital vehicle for the country to leapfrog towards social and economic progress. This requires building digital capabilities, making key investments in this sector and creating an enabling environment to unleash private sector initiatives and innovation. Investment in human capital should be the fifth area of priority and an integral part of reform. Failure on this count has left the country with deteriorating social indicators and at the bottom of global human development rankings. Underinvestment has meant 40pc of Pakistanis are illiterate and 26 million school-age children are out of school. -- Courtesy Dawn

AJK and GB movements

Sajjad Ahmad

Amid a grave economic crisis and the recent Dubai leaks embarrassment, the situation in what people generally believe are 'peripheral' areas of Pakistan has drawn the attention of the authorities. Be it Haq do Tehreek in Balochistan, the Awami Action Committee of Gilgit-Baltistan or the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) demanding their rights, what is common in all these movements is that their issues lie in the centre, Islamabad. Through protests, sit-ins, strikes and politics of agitation, these so-called peripheral and marginalised areas are gaining centre stage. A general feeling of dissatisfaction and disenfranchisement among the population seems to be the driving force behind these movements.

The recent protests in AJK led by JAAC didn't happen overnight. According to one of the senior leaders of JAAC — an alliance of labour leaders, traders, transporters, and civil society members — which led protests and

a march towards Muzaffarabad, the demands, which were neither irrational nor unfair, go one year back. They were asking for the electricity rate to be set according to hydropower generation costs in AJK, subsidised wheat flour, and downsizing government officials to spend resources on the public rather than on the ruling elites. Their argument is simple: the AJK government is oversized, and in a population of only four million, it doesn't need so many ministers and bureaucrats. Their perks are a burden on the region's budget. However, given the abysmal record of managing crises, the authorities, rather being proactive, adopted a reactive approach.

The unrest began when activists and members of JAAC were detained pre-emptively in overnight raids by law enforcement agencies. This prompted JAAC to call for a strike on May 10 and a march towards Muzaffarabad on May 11. During the several days of unrest, four precious lives were lost and over a hundred were injured. Consequently, in an emergency meeting in Islamabad, PM Shehbaz Sharif met all the demands, and the JAAC called off the protests. The PM announced a grant of Rs23 billion to AJK, which included subsidies on flour and electricity prices. Senior PML-N leader Rana Sanaullah acknowledged that the situation was mishandled and that the damage could have been avoided through early negotiations.

In Pakistan, it has become a pattern to address issues only when they get out of control and result in a full-fledged crisis. The wheat subsidy is not a new issue for the government. Just a few months ago, GB was embroiled in mass protests, sit-ins and strikes for the restoration of the wheat subsidy granted to the region. The anger was also due to the unilateral decisions of the federal government. The demonstrations were led by the Awami Action Committee GB — an alliance of trade unions, religious and political leaders, and CSOs. This was also a repeat telecast. In 2022,

similar protests erupted on the same issues. In 2024, however, the AAC had a 15-point demand list which included the restoration of wheat subsidy, suspension of Finance Act, land ownership rights for locals, a share for GB in the NFC Award, royalties from the Diamer-Bhasha dam, an end to prolonged power outages and exploitation of GB's mineral resources, among others.

The regions of AJK and GB both have a disputed status. They are semi-autonomous regions which have gone through various reforms since 1947. AJK has its own constitution, government and legislative assembly, while GB has only a legislative assembly.

However, both regions are politically and financially dependent on the centre. Islamabad maintains a strong grip on their administration through federal bureaucracy. Representatives contest elections on the platforms of mainstream political parties and enter local assemblies with their hands tied. They cannot deviate from their parties' policies. They

often acknowledge the public demands during such protests — as in the case of AJK's recent protests — but also admit like AJK's Rural Development Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, that the solution falls in the centre's jurisdiction.

In both AJK and GB's cases, the protests and marches occurred only when negotiations with regional governments failed. With these repeated episodes, one wonders why conciliation and crisis management are so difficult for the centre.

Perhaps the starting point for the federal government to manage affairs should be to first realise that a new generation has come of age in both regions, which is detached from traditional politics. This young generation is educated, aware of their rights, and in the majority.

They are shaping these rights movements and redefining politics in both AJK and GB. The government of Pakistan should have the answers to their questions. Relying on old methods won't work and this AJK episode is a glimpse of that.

There is no harm in empowering regional governments and granting autonomy in local affairs. It is perhaps the best solution to regain the trust of the people and avoid future unrest.

Self-determination, a catchword linked to Kashmir, generally refers to the right of people to constitute themselves as a nation-state or to integrate with an already existing one. Salvatore Senese divides it into two categories: internal and external. The latter has been already mentioned. Internal self-determination, according to Senese, is 'the right of people to freely choose their own political, economic, and social system'.

Can Pakistan provide internal self-determination to AJK and GB? The time is ripe for it. The PM has already stressed for permanent solutions to AJK's problems, which is a promising sign.

Only time will tell how serious the government is about providing permanent solutions to the chronic problems of AJK and GB. -- Courtesy Dawn

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 telephony 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 community 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 en-

hance public safety by monitoring sensitive areas.

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 penalty 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.

Murad focuses on critical environmental drivers of stunting to control it

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah Monday said that the critical environmental drivers of stunting including water, sanitation, hygiene, and the agri-food system were being focused on through effective interventions. "These interventions have been made through ADP schemes and from the ongoing World Bank projects."

This he said while speaking with World Bank Country Director, Najy Benhassine who called on him along with his delegation to discuss the Child Stunting Mission.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Health, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, acting Chief Secretary Musadqi Ahmad, PSCM Agha Wasif, Chairman P&D Najma Shah, and Secretary Health Agha Wasif. The World Bank delegation members

were Economist Ghazaa Mansuri, Senior Health Specialist Ms Hinn Hinn Pyne and Senior Health Expert Ziauddin Hyder.

Murad Shah said that the overall stunting rate in the province as assessed by Unicef in its survey of 2014 was 48 per cent.

The Sindh government launched the World Bank-assisted Multi-Sectorial Accelerated Action Plan (AAP) in 2017 to reduce stunting from 48 per cent to 30 per cent by 2021 and then further reduction up to 15 per cent by 2026," he said and added that the stunting rate had started coming down from 48 per cent but its assessment could be made through another survey.

The chief minister and the World Bank team agreed that the provincial government would address environmental drivers of stunting by expanding

access to safely managed water and sanitation.

Murad Shah said that the local government and Public Health Engineering department were working to ensure the treatment of drinking water, sewage and effluent.

The chief minister said that the mass rollout of a behavioural change Campaign to shift cultural and behavioural practices was important for which PPHI and the health department were working.

He said that the declaration of Open Defecation Free (ODF) Villages was being made through water sources testing for biological and chemical contaminants.

Demos on the construction of household latrines were made in the villages and behaviour change communication campaigns were in progress.



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

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 Gayasi 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.

CM vows to raise living standard of people

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed her resolve to make people's lives easier, stating that all necessary measures would be taken to address public issues.

The CM said in a meeting with the members of National and Provincial Assemblies from Lahore, including Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan and MPA Mian Marghoob Ahmed, here on Monday.

The CM said streets of every city, including Lahore, would be paved. Urban sanitation and sustainable solid waste management systems were on the cards, she mentioned. Earlier, both the visiting public representatives discussed development issues of Lahore. In the meeting, they particularly apprised the chief minister about public issues and development needs of their respective constituencies. Moreover, general situation of the province also came under discussion.

Both visiting members of the national and provincial assemblies appreciated various initiatives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for welfare of

people. They reiterated their determination to work together for development of Punjab.

Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan acknowledged Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision and speed to solve public problems. He added the launch of Nawaz Sharif IT City project could be a game changer for the province.

Mian Murghoob Ahmed said the fate of Lahore's slums and suburban settlements was changing. Senator Pervaiz Rashid and Special Assistant Zeeshan Malik were also present.

During the meeting, the CM Sindh congratulated Sardar Saleem Haider on assuming the post of Governor of the Punjab. They also discussed the matters of mutual interest on the occasions.

Governor Punjab meets Sindh CM

KARACHI (APP): Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider met the Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah at chief minister House here on Monday.

During the meeting, the CM Sindh congratulated Sardar Saleem Haider on assuming the post of Governor of the Punjab.

They also discussed the matters of mutual interest on the occasions.

CM offers condolence to Iranian people over Raisi's demise

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has expressed his deep regret and sorrow over the death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi. The chief minister said he was extremely saddened by the death of the President of Iran. He offered his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and Iranian people on the martyrdom of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and other personalities. Murad said, "Our prayers are with his family in this hour of sorrow."



KARACHI: Shiite Muslims pay tribute to Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, and other victims of a recent helicopter crash in mountainous terrain near Iran's border with Azerbaijan, in Karachi.

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, including the availability and supply of medicines, the functionality of biomedical machinery, and other matters. Additionally, the ongoing health development projects in South Punjab should also be monitored. He mentioned that to ensure timely medical facilities at the doorstep of people in remote areas, a special project called "Clinic on Wheels" has been launched under the directives of Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz and the benefits of this project must reach to the people at all costs.

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. However, in this regard, technical training should be given to women and special persons and the owners of the respective industries should be obliged to follow the quota of special persons and also employ women on a priority basis.



LAHORE: Police personnels covered their face with men scarf due to hot weather in the Provincial Capital.

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah in meeting with the World Bank delegation led by its Country Director, Najy Benhassine, held at CM House in Karachi.

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.



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

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.

Timely justice at doorstep, federal ombudsman's directives implemented in remote areas

LORA (APP): In adherence to the directives of Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, a Khuli Kutcheri on Monday was conducted at the Tehsil Municipal Hall in Lora, aimed at providing immediate and affordable justice especially to the residents of remote areas.

A large number of people from Tehsil Lora, Tehsil Mayor Iftikhar Abbasi, Tehsil Administrator Azhar Naveed, Trade Union President Asad Ikhtlaq, Tehsil Khateeb Mufi

Nadir, local dignitaries, prominent figures and others were present. The participants lauded the efforts of Federal Ombudsman for ensuring justice is delivered to the public at their doorstep without any discrimination.

In-charge Federal Ombudsman Regional Secretariat Abbottabad Abdul Ghafoor Baig, received a large number of complaints from the public against various federal and provincial departments during the session. Immediate orders were

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.

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.

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.

MNA Malik Iqbal Channar said that the Clinic on Wheels program is a revolutionary initiative by Punjab CM Maryam

Nawaz Sharif. He added that the program is providing people with healthcare facilities at their doorsteps. He further stated that doctors and paramedical staff are providing a key role in providing healthcare facilities to the people of the area. He urged the residents of the area to benefit from the Punjab government's Clinic on Wheels program. Malik Muhammad Iqbal Channar talked to the patients who came to the camp established in Islamia Colony and inquired about the healthcare facilities provided to them. He instructed the health department officials to ensure that the benefits of the Punjab government's health-friendly programme are provided to the residents of the urban.



PESHAWAR: Supporters and activists of Jamat-e-Islami (JI) are gathered to attend Gaza Million March to express solidarity with Palestinians, in Peshawar.

Awareness walk held under "Suthra Punjab" program

MURREE (APP): On the directions of Secretary Local Govt & Community Development (LG&CD) Department Punjab, Shakeel Ahmad, an awareness walk was organized by Municipal Corporation Murree under the "Suthra Punjab" Programme on Monday.

According to the Focal Person Media LG&CD Department, Dr M Abdullah Tabassum, the walk was started from Municipal Corporation Office and culminated at Maal Road. The awareness walk was headed by Focal Person Media LG&CD

Department, Dr M Abdullah Tabassum, and was attended by Capt @ Seheray Sherazi, ADCR/ Administrator MC Murree, officials of Education department, Revenue staff, MC staff and others.

Addressing the participants, Abdullah Tabassum highlighted the "Suthra Punjab" program, initiated by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, as a landmark endeavor. This programme aimed at to extend integrated sanitation efforts to villages, marking a significant step forward in promoting cleanliness throughout the region.

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 Sohrab Goth Karachi.

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 altercation 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.

He said that the completion of Rachana Industrial Park showed the unwavering commitment of the PML-N government, Rachana Industrial Park was very important in the context of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor and it was located near to M-2 on Lahore Sheikhupura Road and at the starting point of M-5, so it would be an important gateway to enhance trade and cooperation between Pakistan and China and fulfill the government's vision for a greener future. He said that the PIDC would ensure that industrial development was compatible with environmental sustainability.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan Mr. Henrik Persson called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

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 rupee 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, long-overdue regulatory and policy reforms are needed. These reforms would unlock the telecom sector's potential in accelerating the government's vision of digital transformation for socioeconomic growth, he said.

The telecom giant maintains that it continues to navigate challenges impacting its growth.



KARACHI: Brokers are busy in trading at Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi.

FESCO to outsource bill distribution in 26 subdivisions

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has decided to outsource bill distribution in its 26 subdivisions of second circle Faisalabad.

FESCO spokesman Tahir Sheikh said here on Monday that initially 4 divisions of second circle including Nazim Abad, Ghulam Muhammad Abad, Sammundi and Tandlianwala were selected for this program where 841,000 consumers would be facilitated with timely

distribution of electricity bills.

This is a pilot project which would remain continue for one year and after its success the scope of this project would be expanded to other subdivisions also. He said that bids were invited from well reputed firms to outsource bill distribution.

He said that Nazim Abad division comprised of 8 subdivisions including Samanabad, Factory Area, Nazim Abad, Jhang Road, Bakkar Mandi, Thikriwala.



ISLAMABAD: Traders offering biddings for watermelons to vendors at Islamabad Fruit and Vegetable Market.



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.

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.

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 and reached to \$657.132 million as compared to \$576.619 last year. The imports of all other petroleum group products decreased by 45 percent.

Rupee loses 9 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Monday lost 09 paise against US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.29 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.20.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.6 and Rs 280.2 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 75 paise to close at Rs 302.59 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.84, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).



PESHAWAR: Members of All Pakistan Beekeepers and Honey Trader Association are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Tarnab Farm in Peshawar.

PMEX striving to automate, digitize Pak commodity market

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chief of business of Pakistan Mercantile Exchange (PMEX) Zaki Ur Rehman on Monday said that PMEX is striving to automate and digitize the commodity market and also working on future markets to promote innovation and competitiveness in the country's economy.

PMEX is proud to announce the successful completion of our recent event, marking a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to enhance the financial markets in Pakistan, Chief of Business of Pakistan

Mercantile Exchange (PMEX), Zaki Ur Rehman told APP here.

"As the Chief Business Officer of PMEX, I am delighted with the exceptional turnout and positive feedback we have received from all participants and investors", he said. "Our latest event underscored PMEX's commitment to innovation, transparency, and growth within the financial sector."

Zaki said the success of this event is a testament to our dedicated team's hard work and the collaborative spirit of our partners and stakeholders.

CDNS realizes Rs 1500b targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has attained a target of Rs 1500 billion in fresh bonds and achieved 85 percent of the annual target in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to May 15.

The National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1742 billion for the year 2023-24, in which it is encouraging that 85 percent of the target has been achieved, and it is hoped that National Savings will surpass its annual target this FY 2023-24, the senior official of

CDNS told APP on Monday.

The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, he said. He said this was an Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said. Given the current market trend in the country

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 258 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 258.34 points,

a negative change of 0.34 per cent, closing at 75,084.00 points against 75,342.35 points the previous trading day.

A total of 375,359,048 shares valuing Rs 16.301 billion were traded during the day as compared to 496,699,517 shares valuing Rs 17.631 billion on the last day.

Some 380 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 137 of them recorded gains and 223 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 20 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Hum Network with 30,918,735 shares at Rs10.90 per share, K-Electric Limited with 18,317,678 shares at Rs 6.67 per share and Dewan Motors with 17,860,403 shares at Rs 39.73 per share.

Ismail Industries limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 69.93 per share price closing at Rs 1,618.85, whereas the runner-up was Hallmark Company Limited with Rs 41.33 increase to close at Rs 593.44.

Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 97.78 per share closing at Rs 1,429.19.

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.

Pakistan and Sweden could benefit from each other's experiences in the field of technology, she added. The minister said the private sector was being fully supported and facilitated under the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.



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

FTO to send proposals to FBR to facilitate business community

LAHORE (APP): Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr Asif Mahmood Jah said on Monday that the Ombudsman Secretariat will send a set of concrete and viable proposals to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for incorporating in the upcoming budget for facilitating the business community.

Presiding over a high-level central advisory committee meeting here, he sought budget proposals from presidents of chambers of chamber and industry, tax bar associations, trade bodies, APTMA and other stakeholders.

President Lahore Chamber Kashif Anwar

suggested facilitating businessmen paying sales tax and the government must ensure ease of doing business in a congenial environment by taking stakeholders into confidence. He further stated that solar industry should not be subjected to unnecessary taxation rather than it must be fully encouraged to promote solarisation in all sectors to overcome power scarcity.

Malik Manzoor Ahmad, Rehman Aziz Chan, Mian Waqar Ahmad and a number of trade leaders across the province through video link shared their proposals and discussed in detail focusing on the introduction of result-oriented economic reforms.

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

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 Pakistan

Government 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



and America participated to set a roadmap of council goals & objectives.

The meeting was chaired by Shaikh Imtiaz Hussain, Chairman of FPCCI USA-PAK Business Council. The Gwinnett County

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.

Rice valued \$3.282 bln exported, exports grew 80.13% in 10 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rice exports from the country during the first 10 months of the current financial year grew by 80.13 per cent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-April, 2023-24, over 5,097 million metric tons of rice worth \$3.282 billion were exported as compared to the exports of 3.270 million metric tons valued at \$1.822 million of the same period of last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of

Statistics. The exports of Basmati Rice grew by 34.01 percent as 612,086 metric tons of Basmati Rice worth \$699.208 million were exported as compared to the exports of 486,998 metric tons valued at \$521.751 million of the same period last year, it added.

Meanwhile, over 4,474 million metric tons of rice of other varieties worth \$2.583 billion were also exported in last 10 months as against the exports of 2.783 million metric tons valued at \$1.300 billion.

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 Netanyahu 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 aid 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 Slavvansk 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.

DR Congo thwarts Kinshasa 'coup attempt', says army

Monitoring Desk
KINSHASA: The DR Congo military on Sunday thwarted an attempted coup near the offices of President Felix Tshisekedi in Kinshasa involving "foreigners and Congolese", the army spokesperson said.

The coup bid took place in the early hours of the morning outside the residence of economy minister Vital Kamerhe, in the Gombe area in the north of the capital, near the Palais de la Nation which houses the president's offices. "An attempted coup d'etat has been stopped by the defence and security forces."

Russia says it took full control of Bilohorivka in eastern Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: The Russian military said on Monday it had taken full control of the settlement of Bilohorivka in Ukraine's Luhansk region and had taken up better positions in the area.

The Russian Defence Ministry said in a statement its forces had also been involved in fierce clashes in Ukraine's Kharkiv region near Vovchansk, Starystia and Hlyboke where it said they had repelled two counterattacks.

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 Russia-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.

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.

Dominican Republic voters head to polls, incumbent Abinader the favorite

Monitoring Desk
SANTO DOMINGO: Voters in the Dominican Republic head to the polls on Sunday to cast ballots for the next president and members of parliament in an election widely seen as a referendum on the hugely popular incumbent and anti-corruption crusader, Luis Abinader.

Up to eight million eligible voters will decide which candidate is best suited to take on the fallout from the humanitarian crisis next door in Haiti, tackle graft in government and tame inflation and inequality in the Caribbean's top tourist destination.

President Luis Abinader, a former businessman and leader of the Modern Revolutionary Party, has staked his claim on his adept handling of the COVID-19 crisis. His hardline stance on Haiti and a crusade against corruption have helped give him a strong leg up over his two main opponents. Three-time former President

Leonel Fernandez, of the People's Force party, has painted his opponent as weak on the economy and crime, while the Dominican Liberation Party's Abel Martinez, a first-time candidate, has trumpeted his successes as mayor of the country's second-largest city. Several others are polling at or under 1%.

If no candidate receives more than 50 percent of the vote, a second round will be held on June 30.

Abinader is the widely held favorite and appears poised for a big win in the first round, thus foregoing a runoff.

The 56-year-old is one of Latin America's most popular presidents, with approval ratings around 70%, according to a CID-Gallup poll in September. He catapulted the island's all-important tourism industry to recovery in record-breaking time, returning his country to a predicted 5% growth in GDP in 2024, according to World Bank figures.

Eruption of Indonesia's Mt Ibu forces seven villages to evacuate

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: A volcano on the remote Indonesian island of Halmahera has spectacularly erupted, spewing a grey ash cloud into the sky, and people from seven nearby villages have been evacuated, authorities said on Sunday.

Mt. Ibu erupted on Saturday evening, sending ash 4 km (2.5 miles) high, as streaks of purple lightning flashed around its crater, according to information and images shared by Indonesia's volcanology agency.

A joint team comprised of police, military and search and rescue officials was dispatched to the area to evacuate residents from surrounding villages, Abdul Muhari, from the disaster mitigation agency, said in a statement.

Photos shared by the disaster agency showed authorities assisting the elderly, while other residents were moved in pickup trucks and accommodated in emergency tents for the night.

The eruption prompted authorities to evacuate more than 12,000 people on a nearby island.

provide any information about how many people had been moved, but authorities have recommended that a seven-km (4.35-mile) radius be cleared.

Indonesia's volcanology agency raised the alert level of the volcano to the highest level on Thursday, after Ibu erupted multiple times earlier this month.

Ibu's activities follow a series of eruptions of different volcanoes in Indonesia, which sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire" and has 127 active volcanoes.

Flash floods and cold lava flow from Mount Marapi, one of the most active in West Sumatra province, covered several nearby districts following torrential rain on May 11, killing more than 60 people.

In recent weeks, North Sulawesi's Ruang volcano has also erupted, spewing incandescent lava.

The eruption prompted authorities to evacuate more than 12,000 people on a nearby island.



People get their names checked in voters' lists inside a polling station during the fifth phase of India's general election in Howrah district in the eastern state of West Bengal, India.

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, prosecutors said Russian shelling killed a 60-year-old woman and injured three other civilians. A 59-year-old man was also injured in the village of Ukrainke, they said.

Across the border in Russia's Belgorod region, Moscow's defence ministry said its forces shot down a Tochka-U missile fired by Ukraine. A similar missile caused a Belgorod apartment building to collapse last week, killing at least 15 people, Russia said. Late on Saturday Belgorod regional governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said a Ukrainian drone attack injured a woman and a man in the village of Petrovka. They were treated for shrapnel injuries in Belgorod, he wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

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."

Iraq father begins legal action against BP over son's cancer death

Monitoring Desk
RUMAYLAH: Hussein Juloud is taking legal action against British energy giant BP after he lost his son to leukaemia, which he alleges was caused by gas flaring at Iraq's largest oil field.

The bereaved father, who lives near the Rumaila field in the southern province of Basra, is demanding that the firm compensate him for his son Ali's medical expenses, which have left him in crushing debt.

He wants BP to cover the costs of his 21-year-old's medical treatment — including chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant — and his funeral following his death in April last year. He said no amount of money would make up for his son's death. But "what I am claiming is my right", added the 55-year-old father of seven.

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.

The Election Commission on Sunday specifically called upon residents of those cities "to erase the stigma" of urban apathy.

"At the core of our vision for Mumbai is better infrastructure and more 'ease of living'."



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

Hundreds of Tunisian president's supporters protest against 'foreign interference'

Monitoring Desk
TUNIS: Hundreds of people demonstrated in Tunis on Sunday in support of President Kais Saied amid widespread criticism at home and abroad after a wave of arrests that included journalists, activists and lawyers. The European Union, France and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern at the arrests and at a police raid on the headquarters of the bar association this month in which two lawyers critical of the president were detained.

Police this month arrested 10 people, including journalists, lawyers and officials of civil society groups, in what was described as crackdown by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which called on Tunisia to respect free speech and civil liberties.

Last week, lawyers went on strike, saying one of the two lawyers arrested in the bar association raid had been tortured, an allegation denied by the Interior Ministry. Following international criticism, Saied last week asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to call in several ambassadors to protest at their countries' interference in Tunisia's affairs.

US works to ensure Venezuela election credible but faces obstacles, official says

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US sees it as a "very open question" whether Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro can win re-election if he holds a free vote in July, and Washington is trying to ensure the ballot is credible in the face of significant obstacles, a senior US official said.

The Biden administration is engaging with Venezuelan "stakeholders" as well regional and European partners in a bid to keep the electoral process on track but expects

additional difficulties as the July 28 vote approaches, the official said on condition of anonymity.

Maduro is vying against Edmundo Gonzalez, veteran diplomat who was named main opposition candidate after primary winner Maria Corina Machado had a ban on holding office upheld by the Supreme Court, a move condemned by the US at the time. Machado has since given Gonzalez her backing.

Comet fragment lights up sky over Spain and Portugal

Monitoring Desk
LISBON: A bright comet fragment lit up the skies over parts of Spain and Portugal late on Saturday, according to the European Space Agency (ESA), with one Lisbon resident saying the dazzling display "felt like a movie". On Sunday morning, the ESA shared on X a video captured by its "fireball camera" of what it described as a "stunning meteor" over the skies of the western Spanish city of Caceres, near the Portuguese border. But it later said it appeared to be a "small piece of a comet" and not a meteor, estimating it flew over Spain and Portugal.

Tunisia says 23 migrants missing after setting off in boat to Italy

Monitoring Desk
TUNIS: About 23 migrants were missing after setting off in a boat from Tunisia towards Italy, the country's national guard said on Saturday.

Tunisia is facing a migration crisis and has replaced Libya as a main departure point for people fleeing poverty and conflict in Africa and the Middle East in the hope of a better life in Europe.

The national guard said it had deployed floating units and had informed the navy to help in the search for the missing people.



TAIPEI: People hold up guavas as they take part in a protest organised by the Taiwan People's Party (TPP) against the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) ahead of the inauguration ceremony of Taiwan's president-elect Lai Ching-te and vice-president-elect Hsiao Bi-khim.

Acting President 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 Awan-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 expressed satisfaction over the regular conduct of bilateral naval exercises and training collaboration between Pakistan and Malaysia. He appreciated the Royal Malaysian Navy for regular participation in AMAN exercises and emphasised the need for continuity of the same in future. He stated that Pakistan was looking forward to the continued support of Malaysia for Pakistan's bid to become the Full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN.

Earlier, the Acting President conferred the award of Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) upon Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Rahman bin Ayob during a special investiture ceremony.

Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Rahman bin Ayob is a close friend of Pakistan and has played a prominent role in promoting cooperation between the Royal Malaysian Navy and the Pakistan Navy.



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

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.



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

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 irreparable 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.

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-

tuition. "We have to go back to 1947 if we revisit the past. "The government have no public mandate, this

setup has also come from the same route, earlier used by the PTI'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

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 stakeout 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 review of the strategic 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 Amba-

sador 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 cease-fire 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. He said the delegation-level talks started with condolence and Fateha for

the departed souls and prayer for patience for the bereaved families.

In his remarks, Hakan Fidan told the media that Pakistan was a strategic partner of Turkiye as there had been an unshakable friendship and brotherhood between the two people who always supported each other.

He said the delegation-level talks identified the ways to strengthen ties and exploit the potential besides the steps to take the bilateral trade to \$5 billion from the current \$1 billion.

He said both sides decided in principle to broaden and strengthen ties in trade, defense, investment, banking science and technology and innovation.

Fidan said the situation in Afghanistan also impacted Pakistan and they expressed their common desire for permanent peace and stability in the country.

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.

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 Pakistani 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.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf during call-on with Chief of Royal Malaysian Navy Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Rahman Bin Ayob at Naval Headquarters.

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 Shehbaz 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: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango meeting with Deputy Consul General of Iran Syed Mehdi Shaiqi

Minister Salik finds solace in exceptional arrangements for Pakistani Hujjaj

MAKKAH AL-MUKARRAMA (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik, on Monday voiced his contentment over the efficient operations in place for Pakistani pilgrims in Saudi Arabia that promised a journey of spiritual enrichment and ease during the Hajj.

"After visiting various facilities, including the Pakistan Hajj Medical Mission (PHMM), Hujjaj residential buildings, catering companies' kitchens providing three meals a day and transport arrangements, I felt relieved to see that all operational preparedness and ongoing services are up to the mark," he said while talking to media during his visit to the PHMM.

The Pakistan Hajj Mission team and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, he said, drawing on past experiences were well

aware of the challenges faced and took timely measures, resulting in meticulous preparations for the Pakistani Hujjaj. He praised the entire team for working with full devotion to serve the guests of Allah Almighty, extending all possible assistance to them round the clock. "I am proud of it. By the grace of Allah Almighty, the overall Hajj operation will be much better than last year's."

Answering a question, Minister Salik said he has visited the Rehlat Manafeta Company, a service provider, to review arrangements for Pakistani Hujjaj during the five Hajj days in Mashair from 8-12 Zilhaj.

He commended the company for completing all arrangements for transport, accommodation and catering services in Mina, Arafat, and Muzdalfad during the Hajj days.

The minister stressed the need for further collaboration with the company to extend maximum facilitation to the guests of Allah Almighty at the holy land.

Accordingly, the CEO has been invited to visit Pakistan in August to explore increased cooperation and collaboration in future Hajj-related plans.

"We are striving to improve Hajj arrangements with each passing year," he said, praising the team, including Pakistan Hajj Mission, Director Medina, Director Makkah, and Director Mouavneen.

Earlier, the minister took round of different sections of the PHMM including male and female wards, pharmacy, medicines storage facility, OPD, surgical ward, dental clinic, expressing satisfaction over the preparedness of the medical mission to tackle any medical-related situation.

Ziaullah visits Iranian Consulate

QUETTA (APP): The Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Ziaullah Langove visited the Iranian Consulate here on Monday.

During the visit, the Provincial Minister condoled death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his companions with the Deputy Consul General Syed Mehdi and other staff of Iranian Consulate and offered fateha for their departed souls.

Also present on the occasion were the Member Provincial Asse, Mir Zabid Reki and others.

Speaking on the occasion, the Provincial Minister for Home said that we are standing with Iranian people in the time of grief and trial.

Mir Ziaullah Langove said that the late Iranian President was the big supporter of unity of Muslim Ummah.

Ghazala Gola expresses grief over martyrdom of Iranian President

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Speaker Balochistan Provincial Assembly Ghazala Gola on Monday expressed deep sorrow and grief over martyrdom of Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister and others in a helicopter crash.

He said that loss caused by the helicopter accident was not only saddened for Iranian people but also for the people of Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah.

The deputy speaker said that the manner in which the Iranian President had represented the Muslim Ummah around the world was commendable.

Pedestrian crossing at Torkham Border resumes

PESHAWAR (APP): The Torkham border between Pakistan and Afghanistan has reopened for pedestrian crossing after a three-day closure, said immigration officials on Monday.

The officials said pedestrian crossing at Torkham Border has reopened after three days of closure. The border remained closed only for pedestrian crossing due to shifting of Immigration Section to a new building that required a period of three days. The officials said that all the necessary machinery has now been shifted to the new building.

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.

During the meeting, the two senior military leaders engaged in comprehensive discussions on defence and security cooperation, regional dynamics, and global security challenges, an Inter Services Public



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti talking with Provincial Ministers

Attaulah Tarar receives 170 more students at Lahore Airport

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah 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.

Attaulah Tarar acknowledged the alarming situation in Bishkek, which caused significant distress among the students. He



QUETTA: Director General Balochistan NADRA Muhammad Kashif Iqbal listening problems of people at NRC Dast