



CEC Raja leaves for Brazil for EVM briefing

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Chief Sikandar Sultan Raja on Monday departed on an official visit to Brazil...



Govt increases petrol price by Rs4.53, diesel by Rs8.14

The new rates of petrol and diesel after the increase are Rs293.94 and Rs290.38 respectively. The new fuel prices will be effective from April 16...

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Ahlan Wa Sahlan Marhaba

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar receiving Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud at Nur Khan Airbase Rawalpindi on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz Sharif orders improvement of power transmission network to reduce oil import

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday emphasizing the improvement of power transmission network...



The oil import worth billions of dollars can be controlled by using alternative resources like solar, wind and hydel. Make cold calculations and I believe, you will be the winner in the long term...

High-level Saudi delegation reaches Pakistan as investment likely

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation of Saudi Arabia, led by Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, has arrived in Pakistan on Monday...

es Bandar Ibrahim AlKhorayef, Deputy Minister of Investment Badr AlBadr, Head of Saudi Special Committee Mohammad Mazed Al Towajiri, and senior officials from Ministry of Energy and Saudi Fund for General Investments.

The visit was taking place to

expedite action on the understanding reached between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Arabia Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman, during their recent meeting in Makkah to enhance bilateral economic cooperation.

The Saudi team was expected to hold meetings with the president, the prime minister, the foreign minister, counterpart ministers, COAS and SIFC committee.

The visit is anticipated to provide a significant boost to

bilateral cooperation and foster a mutually beneficial economic partnership between the two nations.

Pakistan is hoping to attract billions of dollars in investment from Saudi Arabia as part of its initiative under the banner of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), a civil-military forum aimed at removing bottlenecks and other bureaucratic hurdles hindering foreign investment.

In recent visit to the Kingdom, PM Shehbaz and Crown Prince

Mohammed Bin Salman agreed to expedite the first wave of a planned \$5 billion investment package for Pakistan.

In January last year, the crown prince had directed the Saudi Development Fund (SDF) to study increasing the deposit amount in the State of Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to \$5bn.

The move, according to the Saudi Press Agency, confirmed Saudi Arabia's position on supporting the economy of Pakistan and its "sisterly people."

Finance Minister meets USPBC delegation in Washington



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday met a delegation of the US Pakistan Business Council (USPBC) in Washington DC to discuss the government's commitment to improving the business climate in the country.

According to a Finance Ministry press release, the minister during the meeting highlighted the government's dedication to attracting both foreign and domestic investments in key sectors, including agriculture, IT, mines and minerals, and energy.

China pins responsibility for Iran escalation on Israel

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: China has put the responsibility for the recent escalation in the Middle East on Israel's action, calling its attack on Iran's embassy an act of extremely vicious nature.

Making a statement at the United Nations Security Council Briefing on the Situation in the Middle East, Chinese ambassador Dai Bing said that a crisis in the region would have serious spillover effects.

"On April 1, Iran's diplomatic premises in Syria were attacked by airstrikes, resulting in loss of several Iranian personnel and severe destruction to the premises," Bing said.

"This is a grave violation of the UN Charter and international law and a breach of the sovereignty of both Syria and Iran. The attack is of an extremely



China

vicious nature," he added.

He called on all parties to 'exercise maximum calm and restraint' and resolve their differences and disputes in accordance with the purposes of the UN Charter and international law to prevent further escalations.

Bing also said that the current situation was a direct consequence of Iran's actions in Gaza.

"It serves as another reminder that the Palestinian question remains central to the Middle East issue and bears on the peace, stability and long-term security in the region. If

the flames of the Gaza conflict are allowed to continue raging, then the adverse spillover is set to spread still further, making the region even more unstable," Bing said.

"Countries and peoples in the Middle East have no desire for, nor can they afford a larger conflict or war."

Iran had launched explosive drones and fired missiles at Israel late on Saturday in its first direct attack on Israeli territory, a retaliatory strike that raised the threat of a wider regional conflict, as the U.S pledged "ironclad" backing for Israel.

Israel's military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said Iran launched dozens of ground-to-ground missiles at Israel, most of them intercepted outside Israeli borders. They included more than 10 cruise missiles, he said.

Romina urges masses to cooperate with rescue teams amid relief efforts in rain-hit areas

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Monday expressed her grief over the loss of lives and property due to rains.

The Climate Coordinator in a statement urged that the people should cooperate with rescue agencies and actively participate in relief work.

Romina said, "Pakistan is facing serious challenges like climate change. However, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) are the most affected by the recent rains."

Lightning, downpours kill 41 people across Pakistan

AFF

ISLAMABAD: At least 41 people have died in storm-related incidents across Pakistan since Friday, including 28 killed by lightning, officials said on Monday.

Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has warned of landslides and

flash floods because more rain is expected in coming days.

Punjab, Pakistan's largest and most populous province, witnessed the highest death toll, with 21 people killed by lightning between Friday and Sunday.

"I have asked the NDMA to coordinate with the provinces... and for the NDMA to provide relief goods to areas

where damages occurred," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Monday.

People living in open, rural areas are more at risk of being struck by lightning during thunderstorms.

At least eight people were killed in Balochistan province, including seven struck by lightning, where 25 districts were

battered by rain and some areas were flooded.

Schools in the province were ordered shut on Monday and Tuesday, delaying the return of students after Eid al-Fitr holidays at the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Four people were killed in road accidents linked to flooded roads in southern Sindh province.

Another eight people were killed in the northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including four children, when houses collapsed in the heavy downpours.

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, speaking to local media, blamed climate change for the surge in lightning incidents.

Chairman Ulema Council lauds Saudi support for Pakistan's economic growth

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Monday said that Pakistan was poised to make economic growth with the strong support of the brotherly country of Saudi Arabia.

He attributed the country's positive economic trajectory to the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, particularly in fostering

Oil tankers association to suspend petrol, diesel supply

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Oil Tankers Association has announced the suspension of petrol and diesel supply from Tuesday (today) because of a reduction in the supply by the administration.

In a statement, the association the supply of petroleum products would remain suspended to Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Gilgit Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The supply to all airports would also remain suspended, it added. "The supply would remain suspended until the fulfilment of our

Azad Kashmir cigarette industry seeks separate tax slab for its business

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: A delegation of representatives of the cigarette industry of Azad Kashmir met with the Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, Engineer Amir Maqam. Kashmir Affairs Minister in Islamabad and tendered their demands with Minister Kashmir Affairs that a separate tax slab should be made for Azad Kashmir's local industry and Pakistan's multinational industry.

The Minister said that problems of Azad Kashmir's cigarette industry will be solved on a priority basis, during the meeting, representatives of cigarette companies told the Minister of Affairs. Kashmir Amir Muqam and provided all the evidence in the context of the recent actions against the cigarette companies and also provided the details of the threats given to them. Steps will be taken for approval of sales tax invoices.

Consideration will also be given to seeking the mediation of all records



from the industry to the Excise Department. The Minister said that AJK Industry

plays a key role in the development and stability of the Pakistani economy. Engineer Amir Maqam said he

will spare no minute in solving the problems of Azad Kashmir's cigarette industry and providing facilities.

Rainy season

ISLAMABAD: A view of Constitution Avenue during rain in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

UAJK advances Academic Infrastructure with cutting-edge equipment

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) is on the cusp of a new era of academic excellence with the arrival of cutting-edge educational equipment, generously funded by the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD). This transformative project, valued at over four billion rupees, aims to enhance various teaching departments at the King Abdullah Campus of the varsity.

Guided by the visionary leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, who has cham-



ioned the cause of quality education and research since his appointment in 2017, this initiative marks a significant step forward for the university.

Prof. Dr. Abbasi's efforts culminated in a historic agreement signed on July

28, 2022, under the auspices of Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Maliki, the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan. The generous support from the Saudi government underscores a shared commitment to advancing education and fostering academic excellence in the region.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi expressed his gratitude, stating, "This investment is not only a testament to our enduring partnership with Saudi Arabia but also a significant milestone in our journey towards providing world-class education to our students."

The Resident Director of the King Abdullah Campus, Prof. Dr. Ayaz Arif, emphasized the transformative impact of the new equipment on research opportunities and academic diversity. "With this support, our students will have access to resources previously only available in developed countries, unlocking unprecedented opportunities for growth and innovation," remarked Prof. Dr. Ayaz Arif.

The King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Campus of UAJK stands as a symbol of the longstanding political, economic, and academic cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Wazir tribes held second Grand Jirga to solve the problems of Angoor Ada border

Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: The second Grand Jirga of 9 major tribes of Ahmad Zai Wazir was held in Wana Rustam Bazar of Lower South Waziristan District on Monday to make Pak-Afghan border with Afghanistan the biggest trade route of the region.

Addressing the Jirga, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam District President Maulana Mirza Jan, Malik Saeed Ullah, Malik Jameel, Malik Saira Noor and Waziristan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Saif Ur Rehman said in their respective addresses that due to the suspension of commercial and business activities on the Angoor Ada border, the tribes here have lost billions.

They said at the same time, billions of rupees have reached the government



treasury after the end of commercial and business activities at the border crossing.

The leading elders of 9 tribes said that all the tribes should take concrete steps to increase the trade activities on the Angoor Ada border and to continue the Pak-Afghan trade permanently, so that our future generations can benefit from this trade route.

They emphasized in the Jirga that Ahmad Zai Wazir's tribes should not be satisfied with taking only temporary measures this time rather, such steps must be taken unanimously, that the unemployment and poverty here will end.

On this occasion all the elders and Ullamas appealed to Ahmad Zai Wazir tribes to fully participate in the Grand

Jirga on Saturday.

On the other hand, a protest sit-in by the local tribes has been going on for the last five months at the Angoor Ada border.

According to the sit-in participants, the government should take concrete steps to provide electricity for the local people.

Sit-in participants said however, the local tribes should be allowed to carry hand carry at Angoor Ada border.

Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan Lower Nasir Khan says about this that most of the demands of the participants of the ongoing sit-in at Angoor Ada border have been fulfilled by the district administration.

DC further said however, hand carry is not allowed at any other borders, due to which it cannot be allowed here at Angoor Ada border either.

Two killed in Nala Jagran in Neelum after heavy rains

Abdul Majeed Tahir

NEELAM: According to the spokesperson of District Disaster Management Authority, Muhammad Akhtar Ayub, the wife of Rehmatullah, a resident of Katan Dogian, a son and a daughter were swept away in the Nala Jagran. According to the District Disaster Management Authority, the dead body of Safida Bibi wife Rehmatullah age 35 years has been found while Faizan Ahmed son of Rehmatullah age 10 years has been referred to Muzaffarabad in critical condition after first aid at Jhambhar Hospital. The search for the body of Adibah Bibi daughter Rehmatullah aged 5 years is going on. As a result of heavy rains, rivers have flooded at many places across the district, posing serious risks to property and citizens. The Neelum highway is under the influence of landslides at several places. In the continuous rain, the staff of the Highways Department is busy in keeping the Neelum highway fully restored. It has been urged to move to safe places. He has appealed to the tourists to avoid traveling to Neelum until the weather clears.

Abolition of Interest Awareness Campaign Conference will be held on April 28: Mayo

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Mayo National Unity Council Central President Chaudhry Muhammad Azam Mayo arrived in Multan from Bahawalpur on a one-day visit. Chaudhry Muhammad Azam Meet With Saleem Ur Rehman Chief Organizer All Pakistan Mayo Association. Mayo Conference To be held in Karachi on April 28, for information Chaudhry Muhammad Azam Mayo will leave for Lahore on April 16 on a two-day visit where he will meet Mayo dignitaries and office-bearers at the residence of Central Senior Vice President Muhammad Tahir Khan Mayo on April 16, and Central General Secretary Muhammad Tahir Ismail in Air Force Colony Lahore will stay at Mayo's residence. On April 17 at 11 am, Chaudhry Muhammad Yunus Mayo Advocate Member will meet the lawyers in the think tank's office, after that Mayo Students Union will meet the officials of Punjab University while Chaudhry Ahmad Farooq Mayo. Chaudhry will go to his residence in the evening for meeting Sher Muhammad will participate in the marriage of Mayo's children and will reach Bahawalpur on April 18. Saleem Ur Rehman Mayo Said Large No Of Mayo Community Members Join The Conference in Karachi on 28th April 2024



MAPCO promotes 7 officers with the approval of the Senior Selection Board



Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: Multan Electric Power Company (MAPCO) Authority has issued a notification for the promotion of 7 officers with the approval of the Senior Selection Board. Engineer Saifullah Sarani, Engineer Asghar Khan Ghalo and Engineer Muhammad Shehzad Rai have been approved for promotion from Superintending Engineer to Chief Engineer. Predecessor of Engineer Muhammad Akram Sial Engineer (T&G) has been appointed. Engineer Asghar Khan Ghalo has been promoted to the post of Chief Engineer and Director General IT and Engineer Mohammad Shahzad Rai has been promoted to the post of Chief Engineer O&M Distribution. Chief Engineer (T&G) Syed Jawad Mansoor Shah has been posted as Chief Engineer/Customer Services Director. Engineer Rajesh Kumar Rathi, Engineer Abdul Hafeez Bhatti and Engineer Mohammad Hasnain Shakeel have been approved for promotion to the post of Superintending Engineer from XEN. Circle Malik Yaqoob Gadara has been directed to report to Mepco Headquarters. Engineer Abdul Hafeez Bhatti has been appointed as Regional Manager (M&T) First Mepco. Engineer Muhammad Hasnain Shakeel has been appointed as Manager Engineering Mepco Headquarters. Jamshed Alam Niazi has been promoted to the post of Director Public Relations. He was performing the duties of Director Public Relations MEPCO on current charge basis.

Pakistani Tehreek-e-Insaf's Rubina Akhtar starts election campaign in NA 148

Quratul Ain Asim

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Leader Dr Rubina Akhtar Said i will serve the people and the region fully by being elected in the NA 148 by-election. Dr Rubina Akhtar Further Said

People of Constituency NA 148 elect me, the constituency will see change. Dr. Rubina Akhtar

Multan: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Dr. Rubina Akhtar has started her election campaign in constituency NA-148 in connection with the by-elections. Later, the same dirty politics is going on, political before the elections The leaders entertain the people by talking to the people and when they win, they turn their eyes away. The by-elections will bring forth a new leadership that will address their issues The priority will be solved on the basis, Dr. Rubina Akhtar added that if people give me a chance, she will make the constituency unique and the change will be realized in the true sense of the constituency.



All political parties withdraw from Waziristan Olasi Pason



Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: An important meeting of all the political parties of South Waziristan Lower district was held at Wana district office of Jamaat-e-Islami on Monday.

In which South Waziristan Lower Awami National Party, Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party, Pakistan Peoples Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan Muslim League-N, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, National Democratic Movement, Pakhtunkhwa National Awami Party and lawyers participated.

The political parties were represented by Ayaz Wazir, Ashfaq Wazir, Imran Mukhlis, Asghar Wazir, Nadeem Amir, Khayal Mohammad, Ziaul Haq, Hamayun, Haroon and Ajmal Khan Advocate.

On this occasion a unanimous resolution was presented in this important meeting, that Waziristan Wana Olasi Paswan was the need of the hour which was only an agenda for peace.

President Tokayev signs laws aimed at Protecting the Rights of Women and Safety of Children

Spokesman Report

ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN: President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has enacted the laws of Kazakhstan "On Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan Regarding the Protection of Women's Rights and Children's Safety" and "On Amendments and Additions to the Administrative Offenses Code of Kazakhstan Regarding the Protection of Women's Rights and Children's Safety." These laws significantly strengthen protections for women and children. The Kazakhstan Senate passed the legislation on April 11, following its approval on February 21 by the Mazhilis, the lower house of the Kazakh Parliament. This law became the first in the Commonwealth of Independent States region to introduce novel measures for the protection of women and children.



and enhance the safety of minors. Specifically, the intentional infliction of minor health harm and battery have now been criminalised. Additionally, the accountability for intentionally causing moderate to severe health damage has been increased.

The legislation was developed in collaboration with the Commissioner for Children's Rights, members of Parliament, and various government agencies following directives from President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The law aims to increase the safety and security of families and children across Kazakhstan, focusing on the development of a robust infrastructure to support those in vulnerable situations and to prevent instances of violence.

Norms have been introduced to toughen accountability for all acts of violence against women and children, strengthen the institution of the family,

Criminal liability now applies to those who incite or assist in suicide, as well as those who promote it. Similarly, sexual harassment of individuals under the age of 16 is now subject to criminal liability. The penalties for kidnapping and unlawful imprisonment of minors have been significantly toughened, reflecting a broader commitment to safeguarding young people. Additionally, administrative responsibility for bullying, including cyberbullying, of minors has been

established for the first time. To ensure the safety of children in educational environments, institutions are now mandated to immediately report any illegal acts committed by or against minors to law enforcement. Furthermore, to protect children under 16 on public transport, a new rule prohibits their forcible removal for lack of fare payment.

Moreover, legal foundations have been established for a contact centre dedicated to family issues and the protection of women's and children's rights. Government bodies must now collaborate and inform the centre about responses to citizens' appeals. Additionally, laws have been enacted to create family support centres that offer specialised services to domestic violence victims.



Furthermore, new principles of marital and family legislation have been established, aimed at strengthening the institutions of marriage and family, fatherhood, motherhood, and childhood, along with the principle of providing moral and spiritual education to children, fostering respect for universal, national, traditional, cultural, and family values.

President Tokayev has been a vocal

advocate for strengthening legal measures against domestic violence, which he reiterated as a major social evil during the third meeting of the National Kurultay (Congress) in March this year. The directives to strengthen penalties for violence against women and children were issued by President Tokayev in his addresses to the people of Kazakhstan on March 16, 2022, and September 1, 2023. The

President's commitment to combatting this issue is reflected in the robust provisions of the new legislation, which highlight the government's dedication to the protection of fundamental rights of citizens.

The law marks a significant step forward in Kazakhstan's commitment to social justice and the protection for women and children.

SCO Family in My Eyes" the SCO Countries Art Exhibition of Children and Young Artists Launched in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Commission of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), together with the Central Academy of Fine Arts and the SCO Secretariat is organizing the SCO Countries Art Exhibition. Pakistani Children and Young Artists are invited to submit their paintings and artworks.

Themed with "The SCO Family in My Eyes", the artworks are supposed to embody the "Shanghai Spirit", telling the fantastic SCO story from the perspective of civilization mutual learning, green development and scientific and technological innovation to embrace a



better future of SCO.

Pakistani Children aged between 5 to 16 years old and Children from SCO countries are invited to participate in the event. The event is open and deadline for submissions is till June 1, 2024.

For relevant detailed information on the event regarding regulations for art work submission, contact details, and other information, please follow the Facebook page of China Cultural Center in Pakistan, face-

book account of the Cultural Office of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan as well as the X(former Twitter) account of Cultural Counsellor and Director of China Cultural Center in Pakistan or simply open the following links.

Palestine's Embassy in Pakistan denies fake news regarding the adoption of 3,000 Palestinian orphans

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the State of Palestine in Pakistan announces that, Subsequent to what was published on social media in the past few days, regarding the adoption of 3,000 Palestinian orphans, is a fake and illegal; Our embassy condemns this act and confirms that the policy of the State of Palestine stipulates sponsoring Palestinian orphans (only) within the territory of the State of Palestine and not outside it and

we confirm that there are NO Palestinian orphans arrived in Pakistan.

We would like also to draw your attention to fake news and allegations, regarding repeated circulation of appeals for donations in specific bank's accounts to collect donations for the Palestinian people in light of the genocide, criminal's war, and destruction in the Gaza Strip. Accordingly, we appeal to our fellow Pakistani people to contact our embassy regarding this issue before making any dona-

tions, sponsoring orphans, or helping hidden families, so we can direct you to the official, accredited and reliable authorities.

The Embassy of the State of Palestine reserves all its legal rights regarding those issues and with cooperation with the Pakistani authorities/ officials will follow up this matter.

We extend our grateful appreciation and thanks to our brotherly people of Pakistan, H. E. the President, H. E. the Prime Minister, the government officials, and

the Pakistan army.

We also appreciate highly the entities and personalities that made through accredited Pakistani institutions. And we assure you that the donations were sent to Palestine- Gaza and we are still continuing sending to Gaza through high cooperation between our embassy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the AI-Khidmat Foundation, the Red Crescent, and other institutions and personalities.

TikTok Ad Awards: Celebrating creative excellence on the platform across METAP markets

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Today TikTok is proud to announce the launch of the first-ever TikTok Ad Awards in the METAP region. The awards program is designed to celebrate the brands and agencies leading the way on TikTok with their creative and high-performing campaigns, as well as embracing the unique nature of TikTok and deliv-

ering exceptional advertising experiences.

The Awards will showcase some of the most inspiring advertising campaigns that have brought authenticity, creativity and joy to the platform while achieving groundbreaking results. The initiative aims to acknowledge exceptional talent and innovation within the region.

The TikTok Ad Awards is now open for submissions

from brands and agencies based in the METAP region, encompassing Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Egypt, Turkey, South Africa and Pakistan. The program features six main categories that encompass various aspects of successful TikTok campaigns.

"We are thrilled to launch the TikTok Ad Awards METAP to recognize and celebrate the outstanding creativity showcased by

brands and agencies on our platform across the region," said Shadi Kandil, General Manager, Global Business Solutions, Middle East, Turkey, Africa, Central and South Asia-TikTok. "This awards program aims to highlight the campaigns that push boundaries, captivate audiences, and drive meaningful impact. We can't wait to see the exceptional submissions from the METAP markets."

PPA

KARACHI: In an effort to make a meaningful impact on communities in need, inDrive is proud to announce its partnership with Hands Foundation to partner with the Ride to Donate campaign. Through Ride to Donate, inDrive users contributed to charitable projects simply by using the inDrive app for their transportation needs. The "Ride-to-Donate" project aims to proceed with a 10% donation on every fourth ride to the Hands Foundation, supporting their initiatives focused on community development.

"We are thrilled to partner with Hands Founda-



tion to launch the Ride to Donate initiative," said Ms. Sidra Kiran, PR and Communication Manager at inDrive. "We believe that by mobilizing our community through purpose-driven initiatives like Ride to Donate, we can amplify our impact and inspire others to join us in building a more equitable society," Ms. Sidra Kiran added enthusiastically.

"This partnership reflects our commitment to fight social injustice and empowering our neglected communities to make a positive difference in their lives."

Hands Foundation is renowned for its impactful projects and unwavering dedication to serving marginalized communities. By joining forces with inDrive, the

organization aims to expand its reach and create lasting change in the lives of those in need.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with inDrive on the Ride to Donate initiative," said Spokeperson at Hands Foundation. "Together, we can harness the collective power of individuals and technology to address pressing social challenges and create a brighter future for all."

The Ride to Donate initiative was launched to serve the communities where users can simply participate by the 'Ride to Donate' banner within the inDrive app. Every ride taken during the campaign contributes to making a difference in the lives of others.

Largest Halal Fair In Russia will open on 14 May

Spokesman Report

MOSCOW: More than 40 thousand visitors and 4.5 thousand goods according to Halal standards from all over the world. On 14-19 May 2024 in Russia (Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan) will open the country's largest trading platform for Muslims—the International Trade Fair Kazan Halal Market.

The fair will be held as part of the annual International Economic Forum "Russia-Islamic World: KazanForum", which traditionally gathers representatives of all countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

"In recent years, trade turnover between Russia and the OIC states has been growing. In 2021, it totalled \$113.3 billion, a 43.2% increase compared to 2017," said Hussein Ibrahim Taha, Secretary General of the OIC, in an address to the participants of KazanForum-2023. The halal market and mutual supply of products complying with the norms of Islam opens new opportunities, he believes.

"The global Halal market is growing very fast and is now estimated at \$2.6 trillion. I hope the work of the Forum will contribute to the further development of the Halal industry in Russia and

trade. And by 2028, the market is expected to be worth more than \$11 trillion," said the OIC Secretary General in May 2023.

The development of the industry and foreign trade is facilitated by the international fair of the best halal products within the framework of KazanForum.

At Kazan Halal Market one can buy food, clothes, accessories, cosmetics and other consumer goods with Halal certification from leading manufacturing companies of the Islamic World. In 2023, visitors could familiarise themselves with products from Iran, Afghanistan, Senegal and Turkey. It is expected that this



year companies from Indonesia and Malaysia will show addition-

al interest in the fair and in entering the growing Russian Halal market.

A total of 400 exhibitors took part in Kazan Halal Market and presented 4,500 products. The fair became a place of attraction for Halal connoisseurs and a convenient platform for family shopping. It was visited by more than 40 thousand guests, including:

- Official delegations from Malaysia, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Morocco, Bahrain, Chad, Senegal, Iran, Turkey, Gabon;
- Representatives of foreign media;
- participants of the All-Russian

Forum of Tatar religious figures;

- young diplomats of the OIC countries;
 - deputies of the State Duma of the Russian Federation;
 - members of regional governments of the Russian Federation.
- In 2024, the Kazan Halal Market International Trade Fair will be held on 14-19 May in the Kazan Agro-Industrial Park. Participants will be able to present their products on the trade area of 5 thousand square metres. Participation fee—210 USD for 1 equipped trading place with a showcase. Specialisation of the fair: food products, wholesale and retail trade, consumer goods.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
70,544.58	70,314.71
Day's High	Day's Low
70,608.88	69,914.10
Index Value	Change
15,057,198,666	+229.87
Percentage	Time
+0.33%	15 Apr, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,965.53	-30.05
Percentage	Time
-0.38%	15 Apr, 4:50 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
37,888.38	-94.86
Percentage	Time
-0.25%	15 Apr, 1:22 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,232.80	-290.75
Percentage	Time
-0.74%	15 Apr, 3:15 pm GMT+

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	181	183
Bahrain Dinar	738.93	751.93
Canadian Dollar	201	203.5
China Yuan	38.39	38.79
Danish Krone	39.64	40.04
Euro	295	298
Hong Kong Dollar	35.45	35.8
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.44
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.94
Kuwaiti Dinar	901.72	910.72
Malaysian Ringgit	58.24	58.84
New Zealand \$	164.94	166.94
Norwegians Krone	25.49	25.79
Omani Riyal	721.54	729.54
Qatari Riyal	76.35	77.05
Saudi Riyal	73.3	74.05
Singapore Dollar	206	208
Swedish Korona	25.53	25.83
Swiss Franc	303.88	306.38
Thai Bhat	7.59	7.74
U.A.E Dirham	75.4	76.15
UK Pound Sterling	345	349
US Dollar	278	280.7

Difficult economic conditions increasing Pakistan's dependence on Arab nations: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Monday that the Middle East crisis is worsening; therefore, Pakistan needs to exercise caution.

The challenge for Pakistan will be to strike a balance between its relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that Pakistan's reliance on Arab nations is growing due to challenging economic circumstances.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the Middle East conflict is increasing, which can take any shape.

It is most likely that this conflict will continue but will not turn into a major war, but still Pakistan has to be careful in this regard, he added.

The business leader said that Pakistan's dependence on Arab countries is increasing,

but this relationship should not be at the cost of any third party.

In the current situation, balancing relations with Arab countries and Iran will be a severe test of our leadership in which success is the only option.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that President Asif Ali Zardari's contact with his Iranian counterpart is very important in the current situation as the scope of tension between Israel and Hamas is expanding, and now Iran has also jumped into this matter.

Now, the US and Israel, with the help of their allies, will try to teach Iran an economic lesson instead of a military one.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that a few months ago, Iran had launched a missile attack on Pakistan in which some people were killed, to which Pakistan immediately retaliated, but due to diplomatic efforts from both sides.

That issue between the two neighbours was resolved, but trust was not fully restored, and both sides continued to accuse each other of



supporting terrorists.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that Saudi Arabia wants to invest heavily in Pakistan, while millions of its Pakistanis also work there and send billions of dollars annually.

Millions of Pakistanis are also working in

other Arab and Gulf countries and sending massive foreign exchange, which cannot be ignored in any case. On the other hand, Pakistan wants natural gas from Iran and the employment of a large number of Pakistanis along the Iranian border is related to trade with Iran.

Therefore, it is challenging to ignore Iran. It is impossible to import gas from Iran because it is not acceptable to America. Still, it is also a fact that more than a dozen countries in the American camp are doing business with Iran, so Pakistan also hopes that, sooner or later, it will be able to import gas.

Pakistan will have to pay a fine of up to twenty billion dollars if it decides not to buy gas from Iran. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that President Zardari has contacted the Iranian leadership, and now Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Mian Nawaz Sharif should also take Saudi Arabia into confidence because the kingdom leadership trusts this family the most in Pakistan.

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed inaugurates evening OPD in Pims on Monday. Federal Secretary for Health, Iftikhar Ali Shalwani is also present on the occasion.

Photo: PID

Visit of the Saudi delegation will be a milestone for Pakistan's economy: Atif Ikram Shaikh

PPA

ISLAMABAD: President of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Shaikh termed the visit of the Saudi delegation as a milestone for the economy and hoped that it happens in response to the recent visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan to the capital of the brotherly kingdom.

The focus is on a positive continuation of the investment projects in Pakistan. The pledge to complete the five-billion-dollar investment trail would soon begin restoring the confidence of investors from all over the world.

Atif Ikram Shaikh said investment of this denomination from the platform of the SIFC in the Reco Deq prospect was a positive step for the bolstering the economy. The role of the Investment Council is significant and timely, he added. There is a need for a framework to help widen the possibilities of cooperation in different fields of the economy.

President Federation Atif Ikram said that Pakistan has vast potential to augment investment-driven relations with Saudi Arabia in sectors like textile, pharmaceutical, rice, leather, dairy farming etc. It is bound to play a supporting role for the welfare of the people in the two brotherly countries, he concluded.

MEPCO Earned Profit of 22 Billion Rupees has Been Made in the First half of the current financial year 2023-24

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Chief Executive Officer MEPCO Engineer Rana Mohammad Ayub Khan has said that due to the hard work of MEPCO workers and officers day and night and performing their duties wholeheartedly, Mepco a profit of 22 billion rupees has been made in the first half of the current financial year 2023-24. Officers and employees should continue their best performance and work harder to achieve the line loss and recovery targets given by the Ministry of Power (Power Division). It is our responsibility to crack down on electricity thieves, cases should be registered against them and compensation should be collected. He was addressing a high-level meeting held at Mapco headquarters. He said that steps should be taken to reduce the loss rate in areas with high loss feeders and day and night operations should be conducted against electricity thieves in these areas. It is our duty to facilitate the customers and any kind of negligence in this duty is not tolerated. Every officer/employee should improve his/her performance and perform his/her duties responsibly and honestly. During the



public holiday of Eid-ul-Fitr, the supply of electricity continued continuously and 97% of the areas of MAPCO region were successfully supplied with electricity. Complaints of burning or damaged transformers have been received in remote areas and it is very important to improve the services in these areas. The Chief Executive Officer said that the officers of the operation circles should resolve the complaints of power outage due to wind and storm in the shortest possible time and create a positive image among the consumers. We all have to create an atmosphere of trust between our customers and Mapco and it is possible to build trust by promoting a customer-friendly culture. He said that

it is not impossible to achieve the recovery goals, it should be made possible in every case and one's abilities should be used for the interests of the company. The Chief Executive Officer congratulated all the officers on Eid-ul-Fitr and the promoted officers. On this occasion, General Manager Operation Nasir Ayaz Garmani, Chief Engineer Jam Gul Muhammad Zahid, Finance Director Mian Ansar Mehmood, Director General HR & Admin Waqas Masood Chaghatai, Chief Engineers Muhammad Shehzad Rai, Syed Jawad Mansoor Shah, Saifullah Surani, Muhammad Akram Sial, and Mohammad Asghar Ghalo, and other departmental officers/heads were also present.

Petroleum dealers are facing lot of loss in their business: Abdul Sami Khan



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: 2nd Meeting of FPCCI Central Standing Committee on Petroleum Product's and Dealers held today under the Chairmanship of Abdul Sami Khan (SI), Convener of the committee, to highlight the problems being faced by the Petroleum dealers all across Pakistan.

The committee was attended by petroleum dealers all over Pakistan, including Ajk, Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and A.JK.

The convener of the committee emphasised, that

due to smuggling of petrol from neighbour country, the dealers are facing lot of loss in their business. Due to non/cooperation from government agencies, the volume of smuggling products is increasing day by day, almost more than 2 billion dollars per year loss to National exchequer. Further, OMCs are also not cooperating with dealers which is causing great damage to the business on account of club cards expense and non-implementation of imposition of required fee as instructed by State bank.

Pakistan's resources cannot support 200 white elephants

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Monday that the resources of Pakistan are insufficient to support two hundred white elephants.

State-owned firms had wasted four trillion rupees in five years, and the entire cost of corruption rests with the people, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the country's resources are not able to carry the burden of two hundred white elephants, so the government should get rid of them.

These two hundred state-run

enterprises have not contributed to the country's development. Instead, four trillion rupees have been wasted in five years, the entire burden of which was borne by the poor, which has compromised their quality of life.

According to Shahid Rasheed Butt, every government that comes to power transforms government institutions into recruitment centers. Every government recruits an army of incompetent and corrupt individuals, contributing to losses worth trillions of rupees.

Apart from this, new departments are also established to get party workers employed at the cost of the country.

Moreover, political interference in state-run corporations has crumbled

them, which has become a burden on the country. At present, there are many such departments whose existence is unnecessary, but millions of rupees are being spent on them.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that dozens of countries have developed by adopting the path of privatization, foreign investment, elimination of subsidies, discouraging manipulation, promoting competition, and adopting a free trade model.

He said that Vietnam was a very backward country that decided to undertake economic reforms in 1986 to overcome poverty, unemployment, and inflation. Their leadership surprised the whole world by selling 9000 state-owned companies in a few years.

about the competence and honesty of leaders and bureaucrats.

The business leader noted that with a young and expanding population, the largest difficulty facing Pakistan is its sluggish economic growth. The current state of affairs shows that the middle class is shrinking and poverty is increasing.

The situation in regional nations is precisely the opposite of this. Their vibrant middle class is growing, poverty is declining and their growth rate is impressive.

He said that if the Pakistani government can get rid of failed institutions, there will be no need to impose more taxes on the people and increase the cost of electricity, gas, and petrol.

Infinix NOTE 40 Series vs. the Competition: Why It Stands Out



PPA

LAHORE: Smartphone enthusiasts have now a plethora of options, each promising cutting-edge features, and top-notch performance. From established giants to emerging contenders, the market is brimming with choices catering to diverse needs and preferences. In this article, we delve into a comparison of some notable contenders, concluding with a spotlight on the Infinix NOTE 40 Pro and its exceptional offerings.

Starting our exploration is the OPPO 78, boasting impressive specifications with a price tag of PKR 71,999. Powered by the Snapdragon 680 4G processor, it offers 8GB of RAM and 256GB of internal storage. Its 6.43-inch AMOLED display delivers vibrant visuals, complemented by a 50MP+2MP rear camera setup. While it features a generous 5000mAh battery with 67W Supercharging, it lacks support for wireless charging and reverse charging.

Setting it apart from its competitors, the NOTE 40 Pro offers multiple charging modes, enabling users to stay powered throughout the day. Along with the 20W Wireless MagCharge it also offers reverse charging functionality, adding to its versatility. Infinix NOTE 40 series, with its promise of diverse yet multiple charging modes, stands as a testament to the brand's commitment to empowering users, offering them the autonomy to lead their lives without constraints.

In a market flooded with options, the Infinix NOTE 40 Pro emerges as a compelling choice, offering a blend of top-tier specifications, innovative features, and competitive pricing. With its exceptional charging capabilities, immersive display, and powerful camera setup, it stands poised to redefine the smartphone experience for users seeking performance and value. Starting from an unbelievable price of PKR 54,999 Infinix NOTE 40 series is available to purchase at outlets Nationwide.

Ahsan stresses to transform sports, tourism scenarios

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ahsan Iqbal on Monday underscored the need to transform country's sports and tourism scenarios to project its true image globally. Ahsan, who is also Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives was given additional charge of IPC ministry recently. "I am honoured that the prime minister has entrusted me with this responsibility," he said while talking to media after chairing his first meeting as IPC minister here at Pakistan Sports Board. He emphasized the signifi-

cance of the IPC ministry in the field of sports. "The 18th Amendment does not mean that the federation should neglect the coordination," he said. Highlighting the importance of national coordination for the development of the country's potential in tourism and sports, he said. "The establishment of a National Tourism Council is necessary. Similarly, we will have to make concerted effort to revive the country's sports reputation," he added. The minister also spoke about Pakistan's performance at the Asian Games in Hangzhou, last year wherein it only claimed three medals.



"Today, Pakistan's name is not prominent in the Asian Games as it used to

be in the past. "We will have to take some serious steps for sports development. We will have to declare 2025 as the year of sports revival," he asserted. He highlighted the significant investments made by other countries for hosting prestigious sport events to get recognition and promote themselves. "We need to launch the National Internship Programme on a large scale this year," he added. He also mentioned Pakistan's dairy industry, pointing out the low export numbers compared to other countries. He stressed the need for Pakistan to explore new markets for its meat products.

Returning Rafael Nadal wants to enjoy comeback 'gift'

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Tennis superstar Rafael Nadal said Monday that returning to action at the Barcelona Open is a "gift" and he wants to enjoy every moment of what he expects to be the last year of his career. The 22-time Grand Slam winner has not played an ATP Tour match since January, when he felt a hip injury flare up at the Brisbane International. Nadal, who missed virtually all of the 2023 season, will face Italian Flavio Cobolli on Tuesday in the first round on the centre-court in Barcelona which bears his own name.



The 37-year-old withdrew from the Monte Carlo Masters earlier in April and is hoping to compete at Roland Garros in May, where he is a record 14-time champion. "More than lamenting where I wasn't able to be, I prefer to be happy that I am here," Nadal told a news conference. "On a personal level it is a gift for me to be in Barcelona. I'm taking this as my last year and I want to enjoy every moment."

Rafael Nadal, the record 12-time Barcelona Open winner, has not played a match on clay since winning the French Open in 2022. Despite viewing 2024 as his final year as a professional, the veteran said he was not setting any deadline for retirement. "We'll keep going forward until I have the feeling that it's not worth it," continued Nadal. "I'm not putting a deadline on that, but as I've said, in the end life marks your path for you."

England spin great Derek Underwood dies at 78

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Derek Underwood, the most successful spin bowler in England Test cricket history, has died at the age of 78, his former county Kent announced on Monday. Underwood took 297 wickets in 86 Tests with his distinctive brand of brisk left-arm spin. He was noted for being particularly effective on uncovered pitches, which were in use for much of a 24-year first-class career that ran from 1963 until 1987.



He famously bowled England to a Test victory over arch-rivals Australia at The Oval in 1968 on such a surface, taking 7-50 when a draw had seemed inevitable. Underwood made his England debut as a 21-year-old in 1966 and played his last Test in 1982. Together with outstanding wicket-keeper Alan Knott, he formed a celebrated combination for Kent and England. Both Underwood, affectionately nicknamed "Deadly", and Knott might have achieved even more success for England had they not been involved in Kerry Packer's breakaway World Series Cricket of the late 1970s and a rebel tour of South Africa in 1982. Even so, Underwood's tally of Test wickets is 42 more than the next highest by another England spinner, Graeme Swann. Former England captain Mike Atherton said Underwood would be "held to be England's best spinner" even though he faced different conditions from modern bowlers, who play on covered pitches and have the benefit of the decision review system in international games. "On pitches that were drying, from wet to dry, he was said to be near unplayable," Atherton told Sky Sports. "You think of spinners being quite slow and flighty, but because of the conditions that pertained at the time, particularly the uncovered pitches, he was somebody who had quite a long run-up and bowled in a kind of a cutter fashion. "You speak to someone like Ian Chappell, who would have played against him in the Ashes as an Australian batter, and he would say Derek

Underwood was amongst the most difficult bowlers that he played against." Derek Pringle, a former England all-rounder who played against Underwood for Essex, said on X: "Very saddened to hear of Derek Underwood's passing — a superb spin and cut bowler and an unassuming England and Kent legend. I once faced him on a 'turner' at Folkestone and there was only one Deadly Derek and it wasn't me." After his playing career was over, Underwood served as president of Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), the owners of London's Lord's Cricket Ground, for an annual term in 2009, and was inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame. England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chairman Richard Thompson said: "Derek Underwood will be remembered as one of the finest spin bowlers this country has ever produced and his remarkable record is testament to his enduring skill." Kent chairman Simon Philip said: "Derek was an outstanding contributor to both Kent and England, winning trophies for club and country and etching his name in the history books forevermore. "Watching Derek weave his unique magic on a wet wicket was a privilege for all who were able to witness it."

Ex-Australia opener Slater remanded in police custody for various charges



A Sports

LAHORE: Former Australia opener Michael Slater has been remanded in police custody after being charged with more than a dozen offences, English news outlet The Guardian reported. According to The Guardian, the 54-year-old cricketer-turned-commentator's case was summoned in Maroochydore magistrates court on Monday. The former cricket player is being charged on 19 counts for alleged acts that purportedly occurred on the Sunshine Coast of Queensland on various dates between December 5, 2023, and April 12, 2024.

In addition, Michael Slater was charged with ten charges of violating his bail and disobeying a domestic violence order. The Queensland Maroochydore Magistrates Court reportedly heard Slater's case on Monday. The report, however, did not identify the victim. Meanwhile, the local police confirmed detaining a 54-year-old man from Noosa Heads at the Sunshine Coast last Friday over the alleged domestic violence incidents for several days. Slater has been remanded in custody, with the case scheduled to be heard in the same court on Tuesday. The former opener was first arrested on grounds of stalking and domestic violence in connection with his ex-wife in October 2021. In 2022, Slater was charged with domestic violence which got dismissed on mental health grounds in a Sydney local court. Slater, who forged a career as a high-profile cricket commentator was let go by Australia's Channel Seven in 2021. Last year, he was also arrested for assaulting a police officer after an heated argument, leaving the victim with a cut to their hand. It is worth mentioning here that Michael Slater, after making his debut during the 1993 Ashes, went on to represent Australia in 74 Tests. He accumulated 5,312 runs at an average of 42.83 with the help of 14 centuries. He also played 42 ODIs for Australia and culminated 987 runs at an average of 24.

GSP CM Punjab Baseball League 2024 camp commences with top players nationwide



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Today marks the commencement of the highly anticipated GSP CM Punjab Baseball League 2024 camp at FC Baseball Ground in Lahore. Welcoming top players from across Pakistan, the camp serves as a rigorous training ground ahead of the league's kickoff on April 18th. Under the expert guidance of esteemed foreign coaches, both male and female athletes have begun their preparations in earnest. The inaugural session witnessed esteemed guests, including General Secretary Syed Fakhar Ali Shah of the Pakistan Federation Baseball, alongside organizing committee members Amjad Nawaz Khan and Ahsan Omer. Their presence underscored the significance of this event in fostering talent and promoting the sport nationwide. Mr. Brian, head coach of the Baseball team, extended a warm welcome to all participants, alongside fellow coaches Nisar Ahmed, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Nadeem Shirazi, Tariq Pasha, Saqib Butt, Umair Bhatti national coaches where among them, fostering an environment of camaraderie and determination. With the camp set to conclude on April 17th, players are poised to hone their skills, aiming for excellence as they gear up for an electrifying season. Executive Director of Pakistan Federation Baseball, Moazzam Khan Klair, expressed his hopes that this camp will significantly boost the sport of baseball in the region.

Naseem Shah close to amass landmark in Pakistan-New Zealand T20Is

A Sports

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's right-arm pacer Naseem Shah is on the verge of achieving a significant milestone amid the upcoming five-match home T20I series against New Zealand. Naseem, who made his international debut against Australia in 2019, has 98 wickets to his name in international cricket and is just two strikes away from joining his teammates Shaheen Shah Afridi, Mohammad Amir and others in the 100-wicket club. Out of his 98 wickets, 24 came against Sri Lanka, followed by 23 against New Zealand and 11 against the Netherlands. Naseem Shah's tally of international wickets comprised 51 Tests, 32 ODIs and 15 T20I wickets. For the unversed, Pakistan will host New Zealand for a five-match T20I series, scheduled to run from April 18. Rawalpindi's Pindi Cricket Stadium will host the opening three T20Is between Pakistan and New Zealand on 18, 20 and 21 April before action shifts to Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium where the last two matches will be played on 25 and 27 April.

Pakistan squad

Babar Azam (c), Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Saim Ayub, Usman Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Azam Khan (wk), Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Afridi, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Amir, Abbas Afridi, Abrar Ahmed, Fakhar Zaman, Irfan Khan Niazi, Usama Mir, Zaman Khan Reserves: Haseebullah, Mohammad Ali, Agha Salman, Sahibzada Farhan, Mohammad Wasim Jr. New Zealand squad Michael Bracewell (c), Mark Chapman, Josh Clarkson, Jacob Duffy, Dean Foxcroft, Ben Lister, Cole McConchie, Jimmy Neesham, Will O'Rourke, Tim Robinson, Ben Sears, Tim Seifert (WK), Ish Sodhi, Tom Blundell, Zak Foulkes. Pakistan vs New Zealand T20I series schedule April 18 — 1st T20I, Rawalpindi April 20 — 2nd T20I, Rawalpindi April 21 — 3rd T20I, Rawalpindi April 25 — 4th T20I, Lahore April 27 — 5th T20I, Lahore

Will Shaheen Afridi not play all matches against New Zealand?

KARACHI: In a rather disappointing news for cricket fans, Pakistan's star pacer Shaheen Afridi is likely to miss out on multiple matches in the upcoming T20I series against New Zealand, sources told Geo News on Monday. They added that it has been decided to "rest" the left-arm bowler as part of the team's rotation policy to manage the players' workload ahead of the upcoming 2024 T20 World Cup slated for June later this year. Shaheen is likely to be on the sidelines for the first two matches of the five-match series. However, he would be part of the last three matches, the sources added. It must be noted that Shaheen was recently removed as captain of the T20I side and was replaced by Babar Azam.

West Indies' Stafanie Taylor wary of Pakistan's spin bowling 'challenge'

Sports Desk

KARACHI: West Indies all-rounder Stafanie Taylor on Monday, acknowledged that the Pakistan women's cricket team's strength lies in their spin bowling but insisted that the visiting team is "experienced enough" to counter the challenge. Taylor interacted with the media on the sideline of the West Indies training session ahead of the first ODI of the three-match series, scheduled to be played here at the National Bank Cricket Stadium on April 18. The all-rounder accepted Pakistan's spin bowling as a challenge but revealed that the touring side is trying not to think too much about it. "It's definitely a challenge [but] we're not trying to think too much of it and trying to focus on each bowler

at a time whenever we go out there and play. "It's not a case that we're not experienced in playing spin and yes, they're a team that's actually full of spin bowlers. "We know most of their spin bowlers, we've played against most of their spin bowlers so it's not something that we're not familiar with." Stafanie Taylor then talked about her previous experience of visiting Pakistan in 2021 when the touring team whitewashed the home team 3-0 in the ODI series. The all-rounder played a pivotal role in her side's dominant triumph but is unfazed by the previous record, stating that is the past now. "We were here the last time and we had a very good time. We came out on the better side of things, [but] that's

past and this series is a fresh one for both teams. "We [are] hoping that we come out as the batter side. For the unversed, West Indies will play a three-match ODI series, followed by five T20Is against Pakistan from April 18 to May 3. All eight matches of the white-ball series between Pakistan and West Indies will be played at the National Bank Cricket Stadium here. West Indies Squad for white-ball series Hayley Matthews (c), Shemaine Campbelle (vc), Aaliyah Alleyne, Shamilia Connell, Afy Fletcher, Cherry Ann Fraser, Jannillea Glasgow, Chinelle Henry, Zaida James, Qiana Joseph, Chedean Nation, Karishma Ramharack, Stafanie Taylor, Rasha-da Williams, Kate Wilmott.



Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high-level review meeting regarding power sector in on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM directs for vital measures to reduce power price per unit for common man

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed for drastic measures including shifting of imported coal-run plants, improvement in power supply system, setting up cost effective and renewable energy plants, and functioning of solar projects to reduce cost of electricity per unit thus benefiting the ordinary people.

The prime minister chaired a high level review meeting regarding the power sector.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers Ishaq

Dar, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari and Dr Mussadik Malik, former minister Muhammad Ali, Member of the National Assembly Bilal Zaheer Kiyani, Rana Ahsan Afzal, Salman Ahmed and relevant authorities, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister directed for shifting of the coal-run power plants from the imported fuel to local coal, besides improvement in the power supply system.

He said that in future, only

clean, cost effective and renewable power plants should be set up in the country.

The meeting was apprised of the 600MW solar power project and the prime minister directed for expediting work on the foreign investment in this regard.

The prime minister also asked for proposals for better utilization of the current surplus power generation capacity in industries.

He observed that wheeling price of electricity should be reduced for the industrial consumers so that power supply at reduced price could

be made possible, besides for the industrial development and increase in export, grid stations should be installed near big industries.

The process of auction of those power plants of Generation Companies (GENCOs) that were lying dysfunctional and defective should be accelerated, he further directed.

The prime minister said that the government was taking all measures to reduce price of power per unit for the common man whereas to reduce circular debt, reforms in the power sector were being carried out on priority basis.

The meeting was briefed over the existing power generation capability, supply system, government's steps and proposals. It was also apprised of the future power demand and supply.

The meeting was told that by shifting the coal-run plants from the imported fuel would not only save the precious reserves but also would make it possible to reduce power price by Rs 2 per unit for the consumers.

The prime minister directed for swift implementation of all the measures within the stipulated time frame.

CEC Raja leaves for Brazil for EVM briefing

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Chief Sikandar Sultan Raja on Monday departed on an official visit to Brazil where he will receive a briefing on the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM).

He was accompanied by the director general of Information Technology (IT) on a two-day visit. They will receive a briefing on the EVM.

Meanwhile, sources said that CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja will prolong his stay in the country and will return to Pakistan on April 20.

It is pertinent to mention that the ECP chief was scheduled to visit Brazil last year, however, the visit faced post-

ponement twice.

In the past, the ECP had objected to hold the February 8 election through EVM and declared them as convenient vehicles for electoral malpractices and fraud.



The electoral body, in 2021 had pointed out as many as 37 objections to the functionality of EVM and declared it to be totally unfit for the task that it is going to be used for.

Later, the PML-N led coalition government approved legislation in the National Assembly to remove

the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in the general elections.

The bill was moved by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Murtaza Javed Abbasi on May 26, 2022, and was passed with a majority vote.

Then Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said that the coalition government was not against the use of EVM in the next general elections.

However, he said that his party had concerns about misuse of technology as the Results Transmission System (RTS) had failed in the 2018 elections.

He went on to say that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had also expressed its inability to hold elections through I-Voting and EVMs in a short span of time.

Opposition unable to lead protest movement against government: Gabol

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly (MNA) and Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) leader, Sardar Nabil Ahmed Gabol on Monday scrapped the Opposition claims of leading a protest movement against the ruling coalition government and claimed it unable to start the protest campaign due to division within its factions.

Talking to APP outside the Parliament House, the PPPP policy maker categorically stated that the Opposition was divided within its ranks and files which had further diluted its strength within the House.

Gabol said he was not seeing any strong protest campaign as neither the Sunni Tehreek/Tehreek-e-Insaf or any other political party in the Opposition had any unity or consensus which ruled out any such possibility of a massive protesting theater to be staged by the Opposition.

Aseefa Zardari sworn in as MNA amid protest from opposition



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, the youngest daughter of President Asif Zardari and the Late Benazir Bhutto was sworn in as a member of the National Assembly (MNA) amid noisy protest from the opposition benches on Monday.

The house met here with Speaker Ayaz Sadiq in the chair, on the requi-

sition from the opposition benches. President Asif Zardari was present in the assembly building to witness the oath-taking of Aseefa along with his other children.

Aseefa entered the assembly hall accompanied by her brother and MNA Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. She was greeted in the hall by the lawmakers belonging to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Several other party leaders were also present in the galleries as guests.

Aseefa was elected unopposed in the by-election in NA-207, Nawabshah, a seat vacated by her father after his election as the president. With the oath-taking as an MNA, Aseefa embarks upon the path to parliamentary politics.

The assembly hall reverberated with slogans of 'Jeay Bhutto' on Aseefa's arrival. While the independent lawmakers belonging to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) raised slogans against skewing election results for the release of their party founder.

Opposition welcomes int'l investors' delegation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan on Monday said the opposition welcomed the international investors' delegation from a brotherly country and demanded equal distribution of dividends to the local masses.

Talking to the media outside the Parliament House flanked by MNAs Mahmood Khan Achakzai of Pash-tunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) and Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, he maintained that any delegation from brotherly nations intended to support economic uplift of the country was warmly welcomed by the opposition.

The opposition, he added, had the only demand that the government should ensure equal and just distribution of the outcomes and dividends of those investments to the local populace of the particular region where the projects were implemented.



"Be it Balochistan or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or any other province the first beneficiaries of foreign investment are the local masses."

Mahmood Achakzai said that he would welcome any other political party who demanded supremacy of the Constitution and rule of law in the country to join the opposition alliance.

Barrister Gohar Ali said that there should be no compromise on rule of law which was the very prerequisite for any democracy to flourish in the country and his party would continue its struggle for the cause.

Abdul Aleem Khan visits Chinese Embassy, condoles Engineers' incident

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan visited the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad on Monday.

He called on Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong and expressed his deep sorrow over the recent accident of Chinese engineers, said a press release.

Abdul Aleem Khan while talking to the Chinese Ambassador said that Pakistan-China friendship is a symbol of economic stability and peace in the region.

He added that there no one can harm the friendship between China and Pakistan and bilateral relations. He said that every Pakistani is saddened and heartbroken over the death of Chinese engineers.



Abdul Aleem Khan expressed his heartfelt sympathies to the families of the Chinese engineers who were victims of the accident.

While writing in the book in Chinese Embassy, Abdul Aleem Khan gave positive comments for Chinese families who lost their beloved ones.

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong expressed his gratitude for Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan's visit to the Embassy and thanked him for his sentiments.

PML-N believes in ensuring prosperity: Azma Bukhari

Bureau Reprt

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari has said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz believes in serving the people and credit goes to the PML-N for overcoming electricity load-shedding, making the country an atomic power and starting China Pakistan Economic Corridor Project.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday she said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has brought an air ambulance project just in one and a half months. She said that rescue workers are getting training of an air ambulance, adding that it is a small size plane which could be landed anywhere.

Azma Bukhari said that all services of an air ambulance would be free for common man.

She further said that price of 'Roti' has been reduced after doing homework, adding that impossible word is not present in the dictionary of PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif and Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz.

She further said that Sehat card would be introduced once again after improving it.



Kashmiris celebrate joyous 'Eid Millan' event in Canada

Bureau Report

MIRPUR: In a vibrant display of unity and cultural celebration, hundreds of Kashmiri families residing in Calgary, Canada, came together to participate in the post-Eid festivities titled 'Eid Millan' on Friday, said a message reaching and released to the media here on Saturday. The US and Canada-based Kashmiri diaspora community celebrated the sanctified festival simultaneously with the observance of the Muslim sacred day, marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan ul Mubarak.

"Organized by the Chinar Kashmir Community Foundation (CKCF), a non-profit organization committed to community development and preserving Kashmiri identity, the event was a testament to the strong

social and cultural connections within the diaspora community. Established in 2013, CKCF has been actively fostering community cohesion through various events, providing a platform for social interaction and cultural exchange.

On this occasion, CKCF presented a special shield to acknowledge the services of the following board members: Akhtar Hussain Kayani, Altaf Khan, Anwar Hussain Kiani, Asif Mehmood, Asif Nazir, Imtiaz Nazir, Inzar Shah, Janat Hussain (Shero), Khalid Khan, Khalid Mehmood, Khalid Naem, Muhammad Riaz Khan, Muhammad Zahid Khan, Sajjad Hussain, Sajjad Tabassum, Saqib Khan, Shahzad Nabi, Syed Abrar Shah, Talib Hussain Khan, and Tariq Mehmood. CKCF extends its gratitude to them on behalf

of the community. Mr. Irfan Sabir, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, and Mr. Happy Mann, Senior Advisor to the Leader of the UCP Community Outreach in Alberta, also participated in the event. They distributed awards, certificates, two Umrah tickets, and other prizes among the winners. The members of the Board of Directors—Abdul Qayyum, Akhtar Kiani, Asif Nazir, Asim Khan, Imtiaz Nazir, Irshad Mahmood, Khalid Khan, Saqib Khan, Talib Khan, Tariq Mahmood, and Zahid Khan—jointly thanked the community members for participating in the Eid Milan event. They resolved to hold more events, gatherings, and training sessions for the empowerment of the Kashmiri community living in Calgary, the message concluded.