

DAILY MIRROR

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Thursday, April, 02, 2026

Shawal, 13, 1447

CM Bugti urges revenue reforms as rising expenditures threaten Balochistan's fiscal stability

APP

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has underscored the urgent need to boost provincial revenue, warning that rising non-development expenditures and shrinking development resources are putting increasing pressure on Balochistan's financial sustainability.

Presiding over the third meeting of the Advisory Council of the Balochistan Revenue Authority (BRA) at the CM Secretariat, Sarfraz Bugti stressed that strengthening the province's revenue system is essential for long-term fiscal stability. The high-level meeting focused on strengthening the province's revenue system, making it more efficient, transparent, and aligned with modern practices.

The meeting approved several measures to modernize and streamline revenue collection for implementation of audit rules.

Digitalization initiatives to automate processes and structural reforms to improve tax collection and governance.

During the meeting, Chairman of Balochistan Revenue Authority Abdullah Khan briefed participants on BRA's performance, noting that approximately Rs. 20 billion as half of the annual target of Rs. 40 billion has already been achieved.

Chief Minister Bugti directed officials to enhance field operations to ensure the timely achievement of revenue targets. He emphasized that increasing provincial revenue is no longer optional but essential.

"Non-development expenditures are consistently rising, while development funds are becoming increasingly constrained. Enhancing the province's own revenue generation is unavoidable," he said.

He emphasized the use of modern technology to ensure transparency and efficiency in tax collection.

The chief minister instructed authorities to invest in professional training for staff and engage private sector experts to modernize operations and boost efficiency.



ISLAMABAD: Group CEO of multinational telecommunication and digital services company VEON Kaan Terzioglu called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Trump says US to leave Iran 'pretty quickly' and return if needed: Khamenei asked for ceasefire

'We will consider when Hormuz Strait is open ... Until then, we are blasting Iran into oblivion,' he says

MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: Iran's new leader has just asked the United States for a ceasefire, United States President Donald Trump said in a Truth Social post on Wednesday.

"We will consider when Hormuz Strait is open, free and clear. Until then, we are blasting Iran into oblivion," he said.

He separately told Reuters today, hours before he was scheduled to make a primetime address to the nation, that the US would be "out of Iran pretty quickly" and "could return for 'spot hits' if needed."

Trump also said he would express his disgust with NATO for what he considered the alliance's lack of support for US objectives in Iran. He said he was "absolutely" considering an attempt to withdraw the US from NATO.

UAE preparing to support US efforts to open Hormuz by force: report

Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates is preparing to support US-led efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz by force, according to a Wall Street Journal report.

Citing Arab officials, the outlet reported that the

UAE is lobbying for a UN Security Council resolution that would authorise military action and is urging the US and military powers in Europe and Asia to form a coalition to secure the strategic waterway.

The Gulf state is also reviewing potential military roles, including mine-clearing operations, as it weighs becoming a direct participant in the conflict for the first time, the report said.

In a statement cited by the Wall Street Journal, the UAE Foreign Ministry said there is "broad global consensus that freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz must be preserved," pointing to international condemnation of disruptions in the waterway.

US-Israeli strikes hit steel complexes in central, southwest Iran

According to Al Jazeera, US-Israeli strikes have hit steel complexes in central and southwest Iran, damaging production units, Iranian media is reporting.

"Initial assessments indicate massive attacks, with significant damage and destruction to production units" at the complex of the Mobarakeh Steel Company, one of Iran's biggest, in the central province of Isfahan, Fars news agency reported, quoting a statement by the company.

Pakistan, Afghan Taliban resume talks in China as Beijing seeks ceasefire

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Afghanistan's Taliban governments have resumed talks in China, which is mediating between the two sides to broker a durable ceasefire after more than a month of fighting, two Pakistani officials said Wednesday.

According to sources representatives from both countries are meeting in Urumqi, in northern China.

However, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs neither confirmed nor denied the latest development.

Sources say the talks are being held at the director-general level, with Pakistan represented by a senior Foreign Office official, along with military and intelligence representatives. The Afghan delegation includes officials from the interior and foreign ministries, as well as members of Afghanistan's General Directorate of Intelligence.

Tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan have risen since the return of the Afghan Taliban to power in 2021, with Islamabad repeatedly calling for action against militant sanctuaries operating across the border. Islamabad has repeatedly urged the Taliban administration to dismantle terrorist sanctuaries on Afghan soil, particularly those linked to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), but those appeals have gone unheeded.

Operation Ghazab lil-Haq was launched on the night of February 26, following unprovoked.

Bilawal meets Fazl to discuss political situation, AJK elections

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday visited the residence of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman for a key political meeting.

The PPP chairman was accompanied by Raja Pervez Ashraf, Nayyar Bukhari and Chaudhry Yaseen.

Former federal minister Maulana Asad Mahmood also participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, both leaders discussed ongoing political developments in the country, with a particular focus on matters related to the upcoming elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

JUI-F Senator Kamran Murtaza also arrived at

Maulana Fazlur Rehman's residence to join the meeting.

Earlier, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss Pakistan's economic and security situation.

According to government sources, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari shared his party's proposals regarding austerity measures and emphasized collaborative solutions to strengthen Pakistan's fiscal policies.

The leaders also exchanged views on Pakistan's ongoing diplomatic efforts to help resolve conflicts in the Middle East.

During the meeting, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari appreciated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership and the government's policies in navigating challenging national and international circumstances.



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13 terrorists killed in two separate IBOs in K-P: Military says

APP

RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed 13 terrorists in two separate intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province on March 30, the military's media wing said on Wednesday.

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operations were carried out after reports of the presence of terrorists belonging to the Indian proxy Fitna al Khawarij, which is the state-designated term for the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

According to the ISPR, one operation was conducted in Khyber district, where troops "effectively engaged the khwarijs' location and after an intense fire exchange, ten khwarij were sent to hell".

In a separate operation in Bannu district, three terrorists were killed during an exchange of fire, the statement said. "Sanitisation operations were ongoing to eliminate any other Indian-sponsored kharji found in the area," it added.

The ISPR said that the counter-terrorism campaign under the vision Azm-e-Istehkam,

approved by the Federal Apex Committee on the National Action Plan, "will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country".

The Apex Committee of the National Action Plan, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in June 2024,

approved Operation Azm-e-Istehkam to eliminate terrorism and extremism across the country.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti Presiding over the third meeting of the Advisory Council of the Balochistan Revenue Authority (BRA) at the CM Secretariat.

Deputy Chairman Senate reaffirms commitment to Balochistan's development

APP

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman of the Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar Wednesday, reaffirmed his commitment to the development and welfare of Balochistan, saying that the province's progress and the well-being of its people remain his top priorities.

Speaking at a ceremony in Quetta, Sardar Akbar Khan Kharoiti, Chairman of the Balochistan Tribal Union,

presented an honorary shield to Syedaal Khan Nasar in recognition of his public service and efforts for the province's development.

The event was attended by legal professionals, social figures, and youth representatives who praised his contributions. Expressing gratitude, the Deputy Chairman said the honour reflects the trust of Balochistan's people.

He vowed to continue working for the province's development, youth empowerment, and promotion of national unity.

He added that the government and state institutions are committed to advancing Balochistan using all available resources and thanked the organisers for their support.

During his visit, he met with Chairman Quetta Development Foundation Bismillah Nasar, senior advocate Sohail Ahmed Rajput, Afnan Ahmed Kakar, and other social leaders.

They discussed development, public welfare, and the province's key challenges, while appreciating his ongoing efforts to address public concerns.

Syedaal Khan Nasar said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the government is implementing development projects across Balochistan at an accelerated pace, and their benefits will soon be visible.

He highlighted the province's rich natural resources and the focus on creating opportunities for youth to ensure sustainable progress.

PM Shehbaz orders comprehensive plan to mitigate economic fallout of Mideast war

Says Pakistan is effectively and successfully managing the challenge of maintaining the balance of supply and demand

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the relevant authorities to formulate a comprehensive strategy to curtail the economic effects on the public in the wake of the current regional situation, stressing that it should not disrupt production or the balance of supply and demand across economic sectors.

The development comes after the government earlier this week decided against imposing a smart lockdown due to differences among provinces during a high-level meeting chaired by the president and the prime minister.

The president directed the relevant authorities to take all possible measures to ease the burden of rising prices on the common man, while assuring participants that adequate fuel stocks were available to meet the country's needs.

Chairing a review meeting on the proposed strategy, the prime minister noted that several countries were facing difficulties in maintaining the balance of supply and demand for essential commodities amid the prevailing situation.

"Pakistan was effectively and successfully managing this challenge," the premier said while appreciating all relevant institutions for taking timely and effective measures to prevent any emergency in the supply and demand of essential goods.

The prime minister further highlighted that, after meeting domestic requirements for food and essential commodities, progress was being made successfully on a comprehensive strategy to export surplus production.

"The government remains committed to taking all necessary steps for economic stability, growth and public welfare," he reaffirmed. In view of rising trends in global market prices, the prime minister directed that a medium- and long-term comprehensive strategy be developed to tackle the financial and economic impact on the country. He instructed that the plan be formulated through close coordination among relevant ministries and institutions, keeping in view the stability and growth of all sectors of the economy.

He also directed that effective measures be proposed to minimise the impact of rising production costs on exports and overall economic output due to the global situation.

"Available resources and opportunities should be fully utilised to prevent negative impacts on agricultural and industrial production amid the current economic challenges," PM Shehbaz said.

During the briefing, it was informed that all relevant ministries and institutions were reviewing the economic impacts of the situation on a daily basis in line with the prime minister's directives.

The meeting reviewed medium- and long-term planning to address financial and economic challenges arising from regional tensions. The prime minister appreciated the coordinated efforts of ministries and institutions and directed further improvement in collaboration.

Last month, the government sharply increased diesel and petrol prices by Rs55 per litre, or 20 per cent, citing the ongoing US-Israel and Iran conflict, which has disrupted global supply chains and pushed crude oil prices to a two-year high.

In response to the crisis, both the federal and provincial governments had introduced a series of austerity measures, including an additional weekly holiday, a reduction in free petrol allocations for ministers, curbs on protocol vehicles, and proposals to provide subsidised fuel for students.

Last week, the government had also approved a significant increase of Rs200 per litre in the fuel levy on high-octane fuel used in luxury vehicles, raising the total levy to Rs300 per litre and the price to Rs600 per litre.

Although it had been expected that the government might further increase petroleum prices due to prevailing uncertainty, it had refrained from doing so on two occasions, stating that Rs125 billion had been allocated through savings and development budget cuts to cushion consumers against rising global oil prices.

Govt taking steps to integrate youth into workforce: PM

APP

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif says the government is taking multiple initiatives to equip young people with professional skills and integrate them into the workforce.

Chairing a meeting in Islamabad today, he emphasized that the youth are the future of the nation.

He directed that the pace of providing technical and vocational training in line with contemporary requirements be accelerated.

Shehbaz Sharif said comprehensive training programs launched through NAVTTC are already showing positive results in harnessing the potential of the youth workforce.

He said providing technical and vocational training along with internationally recognized certifications remains a top priority.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister was briefed on initiatives to create employment opportunities for youth both at domestic and international levels.

It was informed that Matric-Tech program has been introduced in thirty-two educational institutions under the Federal Ministry of Education to promote technical training. Similarly, an Inter-Tech program will soon be launched to provide vocational and technical training at the intermediate level.

Bar and Bench should play key role in delivery of justice: Chief Justice Balochistan High Court

APP

Quetta: Balochistan High Court Chief Justice Muhammad Kamran Khan Mulakhel has said that the bar and the bench should play a key role in the provision of justice, he is committed to solving the problems faced by lawyers, as a lawyer I have a deep connection with the bar, rather I have a special attachment to the bar and the bench. He expressed these views while addressing the lawyers on the occasion of Eid Milan party in the Balochistan High Court Bar Room. On this occasion, judges of Balochistan High Court, lawyers of Balochistan High Court and subordinate courts participated in large numbers. Chief Justice Balochistan High Court Justice Muhammad Kamran Khan Mulakhel, while addressing the Eid Milan party ceremony, extended Eid greetings to the legal community and said that the demands of Quetta Bar Association are of emergency nature which will be resolved on priority basis.

He prayed that Allah Almighty would grant economic and social development to the people of the country, nation, province and city and said that this is the same prayer that Hazrat Ibrahim made on the occasion of the construction of the Kaaba. The Chief Justice said that as a lawyer, he has had a deep attachment to the bar and this time he has a special attachment to the lawyers and the bench. He announced that the establishment of a library in the Kuchlak session, the renovation of the Quetta session and the improvement of security arrangements would be made. He further said that the projects of expansion of the district court, per mile bar room, auditorium and digital lab are under consideration while plans are also being made to shift all the districts to the solar system in a phased manner.

Justice Kamran Mulakhel said that the judiciary does not get a separate budget but has to spend the resources provided by the government honestly and carefully. Discussions have also been held with the Home Secretary and IG Police regarding security.

Van carrying 15 passengers swept away as flash floods wreak havoc in Balochistan

NEWS DESK

QUETTA: Torrential rains triggered severe flooding in parts of Balochistan on Wednesday, causing widespread destruction in Qila Abdullah and Gulistan, with authorities scrambling to respond to the emergency.

According to district administration officials, a van carrying 15 passengers was swept away by floodwaters in the Habibzai area of Gulistan tehsil. In a separate incident at the same location, a truck loaded with food items was also carried away by the strong currents.

Rescue operations have been launched in the affected areas, with teams making urgent efforts to locate and save the passengers feared trapped in the floodwaters. Meanwhile, the water level in the river passing through Qila Abdullah has risen to a dangerous level, forcing authorities to suspend traffic on the Quetta-Chaman Highway.

Member APNS

Daily Mirror

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Troubled skies

AS the relentless exchange of missiles and drones, which seem to be flying, crashing and exploding all over the Middle East, continues to rattle economies near and far, matters have also turned extremely difficult for the global aviation industry.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the pernicious targeting of the region's energy infrastructure have throttled global fuel supply lines, pushing jet fuel prices through the roof and upending the industry's economics. Not only that, the war has greatly expanded no-fly zones for global airlines, which were already facing difficulties due to the war in Ukraine and the sporadic outbreak of other international conflicts, including the recent clashes between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

To make matters worse, pilots now have to contend with the constant risk of being mistaken for a hostile entity, and with drones seemingly everywhere in the skies, there is always a chance of a dangerous accident that could end in a gruesome tragedy.

War and conflicts around the world have also been difficult on travellers, with many finding themselves stranded and facing unending uncertainty. Air fares have shot up on routes that are still functioning due to surges in demand, and flight times have increased by painful degrees because of airspace closures along some of the busiest routes and around some major hubs of the industry. Now, increased jet fuel prices may further push air travel out of the reach of price-sensitive segments.

The US president, having driven the entire world into a crisis of his making, on Tuesday washed his hands of the mess by telling all countries "that can't get jet fuel because of the Strait of Hormuz" to go take it themselves. "Go get your own oil!" he posted on social media yesterday, directing his frustration at all of America's allies for refusing "to get involved in the decapitation of Iran".

In Pakistan, PIA's new owners are already worried they may have to shut shop after the 150pc increase in jet fuel prices. Though the airline was only recently privatised, it seems it is once again hoping for a government bailout. But the chairman of the consortium that now owns it does have a point:

it is not only the rich and powerful who use aeroplanes. The changing economics of air travel will also impact business leaders who need to move about frequently to manage large operations.

Without stabilisation of energy markets and the de-escalation of regional hostilities, the aviation industry faces uncertain times. In such a scenario, the promise of a seamlessly connected 'global village' may give way to a more fragmented reality; one in which mobility is constrained, costs are prohibitive, and vast parts of the world grow increasingly distant from one another.

By Nadeem ul Haque Shahid Kardar

Why the poor reject education

CONTRARY to popular perception Pakistan's education crisis is not a core problem of access. It is a problem of incentives. Until that reality is grasped, the system will continue to expand without delivering either learning or opportunity. The dominant narrative, shaped by well-meaning experts and echoed by commentators, is simplistic, intellectually lazy and politically convenient. Its prescriptions are predictable: build more schools, expand universities, pour in more public money. The oft-repeated figure of 26 million out-of-school children is invoked to fabricate moral urgency, resting on a flawed assumption that parents who keep their children out of school are behaving irrationally. They are not. They are responding, with considerable clarity, to the incentives in front of them.

Education, in this framing, is treated as an unquestionable moral good. And needs to be expanded irrespective of context, incentives, outcomes or returns. Interrogating this assumption is treated as near-heretical. The result is the substitution of sentiment for analysis, and advocacy for understanding. Political responses reflect this shallowness. For many policymakers, education is not about learning outcomes but patronage — an instrument for distributing jobs to teachers and low-skilled staff within their constituencies. Access is invoked; quality is ignored. The system expands in form while hollowing out in substance.

Before demanding that families sacrifice more and governments spend more, a fundamental question must be confronted: why should anyone invest in education at all? This is the central economic question that the discourse avoids. Gary Becker's theory of human capital is unambiguous: education consumes real resources today — time, money, foregone income — in exchange for higher earnings tomorrow. It's an investment. And like any investment, its value depends entirely on expected returns relative to costs.

When schooling is poor, learning outcomes weak, and labour markets fail to reward skills, the economic case for educa-

tion crumbles. Families send children to school only if they expect those sacrifices to pay off. When returns are this weak, incentives collapse. Every year in school has an opportunity cost. A child studying is not earning, not gaining work experience and not contributing to household income. For low-income families, these costs are immediate, while the benefits are distant and uncertain. More importantly, in a low-growth rate economy experiencing high graduate unemployment and an uncertain job market the signal is clear for young people: education does not pay reliably. When expected returns fall below these costs, rational households pull back. They do not persist out of moral obligation or some grand national goal. Refusal to invest in education is not ignorance; arithmetic drives the decision.

For many policymakers, education is not about learning outcomes but patronage.

Framed in these terms, the behaviour of millions of Pakistani households is not puzzling, it is entirely rational. Global evidence shows that each additional year of schooling raises earnings by roughly nine to 10 per cent on average. Pakistan's labour market returns consistently 5pc to 7pc, barely half the global norm, and even weaker at the primary level. Until this basic calculus is acknowledged, calls for higher enrolment and greater spending will remain ineffective and fundamentally misguided. Low returns, however, are only part of the problem. Pakistan's education problems run deeper. Education has also lost its power to signal competence; capability rarely determines outcomes here.

Appointments depend on connections, not credentials. Loyalty, and not competence, is rewarded by promotions. Contracts flow through networks, not capability. Influence is inherited, not earned. Social mobility comes from the family in which you are born not the talent with which you are born. In such an environment, a degree stops indicating ability and becomes a bureaucratic formality, a hurdle to clear, not a skill to be demonstrated.

The consequences follow with grim predictability. Credential inflation takes hold: degrees proliferate while their value erodes. Credentials serve as administrative

filters in a system that knows no better way to classify applicants. Meanwhile, those who genuinely develop skills leave. Brain drain is the rational response when education serves as an exit strategy rather than a productivity investment. Students understand that effort is weakly linked to success. The rational response is to disengage. The labour market compounds the damage. In most functioning economies, education feeds a competitive private sector that bids for talent and rewards ability. In Pakistan, the dominant aspiration is narrow, a government job, which offers security, status and permanence in an otherwise uncertain economy. The problem is that the queue for those jobs is long, the positions are few, and in that queue, merit is largely beside the point. Connections, patronage and political favour determine who advances. Education becomes preparation for waiting. Students internalise this quickly. Success depends less on application of knowledge and mastering ideas than on cultivating relationships. The state reinforces these distortions. Education systems are treated not as engines of learning but as employment schemes. The government does not treat education as a serious professional enterprise. The signal to everyone watching is unmistakable.

The cultural damage is no less severe. Academic institutions are routinely led by individuals whose qualifications are bureaucratic seniority or political proximity, not intellectual achievement. Most tellingly, the government increasingly outsources its own policymaking to international consultants and foreign lenders, sidelining domestic scholars in favour of externally produced prescriptions. The message to students is clear: even the state does not believe its educated people have anything worth hearing.

Put these signals together and the logic sounds well placed. Markets reward connections over competence. Government rewards loyalty over creativity. Students are not irrational. They read incentives with great precision. When education fails to generate adequate economic returns, it becomes difficult to justify the cost. Education cannot compensate.

By Asad-ul-Mulk

Colonial complex

THE culture of 'colonial mentality complex', contradistinguished from 'colonial mentality', uncritically affixes blame for a nation's present-day failings on events of the past, often absolving itself of responsibility, and taking offence at the thought of any value of benign character originating in the West. This attitude is contagious and self-defeating.

In *Inglorious Empire*, Shashi Tharoor writes: "Company official John Sullivan observed in the 1840s: 'The little court disappears — trade languishes — the capital decays — the people are impoverished — the Englishman flourishes, and acts like a sponge, drawing up riches from the banks of the Ganges, and squeezing them down upon the banks of the Thames.'" To argue otherwise would be like insisting the earth is flat.

I recently wrote an article quoting Churchill and Roosevelt, in response to which I received many e-mails expressing disappointment for having quoted Western leaders and concepts. The remonstrance was that I should have quoted Eastern leaders, and drawn on comparable examples from the East instead. Such sentiments have been fermented by political populists in Pakistan — to call out anyone who speaks of any Western value, no matter how benevolent or benign.

The British did some terrible things in India, just like the French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Russian, Belgian and Japanese did in their colonies between the 17th and 20th centuries. To this, there is no cavil. However, we must not forget that the India of the Mughals, and that which preceded it, was far from the Eden of justice we imagine it was.

India of the Mughals, and earlier, was hardly an Eden of justice.

Hitherto in India, political authority was arbitrary, personal, discretionary and subject to the emperor's will. There was no concept of trichotomy of power, independence of the judiciary or democracy. There were no institutional limits on power. Property rights and liberty could be stripped readily, and barbaric practices such as sati, slavery, accession through fratricide and human sacrifices were prevalent. It naturally follows that our own history isn't too glorious either.

Confronted with the vast web of history, each individual should rationally indict generations of the past, rather than having pent-up anger channelled through a national narrative like the one prevalent in Germany following the Treaty of Versailles.

In *The Idea of Justice*, Amartya Sen writes, "The increasing tendency towards seeing people in terms of one dominant 'identity' ('this is your duty as an American', 'you must commit these acts as a Muslim', or 'as a Chinese you should give priority to this national engagement') is not only an imposition of an external and arbitrary priority, but also the denial of an important liberty of a person who can decide on their respective loyalties to different groups (to all of which he or she belongs)".

Like many others, I come from a school of thought which does not subscribe to the concept of 'the original sin'. The injustices and selfishness of our colonial masters is undeniable, just like their more benign contribution to abolishing and criminalising practices such as sati and slavery through legislation like the

Bengal Sati Regulation, 1829, and the Indian Slavery Act, 1843.

No matter how diminutive the progressive steps of the British in India, let us not replicate the saddest approach which Shakespeare alludes to in *Julius Caesar*: "The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones."

Our national obsession, to detest or condemn every genuine value from the West, because it is an affront to our perceived sense of our national past reflects only our own 'colonial mentality complex', which in essence is a form of 'inferiority complex'. Sigmund Freud wrote about this 'defensive pride' in his books *On Narcissism* as well as *Civilisation and Its Discontents*. Alfred Adler expanded upon the theories, particularly in *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology*, where he explains how a sense of 'superiority complex' can develop to mask a 'sense of inferiority complex'. And if not reined in, the complex can lead to boastfulness, inflated pride and contempt for other persons and cultures. In *Rights of Man*, Thomas Paine says, "The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion". True emancipation lies above and beyond national pride, ethnic preferences and racial prejudices.

The very idea that if a noble example is to be tendered, it must have its origin in the

Orient, and not in the Occident, is a manifestation of pride, preference and prejudice, therefore the obverse of emancipation and part of the 'colonial mentality complex'. Pakistan has been free for nearly 80 years, it's time we started taking greater responsibility for our own national failings.

BISP Expands Global Partnerships to Boost Support for Vulnerable Families

APP

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme, Senator Rubina Khalid Wednesday underscored the need for stronger international collaboration to enhance service delivery for vulnerable households, as the programme deepened engagement with key UN agencies.

She was speaking during a high-level meeting held at BISP Headquarters with representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Programme (WFP), and UNICEF to advance strategic partnerships aimed at improving support mechanisms for beneficiaries.

The meeting focused on developing cost-effective and technology-driven solutions, enhancing transparency, and exploring joint skill development opportunities for beneficiaries and their families. Discussions also highlighted the impor-

ance of strengthening monitoring, reporting, and feedback systems, alongside launching awareness campaigns to improve outreach and showcase programme achievements.

Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized that coordinated efforts, particularly in health and education sectors, are essential to maximize impact. She noted that closer collaboration with development partners would further expand the programme's capacity to reach deserving households more effectively.

Participants included WHO Representative in Pakistan Dr. Luo Dapeng, UNICEF Representative Mr. Parnell Ironside, and WFP Pakistan Deputy Country Director Ms. Lindita Bare, along with senior BISP officials.

Representatives of the partner organizations assured full support and agreed to submit concrete proposals to further strengthen collaboration and scale up assistance for BISP beneficiaries.



QUETTA: CM Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti in a meeting with Member Provincial Assembly Malak Naeem Khan Bazai.

Vision to declare New York and Peshawar as sister cities termed historic step

APP

ISLAMABAD: Secretary of the Pakistani-American organization "Stand With Pakistan" and a renowned Pakistani professional in the US health sector, Sohail Pirzada, called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House here on Wednesday and discussed the role of overseas Pakistanis and investment opportunities in Pakistan.

During the meeting, the Governor said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa offers vast investment opportunities in tourism, health, and information technology sectors, adding that the province also has a skilled workforce.

He urged overseas Pakistanis to take advantage of these opportunities and play an effective role in strengthening the country's economy. Faisal Karim Kundi further said that a conducive environment is being provided in the province to attract overseas Pakistani investors, businesspersons, and professionals. On the occasion, Sohail Pirzada appreciated the Governor's vision of declaring Peshawar and New York as sister cities, terming it a historic initiative.

He said that such a development would significantly enhance the capacity of students, entrepreneurs,

DG NAB Lahore chairs high-level meeting on accountability framework with NMC-124 delegation of senior BS-20 officers

By Maqsood Khalid

LAHORE: Senior officers of National Management Course (NMC-124) visit NAB Lahore, receive detailed briefing on institutional mandate.

NAB officials brief delegation on organizational structure and operational mechanisms during Lahore visit.

Interactive session led by DG NAB Lahore highlights anti-corruption measures and institutional performance. Delegation includes senior police officers including DIG Tayyab Hafeez Cheema and DIG Naeem Ahmed Sheikh.

Key challenges of accountability in public sector governance discussed during meeting at NAB Lahore. DG NAB Lahore emphasizes importance of inter-institutional



coordination for transparent governance. Role of National School of Public Policy in training senior civil servants appreciated by NAB leadership. Officers engage in detailed discussion on improving accountability mechanisms and governance standards.

Visit concludes with shield distribution ceremony and group photo, reaffirming commitment to collaboration.

Punjab schools to remain closed on Fridays

INP

LAHORE: The Punjab Education Department has announced that all schools across the province will remain closed on Fridays.

According to the notification, schools will operate from Monday to Thursday, while the Friday holiday will apply to both government and private institutions. Educational institutions reopened on April 1 across the province following a 22-day closure — from March 10-31 — in line with the federal government's measures to conserve fuel due to the ongoing US and Israel war on Iran, which has spiked global oil prices.

During this period, however, educational institutions conducted online classes, while examinations were held as scheduled. According to the new schedule issued by the Punjab Education Department, school timings from Monday to Thursday will be from 8am to 1:30pm.

Inauguration of Maryam Shaukat Skills Lab at Gujranwala Medical College

By Maqsood Khalid

LAHORE: The Maryam Shaukat Skills Lab was formally inaugurated today at Gujranwala Medical College, established in memory of the late Dr. Maryam Shaukat, an outstanding and talented MBBS student of the institution. The inauguration ceremony was held with great dignity and was attended by faculty members, students, and distinguished guests. The Skills Lab stands as a tribute to Dr. Maryam Shaukat's dedication, hard work, and academic excellence, and is expected to play a vital role in enhancing practical training and clinical skills among future doctors.

The Association of Physicians of

Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA), under the leadership of Dr. Fatah Shahzad, along with the parents of Dr. Maryam Shaukat, played a key role in funding the establishment of this facility.

The chief guest of the ceremony, Professor Aftab Mohsin (former Principal of GMC), appreciated the initiative and emphasized the importance of skills-based education in modern medical practice.

The formal inauguration of the Skills Lab was carried out by the respected parents of Dr. Maryam Shaukat, making the occasion both emotional and memorable. Among those present were Dr. Fatah Shahzad (APPNA), Dr. Asif Javed (Member,



Board of Management), Medical Superintendent Dr. Imtiaz, faculty members, alumni, and students. The project was completed under the leadership of Principal Professor Dr. Muhammad Haroon Hamid, whose vision and continuous efforts to enhance academic standards are highly commendable.

Ayaz felicitates newly elected APNS office-bearers

APP

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has extended his heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected office-bearers of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS).

In his felicitation message, the Speaker congratulated Senator Sarmad Ali on being elected President, Ms. Naz Afreen Sehgal Lakhani as Senior Vice President, Shahab Zuberi as Vice President, Muhammad Athar Qazi as Secretary General, Mohsin Bilal as Joint Secretary, and Naveed Kashif as Finance Secretary, along with other members of the newly elected governing body.

The Speaker said that the success of the newly elected leadership reflects the confidence reposed in them by members of the organization in recognition of their abilities and leadership qualities. He expressed hope that the new leadership would play a pivotal role in effectively addressing the challenges faced by the newspaper industry. Ayaz Sadiq emphasized that a free, independent and responsible press is a cornerstone of any democratic society. "The media plays a vital role in promoting public awareness, national development and democratic stability," he added. He further reaffirmed that Parliament remains committed to addressing the issues faced by the media, particularly the newspaper industry and will continue.



Quetta Metropolitan Corporation Administrator Zahid Khan Khilji Meets with Central Anjuman-e-Tajran Balochistan President Abdul Rahim Kakar in Quetta.



Iran will be at FIFA World Cup and play in US, says Infantino

SPORTS DESK

ANTALYA: FIFA president Gianni Infantino told AFP that Iran "will be at the World Cup" and will play their group matches in the United States as scheduled, despite the Middle East war.

"Iran will be at the World Cup," Infantino said at half-time as Iran beat Costa Rica 5-0 in a friendly in Turkey. "That's why we're here. We're delighted because they're a very, very strong team, I'm very happy." "I've seen the team, I've spoken to the players and the coach, so everything is fine," added Infantino, whose attendance at Tuesday's game was unannounced.

Infantino went on to stress that Iran's "matches will be played where they are supposed to be, according to the draw".

The World Cup, being hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada, starts on June 11.

Iran are set to play their first Group G game against New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15. They are then scheduled to play Belgium in Los Angeles on June 21 and Egypt in Seattle on June 27.

Iran's participation had been thrown into doubt by the war with the US and Israel that broke out on Feb 28.

"For us, what matters most are FIFA's rules and regulations. We will comply with whatever FIFA decides. Every host country has made commitments to FIFA and must honour them," Mahdi Mohammadni, the vice president of the Iranian Football Federation (FFIRI), told AFP at the match.

The FFIRI had said earlier this month it was "negotiating" with FIFA to relocate the country's World Cup matches from the United States to Mexico.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum also said that her country is prepared to host Iran's first-round matches at the tournament if needed.

"Fruitful discussion"

Infantino initially said that US President Donald Trump had given assurances that the Iranian team would still be welcome.

But Trump then stated that Iran's team should not travel to the tournament "for their own life and safety".

Iran hit back at Trump's comments, saying that "no one can exclude Iran's national team from the World Cup".

On Tuesday, Mohammadni said Infantino had been en route from Mexico to Qatar.

"Having learnt that we were organising friendly matches here, he came to see us in person, and we had a fruitful discussion," Mohammadni said.

"Given our history in this competition, it is only natural that FIFA should support the Iranian team. Mr Infantino is providing the necessary support to our national team and has given our players a great boost."

Asked before the game if Iran would be at the World Cup, back-up striker Dennis Eckert Ayensa told AFP: "Inshallah" (god willing).

Iran, who also played a friendly against Nigeria in the Turkish town of Belek last Friday, crushed Costa Rica, who have not qualified for the World Cup, 5-0 on Tuesday.

Skipper Mehdi Taremi, with two penalties, Ali Gholizadeh and Mohammad Mohebbi put Iran four goals up by the break. Half-time substitute Mehdi Ghayedi added a fifth in the 51st minute by which time coach Amir Ghalenoei had started to empty his bench.



Ali Ibrahim Al-Hamadi of Irak celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's first goal during the FIFA World Cup 2026 Play-Off tournament final match between Irak and Bolivia at Estadio Monterrey in Guadalupe, Mexico.

Iraq seal FIFA World Cup return after 40 years; Turkiye end 24-year drought

SPORTS DESK

Coach Graham Arnold challenged his players to "shock the world" after Iraq became the 48th and final team to qualify for the World Cup with a nerve-shredding 2-1 win over Bolivia in an intercontinental playoff in Mexico on Tuesday.

Iraq, whose preparations were disrupted by the war in the Middle East, sealed their first appearance at the finals in 40 years and will play in Group I against France, Senegal and Norway.

Goals from Ali Al-Hamadi and Aymen Hussein secured a famous win for Iraq, whose last appearance at the World Cup came at Mexico in 1986.

"With everything going on in the Middle East at the moment it made it harder for the players," said the Australian Arnold, who had initially sought to have the fixture postponed due to the disruption caused by the conflict.

"Delighted for the players, very good boys, very happy for the 46 million Iraqis," he added.

"Hopefully, it will help change the perception of Iraq and the football in Iraq. Doing something in the World Cup nobody expects us to do."

"Let's shock the world."

Because of travel disruption caused by the US-Israel war on Iran, most of the Iraqi squad only reached Mexico after a gruelling three-day journey from Baghdad that began with an overland crossing into Jordan.

But there was little sign of weariness during a confident start by Iraq, who took the lead after nine minutes through Luton Town striker Al-Hamadi — the 24-year-old who moved to Liverpool as a toddler following the outbreak of the 2003 Iraq war.

Iraq midfielder Amir Al-Ammari won a corner after a

superb free-kick that was saved at full stretch from Bolivia goalkeeper Guillermo Viscarra.

From the subsequent set piece, Al-Ammari curled a pinpoint corner on to the head of Al-Hamadi who nodded home for 1-0.

Iraq were well worth the early goal and looked in control until Bolivia, who had gradually grown into the game, equalised after 38 minutes.

Ramiro Vaca's shot from the edge of the area was controlled with one touch by Moises Paniagua and the Morocco-based central midfielder swept into the roof of the net.

The goal stunned Iraq and Bolivia looked likely to grab a second after dominating the remainder of the half.

Iraq regained the lead eight minutes after the break, when a long ball forward was nodded into the path of substitute Marko Lawk-Farji.

His cross found captain Hussein and the veteran striker clipped a first-time finish into the bottom corner.

Bolivia pressed frantically for a goal to force extra-time, but Iraq's well-marshalled defence held firm during nine minutes of stoppage time.

The 62-year-old Arnold, who took Australia to the last 16 of the Qatar World Cup in 2022, said: "We have two months to get fit."

"For us to do something at this World Cup would be a miracle."

Oscar Villegas, the Bolivia coach, was visibly distraught. "Devastated, totally devastated because we believed we could be at the World Cup," he said.

Turkiye end 24-year World Cup drought

Turkiye ended a 24-year wait to qualify for the World Cup by beating Kosovo 1-0 in their playoff final on Tuesday, sealing a return to football's biggest stage for the first time since 2002 when they reached the semi-finals.

Spanish police open probe into anti-Muslim chants at friendly match with Egypt

SPORTS DESK

Police in Spain said on Wednesday that they were investigating "Islamophobic and xenophobic" chants heard during the Spain-Egypt international football match in Barcelona.

Egypt's national anthem was jeered ahead of the 0-0 draw in Barcelona on Tuesday in a pre-World Cup friendly and authorities at the RCDE Stadium appealed to fans more than once over the public announcement system to refrain from making offensive comments.

It was the latest in a string of similar incidents to overshadow Spanish football in recent years, with Real Madrid's Brazilian attacker Vinicius Junior in particular repeatedly racially abused.

"We are investigating yesterday's Islamophobic and xenophobic chants at RCDE Stadium during the Spain-Egypt friendly match," Catalonia's regional police force, the Mossos d'Esquadra, wrote on X.

The announcement came shortly after Spain's Justice Minister Felix Bolanos condemned the incident, saying that "racist insults and chants embarrass us as a society".

"The far right will not leave any space free from their hatred, and those who remain silent today will be complicit," he added on X.

"We continue working for a country that is tolerant and respectful of everyone."

Spain's football federation and coach Luis de la Fuente had also condemned the behaviour of a section of the 35,000 crowd.

"It's intolerable," De la Fuente told reporters as soon as he sat down in the press conference room after the match.

"Violent people use football to carve out a space for themselves. They must be removed from society, identified, and kept as far away as possible," the 64-year-old added.

Rafael Louzan, president of the Spanish Football Federation, called the incident "specific and isolated situations".

"What we've done is condemn these kinds of attitudes and to say they must not be repeated," he said.



Spain's Cristhian Mosquera is in action during a friendly match between Spain and Egypt at RCDE Stadium, Cornellà de Llobregat, Spain.

DAILY MIRROR

'Historic milestone': Pakistan, Norway sign carbon market deal under Paris Agreement

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Norway on Wednesday signed the former's first-ever carbon market deal under the Paris Agreement, according to an official press release.

According to the press release, "Pakistan and Norway on Wednesday signed the country's first landmark bilateral agreement under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement, opening the door to international carbon trading, climate finance and major investment in clean energy and climate-smart agriculture."

To tackle climate change and its negative impacts, world leaders at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) signed the Paris Agreement on December 12, 2015, according to the United Nations. The agreement included commitments from all countries to reduce their emissions and work together to adapt to the impacts of climate change, and called on countries to strengthen their commitments over time.

The press release issued on Wednesday said that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed in Islamabad under the auspices of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination marked Pakistan's "formal entry into the global carbon market and is being seen as a breakthrough in the country's climate diplomacy".

Under the agreement, Pakistan will be able to develop carbon-credit generating projects in sectors such as clean energy, agriculture, transport and waste management and potentially sell the resulting emission reductions to Norway, the statement said.

Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Musadiq Malik termed the agreement a "historic milestone", saying it would shift Pakistan from carbon market preparedness to practical implementation, the statement added.

"This is Pakistan's first bilateral agreement under Article 6.2 and an important step towards implementation," Malik said.

"It creates a credible pathway for international cooperation and investment in Pakistan's climate priorities."

Malik said the agreement would strengthen Pakistan's position in international carbon markets and create new opportunities for the country's emerging green economy.

"Carbon markets cannot be treated as an end in themselves. They must help countries like Pakistan finance transition pathways, create jobs, attract technology and deliver real benefits to communities," he said.

The climate minister said Pakistan had already put in place the country's first national policy guidelines for carbon trading, approved by the federal cabinet in January 2025, and was now moving to establish rules, reporting systems and bilateral arrangements needed to operationalise the market.

He said Pakistan had strong mitigation potential in sectors such as renewable energy, agriculture, transport and waste management, and that the agreement would encourage project developers and investors to move forward.

Addressing the signing ceremony, Norway's Ambassador to Pakistan Per Albert Ilsaas said the accord marked the beginning of a new era in bilateral environmental cooperation, the statement added.

"Pakistan is among the countries most affected by climate change, and we believe this partnership can deliver both measurable emission reductions and real development benefits," he said.

"Norway, which aims to become climate neutral by 2030, was seeking to purchase Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs) under Article 6, not to meet its formal climate targets but to go beyond them," he said. "Norway is not purchasing ITMOs to meet its nationally determined contribution targets. We are purchasing them to achieve climate neutrality beyond those commitments," he said.

Ilsaas said Norway's Global Emission Reduction Initiative, launched in 2024 with a budget of \$1.5 billion, would provide carbon finance to countries such as Pakistan.



Balochistan High Court Chief Justice, Justice Muhammad Kamran Khan Malakhail Speaks at High Court Bar Association Reception in Quetta

Bilawal pays tribute to security forces for successful operation against terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

APP

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operations against the terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a statement, he termed the two separate operations carried out in Bara and Bannu as a clear reflection of the effective strategy and professionalism of the security forces.

He commended the forces for eliminating 13 terrorists, praising their courage and operational capabilities.

Bilawal Bhutto said that the nation stands proud of its security institutions, which continue to safeguard the country against the menace of terrorism.

He reaffirmed that the fight against terrorism will continue until the last terrorist is eliminated.

The PPP chairman also reiterated his party's unwavering support for the armed forces, vowing to stand shoulder to shoulder with them in ensuring lasting peace and stability in the country.

4 cops among 9 injured in IED blast in KP's Lakki Marwat

NEWS DESK

LAKKI MARWAT: Nine people, including four cops, were injured in an improvised explosive device (IED) explosion in the Serai Naurang town of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Lakki Marwat district on Wednesday, according to police.

District police spokesperson Qudratullah Khan told Dawn that the explosion occurred on the busy Bannu-DI Khan Road near a fruit and vegetable market.

He said that according to initial information, the attackers targeted a police patrol party from the Shaheed Asmatullah Khan Khattak police station.

The spokesperson said Head Constable Waheedullah and Constables Syed Anwar, Hadiullah and Ikramullah were injured in the explosion.

He said that the van the police party had been patrolling in was also damaged in the explosion.

Government taking Measures to Strengthen Support System for Individuals with Autism: President

APP

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has said that the Government of Pakistan remained engaged in strengthening support systems through early identification, inclusive education, rehabilitation services and public awareness aimed at reducing barriers that prevent individuals with autism from participating fully in society and improve the support available to their families.

In his message on World Autism Awareness Day, the president said "On this day, we come together under this year's theme, "Autism and Humanity — Every Life Has Value," to recognise the abilities and contributions of individuals with autism and to support a society that is more open and responsive to their needs."

He said autism is not a limitation, it is a different way of experiencing the world. "Our responsibility is to ensure that individuals on the autism spectrum have access to the support, education and understanding they need to live with confidence."

He said one in every 100 children worldwide is on the autism spectrum. The condition affects early development, with signs often appearing in the first few

years of life and shaping how a child communicates, learns and interacts.

In Pakistan, he said available estimates suggest that around 0.5 per cent of the population is affected. This represents a considerable number of families who rely on consistent access to diagnosis, schooling, therapy and social acceptance.

"Reducing risk depends on early identification and timely intervention."

Screening during routine child health visits, along with better training for doctors, teachers and community workers, can help ensure quicker referrals. Nutritional support during pregnancy, including the use of folic acid supplements, has also been shown to reduce risk. This allows children to receive help when it can make the greatest difference," the president said.

He added that for many families, the impact is felt in everyday routines. Parents often have to travel long distances to find specialised care or adjust work schedules to attend therapy sessions.

Schools may not always have the trained staff or facilities to support children on the spectrum. These are practical challenges that require steady attention from public services and local administration.

Tanveer calls for transparency in wheat procurement

APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, has stressed that wheat procurement mechanisms must be transparent, efficient and fully accessible, ensuring that farmers in all wheat-producing regions can benefit without delay or exclusion. He was chairing a meeting of National Wheat Oversight Committee in Islamabad. The meeting reviewed ongoing wheat procurement operations across provinces, with emphasis on ensuring timely readiness of procurement systems, smooth market operations during the harvest period, and effective facilitation of farmers at the grassroots level.

The Federal Minister cautioned that any delays in procurement arrangements could create market distortions and allow intermediary actors to exploit price differentials, ultimately affecting the farming community. He directed all relevant institutions to ensure that procurement systems remain

fully operational during the critical harvesting window. The Committee also deliberated on measures to enhance wheat productivity in the long term.

Rana Tanveer Hussain highlighted the need to promote certified and improved seed varieties, encourage balanced and efficient fertilizer usage, and expand the adoption of modern mechanized farming practices such as laser land leveling, efficient sowing technologies, and improved harvesting systems. These interventions were described as essential for increasing per-acre productivity and strengthening national food resilience.

The Minister further emphasized the importance of coordinated federal and provincial efforts in agricultural extension services, farmer awareness campaigns, and timely availability of agricultural inputs. He stated that institutional synergy is critical for translating policy into on-ground impact, particularly in the context of climate variability and global supply chain pressures.

Pakistan's role for peace to be remembered in history: Dr. Tariq Fazal

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said that when history is written, Pakistan's name will be inscribed in golden words for its principled stand for peace, stability, and responsible leadership in a turbulent region.

In a post on X, he said that at a time of rising tensions, Pakistan emerged not as a spectator but as a force for balance and diplomacy.

He said the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the tireless diplomatic efforts of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and the unwavering commitment to national security by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir had collectively played a defining role.

Their coordinated efforts, he added, not only safeguarded Pakistan's interests but also contributed meaningfully to de-escalation, dialogue, and regional harmony.

"This is the Pakistan the world witnesses today — a nation that stands firm, acts wisely, and leads with responsibility," he said.

CM Maryam takes notice of electricity suspension at Lahore hospital

INP

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday took notice of the suspension of electricity during surgery as the doctors have to perform the operation mobile phone's light at Services Hospital in Lahore.

The Chief Minister sought a complete and comprehensive report about the incident from the health department.

Earlier, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has ordered action under the Punjab Employees Efficiency, Discipline and Accountability (Peeda) Act against those medics allegedly involved in the video incident at Lady Willingdon Hospital, Lahore.

Show-cause notices have been issued to responsible senior administrative officials, while a formal letter has also been sent to the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council for disciplinary proceedings against five postgraduate doctors. According to a handout, the health department has decided to take action against Dr. Tayyaba, Dr. Maham, Dr. Zainab, Dr. Ayesha, and Dr. Essa for recording a patient's video during surgery.

Additionally, proceedings under the Peeda Act have been initiated against former MS Dr. Farah, HOD Dr. Uzma.

Government providing all possible facilities to investors in digital, telecom industry: PM

By Zahid Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that the government was providing all possible facilities to investors in the digital and telecom sectors to promote the country's digital economy.

"The recent successful auction of 5G spectrum in Pakistan reflects that the government is moving in the right direction," the prime minister said while speaking to VEON Group CEO Kaan Terzioglu, who along with a delegation called on him at the PM House.

He stated that Pakistan was pursuing a comprehensive and effective strategy to increase foreign investment and promote innovation in the information technology sector.

"Effective use of information technology to achieve a cashless economy is among the government's top priorities," he said, adding that digitalization of the economic sector would help ensure transparency.

Following the 5G spectrum auction, the prime minister noted that all relevant institutions were working in close coordination to provide high-quality internet services to the public through telecom operators.

He further emphasized that Pakistan's youth could play a vital role in strengthening the economy and improving service delivery through active participation in information technology and digital platforms.

He added that the growing interest of young people in telecom and IT is attracting international investors to Pakistan.

On the occasion, Kaan Terzioglu, particularly appreciated the government's initiatives, under the Prime Minister's leadership, to promote a cashless economy and complete digitalization of the economy.

He also expressed his company's intention to further increase investment in Pakistan.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, CEO of Jazz World Aamir Ibrahim, and other relevant government officials.



Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani Meets with President of District Bar Association Multan Bushra Naqvi and Secretary General Saadat Hussain.

Aurangzeb hails IFC's increased engagement in Pakistan

APP

ISLAMABAD: Divisional Director for Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Simon Andrews called on Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb in Islamabad.

The IFC delegation briefed the Minister on its growing portfolio in Pakistan, which now exceeds two billion dollars annually, with approximately 2.7 billion dollars committed this year.

The Finance Minister appreciated the IFC's enhanced engagement in Pakistan over the past few years, particularly in

investment, trade, finance and advisory support.

Discussions focused on further scaling up private sector investment, particularly in infrastructure and public-private partnerships.

Muhammad Aurangzeb emphasized the importance of adopting a client-centric approach to financing solutions, particularly in facilitating local currency lending to support private sector growth and reduce exchange rate vulnerabilities. He underscored that such initiatives complement, rather than substitute, foreign currency inflows and are essential for sustainable economic expansion.

Minister Chaudhry announces Pakistan Maritime Energy City for oil, LNG, LPG storage, re-export

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has announced plans to establish the Pakistan Maritime Energy City (PMEC), an ambitious initiative aimed at meeting both domestic and international energy storage and re-export requirements as part of a broader strategy to expand Pakistan's economic footprint. Chairing a high-level meeting to review the identification of sites for three to four new ports along the country's coastline, the minister said Pakistan had already demonstrated its potential by facilitating foreign transshipment cargo amid ongoing regional tensions.

He noted that this momentum would be leveraged to position the country as a key regional hub for energy logistics.

A 12-member multi-agency committee was constituted under the maritime minister's long-term "Hundred Years Vision 2047-2147" to identify suitable locations for new deep-sea ports and associated infrastructure. The committee has been tasked with laying the groundwork for future maritime expansion and economic growth.

Speaking at the meeting, Junaid Chaudhry said the proposed energy city would offer international stakeholders the facility to store oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for onward export. "Pakistan's needs will remain the top priority, but the facility will also cater to global demand," he said, adding that the energy city would also be integrated with ports' infrastructure.

The minister directed the committee to begin work on identifying suitable land for the project and to prepare a comprehensive development plan. He emphasised that consultations with all stakeholders, particularly provincial governments, would be carried out prior to the project's formal launch.

Highlighting the economic potential of the initiative, Junaid Chaudhry said that in times of regional instability, the proposed energy city could generate significant revenue for the country while ensuring uninterrupted supply chains. "Just as our ports are serving transshipment needs, the energy city will cater to global energy requirements," he added.

He further said that smaller auxiliary energy facilities would also be developed to support major ports, with connectivity ensured through pipelines, maritime routes and re-export mechanisms to strengthen supply lines.

During the briefing, the committee's convener, Director General of Port Qasim Authority Rear Admiral Muhammad Khalid, informed the meeting that substantial progress had been made in data collection.



Former Jamat-e-Islami Chief Siraj-ul-Haq Addresses Media at Quetta Press Club