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Military warns of stern action against 'malicious propaganda targeting armed forces'

Simultaneously Publishing from Islamabad, Sargodha and Karachi

Pakistan invites Saudi Arabia for joint ventures in PIA, airports

The two countries explore investment opportunities which will further bolster ties

Islamabad
The Capital Development Authority (CDA) would provide land while the investment for building hotels would be made by Saudi Arabia.
It was also invited for investment in Mattari transmission line and First Women Bank Limited.
ISHAQDAR
Meanwhile, Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Ishaq Dar said the Saudi investment in Pakistan would not only strengthen the deeply valued partnership but also make a sterling contribution to regional peace and stability.
The foreign minister, addressing the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) forum, said the government's goal was to transform Pakistan into a hub of economic activity and innovation

creating an attractive environment for global investors, particularly those from Saudi Arabia.
The foreign minister assured the delegation that the Saudi investment in Pakistan was not just the placement of capital rather it would prove to be instrumental for mutual progress and prosperity.
The foreign minister reaffirmed that the Saudi investment in Pakistan would be handled with utmost respect and through institutionalised mechanisms. He told the gathering that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia shared deep-rooted ties anchored in rich Islamic heritage and mutual strategic interests and the Saudi delegation's visit underscored a deep and abiding connection between the two countries.

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Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia H.E. Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud, leading a high level delegation, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on 16 April 2024.

CM Marryam directs MPs to monitor Naan, Roti prices



LAHORE
Prime Minister Mairaj Nawaz Sharif has directed MPs to monitor Naan and Roti prices in their areas.
The District Monitoring Committees are tasked to monitor the prices of the items.
The CM ordered the MPs to ensure the official Naan and Roti prices.
She said stern legal action would be taken against the exorbitant sale of Naan and Roti in Punjab.
The public representatives should play their central role in ensuring the relief to the public in Naan and Roti prices, she concluded.

NA-130: Nawaz Sharif's victory challenged in election tribunal



LAHORE
The victory of PML-N supremo and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif from NA-130 has been challenged in the election tribunal of Lahore High Court (LHC).
The election result of NA-130 was challenged by PTI-backed Dr Yasmin Rashid.
It has been pleaded by the petitioner that the election commission issued the notification of Sharif's victory contrary to the law.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia resolve to promote economic cooperation



ISLAMABAD
Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) on Tuesday reiterated their resolve to build a strong partnership and further promote economic cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries.
This was discussed during a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.
Welcoming the delegation, the president said that Pakistan and KSA enjoyed a long-standing and decades-old relationship and Pakistan wanted to transform the existing ties into a long-term strategic and economic partnership.
The two sides discussed the regional dynamics and recent developments in the Middle East and called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and end to the Israeli atrocities in Gaza.
Both sides also exchanged views on issues of bilateral importance and the challenges being faced by the Muslim Ummah.

The Saudi foreign minister was accompanied by a high-powered delegation, comprising the Minister of Water and Agriculture, the Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources, the Assistant Minister of Investment, the Head of the Saudi Special Committee and senior officials from the Ministry of Energy and Saudi Public Investment Fund.
Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar, Minister for Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan, Minister of Petroleum and Water Resources Musadik Masood Malik, Minister of Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Government Secretary Syrus Sajjad Qazi and senior government officials also attended the meeting.

IHC dismisses Bushra Bibi's plea seeking her shifting to Adiala Jail from Bani Gala



ISLAMABAD
The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday dismissed PTI founder's wife Bushra Bibi's plea seeking her shifting from Bani Gala to Adiala Jail.
The IHC judge dismissed the petition of Bushra Bibi for not pursuing her case. She was incarcerated at Bani Gala after her conviction in Toshakhana and illegal marriage cases.
Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb issued the order.
The court expressed its annoyance at Bushra Bibi's counsels for not attending the hearing. The state counsel told the court that a meeting was arranged between PTI founder and his wife Bushra Bibi on Eid.
Justice Mian Gul Hasan Aurangzeb told the State Council that they did not want Bushra Bibi to be shifted to Adiala Jail from home.
"She has asked for relief, I don't know if she wants it or not. Both sides are playing politics with the court. It is a joke with the court," Justice Gul remarked.
Justice Gul said the court had clarified that it wanted to decide the case after hearing arguments today (Tuesday), but petitioner's counsel failed to appear in court. He said both sides were not working well.
After the application was dismissed, Usman Gill, the lawyer of Bushra Bibi.

Bogus cases against PTI founder exposing system day by day: Ali Amin Gandapur

Gandapur said that one day the people making a new experiment will be exposed.



ISLAMABAD
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister and PTI leader Ali Amin Gandapur said on Tuesday that bogus cases against PTI founder were fake and this system was being exposed day by day.
KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, while talking to media outside the court in Rawalpindi, said, "We respect the judiciary and have appeared before the court. It is necessary to form a commission to probe the allegations leveled by Islamabad High Court judges.
He said beneficiaries of Form 47 were sent to the house by stealing

the mandate of PTI founder. "We and the people stand by the PTI founder. The war will continue until real liberty is achieved."
Gandapur said that one day the people making a new experiment will be exposed.
"What kind of system are you installing in this country? When the conscience of people wakes up, they say such guys are mentally sick. You cannot stop people from speaking truth by instituting fake FIRs," he said.
He said PTI founder will be out very soon and he will be the prime minister of this country. Gandapur said he had been made

the chief minister of a province by the PTI founder. The PTI leader asked the rulers to accept their mistake and avoid pushing the country further into darkness. He said after the letter written by the judges, everything was crystal clear. All the decisions made by courts went against PTI and its founder.
"The rulers have no clue what to do now. They think they will deceive the nation and make them fools," he said.
Earlier, Gandapur appeared in the anti-terrorism court in a case in which his non-bailable arrest warrant was issued.

Need 2-3 years for structural reforms, says FinMin as Pakistan eyes another IMF bailout

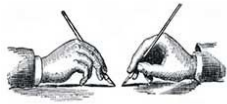
ISLAMABAD
Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said that Pakistan needs two to three years to implement structural reforms prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
Speaking at the Atlantic Council think tank in Washington, Aurangzeb said that Pakistan doesn't need more policy prescriptions as it knows what it needs to keep the economy steady which is implementation of reforms.
"We have known the what and why not for years but for decades. [...] It's time for us to actually start moving the execution of these aspects and why we're looking for a larger and extended program, so once we get into the execution we will need a two to three-year time period to go

through the structural reforms," said Aurangzeb.
The finance minister is currently in the US to hold talks with the global leader for a new bailout package and attend the World Bank meetings.
Aurangzeb said that if Pakistan — which has entered 24 programs with the IMF — doesn't go through the structural reforms, unfortunately, the country would still be looking for another program.
"Now we need permanence in the macroeconomic stability hence the discussion with IMF on a larger and extended program. We are also going to be focused on the growth aspects of it because when you are talking to Fund or you are in a Fund program, it's only about stabilisation."

outlook, Aurangzeb said that Pakistan entered this year in much better shape and a lot of it has to do with the nine-month Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) programme.
He said that the overall GDP was moving in the right direction, agriculture GDP and services sector are doing well inflation has come down from the peak of 37-38% and the exchange rate is stable, adding that all of this has moved the country in the right direction.
"Now we need permanence in the macroeconomic stability hence the discussion with IMF on a larger and extended program. We are also going to be focused on the growth aspects of it because when you are talking to Fund or you are in a Fund program, it's only about stabilisation."



Finance Minister, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, spoke at the Atlantic Council today on the "Opportunities and Challenges for the Pakistani Economy through 2024 and Beyond".



IT, Telecom sector investment opportunities:

Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja has said that there are vast opportunities for investment in the IT and Telecom sector of Pakistan. She said that the present government, under the

vision of the Prime Minister, is committed for the promotion of investment in the country. Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja was talking to CEO Taavun (Pvt) Limited Muhammad

Shahbaz Khan, and CEO Wateen Adil Rashid who called on her here on Tuesday, said a news release. She said that private sector will be fully supported as it has vital role in increasing our exports. About youth, she said youth are our great

asset and the steps are underway for their development. Shaza Fatima appreciated Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan of UAE for his special interest in further investment in Pakistan's Telecom sector.

"From the tension between Israel and Iran"



Tariq Kha Yousafzai

Iran and Israel tensions have created more threats to the Middle East surrounded by conflicts and security concerns. Israel has also targeted Iranian interests and defense facilities several times in the past, but earlier this month, the Iranian consul in Damascus, the capital of Syria. The Israeli attack proved to be like pouring petrol on fire. The diplomatic premises and diplomats are considered safe under the Geneva Convention. It has also undermined the rule and thus added new threats to the world. Targeting the consulate was the kind of provocation from Israel that expected a response, and clearly Iran retaliated. The ultimatum to take was given. However, the statements of the Iranian authorities after this operation seem to indicate that they want to stop and do not want to escalate the conflict. Israel and its allies must also avoid provocative actions, counterattacks from Israel. There is a great fear that this tension will intensify and possibly the allies of both sides may not be able to live without being involved in it. This situation can prove to be a nightmare for the peace of the world. Soon after Iran retaliated Israel's allies, the United States and other allied countries, have strongly condemned Iran's attack. The neutral countries, including the Islamic countries, advised the parties to be patient while reacting cautiously to this matter. In this regard, the statement issued by the Iranian mission in the United

Nations said that this attack is an Israeli aggression in Syria. The answer is. For now, this matter can be considered closed. According to the mission, if Israel made a mistake, Iran's reaction could be even more severe. There was a threat of direct attack from Israel's missile defense system is active and we are ready for both defensive and offensive responses. The Israeli Defense Forces and the people are standing firm. After these attacks, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, expressed his concern about the attack on Israel by Iran, saying that he was a large-scale attack on Israel by Iran. Condemn. According to him, there is a risk of catastrophic tension in the region, which he urges all parties to show restraint in order to prevent it. In order to avoid any action that could lead to a major military conflict on multiple fronts in the Middle East. US President Joe Biden has said that the US has helped Israel in thwarting the Iranian attack, but the decision on a coordinated diplomatic response against Iran will be decided at the G7 meeting on Sunday. According to him, the United States stands with Israel with iron determination and the way it faced Iran's extraordinary attacks is admirable. While the lessons of the United States, President Trump said that if I were the president of the United States, Iran would attack. He does not dare to, besides, Israel has been told by the United States to talk to the United States before any action. China has also expressed deep concern. The spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China has said in his statement on Sunday that China is deeply concerned about the growing tension in the Middle East. The community especially asks influential countries to play a

constructive role for peace and stability in the region. Other countries including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, Russia, Great Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, European Union, Denmark and Various South American countries have also expressed their concern over the situation after the Iranian attack and emphasized on reducing the tension. He had warned that the attack on the Iranian consulate in Syria would further increase the already ongoing tension in the region. According to the statement, the current situation shows the failure of global diplomacy. It also clarifies the serious implications where the UN Security Council is unable to fulfill its responsibilities to maintain international peace and security. There is a dire need. We call on all parties to exercise utmost restraint and move towards de-escalation. Before these attacks, large-scale casualties were expected, but after the low casualties, many questions are being raised. It is better not to mention them. However, it is common language that all this has happened under a very big plan. The effects of which will appear soon. It is being felt after these attacks. That large-scale geographical and political changes can be expected in the region. Which can disturb the entire region. Before this situation arises that there is a loss of human lives on a large scale, the countries of the region, especially China and Russia, should find solutions to the problems facing the region, including the Palestine issue, and present it to the Security Council. And until the problem is resolved, the Security Council should stop both countries from new adventures. If any country violates it, the whole world should take action against it se

Justice: A Rarity in Pakistan

Muhammad Irfan Nadeem,

Our sacred religion stands for justice and puts emphasis that the justice should be ensured at any cost. But, I am hard pressed to say, that justice has become a rarity in our dear homeland and people go the way of all flesh waiting to get their rights back, but their wish for justice is never fulfilled. As a nation, we have fallen to the nadir and have been dragged to perdition by just a few power freaks, who have hijacked every institute, every organization and, as a matter of fact, the whole system triumphantly, proudly and remorselessly. It is very widely said that justice delayed is justice denied, but I don't have even a meager sense of doubt in saying that those wise people would surely hang themselves publicly, if they had seen the negation, exploitation and prevailing injustice at our dear motherland, because it doesn't even exist here, not to speak of the delayed one. The judgment day will get them paid for their sins and crimes; the pricks of conscience won't let them sleep comfortably and peacefully: sinners will go to hell and lose the peace of mind; there is no sacred reward for them are definitely true statements and sum up our religious teachings, but unfortunately this is the only solace for the poor, weaker, hopeless and helpless community of our country. It never hurts the exploiters and cheap-spirited power hungry and cruel big guns ruling over us for decades. True solace is like a cry for the moon. Should we wait for the miracle, revolution or divine interference? We are victimized by those who are meant to bring justice, peace, prosperity and satisfaction for us. Who will shake the unshakable? Who will shatter the un-shakable powerful giants? Even the callous and insensible brutes won't be able to resist shedding blood tears, if they sit alone and ponder upon the murder of justice committed at Pakistan, because insensibility, cruelty and callousness of our system is beyond imagination in civilized countries and nations. It is a big shock for the

educated, sensible and patriotic individuals of our country that justice is like an LED and it displays its splendor according to the will, wishes and desires of those who have got the remote. Have you ever imagined remote system of justice? Not to speak of imagining, it's a bitter reality in our country where non-existence of justice has become a proven fact. High asylum of justice is a sacred pillar of our state, but sanctity is deflowered everyday by the power giants and remedy for this cancerous disease seems impossible to be found in this era of darkness. Have we been thrown back to the stone-age? I won't hesitate to assert that even during the ages of darkness, justice wouldn't have been violated the way it is being torn into pieces during the 21st century in the country which emerged on the face of this earth with the power of the sacred slogan. With the unbearable pain and grief, I am forced to say that non-existence of justice has snatched away all hopes of peace, security, satisfaction and fulfillment. Hopeless nation is compelled to be contented with the violations, because when existence seems improbable, people start thinking about survival at the cost of freedom and justice. Our respected judges are threatened, blackmailed and humiliated and they finally succumbed, because pressure gets on their nerves and they lure their conscience to deep slumber. All are not brave enough to stare into eyes of the challenges, fear and threats and stand tall. Some others happily sell their integrity and announce the decision according to the whims and desires of those who grease their palms. We are not surprised, when we feel that justice is the dream which is not meant to be realized in our day to day affairs. It doesn't matter, it is a university, office, institute or any organization, justice is seen beheaded with an enormous magnitude and an amazing speed and consistency. Clowns rule and the intellectuals are suppressed. Shirkers get promoted and the gifted, efficient, hardworking and

talented workers receive letters of grave concern, warnings and show cause notices, because justice is not the part of the system. Undue favors have eaten up the rights of the deserving individuals. Violation of rules and regulations is the order of the day and the fittest remain busy in the struggle of surviving the odds which are always against them. The rule of injustice has got very debilitating, horrific and demotivating impacts, but we are in the dark tunnel and there is no hope of the light. The honest people have to ensure unconditional subordination, otherwise, they are threatened to pay through the nose. The most threatening result of the non-existence of justice is that it snatches away the impetus to work. It deprives the workplaces of the commitment, motivation, determination, because lack of justice and the perturbing happenings leave behind the demotivated shirkers. Loss of inspiration has a killing impact and the blame goes to injustice. Our nation has forgotten the fact that countries, nations and organizations never flourish without ensuring justice in each and every aspect of life. Our problem is that cruelty and injustice has wiped out positivity and we encounter negativity in each department. When injustice arrives through the door of an institute and organization, peace of mind, satisfaction, sense of achievement and most importantly, positivity jump out of the widow. I very passionately and optimistically hope that the scholars, intellectuals and brilliant minds of our nation will sit together someday and they won't just pine over the devastating, debilitating and deplorable situations and happenings, they will do something practically and look for the real solutions to bring back the greatest blessing of justice back to our country. Situation may be disturbing, but we are not supposed to lose courage. We are not supposed to lose hope. We will have to bring optimism back to our lives. Long live Pakistan!

Military warns of stern action against 'malicious propaganda targeting armed forces'

RAWALPINDI:

Expressing concerns over the malicious propaganda against armed forces during 26th Corps Commanders' Conference, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Tuesday vowed ensuring stern action against elements trying to drive a wedge between the nation and the security forces by levelling unfounded and baseless allegations. The forum paid tribute to the supreme sacrifices of martyrs including officers and men of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and the citizens who have laid their lives for peace and stability in the country. "Unfounded and baseless allegations on law enforcement agencies and security forces have

become a fashion and are part of the larger design to drive a wedge between the people and the Armed Forces of Pakistan," the forum noted. "We will not allow such efforts to succeed and as per the law and constitution, stern action will be ensured," the forum vowed. The army's top brass reiterated resolve to provide full support to the government towards achieving sustainable socioeconomic growth in the country including wholehearted assistance in countering the illegal spectrum, particularly smuggling, hoarding, electricity theft and safe repatriation of all illegal foreigners. The army chief appreciated the untiring efforts of Pakistan Army and LEAs in successfully thwarting several terrorist attacks and

neutralising key terrorist commanders during ongoing counterterrorism operations. He directed commanders to proactively deny any space to the terrorists, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. The COAS said, "Armed forces and LEAs of Pakistan, fully backed by the resilient nation, remain determined to permanently eliminate this menace from Pakistan, INSHA'ALLAH". The forum also condemned heartless terrorist attack against Chinese nationals in Besham, as well as heinous killings of innocent civilians in Balochistan. The commanders were briefed on how terrorist groups operating from Afghanistan pose a threat to regional and global security,



Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a meeting with CEO Taavun (Pvt) Limited Muhammad Shahbaz Khan, and CEO Wateen Adil Rashid in Islamabad on April 16, 2024.



Incompetence of MC staff; standing water of sewers at General Bus Stand creates chaos

Due to the incompetence of the municipal corporation staff, the water of sewers standing in places at Punjab's first model general bus stand have started to present a scene of chaos. Diseases and rot are spreading at the bus stand. There has been a wave of anger among the shopkeepers, which has completely affected their business. Passengers are also facing serious

problems in coming and going to the bus stand. The Sargodha administration has become a silent spectator to the current situation. Even after the shopkeepers of the General Bus Stand made several requests to Commissioner Ajmal Bhatti and Deputy Commissioner Captain retired Shoaib Ali, the staff of the Municipal Corporation did not take any action. The shopkeepers say that our business has been completely closed due to the

standing dirty water of the sewers for a long time. Various diseases are also born from this water. Malik Abu Bakr Awan, General Secretary of Anjuman Tajran of General Bus Stand, has requested that Prime Minister of Pakistan Shahbaz Sharif and Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz should take action on the issue of General Bus Stand and change the incompetent officers.

29th International Mushaira of Saknan-e-Shahr Quaid to be held on April 20 at Expo Center

Soon Times Correspondent Karachi:

The 29th International Mushaira of Saknan-e-Shahr Quaid will be held on Saturday, April 20 at 8 pm at the Expo Center Karachi, in which local and international poets will present their poetry. Thousands of people will participate in the Mushaira. Stalls of books and food will be set up in Mushaira, while no entry fee will be charged. Free parking facility will also be available. Secretary Shoaib Ahmed, Jamal Azhar, Nadeem Zafar Siddiqui, Tauqeer Ahmad Khan, Turab Shah and others while addressing a press conference at the press club said that in the mushaira, Aqeel Danish from British, Basit Ali, Farah Iqbal, Khalid Irfan, Atif Tauqeer from Germany, Ahmad Adil from Germany, Rehana Qamar, Mehboob Khan from Bahrain, Fatima Zahra from Canada, Samreen Nadeem Samar from Qatar, Tabish Zaidi from United Arab Emirates will come and participate in the Mushaira. While the arrival of Senator Irfan Siddiqui, Attalul Haq Qasmi, Khurshed Rizvi, Abbas Tabish, Fawad Hussain Fawad, Syed Sardar Ali Shah, Shakeel Jazeb, Wasee Shah, Ahmed Solangi, Munir Momin, Tauqeer A. Khan and Waheed Noor from

country is expected. It is expected that in Karachi Prof. Sahar Ansari, Dr. Pirzada Qasim Raza Siddiqui, Anwar Shahab, Mahmood Sham, Rehana R. Waheed, Javed Sabah, Khalid Moin, Seema Ghazal, Nasra Zuberi, Shaista Mufti, Sabbeen Saif, Muhammad Ali Gohar, Dr. Mana Uzmi, Farrukh Izhar and Waleed Ahmed will present their speech. Ambreen Haseeb Amber, Vijaya Sani and Agha Shiraza will perform the administrative duties. Commissioner Karachi, Mayor Karachi, Home Department and other relevant institutions are cooperating fully. They said that the special thing about Mushaira is that poets from all four provinces will participate in it. More than 40 poets are expected. He said that the media has an important role in making the mushaira successful.



Billions of foreign exchange can be earned from salt industry: DG, TDAP Athar Hussain Khokhar



Government patronage is essential to export pink salt worldwide. Billions of foreign exchange can be earned from the salt industry through linkages between traders and institutions. Government institutions should start one-window operation to

solve the problems of traders. The implementation on exporting Pakistan's pink salt to the US has started. These views were expressed by DG, TDAP Athar Hussain Khokhar and others while addressing the seminar organized by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan. On this occasion, DG, TDAP Athar Hussain Khokhar said, for the

awareness of export of pink salt, TDAP is organizing seminars in collaboration with Chambers of Commerce across Pakistan and its website to solve the problems faced by the exporters. President Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Sajid Hussain Tarar said, it is the need of the hour to allow the exporters to export salt worldwide easily and at low cost rates. President Small Chamber Dr. Imtiaz Dogar said, export of pink salt by the government is a good initiative which will bring income to the country. Executive member of Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Exporter Asif Naser Gondal informed about the difficulties in exporting salt faced by the traders and said that the government should immediately solve these problems.

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



The Good-Neighbourliness, 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: Ms Wang Yan; Email: sunnywang@sartfair.com and other information, please follow the Facebook page of China Cultural Center in Pakistan, facebook 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.



Minister for Defence -Khawaja Muhammad Asif, presenting a shield to H.E Mr. Mehmet Pacaci, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye, in Islamabad (16-04-2024)

Crackdown against Gas pilferers; SNGPL disconnected 74 connections, imposed fine of Rs 2.55 million

During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad. It disconnected 74 connections and imposed fine of Rs 2.55 million in Multan, the regional team disconnected 03 connections on illegal use of gas. In Peshawar team disconnected 45 connections on illegal use of gas and booked Rs 1.61 million against gas theft cases. It Lodged 07 FIRs against gas thieves. In Rawalpindi & Islamabad the team disconnected 05 connections on illegal use of gas and booked Rs 0.21 million against gas theft cases. In Bahawalpur the regional team disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of

gas. In Mardan, the regional team disconnected 10 connections on illegal use of gas. The team also imposed fine of Rs 0.44 million against gas theft cases. In Faisalabad the regional team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas and imposed fine of Rs 0.02 million against gas theft cases. In Gujranwala, team disconnected 03 connections on illegal use of gas and imposed fine of Rs 0.27 million against gas theft cases. In Sargodha, team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas. In Gujrat, team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas. In Sahiwal, team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas and lodged 01 FIR against gas thief.



A review meeting of the Fertilizer Review Committee was held under the chairmanship of Rana Tanveer Hussain Federal Minister for M/o Industries & Production and M/o National Food Security & Research.

IESCO Power Suspension Schedule for Today:

According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule On 17th April 2024, From 08:00 AM to 1:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Islamabad Club-I, Shahzad Town/Mahfooz Shaheed, Scheme-II, Filtration Plant, Bani Gala, Athal, Shahpur, Treat, T&P, Bharakahu-II, NIH, Bharakahu-I, I-11/2 Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle,

Alamabad, Gulshanabad, Mangatal, Ratta, Zeeshan Colony, Qasim Market, B Block, Jama Masjid, Dhok Khaba, Kamal Abad Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Shah, Dandut Feeders, From 08:00 AM to 05:00 PM, GSO Circle, Tatta Pani, Sehansa, City-II, Fatehpur, Cheruhi, City-I, Nad, Khoi Ratta and surrounding areas will remain closed. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

Head says Hyderabad eyeing 300, Bengaluru's Maxwell takes a break



NEW DELHI
After breaking the Indian Premier League's highest total record for a second time this season by racking up 287 runs on Monday, Sunrisers Hyderabad are now looking to breach the 300-mark, their in-form opener Travis Head said.

Hyderabad set a new mark last month by posting 277-3 against Mumbai Indians but bettered that by making 287-3 against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, the Pat Cummins-led side winning the match by 25 runs.

Head set the tone against Bengaluru with a fiery 102 off 41 balls while South African Heinrich Klaasen made a breezy 67. "Our total needs a three in front of it, does it now?" Head said at the end of the Hyderabad innings on Monday.

"We've got guys like Klaasen, (Abdul) Samad and Nitish (Kumar Reddy)... We've got some power through the middle, and we want to keep just putting the foot down as much as we can.

"We know that's not always guaranteed, but at the moment I think we're setting it up really well in each game and getting to the score that we need."

Former champions Hyderabad are now fourth in the points table following their fourth win in six matches.

Bengaluru, led by South African Faf du Plessis, dropped to the bottom of the 10-team league following their sixth defeat in seven matches.

Pride and hype as F1 roars back to China after Covid absence



Shanghai
Two years ago the Shanghai International Circuit hosted a Covid Formula One once more as the sport returns to China for the first time since the pandemic.

Adding to the excitement of fans, they will see Shanghai native Zhou Guanyu drive a his home track in Formula One for the first time.

"I'm extremely excited, in these 5,000 years of (Chinese) history there has only been one Zhou Guanyu," said fan Wang Xiaotian.

Shanghai last witnessed an F1 race in 2019, before Covid and China's travel restrictions put a halt to almost all major international sport in the country.

Tickets for the action-packed Formula One weekend -- which begins with Friday morning practice, sees a sprint race on Saturday and ends with the grand prix on Sunday -- sold out within minutes of going on sale in January.

Slater remanded in police custody on charges of assault and stalking



SYDNEY (Web Desk)
Former Australia Test cricketer Michael Slater has been remanded in police custody after being charged with more than a dozen offences.

Slater, 54, had his case mentioned in Maroochydore Magistrates Court on Monday.

He is facing 19 charges relating to alleged offences perpetrated on Queensland's Sunshine Coast on various dates between December 5, 2023 and April 12, 2024.

The charges include domestic violence offences of unlawful stalking or intimidation, breaking into a dwelling with intent at night, common assault, assault occasioning bodily harm and choking or suffocation.

The former opening batter and TV commentator was also charged with breaching bail and ten counts of contravening a domestic violence order.

Police confirmed they arrested a 54-year-old Noosa Heads man at a Sunshine Coast address on Friday following alleged domestic violence incidents over several days.

Slater has been remanded in custody with the case due to be mentioned in the same court on Tuesday.



Israel's military chief says that Israel will respond to Iran's weekend missile attack

The U.S. has urged Israel to show restraint as it seeks to build a broad diplomatic response.

JERUSALEM
Israel's military chief said Monday that his country will respond to Iran's weekend attack, but he did not elaborate on when and how as world leaders urged against retaliation, trying to avoid a spiral of violence in the Middle East.

The Iranian attack on Saturday came in response to a suspected Israeli strike two weeks earlier on an Iranian consular building in the Syrian capital of Damascus that killed two Iranian generals. It marked the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iran launched hundreds of drones, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles at Israel in the attack. The Israeli military said that 99% of the drones and missiles were intercepted, by Israel's own air defenses and warplanes and in coordination with a U.S.-led coalition of partners.

Israeli military chief Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi said Monday that Israel is considering its next steps but that the Iranian strike "will be met with a response."

Halevi gave no details. The army's spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said Israel will respond "at the time that we choose."

Both men spoke at the Neveatim air base in southern Israel, which Hagari said suffered only light damage in the Iranian attack.

Iran says any action against its interests will get a 'painful' response



DUBAI
Iran will respond to any action against its interests, President Ebrahim Raisi said on Tuesday, according to the Iranian Student News Agency, a day after Israel warned it will respond to Tehran's weekend drone and missile attack.

"We categorically declare that the smallest action against Iranian interests will certainly be met with a severe, widespread and painful response against any perpetrator," Raisi told the Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

Israel's military Chief of Staff, Herzi Halevi, said on Monday that Iran's attack on Israel - which was a retaliation after the April 1 bombing of the Iranian embassy compound in Damascus - warranted a response.

Iran's deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani told state TV on Monday night that Tehran's counteroffensive following any Israeli retaliation would be "a matter of seconds as Iran will not wait for another 12 days to respond."

Israel still imposing 'unlawful' restrictions on Gaza aid, UN rights office says



GENEVA
Israel is still imposing "unlawful" restrictions on humanitarian relief for Gaza, the UN human rights office said on Tuesday, despite assertions from Israel and others that restrictions have eased.

Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip

triggered by it a massive cross-border attacks on Oct. 7 has turned much of the Gaza strip into a wasteland, with hundreds of thousands of people now displaced and crowded into the southern corner of the enclave.

The amount of aid now entering Gaza is disputed, with Israel and Washington saying aid flows have risen in recent days but UN agencies say it is still far below bare minimum levels required to meet basic needs.

"Israel continues to impose unlawful restrictions on the entry and distribution of humanitarian assistance, and to carry out widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure," said Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the UN human rights office, at a press briefing in Geneva, reiterating calls for unfettered aid access.

Israel, which denies hindering humanitarian relief to Gaza, has faced increased international pressure to let more supplies into the Gaza Strip since it hit an aid convoy on April 1, killing international relief workers.



Heavy rains lash UAE and surrounding nations as the death toll in Oman flooding rises to 18

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates
Heavy rains lashed the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday, flooding out portions of major highways and leaving vehicles abandoned on roadways across Dubai.

Meanwhile, the death toll in separate heavy flooding in neighboring Oman rose to 18 with others still missing as the sultanate prepared for the storm.

The rains began overnight, leaving massive ponds on streets as whipping winds disrupted flights at Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel and the home of the long-haul carrier Emirates.

Police and emergency personnel drove slowly through the flooded streets, their emergency lights flashing across the darkened morning. Lightning flashed across the sky, occasionally touching the tip of the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building.

Schools across the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms, largely shut ahead of the storm and government employees were largely working remotely if able.

Many workers stayed home as well, though some ventured out, with the unfortunate stalling out their vehicles in deeper-than-expected water covering some roads.

Authorities sent tanker trucks out into the streets and highways to pump away the water.

Rain is unusual in the UAE, an arid, Arabian Peninsula nation, but occurs periodically during the cooler winter months. Many roads and other areas lack drainage given the lack of regular rainfall, causing flooding.

Initial estimates suggested over 30 millimeters (1 inch) of rain fell over the morning in Dubai, with as much as 128 mm (5 inches) of rain expected throughout the day.

Rain also fell in Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

In neighboring Oman, a sultanate that rests on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, at least 18 people had been killed in heavy rains in recent days, according to a statement Tuesday from the country's National Committee for Emergency Management.

That includes some 10 schoolchildren swept away in a vehicle with an adult, which saw condolences come into the country from rulers across the region.

India's Lok Sabha election 2024: What are the key issues?



NEW DELHI
Nearly one billion Indians will be eligible to vote in the world's biggest election starting this month. Opinion polls predict an easy win for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which would give him a record-eighth straight term.

Here are some of the key issues in the elections to 543 seats in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament, that will be held in seven phases between April 19 and June 1, with vote counting on June 4.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INFLATION
India's economy is expected to have grown by about 8% in the last fiscal year ended March 31, the fastest among major countries.

In the past decade under Modi, the Indian economy has jumped five places to the fifth position in the world and he has "guaranteed" to lift it to third position should he win the election. One of the

highlights of the Modi era has been gleaming roads and bridges across the country, including in and around New Delhi and Mumbai, its two major cities.

Fruits of the booming economy, however, are more visible in the cities than in the vast countryside. A sharp price rise has also been a concern.

Retail inflation in 2022-23 accelerated to 6.7% from 5.5% in 2021-22, and 6.2% the year ago. Annual retail inflation was 5.09% in February.