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SC won't sit idle on Punjab polls verdict if govt-PTI talks fail: CJP

Short-term inflation hits record high of 48.35pc

2 coal miners trapped inside a coal mine in Dukka Balochistan

Hussain Zarkoon

DUKKA At least two coal miners were trapped inside a coal mine in Balochistan's Dukka district.

Other coal miners managed to come out of the mine. However, the two coal miners were trapped since they were extracting coal from very deep, levies sources said.

"It has been 12 hours since our colleagues are trapped"

"It has been 12 hours since our colleagues are trapped" the Muhammad Zaman, a mine worker told the Daily Quetta Voice. He said so far there were no rescue teams or officials of the mines department to ensure the unhurt recovery of the miners.

However, Colone Noaman of the Frontier Corps (FC) along with other FC personnel reached the affected mine to make sure the recovery of the trapped miners.

Levies sources said both the trapped coal miners belong to the Killa Saifullah district of Balochistan.



Students organizations challenge closure of UoB in BHC

Manan Mandokhail

QUETTA: Students organizations challenged the continued closure of the University of Balochistan (UoB) in the Balochistan High Court (BHC) on Friday.

In their petition, the students' organizations challenged the fee received by the university administration without classes and demanded the pending results. The petitioners also challenged the continued closure of the UoB and termed it a violation of a fundamental right.

Students demand the court to direct the government to resume classes

The student organization of the

BHC to direct the government have been protesting against the non-payment



and the university administration to resume studies and avoid wasting the precious time of the students.

Employees and faculty members protesting for the last two months

Employees and faculty members of the UoB

of salaries for the last more than three months. They are deprived of their salaries. Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo had directed the finance department to issue salaries of the employees and faculty members before Eid ul Fitr Professor Kaleem Barez of the Academic Staff Association said that the government should solve the issue on a permanent basis and that the employees and teachers should not be on the roads every day.

Afghan foreign minister Muttaqi arrives in Islamabad on 4-day visit

Acting Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi arrived in Islamabad on Friday on a four-day visit for talks on security, economic and trade issues.

Prior to his departure from Kabul, Afghan Foreign Minister Deputy Spokesman Hafiz Zia Takki said FM Muttaqi will lead a "comprehensive political and trade delegation."

The Afghan government wants to hold wide-ranging bilateral talks on political, economic relations, regional security and transit, he added.

A day earlier, the Foreign Office (FO) had said that Muttaqi will lead a high-level delegation, which includes the Acting Minister for Commerce and Industry Haji Nooruddin Azizi, and senior officials from the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Transport and Trade.

The FO had also said the two sides will review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan in the political, economic,



trade, connectivity, peace and security, and education domains. Apart from holding bilateral meetings, the acting

Afghan foreign minister will also participate in the fifth China-Pakistan-Afghanistan Trilateral Foreign

Ministers' Dialogue on May 6.

State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China Qin Gang, who will also participate in the trilateral foreign ministers' dialogue, arrived in Islamabad earlier today in a tweet today. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari confirmed that bilateral and trilateral meetings will be held with his Afghan Chinese counterparts tomorrow (Saturday). Since its launch in 2017, the trilateral dialogue mechanism has achieved remarkable results and has become an important platform for the three countries to enhance understanding and deepen mutual trust and cooperation. The dialogue this time is taking place at a time when cross-border attacks from Afghanistan are on the rise and an estimated 150 attacks have been carried out by terrorists in 2022, using Afghan soil.

Lightning kills 3 in Mastung Balochistan

From Our Correspondent

Lightning claimed three lives in Balochistan's Mastung district on Friday. Levies sources said a lightning strike in the Lak Pass area of Mastung claimed three lives. One person was seriously injured as a result of the lightning strike.



The injured person was rushed to the Shaheed Nawab Ghous Bakhti Rainsay Hospital for medical treatment. The dead bodies were also brought to the hospital.

Onus is on India to build conducive environment for talks, says FM Bilawal

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Friday that the onus was on India to build a "conducive environment for talks", as he contended that dialogue between the two countries was hurt by New Delhi's decision to end occupied Kashmir's special status.

He passed these remarks on the second day of his visit to Goa, where he attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) meeting.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting, Bilawal said that the PPP had always advocated normalisation of relations with India, that the latter's "unilateral and illegal" actions pertaining to held Kashmir on August 5, 2019, had violated international law. United Nations resolutions and bilateral agreements.

Hence, he stated, it was



Pakistan's "principled position that the status quo of August 4, 2019, was withdrawn as India's actions had 'really undermined the environment and now the onus is on India that they create the conducive environment in which talks can be held'".

Bilawal said there was a "trust deficit" ever since India violated previous agreements, asserting that there will be no change in the policy on diplomatic relations with India till the latter reverted to Kashmir's position on August 4, 2019. Web Desk

Short-term inflation hits record high of 48.35pc

Weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Index (SPI) rose to an unprecedented 48.35 per cent year-on-year (YoY) for the combined income group for the week ending on May 4, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) on Friday.

Prior to this, the highest-ever percentage of short-term inflation year-on-year was recorded for the week ending on April 19 at 47.23pc. As for the week ending on May 4, PBS data showed that short-term inflation increased by 1.05pc week-on-week (WoW) as a "major



increase" was seen in the prices of chicken, potatoes, powdered milk, pulses, eggs, turmeric and bread. Meanwhile, non-food items, including footwear and soaps, also became costlier. The SPI monitors the prices of 51 essential

items based on a survey of 50 markets in 17 cities across the country. During the week under review, the prices of 30 items increased, nine decreased and 12 remained unchanged. The year-on-year SPI has been steadily on the

rise since August last year and remained mostly above 40pc. It rose to 42.31pc on August 18 last year, followed by 45.5pc on September 1 that year and 46.65pc during the week ending March 22 before hitting an all-time high of 47.23pc for the week ending April 19 this year. Moreover, the SPI has also mostly increased since the start of Ramadan because of the record rupee devaluation, costly petrol prices, a decrease in sales tax and higher electricity charges. One of the factors for the increase in prices of perishable products is due to the higher transportation charges. Web Desk

SC won't sit idle on Punjab polls verdict if govt-PTI talks fail: CJP

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial said on Friday that the Supreme Court may not "sit idle" on its order on holding elections in Punjab on May 14 if the talks between the government and the PTI failed.

He passed these remarks as the top court resumed hearing a petition pertaining to one-day elections following three-day negotiations between the federal coalition and the opposition to agree on a specific date for nationwide polls.

After the negotiations came to an end on Tuesday, the PTI submitted a report to the court stating that no resolution was reached and requested that the court enforce its April 4 order regarding elections in Punjab.

In the last hearing on April 27, the three-member Supreme Court bench comprising CJP Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar — also made it clear to the negotiating parties that its April 4 order on Punjab Assembly elections had remained unchanged.

During today's proceedings, the chief justice said that the government and the PTI could continue the negotiations "if both the parties were interested" but at the same time expressed displeasure over their "lack of interest" in a substantial dialogue.

He also said that the court only had to see if both sides could agree on a date for elections, adding that the SC's responsibility was to uphold the



law and Constitution. After conducting a hearing that lasted nearly two hours, the proceeding was adjourned, with the CJP saying that an appropriate order will be issued. The hearing attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Awan, PPP lawyer Farooq H. Naek, PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi, PML-N's Khawaja Saad Rafique and others were present as the proceeding commenced today. At the outset of the hearing, the PPP counsel read out loud the coalition government's report on talks with the opposition which was submitted earlier today — in court. In its reply, the government stated that a "major breakthrough" was achieved during the dialogue.

The CJP noted that the response had been signed by the finance minister, emphasising the importance of political leadership in resolving political issues. Additionally, he pressed on the significance of ongoing discussion with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The matter in court is constitutional, not political," the top judge remarked, stressing that the SC had left political matters to political parties. He then asked why the approval of the IMF agreement and trade policy were important, to which Naek replied: "Getting the IMF loan is key for the budget." Web Desk

# The curse of narcotics in Balochistan

Editor Asim Khan

The curse of narcotics has ruined our society. Thousands of young people feel prey to the curse of heroin during the last four decades in Balochistan, Pakistan's least developed province. In Quetta, it is very difficult to walk on Jinnah Road because of the young heroin addicts begging and snatching things on the roadside.

First, they (addicts) beg and then try to snatch anything from mobiles to watches and purses from women. Such incidents have frequently taken a place with addicts snatching purses, mobiles, etc., and sneaking into the main city nullah, which snakes through Quetta's high-security zone.

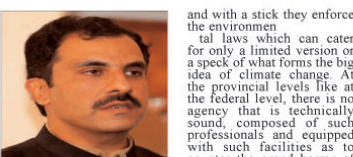
This situation prompted the Quetta police and the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) to launch an operation in the main nullah the other day. CTD and police claimed to have killed eight alleged drug peddlers during an exchange of fire. This was for the first time that police and CTD conducted such a targeted operation.

**Fate of thousands of addicts still shrouded in mystery**  
However, the fate of thousands of young addicts still shrouds in mystery as the government is yet to make a plan for their complete rehabilitation. The challenge for the government is to stop the narcotics smuggling from Afghanistan and rehabilitate the addicts.

Officially an awareness campaign on social media, radio, newspapers, and TV channels should be launched to create awareness among the people about the curse of narcotics. This would be a good initiative to prevent the youth from falling prey to drugs.

**History of heroin dates back to USSR invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.**  
The menace of narcotics in general and heroin, in particular, dates back to the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan at the end of December 1979.

The war in Afghanistan had and has direct impacts on Pakistan in general and Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces in particular. It is a common saying that 'Kalamkwe' or Kalamkwe is the product of the Afghan war, which distorted the true tolerant face of the two provinces.



Pakistan is threatened with the challenges of climate change. Be it global standing or regional vulnerability caused due to climatic trends, Pakistan is at the forefront of the red line. This is so alarming as much as it is so interesting. Is there someone looking after climate change at the provincial or federal level in Pakistan? There is none.

The Ministry of Climate Change at the federal level is downplayed to act only as a regulator and one that has the technical capacity to still maneuver only into the limitations of checking the quality of ambient air. Similarly, at the provincial levels, there are environmental protection agencies that look after the conformity of environmental culture in various sectors contributing to certain types of pollutants. These provincial agencies act as regulators

and with a stick they enforce the environment laws which cater for only a limited version of a speck of what forms the big idea of climate change. At the provincial level, there is no agency that is technically sound, composed of such professionals and equipped with such facilities as to counter the grand horror of climate change.

The climate change data being collected at the provincial level. As for the data and statistics, there is as much fragmentation and silos approach as much as it is in the intergovernmental coordination of climate change. The question is not of the dearth of amplexness of data however it is how the data is made available and how the provincial-level one could ensure that any climate-oriented data is being collected.

The mentioned agencies only ensure the quality of air by recording the various gaseous emissions in the ambient air. The Provincial Meteorological Centers throughout the country pick up conventional weather data and disseminate it. The data is translated into making a meaningful statement on where we stand on climate change at any given time.

As for policies, laws, rules and regulations, we are more than the developed nations. When it comes to drafting policies, orders are worth writing to our experts but when given to them on the ground being implemented, only darkened eulogies are symphonized at shrieks ad infinitum. The laws are being multiplied each day and have become as difficult as to remember the exact number of laws on one single sector.

The National Climate Change Policy 2011 remains a document of the past pushed to nullity though it was the vital document that elevated the Division of Climate Change to the Ministry level yet the promising implementation never has come off until this date.

Developed nations have yet the NCCP grants the legitimacy to the Ministry of Climate Change to wreathe the provinces with a green and an orange garland of beautiful working and legal integration to manage the national issues. The Climate Change Act 2017 was another move towards climate consolidation. It promised to establish the Pakistan Climate Change Authority, Climate Change Council, and Climate Change Fund all of which

Muhammad Jehangir Kakar

was last time seen in 2017 when the said Act was passed. The year 2020 remains a virgin vision thus far.

Ministry of Climate Change must realize that it is the organization at the federal level entirely responsible for catering for climate change affairs. The integration of such a central body with the provinces would be the next challenge given to over politicization of everything. Climate is something which should not be made political though globally it is something which has become an element of political decisiveness as in the Biden-Trump phase.

Nature and nurture along with the potential of Pak-Met office and reach are to be integrated and enhanced. The provincial level with the climate change organizations so formed above.

It is the provinces that should be enhanced and made up to the mark as being internationality acceptable with proper scientific methods and applications of data. A lot must be done to keep the generalists away from making any decisions on the climate change and the professionals are given the entry who have both the capacity and the legitimacy.

# The reforms industry Continuity and change

By Fozia Sadiq Khan

In Pakistan since the coalition government has some space, there is a whole reforms industry that has crept up. Some of the sentiments are genuine as Pakistan has been delaying structural reforms of its economy for a long time. However, the kind of narrative coming out on political reforms appears to be quite rhetorical.

Some propose replacing the existing parliamentary form of democracy with a presidential system, while others point out that the system should be proportional representation instead of the present first-past-the-post system. Some also state that mainstream political parties are being run as fiefdoms and 'monarchies', and they should be organized along democratic lines. A few sensible suggestions are also made - like implementing a cap on campaign financing and

My counter-question to all these coming out of the campaign finance reform is that if you really want to change the political system, then stop coming up with lousy conjectures and every passing day that really puts the other two countries in a more prominent position.

India has turned into a Hindu majoritarian country where discrimination against minorities is being embedded in the constitution. In such a society, Pakistan too has suffered similar crises. The BJP's divisive rule is largely being bankrolled by Big Business which is also the immediate benefactor of the regime. Yet, India's foreign currency reserves were over \$500 billion a few days ago according to Reuters. Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves were \$28 billion in January 2023 according to CEIC Data. Compare it to Pakistan's \$4 billion foreign exchange reserves.

India and Bangladesh are parliamentary democracies with a strong first-past-the-post system, and both countries have high corruption. A lot of politicians in Pakistan are facing court cases just like in Pakistan. So why are we still in the same system? The quality of politicians is neither better nor worse all over the South and Central Asia. In Pakistan, then stop coming up with lousy conjectures and every passing day that really puts the other two countries in a more prominent position.

representation - and not any of their half-baked reforms narrative being sprouted. The explanation lies elsewhere and is more nuanced than silt wheat from chaff.

Pakistan's history has shown that a performance-based parliamentary democracy system works best for the country. We are a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-regional country. Whenever the country has drifted away from the parliamentary system either in terms of the presidential system or other authoritarian forms, Pakistan has to pay a big political price for such deviations. So the parliamentary system is indeed the glue that holds the country together and it should not be questioned by anyone trying to undermine the system. The other argument is that our political parties are being run as personal fiefdoms, dynasties, or monarchies. This can be fixed by having parties organized along ideological lines. However, it started as an ideological party in Pakistan pumped in power in 2008. The PPP in Sindh is still considered a party that has not performed in power from 2008 to present. In Sindh, the province despite being in power from 2008 to present, has not performed in power from 2008 to present.

Political leaders have an overwhelming role in political structure. Structural reasons. Other countries went through similar transitions for hundreds of years and their structures are different.

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ent, Pakistan is on a different structural trajectory. The current political comparison. It is also a populist party based on a mix of populist and some historical differences.

The good suggestion to come out of the political reformers' narrative is to focus on the campaign finance reform. The role of big money in hijacking the electoral process. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) already has campaign finance monitoring mechanisms. The ECP should stop the development of political parties as it is used to be in the pre-1980s period. Pakistan, MNAs and MPAs should only be elected for legislation and executive oversight. All political parties should be carried out by local governments in collaboration with the provincial and local government bureaucracy.

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# Facing future floods safely Experiencing careers

Dr Afreen Siddiqi

Pakistan's floods of 2022 were the latest, and most damaging addition to the long history of floods in the country. As the muddy waters slowly recede, it is time to speed up action to face future floods safely.

Floods have been the most frequent natural disaster in Pakistan. In the past, money has been poured in building levees and flood embankments. In the past, money has been poured in building levees and flood embankments. In the past, money has been poured in building levees and flood embankments.

The prevailing mindset of flood management has to change. In the past, money has been poured in building levees and flood embankments. In the past, money has been poured in building levees and flood embankments. In the past, money has been poured in building levees and flood embankments.

flood security, leading to relaxation of rules for land-use and construction. The increasing density of habitation. This results in greater exposure to risks and increasing the well-being of farmers who bear the brunt of the damage.

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What are the changes needed in infrastructure to address the interactions of people with their environment? These interactions are governed by physical laws of nature and institutions (policies, rules and norms) devised by humans. There is a need to steer emergent level of flood security towards a desirable state. Second, a systems approach to risk management is needed. The so-called 'goal-seeking' system design to attain desired targets of flood safety and security towards a desirable state.

owners and residents of their flood risks) as well as to inform public about the risks, planning, local evacuation plans for people and movable assets (such as boats) in rural areas can be put in place, and early detection systems can be installed.

Community education programmes that raise awareness about safety and evacuation procedures can be conducted. Actions for urgent storm water passage can be taken. Flood embankment construction and levees for households to live at lower risk areas can be provided. Financial solutions, such as insurance, can be offered to flood owners who contribute towards flood risk compensation when they are not insured.

Such lateral 'rainy-day funds' can be drawn up at the local level. Overall, regular processes for short-term and long-term flood risk assessment and corrective actions can affect flood security. These actions are not as costly as some may think. High resolution, regular satellite imagery from earth-observing satellites can be used to identify high-risk areas. Within Pakistan, the capacity for geospatial data analysis and flood risk mapping.

here are quite a few ways to look at the recent history of the country. One of these ways is to apply the lens of continuity and change to analyze them. On the balance, the country has seen continuity and a little change as well.

Imran Khan, the leader of the PML-N, has offered to hold dialogue with 'anyone' for the sake of the national development, interests and democracy of Pakistan, through social media. This is for the first time since 2011, when Khan was launched in a big way on the national stage. The country, that he has offered to hold dialogue with 'anyone' for the sake of the national development, interests and democracy of Pakistan, through social media.

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# Experiencing careers

By Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani

When I finalized the decision to organize a fair in the last days of March this year, we had issues in the morning at the right place for the right job. Many talented young people were coming forward with their hands are approaching institutions where they are not needed while many institutions are not getting suitable candidates for the required qualifications and expertise.

Such a critical situation inevitably has a negative impact not only on our national economy but also results in several problems in failing desired outcomes. The rate of inflation and unemployment are also causing mental stress, especially among the educated youth. Currently, several economic activities have been severely affected due to unfavourable conditions in the global level. The financial crisis has a direct impact on the national economy, which university students are facing various uncertainties about their future.

The Pakistan Hindu Council decided to organize a grand event in the form of the National Fair and Education Expo 2023 in Karachi, the largest city of Pakistan, so that national and international institutions can appreciate university students and unemployed people about vacancies they have at the moment. When I finalized the decision to organize a fair in the last days of March this year, we had issues in the morning at the right place for the right job. Many talented young people were coming forward with their hands are approaching institutions where they are not needed while many institutions are not getting suitable candidates for the required qualifications and expertise.

Political parties must resolve problems through dialogue: Saad Rafique

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Pakistan Railways (PRs) Khawaja Saad Rafique on Friday said that the political parties should resolve all the issues through dialogue...

Rafique said adding that the political parties in the country and he said that Imran Khan was in a hurry, he must represent the people...

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Eight killed in Serbia's second mass shooting in less than 48 hours

BELGRADE: Serbian police said Friday they had arrested a man suspected of killing eight people and injuring at least 14 others in the country's second mass shooting this week...

The incident happened less than 48 hours after the worst school shooting in Serbia's recent history when a 13-year-old killed nine people...

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Pakistan attaches great importance to promotion, protection of rights of minorities: Senators

WASHINGTON DC: Visiting the United States now, Senator Danish Khan Palyani and Senator Gurdip Singh have said that Pakistan attaches high importance to promotion and protection of rights of minorities...

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Chinese FM Qin Gang arrives in Pakistan on a two-day official visit

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Leaders of traders hail business friendly decisions of Chairman CDA

ISLAMABAD: President of the Goods Transport Association (GTA) and Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) have hailed the business friendly decisions of the Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA)...

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PTI left KP impoverished during 10-year tenure: Murtaza Abbassi

Havelian: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbassi, former federal minister Sardar Shahjahan and former PML-N MPA Sardar Aurangzeb Nalotra have said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has left the province impoverished during its ten years of rule in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa...

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Ahsan Iqbal for promoting peace in society

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said on Friday that hatred, extremism and intolerance are major challenges in way of peace, national unity and sustainable economic development in the country...

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Only 9pc share of Pakistan in Gwadar Port's profit, Senate Body informed

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Notice Inviting Tender

Notice Inviting Tender for Executive Engineer Planning & Devt. Department, Nasserabad Division. Includes details on tender forms, eligibility, and submission procedures.

Tashkent: Ambassador of Pakistan to Uzbekistan Ahmed Farooq called on Adviser to Prime Minister for Political, Public Affairs, National Heritage and Culture Engr Amir Muqam in Tashkent.

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- List of members of the Goods Transport Association (GTA) including President, Vice President, and various members.

# IMF Conditions: Pakistan between the devil and the deep blue sea: Mian Zahid

KARACHI: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that Pakistan is between the devil and the deep blue sea over stringent IMF conditions.

In a statement issued here on Friday, he said, "One reason for delay is release of loan tranche by IMF is lack of confidence, which will hit the budget making exercise."

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the ninth review of the IMF and the staff level agreement should have been completed last year, but the previous regime violated the agreement with the international organization due to which the ninth review was stalled.

"The people are constantly being told that all the new conditions of the IMF have been fulfilled, and that the agreement will be concluded in a few days, but the IMF is changing the goalsposts very frequently, he added.

The business leader said that the IMF was adding new demands to its list and asking Pakistan continuously to do more.

Among the reasons for the unnecessary harshness on the part of the IMF was the fear of this institution that after receiving the loan, affairs in Pakistan will continue to be under irresponsibly and the expenditure will not be controlled, which will result in the country's bankruptcy, he observed.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the IMF is also worried that billions of rupees will be wasted to please

the voters before the elections, which will further weaken the country's faltering economy and it will result in disrepute of the lender if Pakistan defaults.

The business leader said that China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have assured loans to Pakistan.

Moreover, the government was discouraging imports, resulting in a fall of 68 per cent in the current account deficit in the last eight months. He also expected to further decline in the next eight months. Import contraction was also reducing the revenue of FBR.

Inflation has crossed 36 per cent, the highest level in Asia, due to which the IMF is demanding a two per cent increase in the interest rates. Mian Zahid Hussain said that economic instability is increasing rapidly due to continuous delay in payment of loan instalments by the IMF. The current agreement with the IMF was signed in 2019 and expires next month. According to the agreement, Pakistan was supposed to get a loan of \$500 million as a half-yearly instalment but so far only 3.9 billion dollars have been received so far. He already accepted all IMF conditions on exchange rate, tax rate, energy price, subsidy reduction and interest rate hike but could not convince IMF to release funds. In this most difficult economic situation, if the nation unions and implements the emergency program of import substitution and privatization of failed government institutions, then this vortex can be exited, he said.



QUETTA : A man on the way hold umbrellas during rain in provincial capital.

## Engr Amir Muqam, Ambassador to Uzbekistan discuss issues of mutual interest

TASHKENT: Adviser to Prime Minister for Political, Public Affairs, National Heritage and Culture Engr Amir Muqam was called on by Pakistan's Ambassador to Uzbekistan Mr. Ahmed Farooq in Tashkent on Friday.

The Ambassador welcomed the Adviser to PM in Tashkent and discussed with him issues of mutual interests during the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Engr Amir Muqam stressed the importance of Pakistan's relationship with Uzbekistan.

It should be mentioned here that the Adviser to Prime Minister is on visit to Uzbekistan on the special invitation of President of Uzbekistan and Culture Minister of Uzbekistan to attend 'III Bakshi Art Festival' to be held from May 06 to 09, 2023. I.N.P

## Pakistan to pay \$3.7bn debt from May-June: Fitch Ratings

WASHINGTON DC: As the government struggles to secure a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Fitch Ratings on Friday revealed that Pakistan faces a total of \$3.7 billion of debt payments in the May-June period, Bloomberg reported.

Hong Kong-based director at Fitch, Kristjan Krustins, said about \$700 million of maturities are due in May and another \$3 billion in June.

In an emailed response to questions, Fitch told Bloomberg that it expects \$2.4 billion of deposits and loans from China will be rolled over.

Quetta, which has been negotiating to restate a \$6.5 billion bailout with the IMF for about half a year, is racing to avert default as the foreign exchange reserves — which currently provide an import cover of nearly one month — come under pressure. The country has secured financing support from countries in the Middle East and China, a key IMF condition.

"Our base case is still that Pakistan and the IMF will reach an agreement on the programme review," Krustins said. But the risks are large and the rating cut in February reflected that a default or debt restructuring is an increasingly real possibility, he added.

The debt payments underscore the crucial need for Pakistan to resume its bailout programme with the Washington-based lender that has been stalled since November last year.

The \$1.1 billion tranche is part of a \$6.5 billion bailout package the IMF approved in 2019, which was due to be repaid in June, prior to the budget. So far, Pakistan has received \$3.9 billion.

The country is reeling from an economic crisis with inflation surging to 36.4%, the highest in its history and the highest in South Asia, while a bruising political battle is raging between the government and former prime minister Imran Khan. I.N.P

## Incident of teachers' killing in Kurram conspiracy to disrupt KP's peace: Governor

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali has termed the killing of teachers in the Teri Mangle incident a conspiracy to disrupt the peace of the area.

This was stated by him in a statement issued on Friday.

Haji Ghulam Ali urged the people of the tribal areas of province to forge unity in their ranks to foil the nefarious designs of anti-state elements.

The Governor KP asked the tribal people, elected representatives and other stakeholders to play their positive role for maintenance of peace and stability in district Kurram. I.N.P

## Uncontrolled elites are making Pakistan a failed state, says Shahid

ISLAMABAD: Business leader and former president of Islamabad Chamber Shahid Rashid Butt on Friday said elites exist in every country in the world. Countries where they are kept under control prosper and the countries where they are left unchecked become beggars.

"The elites of developed countries earn more foreign exchange and exports, while the majority of our country's resources are left unexploited for their own benefit," he observed. Pakistan will not be able to develop and will always be in a losing position if the private sector is properly taxed. How can a country prosper where the labour earns more foreign exchange than exporters who get billions of dollars of subsidies, he questioned. According to an American organization, the number of billionaires in India is 169 with known assets of 750 billion dollars, while we have been paying the IMF for seven months for one billion dollars, he informed. I.N.P

## PTI chief working on anti Pak-China relations agenda: Kundi

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Security and Chairman of National Secretary Pakistan People's Party, Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan is working on an agenda to destroy the cordial bilateral relations between Pakistan and China.

Addressing a joint press conference here along with Advisor to the prime minister on Kashmir, Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira, he said that Chairman Pakistan People's Party and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was fighting the case of Pakistan at the international level. Kundi questioned that on Bilawal agenda Imran Khan was working and why his policies were against the country. I.N.P

## Glowing tributes paid to Ashraf Sehrai in Muzaffarabad on his martyrdom day

MUZAFFARABAD: Glowing tributes were paid to senior APHC leader and Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir Chairman Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai on his second martyrdom anniversary, in Muzaffarabad on Friday.

Pashan-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir organized a function in Muzaffarabad to remember Ashraf Sehrai on his martyrdom anniversary.

The Chairman of Pashan-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir, Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, Pakistan Peoples Party leader Shaukat Javed Mir, Hurriyat leader Mushtaq Salam, Usman Ali Hashmi, Chaudhry Muhammad Mushatq, Hashif Bilal Ahmad Farooqi and Muhammad Ishaq Shaheen in their speeches paid tributes to him for his outstanding services in the religious, social and political fields.

They said that Ashraf Sehrai was a prominent leader of the Kashmiri freedom movement and a trustworthy associate of senior Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Gilani who spent most of his life in Indian jails.

The Hurriyat leaders said one of his sons, Imdad Sehrai, was martyred by Indian troops on May 19, 2020, one year before his own martyrdom. Ashraf Sehrai and his entire family were victims of Indian atrocities for many decades but they neither showed flexibility on the freedom of Kashmir, nor did they make any compromise with the usurpers.

History is a witness that the blood of the martyrs has never been washed away and the blood of the martyrs of Kashmir will also not go waste, they maintained. I.N.P

## Governor Punjab hails role of businessmen in country's economy

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that the businessmen are playing an important role in the country's economy by bringing valuable foreign exchange to the country along with creating employment opportunities.

He was speaking as chief guest at a special convocation organized here on Friday to award the honorary degree (Honoris Causa) of Ph.D. Management to Pakistan's well-known businessman and philanthropist, SM Parvez, organized by University of Management and Technology (UMT) at Governor House, Lahore. The Governor Punjab and Patron UMT, Muhammad Balighur Rehman awarded honorary degree of Ph.D Management to SM Parvez. Addressing the ceremony, Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the businessmen are playing an important role in the country's economy by bringing valuable foreign exchange to the country along with creating employment opportunities. He said that the role of business community in education and health sector for public welfare is commendable. Online



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira and Minister of State of Poverty Alleviation Faisal Karim Kundi addressing a press conference.

## Flour price continues to rise in Balochistan

QUETTA: The price of flour continues to rise in Balochistan as the government failed to provide the commodity to the masses to overcome the problem of shortage of wheat in the province.

The flour crisis has further worsened in Quetta, Loralai and other areas of Balochistan as the supply has been interrupted for the last few weeks.

The Balochistan government appears to be helpless regarding the flour crisis as per kilogram flour was being sold at over 160 rupees in the local market.

According to sources, a 20 kg bag of flour in Quetta has reached Rs 3,100 and people are also worried due to the increase in flour prices.

The flour dealers in Balochistan have announced a strike against the ban on inter-provincial supply of flour. According to flour dealers, there was a ban on bringing flour from Punjab and trucks loaded with flour had been stopped at check posts on the Punjab border with Balochistan. They sought assistance from the government to resolve the issue on an emergency basis and make sure the availability of flour at affordable rates for the people of Balochistan.

The owners of flour mills are of the opinion that wheat was not being supplied as per their demand and if the situation remained the same, a 20 kg bag of flour could reach up to Rs 3,600.

People demanded that Chief Ministers of Punjab and Balochistan to take notice of the issue and order for the removal of all check posts of the police and other agencies set up by the Punjab government to stop the transportation of wheat to other provinces.

## Motorcycle thieves arrested, stolen motorcycle recovered

KARACHI: The Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police in a joint patrolling arrested three thieves who were involved in recovering a stolen motorcycle from their possession.

According to spokesmen for Rangers on Friday, a Rangers team which was patrolling arrested an alleged motorcycle thief and his accomplices when he was stealing a motorcycle in Sikandar Goth.

During initial interrogation arrested accused Huzefa revealed that he along with his two other accomplices namely Akif and Adeel had stolen more than 30 motorcycles and sold them in parts.

Upon Huzefa's indications on various aspects of Akif and Adeel were arrested. They confessed they were involved in motorcycles lifting in Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Gulzar Jirri, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Sikandar Goth, and adjacent areas.

Arrested accused along with the stolen motorcycles were handed over to police for further legal proceedings. I.N.P

## MOFA organizes function to mark Vesak Day

ISLAMABAD: A function to mark Vesak Day, the birthday of the founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, commonly known as Buddha, was organized at Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad Friday.

The event was presided over by Diplomatic Corps in Islamabad acting as the guest of honor.

Addressing the ceremony, Acting Foreign Secretary Syed Sajjad Qazi said Pakistan is proud to have a special association with the Buddhist heritage.

He said the land of Pakistan has been cradle of Buddhist art, culture, civilization and holy land of Buddhism for more than thousands of years.

The Acting Foreign Secretary said we are also proud of the fact that advent and development of Buddhism is associated with the birth of Pakistan.

He also extended heartiest felicitation to millions of Buddhists around the world including Pakistan on Vesak Day, the Birthday of Buddha.

On this occasion, High Commissioner-designate of Malaysia to Pakistan, Ambassador, Mohamad Azlan Bin Yazlan, on behalf of ASEAN Committee lauded the efforts of the Pakistani government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs for preserving cultural heritage of Buddha in Pakistan. He said today we give a message of peaceful co-existence on behalf of the ASEAN countries.

Message of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari who is in India to attend Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Foreign Ministers meeting at Quetta, was also read out. An exhibition reflecting the life of Buddha through artifacts, pictures, portraits, Buddhist art, sculpture and other items was also organized on this occasion. I.N.P

## China, Pakistan step up exchanges in art and culture

ISLAMABAD: China, Pakistan has stepped up exchanges in the fields of art and culture, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on various aspects of art and culture.

"We are discussing with Chinese expert professors about long-term cooperation in the fields of art and culture and Pakistani arts and crafts. The safeguarding of the rock carvings and ancient inscriptions in our northern areas is also possible under such collaboration," Prof. Dr. Zarawar Khan, Department of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Swat said while attending the China-Pakistan Contemporary Arts Exchange Exhibition.

The exhibition is taking place at the University of Education, Lahore from May 3-5 and in tandem at the Lahore Museum from May 5-7.

More than 100 pieces of works by Pakistani and Chinese artists, including Chinese painting, Chinese calligraphy, sculpture and other forms of art, are on display.

"The art exhibition is one of its kind ever in the final phase in Guangzhou, China in Lahore in collaboration with the Chinese art historians, students and delegates.

The exhibition has added new dimensions to the knowledge on art and cultural relations between China and Pakistan," said Dr. Zarawar Khan.

Post pandemic, Chinese students, art experts and historians are restoring concern in Pakistan to conduct research on bilateral arts and crafts and enhance cultural interactions. The exhibition is also part of the ongoing efforts to mark the 25th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative.

According to Mr. Hao, Director of the International Office, Hebei Academy of Fine Arts, after the conclusion of the two exhibition areas, the exhibits will continue to be on display at the local art center for more than a week. The academy will also donate some excellent works to the University of Education and Lahore Art Center as a commemoration. He told CEN that in the Lahore Museum, a China Pavilion was built last year and Chinese collections were copied donated by locals. I.N.P

## Canton Fair: Pakistani entrepreneurs bridging trade relations with the World

BEIJING: Canton Fair paves the way bridging trade relations of Pakistani entrepreneurs with China and the rest of the world, according to a report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Friday.

"I heard that there will be an international booth here and a lot of international visitors will be participating. I feel like I must come here to find out the possibility of doing business with China as well as the whole world," Rana Javeed Akhtar, Chief Executive, Export Fair, said while attending the 133rd China Import and Export Fair held in Guangzhou, China over the 13rd and 14th of May.

Export Fair - known as Canton Fair - kicked off on the morning of April 15, and entered into its final phase in Guangzhou, China on May 1.

Held in three phases through May 5, it is also the largest in history, with a record number of exhibition areas and exhibitors. Its offline exhibitors rose to more than 34,000 this year, with more than 9,000 new exhibitors, and online exhibition enterprises reached 39,281.

"It's our first time to be here," Akhtar said, adding that he was hoping for the best. "I was really impressed - the fair is well organized; we got good services from the construction team from the Cantonese people. I bring the best textile products here. I would like to see how I can explore the market and hope to start business with the Chinese buyers."

Saidar Fayyaz, Chief Manager Exports, Piano Exports PZCO, who also attended the fair as an exhibitor for the first time, expressed his excitement over the event. He heard that it is one of the largest fairs in the world. He was eager to come here, and hopefully more coordination will be seen in the future," he pinpointed. As one of the largest manufacturers of writing instruments and stationery items and one of the leading exporters to the globe, Piano Exports PZCO showcased its dazzling products with price & quality combination to international visitors. I.N.P