



"The positive news about the economy is due to the hard work of prime minister and his cabinet members"

Minister for Information and Broadcasting
Attaullah Tarar

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Security forces kill seven terrorists trying to infiltrate Pak-Afghanistan border North Waziristan District: ISPR

ISPR says security forces of Pakistan are determined & remain committed to securing its borders



RAWALPINDI: On 16 April 2024, movement of a group of seven terrorists, trying to infiltrate Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was detected by security forces in general area Spinkai, Ghulam Khan of North Waziristan District.

According to the statement issued by ISPR, the infiltrators were surrounded, effectively engaged and after an intense fire exchange, all seven territories were sent to hell. A large quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives was also recovered from the killed terrorists. Pakistan has consistently been asking Interim Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. Interim Afghan Government is expected to fulfill its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by terrorists for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan. Security forces of Pakistan are determined and remain committed to securing its borders and eliminating the menace of terrorism from the country. PR

Iranian envoy lauds Pakistan's defence capabilities



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Reza Amiri Moghaddam called on Minister for Defence and Defence Production Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Wednesday and lauded the defence capabilities of Pakistan.

The Defence Minister said Pakistan and Iran enjoyed cordial and fraternal ties, nourished by centuries old religious and cultural affinities, a news release said Khawaja Asif reiterated Pakistan's stance on Palestine issue and highlighted early achievement of ceasefire in Gaza as well as resolution of Palestine issue. Underlining the importance of Joint Border Commission, the Minister said that Pakistan had taken all necessary measures in the domain of border management and the joint efforts on the issue should continue in days ahead. On the occasion, the Iranian Ambassador appreciated Pakistan's defence capabilities and said the two countries had potential for further collaboration in the field of defence and energy cooperation. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the existing level of bilateral cooperation and committed to further it in areas of common interest, enhancing security, counter-terrorism and regional economic connectivity. — VOM Report



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Shanghai Electric Group called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Cabinet directs NFS&R Ministry to take steps for meeting wheat procurement target

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet on Wednesday directed the Ministry of National Food Security and Research to work out an effective strategy in coordination with the provincial governments for achieving the wheat procurement target. Chairing the cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif directed to take all possible steps to ensure that the farmers get full reward of their hard work. Acknowledging the endeavours of Federal Cabinet and relevant authorities with regard to the successful visit of Saudi delegation, the prime minister said the delegation was impressed by the preparatory work and comprehensive briefings by the Pakistani ministers and officials. He also expressed special thanks to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for his keen interest in Pakistan, which led to a successful visit of the Saudi delegation. "We must work hard with the same spirit and dedication to ensure the completion of projects under this Saudi investment in Pakistan," he added. He warned that any obstacles or impediments in that regard would not be spared. He reiterated the commitment to working day and night for Pakistan's progress and prosperity, as pledged to the people.

"If we continue to work hard, we will soon achieve the goal of country's development, prosperity and economic stability." The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Federal Ministry of Education and Technical Training, approved the bill regarding the establishment of the Institute of Modern Sciences in Wah Cantonment. The prime minister directed to form a committee to further improve the procedure for establishing new universities and higher education institutions, which would be headed by the Minister for Federal Education and Technical Training, while the Minister for Petroleum, the Minister of State for Information Technology and the Attorney General for Pakistan would be its members. The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, allowed former ambassador Manzoor Ahmad Chaudhry to receive the Commandeur de l'Ordre National Award from the Government of Cote D'Ivoire in recognition of his services. On the recommendation of the Ministry of Law and Justice, it gave its approval for the conversion of Accountability Court-VIII Karachi to Special Court (Customs, Taxation and Anti-Smuggling-II), Accountability Court-III Hyderabad to Banking Court Mirpur Khas, Accountability Court-III Sukkur to Banking Court, Ghotki and Accountability Court-IV Sukkur to Banking Court Shaheed

Benazirabad. On another recommendation of the Ministry of Law and Justice, the cabinet gave its consent for authorizing the Special Court II (Anti-Terrorism) to hear cases reported under the Official Secrets Act, 1923. The Special Court II was given the authority in view of proceeding of the Special Court I judge on leave. The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, approved the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Labour, the Government of Qatar and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development regarding labour relations, labour inspections, and occupational safety and health. It was told that currently 300,000 Pakistanis were working in Qatar, who were sending foreign exchange worth Rs 850 million to Pakistan. The cabinet also approved the Federal Public Private Policy of Pakistan 2023-2028 on the recommendation of the Ministry of Planning and Special Initiatives. In this regard, the prime minister stressed that through public-private partnership, the country's economy could be strengthened, and directed all the ministries to submit their proposals in that regard. The cabinet also endorsed the decisions taken in its meeting held on April 4.

Response received by PM at int'l level – a new milestone in foreign policy, says Atta Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday said that the response received by the prime minister at international level was a new milestone in the country's foreign policy. Addressing a press conference after the Federal Cabinet meeting, the minister said that it was a good omen that Pakistan – a strategically located nuclear state – was in news for good reasons especially on the economic front. He said that the news about improvement in Pakistan's economy from international institutions and journals was encouraging. Bloomberg, the United Nations Development Programme and the Asian Development Bank had predicted growth and development of Pakistan's economy, he added. The minister said the stock exchange had witnessed a historic bullish trend which was the proof of restoration of investors' confidence. He assured that the impact of improvement in the economy would reach the masses soon. Atta Tarar said that friendly countries were now valuing their relations with Pakistan which was an achievement. "The positive news about the economy is due to the hard work of prime minister and his cabinet members," he added. The minister said that the international community knew that Shehbaz Sharif who was a hard working leader, had always delivered. He said that the PM's visit to Saudi Arabia was very successful and as a result of it, a high-level Saudi delegation had come to Pakistan. The delegation led by the Saudi Foreign Minister discussed investments in minerals, tourism and other sectors, he added. He said that during the cabinet meeting, a detailed briefing was given on the prime minister's visit to Saudi Arabia and progress on investment related matters. He disclosed that a delegation from the private sector of Saudi Arabia would also visit Pakistan soon and hold meetings with the private sector for collaboration in various fields. Both Pakistan and Saudi governments would facilitate that visit which would help boost the national economy and create job opportunities, he added. The minister said that the cabinet discussed the wheat crop situation. It was informed that a bumper wheat crop yield was expected in the country. He said that letters were being written to all four provinces regarding increasing the target of wheat procurement so that the farmers could get a better reward of their hard work. The step would not only benefit the farmers but would also give a boost to the rural economy, he added. He said that delegations from more friendly countries would also visit Pakistan soon. He said on Eid-ul-Fitr, the prime minister received congratulatory messages from various world leaders. During the exchanges, he said, concerns were expressed over the situation in Gaza with calls for an immediate solution to the crisis. About the opposition's public meeting in Balochistan, he said it was a flopped show. Camera techniques were used to show the participants which proved that there were not many people in the rally. He pointed out that the top leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was issuing statements contradicting one another's stance. APP

Pakistan, Azerbaijan relations based on historical, cultural, religious commonalities: Ayaz Sadiq



these views during a meeting with the Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov, who called on him, said a news release. The Ambassador presented a congratulatory letter from the Speaker of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan Sahiba Gafarova to Speaker Ayaz Sadiq on his successful election and invitation to visit Azerbaijan. Ayaz Sadiq thanked the Ambassador for conveying congratulations and invitation. The Speaker underscored that the unanimity of views shared by both nations on different issues and forums was the manifestation of strong ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He appreciated Azerbaijani support to Pakistan on the principled stand of Kashmir. He also reminded that the Parliament of Pakistan passed a resolution to condemn Armenian Aggression in the Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Wednesday said that Pakistan highly values its close brotherly relations with Azerbaijan that are based on historical, cultural, and religious commonalities. "Pakistan was committed to expanding its parliamentary and economic cooperation with Azerbaijan by expanding cooperation in all areas of mutual interest to attain the shared goal of progress and prosperity" The speaker expressed

FM Dar, Czech counterpart discuss bilateral issues, reaffirm to promote cooperation



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky on Wednesday discussed the key bilateral issues. They also reaffirmed commitment to promote bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the fields of trade, economy, investment and people-to-people exchanges. FM Dar, Czech counterpart discuss bilateral issues, reaffirm to promote cooperation The foreign minister, on his X account, said that he was pleased to receive a congratulatory telephone call from the Czech counterpart and extended invitation to him to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience. APP

US assures support to Pakistan in managing 'daunting debt burden'



WASHINGTON: As Pakistan seeks to clinch a fresh International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout package, the United States on Wednesday vowed its support to Islamabad in its efforts to manage the country's "daunting debt burden". "Pakistan has made progress to stabilise its economy, and we support its efforts to manage its daunting debt burden. We encourage the government to prioritise and expand economic reforms to address its economic challenges," said State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller, when asked if the US would support Pakistan in challenging times. Miller also said that US support for Pakistan's economic success was unwavering and it will continue to engage with the South Asian nation

through technical agreements as well as through trade and investment ties, all of which are priorities of bilateral relationship between the two nations. He also welcomed the staff-level agreement between the global lender and Pakistan on the second and final review under the \$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement, which, if cleared by the global lender's board, will release about \$1.1 billion to the struggling South Asian nation. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb is currently in the US to hold meetings with the IMF for a new bailout package and attend the World Bank meetings. Sources told The News that Pakistan decided to make a request for augmenting the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) through climate finance, so there was a possibility for securing \$6 to \$8 billion SBA. Ahead of his visit, IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva said Pakistan was successfully completing its existing programme with the IMF and its economy was performing somewhat better.

Cheikhrouhou expressed her keen interest in furthering IFC's collaborative efforts to support sustainable development

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, met with Ms. Hela Cheikhrouhou, Regional Vice President for MCT, at the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The Minister briefed her on the government's structural reform agenda focused on taxation, energy and privatization. He appreciated IFC's efforts in enhancing investment climate in Pakistan, particularly their support in improving national and provincial ease of doing business rankings, and meeting universal financial access targets. He encouraged IFC to scale up its engagement and work with Pakistan in the priority areas of

securitization of remittances, mining, airport management and capacity building. Ms. Cheikhrouhou expressed her keen interest in furthering IFC's collaborative efforts, emphasizing the importance of tailored financial solutions to support sustainable development in these sectors. Finance Minister, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, attended the G-24 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting on the sidelines of the IMF/World Bank Spring meetings in Washington D.C. During the meeting, the Minister engaged in important discussions on sustainable and inclusive economic growth and financial stability. He appreciated the ongoing support provided by the IMF and World Bank to Pakistan to stabilize its economy.



The Minister highlighted that government undertook difficult but necessary reforms to move the economy in the right direction. He underscored the need for enhanced private sector engagement, terming it crucial for driving economic growth and innovation. He also highlighted the adverse impact of climate change on developing countries, including Pakistan and stressed the importance

of leveraging the Adaptation Fund to implement effective mitigation and adaptation strategies. In his meeting with Mr. Mohammed Al-Jadaan, Finance Minister of Saudi Arabia, Finance Minister expressed gratitude for Kingdom's steadfast financial support to Pakistan in times of economic challenges. Both sides exchanged views on deepening economic and investment relations between the two countries. They also explored new avenues for collaboration to further strengthen trade and investment ties in diverse areas. Finance Minister met with Mr. Axel Van Trotsenburg, Senior Managing Director, World Bank to discuss World Bank's ongoing support and engagement with Pakistan. The meeting explored the option of maximizing Regional IDA

resources for development projects in Pakistan including flood-affected areas. It was agreed to use the story of effective utilization of Pakistan IDA resources more effectively and benefit from the Knowledge Centre of the Bank. Finance Minister also met with Mr. Scott Nathan, CEO, U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC). The Minister highlighted government's commitment to attract investments across various sectors in Pakistan, including priority areas of agriculture, IT, extractive industry and renewable energy. He hoped that DFC would expand its portfolio in Pakistan following the resolution of outstanding issues and tap the significant investment opportunities by leveraging private sector investments and public-private partnerships.

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Climate and the religious lens

A strategic rivalry

HUSSAIN H ZAIDI

As if it were ordained by providence, the fate of the world is settled by a show of strength between great powers. The cold war era (1945-89) was defined by the US-USSR rivalry to cast the world in their respective image. The present age is being shaped by the attempts of the US, the world's largest economy, to put the skids under China's - the world's second largest economy - possible ascendancy to economic superpower status. The Biden Administration has adopted a two-pronged strategy towards China called 'constructive competition': engaging with Beijing at senior government levels, while throttling Chinese companies' access to key technologies, such as semiconductors, or otherwise penalizing them. The recent week-long visit (April 4-9) to China by US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen may be seen in this context. At a press conference in Beijing, Yellen described the bilateral economic relationship as the most important of its kind in the world and reiterated that Washington did not seek to decouple from Beijing. At the same time, she expressed concerns about the 'growing negative spillovers' of the Chinese economy that may harm American enterprises and workers. She particularly referred to 'weak' consumer demand and 'business overinvestment' in China on the back of government subsidies that may prompt Chinese enterprises to dump their cheap products in US and other overseas markets and thus price out local competitors. She also subtly warned of action against the Chinese firms that are allegedly supporting Russia's industrial base and military procurement in the war against Ukraine. In all, Washington-Beijing tensions stem from three sets of factors: trade, high technology and geopolitics.

Trade tensions between the two economic giants are rooted in both facts and perceptions. The US has been running a chronic trade deficit, which reached \$1.06 trillion in 2023. China, however, has persistently been running a huge trade surplus, which was recorded at \$830 billion in 2023. The principal source of the US trade deficit is China, and the largest source of China's trade surplus is the US. In 2023, the US-China bilateral trade reached \$575 billion, which comprised \$148 billion in US exports to China, and \$427 billion in US imports from China, resulting in a whopping \$279 billion trade imbalance for the world's largest economy. The US sets down its external deficit with China to the latter's resort to allegedly unfair trade practices, particularly massive state support to enterprises and currency 'manipulation', which make Chinese exports cheaper than they would be otherwise. Cheaper exports, the allegation goes, depress prices in the American market and thus harm local enterprises, usher in job losses and perpetuate trade imbalances. Shocks generated by this triple whammy year after year are severe enough even for as massive an economy as that of the US. With a view to bringing down the trade imbalance, the Donald Trump administration slapped punitive import tariffs on a large number of Chinese goods in 2018, prompting retaliation from Beijing. Another motive behind the move was to make American companies doing business in China relocate back to their home country by raising the cost of exporting products. However, the punitive tariffs fell flat. The reason: trade and current account deficits signify that an economy is consuming more goods than it is producing. China has the world's largest and most complete manufacturing sector, while the core competence of the US lies in high-end services, reflecting its status as the world's most developed economy. Likewise, while manufacturing accounts for 27 per cent of the Chinese economy, its share in the US economy is only 11 per cent. The enormous size of China's manufacturing sector confers on the country the advantage of the economies of scale, resulting in lower prices. The US is a post industrial economy well past the manufacturing phase, while China will remain in this phase for at least another two decades. Not surprisingly, the US runs, and will continue to run, a big trade deficit with China. As for bringing manufacturing back to America, it does not hold much prospect because of much higher wages in the US compared with China, as well as the enormous size of the Chinese market. US-based multinational giants like Apple and Tesla will continue to find China a profitable production base.

Recent decades have seen a gradual downswing in the economic strength of the US and an upsurge in that of China. It is widely forecast that, at the current growth rates, China will overtake the US as the world's largest economy by the close of the 2030s. Although Washington will remain well ahead of Beijing militarily, a redistribution of economic power will act heavily on each nation's capability to shape international events. More than anything else, it was the increasing economic cost of its engagement in Afghanistan that forced Washington to pull out of that country. The USSR broke up because its economic power failed to keep pace with its geostrategic ambitions. Surely, the US would not like to tread its former archrival's path. A trade war has both economic and political dimensions. A nation running a massive trade deficit is more prone to starting a trade war than one running a comparable trade surplus. When a country is losing jobs to its trading partners allegedly because of trade imbalances, it is easier to sell a protectionist policy to key domestic constituencies. No government, least of all a democratically elected running a superpower, wishes to be seen as being too toothless to effectively respond to the 'unfair' practices of its trading partners. Not only that, some important non-trade strategic objectives can also be pursued on the presumption that the other side would not be able to respond in equal measure for long. The economy is the mainspring of Chinese strength, and the country's global projects, such as the Belt and Road (BRI) initiative of which the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a part, are underpinned by its accumulation of huge foreign exchange reserves based on a spectacular export performance.

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The condition of Pakistani cities shows that we are suffering from an intellectual, professional and moral crisis. There is a sense that the existing government institutions and people cannot be persuaded to take the natural environment and climate change seriously, despite worse air pollution, urban flooding, water shortages and the waste crisis in the urban cities of Pakistan. Successive civil and military governments have passed a number of laws, prepared policies and organized awareness walks in the last three decades, but the issue of the deteriorating environment and the threat of climate change keep getting worse. The current way of dealing with the environment and climate change is no longer adequate. New concepts and approaches must be sought within our social strengths and culture. Pakistan's culture, norms and practices are inherently religious in nature. Understanding the connections between how people connect religion with everyday life can bring deep meaning to the natural environment surrounding us. Recently, I came across a wonderful book 'Green Deen: What Islam Teaches about Protecting the Planet' by the late Ibrahim Abdul-Matin, who also worked as a sustainability adviser in the New York City mayor's office. According to this book: "A saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be

upon him): "Wherever you may be at the time of prayer, you may pray, for it (the Earth) is all a mosque". We heard this hadith several times, and scholars have focused on the importance of prayers. However, the later part of hadith - praying wherever you find a place can mean that the Earth is a mosque; a mosque is sacred; therefore, the Earth is sacred."

sustainable development to achieve a thriving community, social cohesion and resilience. It says that the climate change agenda in Pakistan should not overlook the role of religion and religious institutions in planning future developments and dealing with future disasters. The lack of attention to religion, religious institutions and religious narratives in climate change literature

resources around them. Although not all Pakistanis are religious, they can understand their personal role in addressing the environment through the lens of religious narratives. It would help them gain unique insights into the environment and motivate them to take action. Literature in the field of environmental humanities and social sciences asks us to think of religion differently from what is traditionally understood and unlocks its potential for environmentalism. Deep meaning in the transition towards a low-carbon future is required, and religious narratives can develop these meanings. The true teachings of Islam are concerned with acting on core ethical principles that are deeply connected with a love for the natural and social environment. Protecting water, consuming things ethically, and treating animals, birds, and trees respectfully are part of our religious teaching and should be widely articulated in our society and institutions. Therefore, the religious narrative approach should be designed to motivate people to reflect on their daily lives when they buy cars, build houses, and cut and plant trees, and its consequences for climate change. Religious narratives will enable the active engagement of all citizens to protect the natural environment, which Pakistan desperately needs to address climate change.

The writer is a professor of transport and urban planning at Massey University, New Zealand.

The current way of dealing with the environment and climate change is no longer adequate

Treating the Earth like a mosque means treating the natural world justly and fairly. We, as Muslims, must accept our role as the protectors of the planet, which has come under threat from the actions of urban development practices in Pakistan and beyond. Islam teaches us ethical principles that guide how we interact with the social and natural world. The core message that the earth is a mosque brings the religious obligation to protect the environment. Abdur Rehman Cheema's book 'The Role of Mosque in Building Resilient Communities Widening Development Agendas' stresses the importance of human belief and the role of the mosque in responding to and recovering from natural disasters in Pakistan. This book shows that religious practices and the mosque can catalyze

and practices lies in the fact that Western literature, governments and donors follow the secular tradition where religion is a private matter. The opposite is true in Pakistan. Pakistan should develop its own path for addressing climate change. The climate change agenda should tap into the beliefs of Pakistani society and include mosques and religious narratives in dealing with environmental issues. This approach may inspire society to challenge existing developmental practices and consumption-led approaches to transition to a low-carbon urban future. Over the centuries, religion has spread hope, meaning and love, which is powerful. We can redirect religious discourse to generate love, feelings and deep meaning regarding the environment. This will help people protect and restore natural

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

History of Pakistan



[118] Some academics such as Rudolph Rummel and Rounaq Jahan say both sides [119] committed genocide; others such as Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose believe there was no genocide. [120] Discredited by the defeat, President Khan resigned and Bhutto was inaugurated as president and chief martial law administrator on 20 December 1971. [112] 1971-1977: Second democratic era See also: 1970s Operation in Balochistan, Pakistan and its Nuclear Deterrent Program, List of Pakistani films of the 1970s, and Federal Investigation Agency **Zulfikar Ali Bhutto** The 1971 war and the separation of East Pakistan demoralised the nation. With the PPP's assumption of power, democratic socialists and visionaries had authority for the first time in the country's history. Bhutto dismissed the chiefs of the army, navy and the air force and ordered

house arrest for General Yahya Khan and several of his collaborators. He adopted the Hamoodur Rahman Commission's recommendations and authorised large-scale courts-martial of army officers tainted by their role in East Pakistan. To keep the country united Bhutto launched a series of internal intelligence operations to crack down on fissiparous nationalist sentiments and movements in the provinces. 1971 to 1977 was a period of left-wing democracy and the growth of economic nationalisation, covert atomic bomb projects, promotion of science, literature, cultural activities and Pakistani nationalism. In 1972 the country's top intelligence services provided an assessment on the Indian nuclear program, concluding that: "India was close to developing a nuclear weapon under its nuclear programme". Chairing a secret seminar in January 1972, which came to

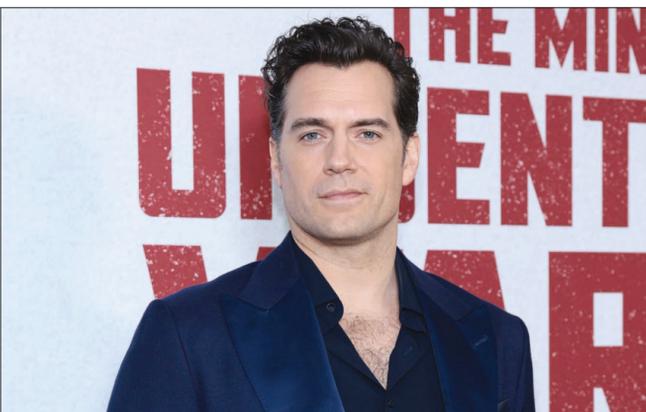
be known as "Multan meeting", Bhutto rallied Pakistani scientists to build an atomic bomb for national survival. The atomic bomb project brought together a team of prominent academic scientists and engineers, headed by theoretical physicist Abdus Salam. Salam later won the Nobel Prize in Physics for developing the theory for the unification of the weak nuclear and electromagnetic forces. [121] The PPP created the 1973 Constitution with the support of Islamists. [122] The Constitution declared Pakistan an Islamic Republic and Islam the state religion. It also stated that all laws would have to be brought into accordance with the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Quran and Sunnah and that no law repugnant to such injunctions could be enacted. [123] The 1973 Constitution also created institutions such as the Shariat Court and

the Council of Islamic Ideology to channel and interpret the application of Islam to the law. [124] In 1973 a serious nationalist rebellion took place in Balochistan province, which was harshly suppressed; the Shah of Iran purportedly assisted with air support in order to prevent the conflict from spilling over into Iranian Balochistan. Bhutto's government carried out major reforms such as the re-designing of the country's infrastructure, the establishment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and the reorganisation of the military. Steps were taken to encourage the expansion of the country's economic and human infrastructure, starting with the agriculture, land reforms, industrialisation and the expansion of the higher education system throughout the country.

To be continued....

Henry Cavill to take on James Bond role?

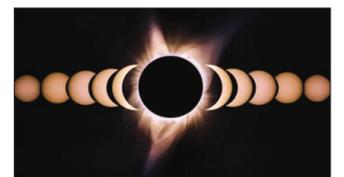
Henry Cavill recently offered an insight into his chance of becoming the next James Bond



Henry Cavill recently offered insight into his chance of becoming the next James Bond, based on the character created by Ian Fleming. While promoting The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare, his latest collaboration on The Rich Eisen Show, Cavill was asked if there's any chance he will take on the said role in the announced Bond 26. He didn't go on to shut the door on the possibility, commenting: "I have no idea. All I've got to go off is the rumors. The same information you have. Maybe I'm too old now, maybe I'm not. It's up to Barbara Broccoli and Mike Wilson and we'll see what their plans are." Meanwhile, the host quickly chimed in, asking: "Well, I mean, you're playing the guy Bond is based on." To which Cavill responded, noting: "Yeah, it seems like a good first step right?" Before Daniel Craig took on the role in 2006, Cavill was among the cohort of actors who made it to the final stages for the role. However, the producers decided to sign Craig for the role since Cavill was only 22 at the time. While there hasn't been an official announcement about the casting, it was reported in March that Aaron Taylor-Johnson is set to play Bond in the upcoming installment.

Next Total Solar Eclipse will take place here

The upcoming Total Solar Eclipse will be visible from parts of Spain, Iceland and Greenland in 2026. Following is everything that you should know about the next Solar Eclipse, according to Live Science. Resulting in one of nature's most spectacular sights, Total Solar Eclipses are uncommon and dynamic events. On Wednesday, August 12, 2026, when it will be possible to experience darkness in the daytime and briefly see the Sun's corona or outermost atmosphere with the naked eye, the next Total Solar Eclipse will take place. When the Sun appears completely obscured by the Moon, this event is called "totality". The path of totality is the limited zone from which totality is visible on Earth. Specifically, the places where the Moon's umbra, the darkest central part of its shadow, is projected across the Earth's surface, this path is just the movement of the Moon's



shadow across the world. One must be within this zone to experience totality. Beginning at the northern tip of Russia, then passing over parts of Greenland, Iceland and Spain, the eclipse's 182-mile-wide (293 kilometres) path of totality will take around 96 minutes to cross the planet on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, according to Space. Depending on the viewer's location, the maximum duration of totality will be 2 minutes, and 18 seconds.

Why are young people getting cancer sooner?

Cancer rates in young adults seem to be on the rise. Have you ever wondered why cancer seems to be knocking on the door of younger generations earlier than before? It turns out that fast aging might have a role to play in spurring the disease. Researchers from Washington University in St. Louis's medical school dropped a bombshell at the American Association for Cancer Research annual meeting earlier this month. Accelerated aging could be the culprit behind early-onset cancer. "Accumulating evidence suggests that younger generations may be aging more swiftly than anticipated, likely due to earlier exposure to various risk factors and environmental insults. However, the impact of accelerated aging on early-onset cancer development remains unclear," said Ruiyi Tian, one of the authors of the study.

Digging into data from over 150,000 individuals stored in the UK Biobank, experts noticed something alarming. Despite life expectancy climbing, the period of "healthspan" - when folks enjoy life without health issues - hasn't kept pace. Here, we have a question: What is causing fast aging? Experts are looking for the answer, connecting the dots. James Kirkland, an aging research professor at the Mayo Clinic, points fingers at factors like air travel, radiation exposure, and pesky PFAS chemicals. It's not just about looking older. Inside our bodies, certain cells hit the brakes on dividing but refuse to kick the bucket. These rebellious cells, called senescent cells, churn out troublemaking molecules and multiply with age. Studies show that these molecules are best buds for cancer. Introducing senescent cells into organ-

isms kickstarts cancer growth, even in younger bodies. But hold on, there is a mystery to solve. Despite fewer smokers and efforts to tackle obesity, aging processes are speeding up in youth. Is there a hidden environmental trigger at play? Kirkland and other researchers are working to explore the answer. "Globally, it seems fundamental aging processes [are] appearing in younger and younger people despite decreases in smoking worldwide and despite taking into account things like obesity, which we know accelerate fundamental aging processes, so is there something in the environment that we don't know yet that could be driving this?" Kirkland said. The big question remains: What's aging our younger generations at warp speed, inviting cancer to the party sooner than ever?



Pak is rich in tourism potential & if proper attention is paid to it, significant revenue can be generated from tourism: Yusuf Raza Gillani

Governor GB Syed Mehdi Shah calls on Chairman Senate

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani met with Governor Gilgit Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah on Wednesday at Parliament House. Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah extended heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani on his election as Chairman of the Senate.

During the meeting detailed discussions took place, including the overall national situation and promotion of tourism. Governor Gilgit-Baltistan briefed Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani on various issues, including administrative matters of Gilgit-Baltistan. He said that Pakistan is rich in tourism potential, and if proper attention is paid to it, significant revenue can be generated from tourism.

Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani while discussing the overall national situation including Gilgit-Baltistan, said that Gilgit-Baltistan is blessed with natural beauty. This region is a beautiful and attractive destination for tourists from all over the world. There is a need to promote tourist destinations in a comprehensive manner so that tourists from all over the world can be attracted to this side. He said that the northern areas of Pakistan are counted among the beautiful places in the world. The promotion of tourism will not only provide employment opportunities to the local population but will also prove effective for the betterment of the country.

Rural & primary health centers across the province to be revamped within six months: Maryam Nawaz

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has urged Members of the Provincial Assembly to monitor the new official rates of bread in their respective constituencies. She was talking to the MPAs from different districts, including Zahid Akram, Muhammad Ajmal Khan, Muhammad Kashif, Agha Ali Haider, who called on her in Lahore on Wednesday. The Punjab Chief Minister said the rural and primary health centers across the province will be revamped within six months and a 100 percent free medicines program will be started soon. She said 600 roads will be constructed and repaired in the province, five expressways and three motorways will be built across the province. The MPAs apprised the Chief Minister about public problems and development needs of their respective constituencies. SABAH



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong called on Foreign Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

President Asif Ali Zardari for strengthening economic, cultural ties with Turkiye

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday called for further enhancing bilateral cooperation with Turkiye in the areas of trade, economy, education and culture.

The president, talking to Ambassador of Turkiye in Pakistan Dr Mehmet Pacaci, who called on him, said that Turkish companies should benefit from the investment-friendly policies of the country and invest through the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

Welcoming the ambassador, the president said that the people of Pakistan and Turkiye had historic and long-standing ties, adding that the two nations had always supported and stood by each other in difficult times. President Zardari stated that Pakistan could benefit from the Turkish development experience, especially in the area of infrastructure development.

In order to promote regional connectivity, he suggested undertaking a joint feasibility study to establish a railway connection between the two brotherly countries.

The president also underlined the need for increasing educational and cultural exchanges to further promote people-to-



people contacts.

He said that Pakistan looked forward to welcoming Turkish President Recep Tayyip

Erdoğan to the 7th High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council session in Pakistan. President Zardari also expressed his grati-

tude for President Erdogan's congratulatory messages on his election as President of Pakistan as well as at the beginning of Holy Ramadan.

He also conveyed his warm greetings and sentiments for the future success of the Turkish president.

IHC adjourns hearing on appeal against punishment of Imran Khan & Shah Mahmood Qureshi in cypher case till April 22

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court has adjourned hearing on appeal against punishment of PTI founder Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in cypher case till April 22. During the hearing Chief Justice Aamer Farooq inquired that why Ministry of Interior filed complaint instead of Foreign Ministry? IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb conducted hearing on the appeals. On behalf of PTI founder and Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Salman Safdar, Usman Riaz Gul and others appeared before the court while FIA prosecution team was represented by Hamid Ali Shah, Zulfiqar Naqvi, Naem Iqbal and others.

On court's order, advocate general Islamabad and assistant superintendent Adiala jail appeared before the court. In the courtroom a large number of relatives of the accused, party leadership and lawyers were present. Imran Khan's lawyer Salman Safdar while talking to Chief Justice said today big books are lying before you. Afterwards, from FIA prosecution team, Hamid Ali Shah while starting his arguments told the court that he will start arguments from where Salman Safdar had ended. Chief Justice inquired from the prosecutor that did this complain register by the Ministry of Interior. Prosecution told the court that with the approval of federal cabinet, inquiry was registered in the FIA. Chief Justice asked why Interior Minister made complainant instead of Foreign Ministry as Salman Safdar has laid much emphasis on it. Prosecutor Hamid Ali Shah replied he would assist the court in this regard afterwards. Chief Justice inquired who participated in audio leaks.

Hamid Ali Shah said in the alleged audio, Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Asad Umar and Azam Khan were in the audio and FIA has given report after exhibiting this audio. FIA Cyber Crime Wing brought forth report of audio tape of four persons. Audio tape was found from social media platform in which they were discussing about the cypher. In this audio, it was said that they would play on cypher.

Chief Justice remarked that Salman Safdar took up the question that why Interior Ministry register the complaint instead of Foreign Ministry as cypher issue was related to Foreign Ministry. Salman Safdar argued that FIA informed that it is already doing inquiry in this regard. Prosecutor Hamid Ali Shah argued that inquiry was started after complain of Secretary Interior Yousuf Naseem Khokhar. On Oct 13, 2022 secretary interior asked for investigation into the alleged audio leaks. In the inquiry it was found that violation of official secret act was done. Secretary Interior Aftab Akbar Durran again complained on Sep 25, 2023. On August 15, 2023, case was registered under official secret act in the light of CTD. They were of the view accused Imran Khan was made judicial on August 16, 2023. Proceedings were started on August 16, 2023 and ended on Jan 30, 2024. In this two times the trial was remanded back. Shah Mahmood Qureshi was arrested on August 19. On Oct 3 2023, challan of the case was submitted. It was charged two times one on Oct 23 and other on Dec 13. SABAH

PUAN hosts first-ever Accessibility and Inclusion Job Fair



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) on Wednesday hosted its first-ever Accessibility and Inclusion Job Fair alongside the 5th Khadija Tul Kubra Awards Ceremony, drawing a diverse crowd of job seekers, advocates, and business leaders. US Ambassador Donald Blome, in his remarks on the occasion, commended the event's organizers and highlighted the importance of equity, accessibility, and inclusion at the workplace. He emphasized the mission of PUAN to support US exchange alumni in making a positive

impact globally. He praised the collaboration between PUAN, STEP, and the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan, acknowledging the hard work of individuals like Abia, Atif, Rita, and Syed Moeez Ud Din in ensuring the programme's success.

The ambassador underscored the significance of creating an inclusive work environment, adding that diversity at the workplace was an invaluable asset.

He expressed pride in the U.S. Embassy's commitment to the principles and highlighted the presence of the Human Resources Office at the event, affirming the United States' belief in the skills and talents of Pakistan's people.

Ambassador Blome congratulated the award recipients for their pioneering efforts in advocating for mental healthcare, accessible public facilities, and policy recommendations.

He encouraged further collaboration with the U.S. Mission to advance the rights of persons with disabilities, signaling ongoing support for their important work. APP

CDA to develop number of modern parks in federal capital

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is all set to develop a number of new modern parks within the federal capital to provide enhanced recreational facilities to the residents of Islamabad and surrounding localities.

"Over the past decade, approximately 37 public parks have been developed by the Authority in the federal capital and are actively formulating a policy to increase their number in the coming years, official sources told APP here Wednesday.

"The process to develop a new park requires three to four months after the completion of the codal formalities," they added. Presently, the sources said that the federal capital had six amusement parks, which were considered enough to meet the recreational desires of the resident of Islamabad. They further said, "The policy has been made that an amusement park will be constructed whenever a new sector is developed." The sources have indicated that the CDA in the process of developing multiple new sectors such as I-11, I-12, I-14, I-15, I-16, D-12 and Park Enclave.

Newly elected Emir JI Pakistan Hafiz Naeemur Rehman is set to officially assume the office by taking oath today

Qaiser Sharif says the oath taking ceremony will commence at JI Headquarters Mansoorah after Maghrab prayers

LAHORE: The newly elected Emir of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Engineer Hafiz Naeemur Rehman is set to officially assume the office by taking oath at Mansoorah tomorrow (Thursday).

Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, who previously held the position of Emir of the JI Karachi chapter, was elected as the Emir of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan with a majority vote following JI intra-party election which concluded on April 4. JI Spokesperson Qaiser Sharif said on Wednesday that Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has arrived at the JI Headquarters in Lahore to take on his new responsibilities. The oath taking ceremony, said Qaiser Sharif, will be attended by JI Emir

Sirajul Haq, Sectary General Ameerul Azim, Vice Emir Liaqat Baloch, Dr. Farid Ahmed Paracha, Rashid Nasim, JI Spokesperson Qaiser Sharif and other leaders, workers and people from different walks of life. The ceremony will be held after Maghrab prayer, he added.

Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has also called the meeting of the JI working committee (Majlis-e Aamla) on Thursday evening. He will preside over the meeting after taking the oath. Similarly, the meeting of JI Majlis-e Shura (consultative/advisory council) will also be held on Friday. Hafiz Naeemur Rehman will chair the three-day meeting and is likely to talk to media on Sunday. SABAH



ISLAMABAD: Country Education Lead at Microsoft Pakistan, Jibrin Jamshed called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

Minister Salik meets HOAP delegation; pledges full support for smooth Hajj operation

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Wednesday convened a meeting with a delegation from the Hajj Organizers Association of Pakistan (HOAP) and ensured the seamless execution of the Hajj operation for the year 2024. The delegation, spearheaded by HOAP Patron-in-Chief Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, demonstrated their unwavering commitment to the successful organization of the Hajj pilgrimage.

Alongside Ashrafi, the delegation comprised esteemed members including Senior Vice Chairman Sanaulah, Islamabad Zone Chairman Akhlaq Ahmed, Punjab Zone Chairman Malik

Saeed, and Executive Body Members Waheed Iqbal Butt and Khalid Mehmood Javed Bhatti. During the meeting, the minister extended his gratitude to the delegation for their felicitations on his recent appointment and expressed his dedicated support towards facilitating the pilgrims. He assured the delegation of his complete cooperation and vowed to extend all necessary assistance to ensure the comfort and ease of the intending pilgrims.

The minister directed Religious Affairs Secretary, Syed Dr. Atta-ur-Rehman, to prioritize the resolution of any outstanding issues discussed during the meeting with the HOAP delegation. APP

USAID launches \$10m climate financing initiative in Pakistan

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Pakistan on Wednesday launched the Pakistan Climate Financing Activity, an up to \$10 million, four-year endeavor aimed at bolstering sustainability and climate resilience in Pakistan.

Funded through USAID, this initiative underscores the steadfast commitment of the U.S. government to foster responsible stewardship of natural resources and combat the climate crisis. It represents a significant stride towards fulfilling the objectives outlined in the U.S.-Pakistan "Green Alliance" framework. The USAID Pakistan Climate Financing Activity will help facilitate Pakistan's transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy. Through targeted technical assistance, the initiative aims to mobilize both public and private, domestic and international finance for climate mitigation, resilience, and adaptation efforts.



At the launch event held in the federal capital, notable attendees included representatives from the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, representatives from the provincial departments of the Government of Pakistan, as well as representatives from the private sectors, development partners, decision-makers from Pakistan's financial sector, and academia.

Addressing the audience on Wednesday, USAID Deputy Mission Director

Maura O'Brien emphasized, "The USAID Pakistan Climate Financing Activity will support innovative projects tailored to Pakistan's context, scaling up efforts to build climate resilience. Through evidence-based solutions, this activity aims to advance Pakistan's capacity to respond to climate change effectively. I am confident that the Pakistan Climate Financing Activity will bridge gaps and fulfill existing needs – and ultimately advance Pakistan's capacity to respond to climate

change effectively."

Echoing USAID's sentiments, coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Rumeena Khurshid stated, "The Government of Pakistan warmly welcomes this initiative from the United States, aimed at bolstering our nation's climate resilience, mitigation, and adaptation efforts. While Pakistan has made strides in fostering an innovative climate landscape, financial constraints remain a significant impediment. This activity will serve as a catalyst for concerted action, bringing together government, private sector, environmental experts, and development partners to tackle the challenges posed by climate change."

The USAID Pakistan Climate Financing Activity aligns with USAID's global flagship initiative to enhance climate investment in vulnerable and emerging markets. By de-risking and catalyzing climate finance equitably, this initiative aims to leverage both public and private sector investments to fortify Pakistan's capacity for climate resilience and adaptation.