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## MILGEM-IV launched: High time for Pak-Turkiye enhanced strategic cooperation, says PM

Shehbaz Sharif again invites Turkiye to join CPEC; Pakistan, Turkiye agree to maintain close coordination for improved ties

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday lauding the leadership role of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, said that it was high time for Pakistan and Turkiye to enhance their bilateral strategic cooperation for the prosperity of the two nations.

The prime minister, addressing the launching ceremony of the fourth MILGEM Class Corvette - PNS Tariq here, said the joint venture project was an example of cooperation and support between the two

brotherly countries. Earlier, the prime minister and visiting Vice President of Turkiye, Cevdet Yilmaz launched the fourth MILGEM warship.

Initiated in 2018, the MILGEM project envisages the construction of four Corvettes for the Pakistan Navy - two in Pakistan and two in Turkiye.

The prime minister said Recep Tayyip Erdogan was a great leader which was reflected by his "wonderful" victory in the recent poll.

Therefore, the prime

minister said it was high time for both countries to enhance their strategic cooperation and add more joint ventures in other fields.

The prime minister earlier attended the launching ceremony of the third Naval Corvette, PNS Khyber, in Istanbul, in November 2022. The first two Corvettes, PNS Babur and PNS Badar were launched in Istanbul and Karachi, in August 2021 and May 2022 respectively.

The MILGEM project

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir attending 96th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China commemorated at General Headquarters (GHQ)

## Nephew of Nawab Raisani, son of Dolat Lehri among three dead in armed clash

QUETTA: A nephew of the Chief of Sarawan and former Chief Minister, Nawab Muhammad Aslam Raisani, Nawabzada Haroon Raisani and the son of renowned transporter, Mir Dolat Khan Lehri, Brahmdagh Lehri was also killed. Three other companions were also injured from this side. The eyewitnesses said that the fire arms were used openly from both the sides. The bodies of deceased and injured persons were shifted to the civil hospital. The area police and administration reached the spot and started investigations. This resulted in the death

of Nawabzada Haroon Raisani and one of his guards reportedly a levies personnel. While from the other side, the son of Mir Dolat Lehri, Brahmdagh Lehri was also killed. Three other companions were also injured from this side. The eyewitnesses said that the fire arms were used openly from both the sides. The bodies of deceased and injured persons were shifted to the civil hospital. The area police and administration reached the spot and started investigations. This resulted in the death

Calls for forming commission on Bajour incident:  
Achakzai urges Taliban to play role in establishing peace & democratic govt. in Afghanistan



By Sardar Khondai CHAMAN: The Chairman Pashtoonkhaw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Mehmood Khan Achakzai has emphasized that Taliban may play their role in establishing peace and a democratic government in Afghanistan by calling those engaged in Doha dialogue. The Chairman PkMAP was addressing district workers conference arranged by PkMAP in Chaman on Wednesday. A large number of the workers of the party participated in the conference.

Sohbat Khan Achakzai and Karim Khan Achakzai were elected as the secretary and senior assistance of the district Chaman respectively. Mehmood Khan Achakzai said that even a little leniency and carelessness caused big disaster in the region as the intentions of the world forces seemed inappropriate. He underlined the need to form a judicial commission for inquiry of the Bajour incident. He said that we equally share the grief and sorrow with the bereaved families of those dead in the terrorism act.

## 3 terrorists involved in Zhob attack, identified as Afghan citizens

ISLAMABAD (Online): It has been confirmed that Afghan terrorists were involved in terrorism in attack on Zhob Cantt, Foreign Office expressed strong reaction on Wednesday.

On July 12, 2023, 3 terrorists attacked on Zhob Cantt were identified as Afghan citizens. The terrorists belong to Afghanistan's Kandahar province.

The Foreign Office has given instructions to the Afghan Embassy to receive the bodies of Afghan terrorists.

Foreign Office expressed deep concern and condemnation over the continued involvement of Afghan terrorists in terrorist activities in Pakistan and the use of Afghan territory for terrorism within Pakistan.

## Caretaker PM: Shehbaz contacts Nawaz, Zardari on proposed names

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif contacted Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif and former president Asif Ali Zardari and held consultations on the proposed names for the caretaker prime minister and the caretaker set-up.

During consultations, the leaders agreed to complete the process of appointing the caretaker prime minister according to the Constitution and the law.

Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari also agreed to present all the proposed names before the leaders of allied parties.

The leaders also agreed to deal with the issue of formation of a caretaker set-up as soon as possible.

## Iranian FM arrives Pakistan on first bilateral visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister of Iran Hossein Amir Abdollahian, will undertake his first bilateral visit to Pakistan from August 2-4 to discuss entire gamut of bilateral ties and the emerging regional situation with the leadership of Pakistan.

Foreign Minister Abdollahian will hold talks with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Thursday.

## SC rejects plea for formation of full court

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has rejected the petition seeking formation of full court to hear pleas against trial of civilians in military courts under army act.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial remarked the full court bench is not available till September.

We will continue our work if any one likes it or otherwise, he observed.

The matter came up for hearing before a six members larger bench of SC presided over by CJP Wednesday.

At the inception of hearing CJP inquired from Attorney General (AG) do you want to say something.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Turkiye's Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi applaud after cutting a rope to launch Pakistan's 4th MILGEM Class Corvette "PNS Tariq" into sea at Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works.

## Felicitates PLA on 96th Anniversary PLA, Pakistan Army brothers in arms: COAS

Pakistan-China relationship is unique & robust that has proven its resilience in the face of all challenges; Friendship stood test of change of int'l landscapes: Chinese diplomat

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday said the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China and Pakistan Army are brothers in arms and our relationship would continue to contribute towards safeguarding our collective interests. He made these remarks as Chief Guest during the 96th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China commemorated here at General Headquarters (GHQ), an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

Chargé d'affaires of the embassy of the People's

Republic of China, Pang Chunxue, Defence Attache, Chinese Embassy Major General Wang Zhong, officials and Officers from tri-services of Pakistan attended the event.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chinese Charge d'Affaires thanked COAS for hosting the event for the 96th anniversary of the founding of the PLA.

"This all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between China & Pakistan has stood the test of the time and change of international landscapes", the Chinese Charge d'Affaires remarked.

"China & Pakistan have just jointly celebrated the

10th anniversary of the launch of CPEC and in the past months, COAS and other military leaders paid successful visits to China, which has strongly promoted the relationship between the two militaries", the Chinese Charge d'Affaires endorsed.

The COAS felicitated the PLA and lauded the PLA's role in China's defence, security and nation-building. While highlighting various facets of the deep-rooted ties between the two states, militaries and the people, COAS said that the "Pakistan-China relationship is unique & robust that has proven its resilience in the face of all challenges."



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar in a group with under trainee ASPs of National Police Academy currently on study tour of Quetta

## Governor exhorts police officers to perform duties remaining above personal interests

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has exhorted the police officers to perform their professional duties remaining above every kind of personal interests considering their human and national obligation.

The Governor was speaking to the under trainee Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs) of the National Police Academy, currently on study tour of Quetta, here at the Governor House on Wednesday. The Deputy Commandant of the NPA, Noman Siddiqui was leading the group of newly inducted PSP officers.

He congratulated the ASPs on assuming new responsibilities as the PSP officers, the Governor stressed that the role of police department is very crucial for protection of the life and property of the masses and elimination of criminal elements.

He expressed satisfaction over that our senior

police officers are well aware of the present circumstances and as such they have the ability to perform their responsibilities very well. Therefore, it is necessary for them to utilize their wisdom, experience and spirit of public service for the welfare of masses, adding he stressed.

He said that the police officers have become voice of the voiceless by establishing good governance in the police force. Still heavy responsibilities rest with the officers to tackle the challenges of law and order. They should also consider them to be the servants of public instead of their boss or lord, adding he insisted.

The Governor on the occasion appreciated the initiative of the Command and Control Center at Central Police Office saying that the whole data of criminals and crimes is maintained at the center.

Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar on the occasion responded to different queries of the officers.

He said that we all are



QUETTA: Activists of Pakistan Markazi Muslim League hold a protest rally against increase in electricity, gas and petroleum prices.

## Rejects IK's request to stay Toshakhana trial We cannot interfere in trial court proceedings: SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) while rejecting PTI chairman petition filed against High Court (HC) order in connection with Toshakhana trial has remarked supervisory jurisdiction on trial courts is of high court only.

"We cannot interfere in proceedings of trial court at this time. Let Islamabad High Court (IHC) decide. Possibility is there high court gives order for stopping trial tomorrow, the SC further remarked.

The matter came up for hearing before a 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Yahya Afridi Wednesday.

During the hearing of the case Justice Yahya Afridi inquired the case is fixed for hearing in High Court on what date.

Khawaja Haris told the court the case is fixed for hearing tomorrow in high court.

Justice Yahya Afridi remarked what relief you had sought we had given. It is surprising that even then you resorted to SC.

Khawaja Haris took the plea the real question is of jurisdiction.

Justice Yahya Afridi remarked your petition had become in-fertile. Even then we heard it and gave order. We are understanding the situation. We had thought high court would give you better order. We had written in the order the high court should hear the petitions together. May be what relief you are demanding high court gives that decision.

Khawaja Haris told the court high court did not give stay. Therefore, we have come to SC.

The SC maintained let high court decide first. If you don't get relief then the case is pending hearing in SC.



BAGHDAD: Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah Khan and Interior Minister of Iraq Abdul Amir Al Shammari during an agreement signing ceremony.

## NA passes amended PEMRA & Press Council bills

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Wednesday approved the major legislation - the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Press Council of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, 2023 - marking a significant stride towards enhancing the media landscape, and upholding transparency and responsibility.

Moved by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, the House passed the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023 along with amendments with the prime objective to benefit journal-

ists and foster a free and responsible media environment.

The minister also introduced the Press Council of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, 2023, advocating for the replacement of the term "Government" with the phrase "secretary of the division to which business of the Council stands allocated" in section 8, in subsection (1), in clause (xiii) of the Press Council of Pakistan Ordinance, 2002 (XCVII of 2002).

The two bills underwent a thorough examination by the Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting and its report

Continued on page 2



KHUZDAR: Former Senator Nawabzada Haji Lashkari Khan Raisani addressing a Press conference

## Chief Secretary directs to ensure transparent use of relief fund of Rs. 100 mln released to PDMA

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili has stated that Rs. 100 million has been released to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) under the Relief Fund, and it should be ensured to use the same in a transparent manner.

He directed to make the government machinery fully functional and active in all rain and flood affected areas of the province. He asserted that no negligence would be tolerated in the relief and rehabilitation activities in the affected districts.

The accountability of each and every officer and other employees would be made, the Chief Secretary warned while chairing a high level meeting held to review the situation regarding flood caused by the rains in the province the other day.

The senior Member Board of Revenue, secretaries of different concerned departments as well as the commissioner Naseerabad and Director General PDMA were in attendance at the meeting.

The deputy commissioners of concerned districts also participated in the meeting through video link.

The Commissioner Naseerabad and deputy commissioners of the affected districts briefed the meeting about the losses caused due to the rains besides the relief activities there. The Chief Secretary expressed anguish over the cracks caused in the Kirthar canal in Usta Muhammad.

He described the cracks in the canal as negligence of Irrigation department. He directed to fill the cracks within 24 hours starting necessary work on it right now.



## Misbah-ul-Haq to lead high-profile Cricket Technical Committee

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board has constituted a high-profile Cricket Technical Committee (CTC), consisting of former Pakistan captains Misbah-ul-Haq (head), Inzamam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Hafeez.

The CTC will provide recommendations on cricket-related matters, including, but not limited to the overall domestic structure, scheduling, playing conditions, appointment of the national selection committees, appointment of national team coaches, central and domestic contracts and plans for the development of umpires, referees and curators.

The CTC will have the powers to invite additional cricket experts, and shall report to the head of the PCB Management Committee on regular basis.

PCB Management Committee Chairperson Zaka Ashraf here on Wednesday night said: "I am delighted to welcome Misbah-ul-Haq, Inzamam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Hafeez on board for the betterment of cricket in our country. These three former captains possess great cricket knowledge and understand the demands of modern-day cricket.

"Domestic cricket structure is a pillar of any cricketing nation. We have to make it fool proof and its structure progressive. The presence of Misbah, Inzamam and Hafeez, three of Pakistan's most experienced and decorated cricketers who rose through the domestic ranks, will help us in providing our cricketers the best system to thrive so that we can pro-

duce the best cricketers." Misbah-ul-Haq said: "It is a great honour for me to be appointed as the head of this committee, which comprises well-respected individuals who have served Pakistan cricket for decades.

"This is a challenging assignment, but with the vast experience and knowledge that this committee possesses, I have no doubt whatsoever that we will be able to make a positive difference by providing recommendations that improve and enhance the state of the game from the grassroots till the very top."

Acting Director - Domestic Cricket Operations, Junaid Zia, has been included as the ex-officio member of the CTC, and Usman Tasleem is the ex-officio and secretary.

## President phones father of sepoy martyred in Kacchi Canal attack

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday telephoned the father of Sepoy Muhammad Nasir who was martyred in an attack that took place in the Kacchi Canal area of Balochistan on July 13.

The president paid tribute to the martyred sepoy for sacrificing his life for the country's security and saluted him for his services to the country, patriotism, and commitment to duty.

The president also conveyed gratitude, on behalf of the entire nation, to the family of the martyred.

The father of the martyred soldier expressed his desire to rename a government school in Bhakkar district after his son Sepoy Muhammad Nasir Shaheed.



RAWALPINDI: Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Peoples Republic of China, Ms. Pang Chunxue, Major General Wang Zhong, Defence Attachel, Chinese Embassy officials & Officers from tri-services of Pakistan attend the event of 96th Anniversary of the Founding of People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China commemorated at GHQ. General Syed Asim Munir, COAS was the Chief Guest on the occasion.



KARACHI: Vice President of Türkiye, Cevdet Yilmaz meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Marriyum breaks ground of cinema at SRBC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday broke ground of a cinema house on the premises of Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Company (SRBC).

Upon arrival at the SRBC, she was accorded a warm welcome by the officers and employees. Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Sohail Ali Khan, Principal Information Officer Mobashir Hassan and SRBC Managing Director Tahira Sayeda were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, she said efforts were being made to resolve the financial issues of the Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Company.

She said salaries and pensions of the SRBC employees were now being

paid on time and regular basis, and an amount of Rs 310 million had been disbursed among them on that count in a brief period of 15 months.

She said when the present government came to power, the building of SRBC was a ruin, and employees were on the streets as they were not paid salaries and pensions for many months.

"During 15 months, we have constructed a new building for the SRBC that consists of 108 rooms," she added, congratulating the employees on the completion of the new building.

Marriyum said 3 state-of-the-art studios had also been established at the Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Company.

The minister also visited various sections of the SRBC.

## 36 brick kilns sealed in ICT on violation of child labour

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister of State for Law Shahadat Awan on Wednesday informed the National Assembly that the government sealed 36 brick kilns in the Islamabad capital territory (ICT) on violation of child labour laws besides registering cases against the violators.

Replying to various supplementary questions during Question Hour, the minister said that although labour legislation was now a devolved subject after 18th constitutional amendments but currently various laws enforced to stop child labour.

He said the laws which were enforced in ICT included the Factories Act, 1934, the Shops and establishments Ordinance, 1969, the Employment of Children Act, 1991, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 and Employment of Children Rules, 1995.

## Abdul Wahid Bandeeg played dynamic role for promotion of Balochi language: Speakers

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: Political, social and literary figures have said that renowned literary figure, Abdul Wahid Bandeeg sacrificed more or less thirty-five years of his life for the development of Balochi language, literature and culture. "His efforts in the development of Balochi language and literature are a part of history which cannot be ignored," they added. They expressed these views while addressing a condolence reference organized by the Balochi Labzanki Dewan Quetta and Quetta Press Club in memory of writer and former chairman Balochi Academy, Abdul Wahid Bandeeg.

Speaking at the event, Munir Ahmed Badini, a famous novelist and intellectual of Balochi language, paid tribute to Abdul Wahid Bandeeg and said that he had close literary ties with him. "Mr. Bandeeg played a major role in introducing my novels in his Balochi monthly magazine, and he continued his struggle alone to keep the Balochi language alive and was engaged in the

service of Balochi language and literature till his last breath," he said.

Badini said that he played an important role in compiling Balochi Dictionary and collection of poetry of Mir Gul Khan Naseer, which are great achievements in the promotion of literature.

Abdul Wahid Bandeeg's son Gowaram Bandeeg on the occasion, thanked Balochi Labzanki Dewan and Quetta Press Club for organizing condolence reference regarding his father and said that his father had advised him to continue his struggle till the end to keep the Balochi magazine going.

Addressing the ceremony, former Chief Minister Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch said that I have always found Abdul Wahid Bandeeg to be a dynamic political and literary worker. "It is a very difficult task to publish a monthly magazine in native languages frequently, but Bandeeg continued this process till the end," he said.

He said that all young people, along with their children, have to play their

part in carrying forward the mission of Mr Bandeeg, adding that we need to improve our institutions more and in this regard the patronage and approval of the government is very important. He said that we should make it a habit to pay tribute to our personalities even in their lives. "For the promotion of language and literature, it is necessary to provide opportunities to people in this regard and education should be made common to all corners".

Addressing the ceremony, President of Quetta Press Club Abdul Khaliq Rind, senior journalist Shazada Zulfiqar, Professor Dr. Abdul Saboor Baloch of Jamia Turbat, well-known researcher Saleem Kurd, Chairman Pashto Academy Sohail Jafar, Chairman Balochi Labzanki Dewan Quetta Yar Muhammad Badini, Professor Baloch Khan, Mah Noor Baloch and others said that Mr. Bandeeg served as the chairman of Balochi Academy for twelve years and besides organizing numerous literary seminars in Balochi Academy.

## Care taker PM: Opposition parties decide to send name to PM till Friday

ISLAMABAD (Online): Opposition has accelerated the pace of consultations among them in connection with appointment of care taker Prime Minister (PM). Opposition parties have decided to finalize name of care taker PM till Friday and communicate it to the PM.

A meeting took place in the chamber of opposition leader Raja Riaz on the matter of appointment of care taker PM on Wednesday.

Dr Fahmida Mirza and Saira Bano from GDA and MNAs from PTI dissidents participated in the meeting. Talking to media men after

meeting Fahmida Mirza said preliminary consultation has taken place today on names of care taker PM. The next meeting of opposition will be held on Friday. We will present our names there.

Government has not shared name with opposition so far. However we will give names and may be opposition designated person becomes care taker PM.

Opposition leader in National Assembly Raja Riaz said to his members to bring good names so that we could finalize them.

Next meeting of opposition will take place in parliament house on Friday.

## Babar Azam's ICC Test Batting Ranking improves to claim 4th position

LAHORE (INP): In the latest International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's Test Batting Rankings, Pakistani captain Babar Azam jumped a spot to claim the fourth position.

In the recently-concluded two-match Test series against Sri Lanka, he could score just 76 runs but got a fortunate push in the rankings.

Babar's fortunate promotion was a result of the demotion of Australia's Marnus Labuschagne and Travis Head.

Labuschagne and Head were far from their best in the recently-concluded Ashes and their inability to score big in the five-match series, saw them losing crucial rating points.

Consequently, Labuschagne slipped three spots to fifth while Head was demoted two spots to the sixth position.

Last week, Babar Azam slipped to the fifth position after a below-par performance in the first Test against Sri Lanka.

Pakistan's hero with the bat in the second Test against Sri Lanka Abdullah Shafique got the reward for his heroics as he rose 27 spots to 21st.

Whereas, Pakistan's first Test hero Saud Shakeel remained at 15th position with a career-best 705 rating points.

Pakistan bowlers were also rewarded as Shaheen Shah Afridi, who made six scalps in two Tests against Sri Lanka, jumped three positions to sixth while his pace partner Naseem Shah climbed up seven spots to equal 37th.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's star with the ball in the second Sri Lanka Test Nauman Ali enjoyed a massive surge as he improved 13 places to 42nd — the most notable among improvers.

England produced a strong fightback during the second half of the series to tie the Ashes at 2-2 and a host of their best performers were rewarded on the updated ICC rankings lists.



QUETTA: Administrator Metropolitan Corporation, Jabbar Baloch being received shield from Leaders Odyssey School and College CEO Zahid Mandokhail during meeting held in Quetta.

## NA passes amended...

**Continued from page 1**  
ports were presented in the House. After their third reading, the bills were subsequently passed by the legislators.

In the PEMRA bill, the minister proposed amendment in clause 2, after paragraph (iii), the following new paragraph (iv) shall be added, namely: "(iv) after proposed clause (v), the following new clause shall be added namely (vi) ensure fair, transparent and independent rating to the broadcasters for their TV channels."

She also proposed that after clause 3, the following new clause 3A shall be added namely: "3A. Amendment of Section 4, Ordinance XIII of 2002.- In the said Ordinance, in section 4, after sub-section (3), the following new sub-section shall be added, namely: "(4) The Authority by registering rating companies shall ensure that a fair, transparent, and independent forums shall issue rating to the licensees."

Marriyum suggested to substitute clause 8 of the bill as reporting by the standing committee by following: "8. Amendment of Section 20, Ordinance XIII of 2002.- In the said Ordinance in Section 20 "(a) in

clause (e), the expression "and such content will be in addition to preamble and the licensee will also submit an annual compliance report to the is effect or as and when required by the Authority;" shall be added at the end; and (b) after clause (ii), for the full stop, at the end, a semi colon shall be substituted and thereafter the following new clauses shall be added, namely: (j) not air disinformation; (k) ensure that during a regular programme a continuous break for advertising shall not exceed for five minutes and duration between two such successive breaks shall not be less than ten minutes; and (l) ensure that content of all channel available on electronic media, including logo and name, etc. shall not vary, alter, substitute, tempered on digital media or any other similar forum". Another amendment moved by the minister was in clause 11. It suggests that in proposed section 26, after sub-section (11), the following new sub-section (12) shall be added, namely: (12) Each Council shall compile and submit the annual report of license regarding the compliance of Code of Conduct to the Authority".

## High time for Pak-Turkiye....

The prime minister said that Pakistan Navy was fully dedicated to ensuring the high-quality maritime activities.

He said following the increasing burden on Port Qasim of Karachi, Pakistan was needed to create linkages between Karachi and Gwadar ports as Gwadar was about to become a business center for the country as well as the region.

Calling the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor a "roaring success" the prime minister said Pakistan and China had agreed to launch the second phase that would comprise green corridor, business corridor, special economic zones and IT corridors.

He said the second phase was bound to increase the quantum of business transactions and Turkiye was a "natural partner" and reiterated his invitation for the country to join that joint that wonderful opportunity of prosperity.

Prime Minister Shehbaz thanked Turkish President Erdogan, Naval chief, head of Karachi

## Shipyard and the ministry of defense production as well as the workers for their hard work and contribution to make the MILGEM project a success.

He said that following the said achievements, certain actors were trying to establish their hegemony, so it was important to strengthen our navy and maritime activity.

For this purpose, he said the government was fully geared to provide all-out resources to the Pakistan Navy to augment national security.

The prime minister also announced a "gift" of Rs200 million for the experts and workers involved in the construction of the MILGEM-IV, with a view to recognize their efforts and for their encouragement.

In his address, Turkish Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz condole the loss of lives in Bajaur attack and reiterated Turkiye's condemnation of terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations.

He said the people of Pakistan had a unique

## place in the hearts of Turkish people as both stood by each other throughout the centuries.

He particularly mentioned the Turkish support to Pakistan after the flood and thanked Pakistan for its solidarity after the deadly earthquake hit Turkiye in the recent past.

He said considering the prevailing regional situation, the Pakistan-Turkiye defence cooperation was becoming more relevant with enhanced scope.

He said that Pakistan and Turkiye were faced with the challenges like Turkiye like cross-border terrorism which necessitated the understanding of the terrorists' objective and acting totally opposite to their expectations.

The Turkish vice president said Turkiye had become a major global actor and reduced its foreign dependence in the defence industry, consequent to the will and leadership of President Erdogan.

He said Turkish shipping industry was among the world's top ten industries producing the warships.

He told the gathering that the MILGEM warships were equipped with cutting edge technology and weapon system developed by Turkish industries.

Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi said the MILGEM project would become an emblem of the Pakistan-Turkiye friendship. He said both countries stood shoulder to shoulder in hour of need and exemplified the recent flood in Pakistan and earthquake in Turkiye.



HUB: Chairman Ibrahim Daud presiding over meeting of District Council

**TENDER NOTICE**

The Directorate General of Sports Balochistan invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following sports items/Pana flexes for 23<sup>rd</sup> March, Independence day 14<sup>th</sup> August & Other National Days Sports events, Clubs, Associations, Academies, Beach Games, Divisional Games, District Games, Football Gold Cup, Hockey Gold Cup and all other Sports activities during the current financial year 2023-24. Tender Fee Rs. 1000/- and Bid Security 2%.

**Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB.**

S.#	Name of Items	E/Cost
1.	Sports Items (Jogger Shoes, football items, cricket items, Volleyball, Karate, Wushu, Boxing, Swimming, Tennis, Squash, Table tennis, Badminton items Pana flexes and other sports items etc.)	45 Million

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** (a) 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 10,000,000 in Previous 2. (b) Turnover of at least 40,000,000 PKR in 2 Subsequent Previous Years. (c) Presence in Active Tax Payer List. (d) NTN Sales Tax Certificate. (e) The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. (f) JV is permissible. **Provision of Samples.** The bidders must provide samples for all quoted items; bids without quoted samples will be rejected. In case of large items i.e. major sports items may be provided in catalog with required specification. **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Call Deposit or Bank Guarantee of amount specified above in the name of the undersigned from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the undersigned upon payment (nonrefundable) bidding document fee (1000) through Green Challan. **If Others please specify (The NIT & Bidding Document can also be downloaded from [www.bppra.org.pk](http://www.bppra.org.pk) under TSE No. 232408346371. Incomplete documents not conforming to the tender documents shall be liable to rejection. Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2023, till 10:00 AM at the office of the undersigned. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day i.e 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2023, at the office of the undersigned at 11:00 AM. **Address:** Directorate General of Sports Balochistan, Mir Jaffar Khan Jamali Road Quetta Phone No. 0819201822 Fax no. 081-9201822

**DIRECTOR GENERAL SPORTS BALOCHISTAN**

PRQ No.267/02-9-2023  
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## Ulema condemn Bajaur incident, renew pledge to fight terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ulema and Mashaykh from all schools of thought on Wednesday unequivocally condemned the gruesome incidents of the bomb blast in Bajaur, suicide blast in Khyber Masjid, attack on police deputed on the security of polio team in Quetta and desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden and Denmark in the strongest terms and renewed pledge to continue their fight against all evil forces trying to destabilize Pakistan socially, politically and economically. Leading the joint press conference along with the prominent religious scholars including Council of Islamic Ideology Chairman Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Shia Ulema Council Central General Secretary Allama Arif Hussain Wahidi, and Custodian of the Holy Shrine of Eidgah Sharif, Shaykh Muhammad Hassan Haseeb-ur-Rehman and others Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi termed all those involved in these unlawful acts criminals and emphasized that they had

no connection with Islam and Muslims. Ashrafi who is also the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and the Middle East categorically stated that those involved in the murder of innocent Muslims, and attack on Masjid and security forces were playing the role of Kharijites. Giving a reference to Islamic history, he said the attacks were similar to those made by the Khawarij on Muslims. The people who embarrassed martyrdom in the Bajaur incident were all Ulema, religious scholars and Huffaz and they were all innocent, he maintained. Shedding light on the Paigham-e-Pakistan, a unanimous doctrine signed by more than 15,000 Ulema and Mashaykh hailing from all segments of the society to maintain religious pluralism across the country, and they had given a unanimous Fatwa (religious decree) that the suicide attacks were Haram (prohibited) in Pakistan, and there was no room for any struggle involving

militancy in the country. Condemning the indecent incidents of desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden and Denmark, Ashrafi on behalf of all Ulema and Mashaykh of Pakistan, seconded the stance of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for legislating against these blasphemous acts at the international level. He assured full cooperation to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazl) Chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman as it is the biggest religiopolitical party and contributing to the peace, progress and prosperity of the country since day one. He announced to hold countrywide Ulema and Mashaykh conventions for a stable Pakistan in the entire month of August and made it clear that they would not surrender before the terrorism and extremism anyway. He further assured the national security institutions that they were standing by them for the security and sovereignty and the supremacy of Islam through thick and thin.



Ms. Shazia Marri, Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Chairs the 60th BISP Board of Directors Meeting in Islamabad.

## NA Speaker says: Ensuring merit key to transform PIPS into center of excellence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that observance of merit is key to transforming the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Service (PIPS) into a centre of excellence. While Chairing the Board of Governors' Meeting of PIPS in Islamabad, he said that purpose of PIPS was to provide qualitative legislative support to Parliamentarians across the country. Moreover, he stated that qualitative research is key to ensuring

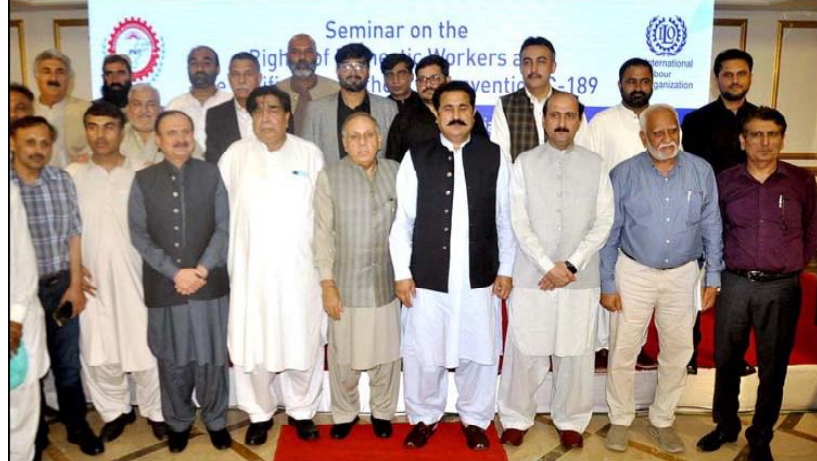
the promotion of public-friendly legislation. The Members of the Board of Governors PIPS unanimously emphasized ensuring merit while making appointments, particularly in PIPS and all other parliamentary institutions. The Members also stressed the need to create strong links among provincial legislators and federal legislators. The Members also urged the need to enhance the research capacity of PIPS in order to provide detailed research-based inputs to legislators.

## Sherry accuses PTI chief of hiding his corrupt practices through baseless arguments

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief had been exposed in the Toshakhana case for committing corrupt practices and concealing the facts but he was hiding his misappropriation under hoax arguments. The federal minister took to Twitter to respond to the recent statement of the PTI chief who appeared earlier in the

hearing of the Toshakhana reference filed against him. Senator Rehman wrote on her official Twitter handle, "Ever since the facts of Toshakhana came to light, PTI chief had taken U-turn (retracted from his statements) continuously. In the beginning, he challenged the powers of the Election Commission itself." The Minister said the PTI chairman maintained that he did not sell the gifts of Toshakhana, but now he claimed to sell those gifts through his military secretary. "PTI chief, who called

others thieves and robbers, is now presenting arguments for stealing gifts worth billions of rupees. Instead of proving himself innocent, he is accusing the government of disqualifying him," Sherry Rehman alleged. The Minister said PTI chief had already been disqualified as a result of his extremist politics, the government had no interest in disqualifying him. She demanded that the PTI chief should hold himself accountable in the same way as he wanted for his opponents for the past four years.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo with Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Sajid Hussain Turi with participants during the seminar on "Rights of Domestic Workers and the Ratification of ILO Convention C-189" organized by Pakistan Workers Federation.

## Senate body on Science and Technology meets

ISLAMABAD (Online): Meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Science and Technology was held here at Parliament House on Wednesday with Senator Sardar Muhammad Shafiq Tareen in Chair. The Senate Committee deliberated on the recruitment process in Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA). Senator Sardar Muhammad Shafiq Tareen expressed reservations on acquiring the services of UTS and inquired as to why the Services of Public Testing Service (NTS&NUST) have not been acquired. He further stated that the irregularities have also been observed in the recruitment process, and several candidates have

approached the standing committee in this regard. PSQCA officials apprised that the contract is being awarded to the lowest bidder as per government policy. The Chairman Committee raised concerns about the 'Promotion vacancies' issue, which were advertised by the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA). He emphasized that the promotion should be granted to deserving employees serving in the organization for many years. Unfortunately, the PSQCA has advertised these posts and is conducting interviews today without considering the eligible serving employees.

## FIA nabs 470 human smugglers in last four years: NA told

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Law and Justice Shahadat Awan on Wednesday told the National Assembly that Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested 470 human smugglers and convicted 364 during the last four years. Replying to a question during Question Hour, the minister said the FIA has been taking action against those involved in human smuggling and registered 889 cases under Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act, 2018 during 2020, 2021, 2022 and April 30, 2023. Some 2016 Pakistanis were identified travelling on fake/ forged documents against whom 971 cases were registered and arrested 104 smugglers/agents during the

said period, he said. He said seven Airline Staff members who were involved in facilitation to paxes on fake travel documents have also been arrested. Legislation has been done to punish human traffickers as well as safeguard the rights of victims. The minister said we were also strengthening international cooperation to curb the menace of human smuggling. To another question, the minister said that the federal capital witnessed 20 per cent reduction in crimes cases. Eagle Squad has been established in the Federal Capital Territory on the pattern of the Dolphin Force in Punjab to control the crime rate, he said.

## CJHC summons meeting of Justice Committee

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Justice Islamabad High Court (IHC) Justice Aamer Farooq on Wednesday summoned the meeting of Justice Committee on Thursday. The Registrar Officer had written letters to the concerned officials in this regard. The meeting would discuss the matters pertaining establishment of Prosecution Wing, law & order situation and problems in way of construction of model jail in Islamabad. The matter of revenue court was also part of the agenda of the meeting. The police officials would present the report pertaining award of sentences to the accused and acquittals in criminal cases.

## River Indus still flows in medium, low flood

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that River Indus was still flowing in medium flood at Guddu & Sukkur and in low flood at Taunsa Barrage (upstream Guddu). According to the daily FFC report on Wednesday, similarly, Rivers Ravi at Head Sidhna and Sutlej at Suleimanki & Islam are experiencing low flood while Rivers Jhelum & Chenab are discharging normal flows. Tarbela Reservoir has attained a water level of 1539.79 feet (10.21 feet below its MCL:1550 feet).

## SAPM holds PTI govt responsible for current crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Wednesday held the PTI chief responsible for the current crisis in the country, saying the PDM-led government has saved the country from economic default and shattered his "dream". The current government had taken tough decisions to improve the economy, even risking its political capital, he said while talking to a private news channel. These steps were vital to stabilize the economy and the government was supported in these measures by the PDM coalition partners,

he added. It is the fruit of the IMF bailout package that the donor countries have started sending money to Pakistan and as a result, there has been an improvement in foreign exchange reserves of the country, he said, adding that political stability is vital for economic development and all the stakeholders must chalk out the way to bring the country out of crises. Replying to a question, he said the present government is trying its best to provide relief to the masses, adding, it is now the responsibility of the coming political government to honor the IMF agreement.

## Disqualification of 5 years period of Talal ends

ISLAMABAD (Online): Five years disqualification period of PML-N leader and former state minister Talal Chaudhry has expired. Supreme Court (SC) had awarded punishment of five years disqualification to him on August 02, 2018 in contempt of court case. Former Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Saqib Nisar took suo motu notice of speech delivered by Talal Chaudhry in a public meeting. During a public meeting in 2018 in Faisalabad Talal Chaudhry had criticized judges who had provided legal shelter to dictatorship. Upon it a 3-member bench of SC had declared that Talal Chaudhry committed contempt.



ISLAMABAD: Parents searching names in list of their daughters at F-7/2, thousands of girls apply but few got admission as government not yet able to fulfill demand of residents of Federal Capital due to small number of Colleges in Islamabad.

## Dar questions PTI govt's Rs 500B anti-terror spending in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Finance and Revenue Muhammad Ishaq Dar, on Wednesday, raised questions about the effective usage of Rs 500 billion allocated to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government over the past decade to combat terrorism. During a Senate debate on the Bajaur suicide bombing, Dar revealed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government received over Rs 500 billion, including Rs 71 billion during 2022-23, from the divisible pool since 2009 to combat terrorism in the province. He expressed his disappointment, stating that if they had spent the amount on budget support, it would be regrettable. Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Ishaq Dar, brought attention to the special provision in the NFC Award, 2021, stating that the provinces unanimously

decided to allocate 1 per cent of the Divisible Pool's net proceeds to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) as an acknowledgement of its front line role against terrorism. However, Dar expressed concern that the provincial government had not effectively utilized the allocated funds to build the intended counter-terrorism capacity. Expressing condemnation for the gruesome incident in Bajaur, he expressed regret that terrorism has resurged, prompting the need for introspection into the reasons behind its resurgence in the country. He called upon the House to organize a briefing from the Interior Ministry, urging them to share terror data from the last decade. He emphasized that a collective decision should be taken to determine the future course of action in combating the menace of terrorism.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf chairing meeting of the PIPS Board of Governors at PIPS.

## Tosha Khana will not be allowed to escape under any circumstances, Atta

ISLAMABAD (Online): Special Assistant to Prime Minister (PM) Atta Tarar said thief behind selling of Tosha Khana watches will not be allowed to escape under any circumstances and will bring him to justice. While talking to media outside Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday Atta Tarar said that there is a notorious criminal who is facing treason case and is also involved in theft of Tosha Khana and 9th May incident. He said that sometimes accused makes different excuses and he has attended 3 out of 40 hearings so far.

He said that the accused had taken gifts of Tosha Khana and sold them. That's how gambling money has been invested elsewhere. He said that 35 questions regarding Tosha Khana gifts were asked by court and he did not have any answer. He said that lawyer of accused Ali Zafar admitted in the Election Commission (EC) that gifts were sold. He said that neither the accused is there nor his lawyer and list of witnesses was not given in the court. He further said that the case was heard in the Supreme Court at 11:30 and in the Election Commission (EC) at 9:30, but no one appeared in the court and we will not let him run away.

## Hearing of contempt of EC against Fawad, Asad adjourned till August 22

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has adjourned till August 22 hearing of contempt of EC case against Fawad Chaudhry and Asad Umar till August 22. During the course of hearing Wednesday, Faisal Chaudhry counsel for Fawad Chaudhry requested the EC to adjourn the hearing of the case. Upon it member EC Ikram Ullah Khan said Fawad Chaudhry was to file written apology today. Member Sindh Nisar Durrani said counsel for Asad Umar has filed plea seeking adjournment.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, Ms. Shazia Fatima Khawaja addressing a seminar on "Rights of Domestic Workers and the Ratification of ILO Convention C-189" organized by Pakistan Workers Federation.

## Political Parties urged to take measures for educational reforms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Independent education policy experts, government stakeholders, and political parties on Wednesday at a conference agreed on introducing reforms for more inclusive and equitable quality education. They were addressing a conference on Mapping the Educational Reforms in View of the Next Democratic Tenure, organized by Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) in collaboration with Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRC). Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Baela Raza Jamil, CEO Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi said that education with learning is a lifeline for all citizens without discrimination. Pakistan remains lowest on key indicators of SDG 4 in South Asia failing to

live up to Article 25-A, a fundamental constitutional right to education. In Spite of progressive manifestos, political parties repeatedly fall short of delivering what they promised, compromising, excluding, and crippling the lives of millions of children, especially girls and marginalized groups. May the coming elections be a new beginning for progressive education investment and delivery for all citizens protected with strong learning foundations. Dr. A. H. Nayyar said that the state has failed to implement the Article 25-A and provide free and compulsory education to all children under 16 years as nearly half the children are deprived of schooling on account of the failure of the state to provide the resources needed for the task.

The political parties must promise in their election manifestos to enhance allocation to education by 6% of GDP, he added. Dr. Shoaib Suddle said that the government has been violating order no. 2 of the Jillani judgment (SMC 1 of 2014, etc.) and Article 22(1) of the constitution because school curriculum and textbooks of compulsory subjects like Urdu, English and Social Studies carry substantial content relating to the religious instruction of majority religion, compelling non-Muslim students to learn Islamiyat in all courses. Peter Jacob, Executive Director, Centre for Social Justice said that fulfilling and implementing Articles 22(1) and 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan on the right to education without discrimination, is a

fundamental constitutional obligation and a pressing need for improving foundational literacy, and the quality of education. He added that civil society will continue to engage effectively with political parties for positive educational reforms before and after the elections in 2023. Wajahat Masood appreciated the landmark decision of the supreme court issued on 19 June 2014. He added that it is not possible to implement articles 20, 22(1), and 25-A of the constitution in letter and spirit unless related laws and policies are made likewise, as they are sectarian, religion-based, and discriminatory. He added the state of Pakistan needs to ensure the equality of citizens and discourage appeasing groups promoting division on the basis of identity.

Dr. Prof. Yaqoob Khan Bangash said that there has to be social interaction among students from majority and minority communities inside and outside classrooms to promote inclusion, pluralism, and diversity. Waseem Ajmal, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training assured that the ministry is committed to removing religious instruction and hate speech present in compulsory subjects to implement Article 22(1) of the Constitution. Saima Anwer said that school curricula and textbooks should focus on promoting inclusion, diversity, critical thinking, and learning outcomes. Moreover, minorities should have access to suitable alternatives to compulsory Islamic education.



ISLAMABAD: Students attending school after the summer vacation on the opening day after two month at G-7 sector.



## Intelligence failure

Bestial violence once again stalks the land. There have been 18 suicide bombings already this year, surpassing the 15 such attacks during all of 2022. The horror of the latest one, in Bajaur district's Khar tehsil on Sunday, continues to unfold as poignant details about the victims come to the fore and the critically injured breathe their last in hospital.

So far, over 50 people have lost their lives, almost half of them minors. The militant Islamic State-Khorasan group claimed responsibility for the attack at the JUI-F rally in which the principal target appears to have been the party's Khar ameer, Ziaullah Jan: the event had been underway for two hours but the attacker detonated his explosives-laden vest only after the former arrived at the venue. Maulana Ziaullah and his 22-year-old son died in the attack.

On Monday, MNAs denounced the attack as the result of "complete failure" on the part of Pakistan's multiple intelligence agencies. It is difficult to disagree, considering these agencies have now had decades of experience in dealing with terror groups and security forces have carried out a number of 'intelligence-based operations' against them.

Their inability to prevent the Bajaur bombing has handed IS-K its biggest mass casualty 'success' since the sectarian attack on a Peshawar mosque last year, in which at least 64 people perished.

A recent UN report noted that in Afghanistan, distinctions between members of Al Qaeda and affiliated groups, including TTP, and IS-K are sometimes fuzzy and that there is a "tendency for people to gravitate towards the dominant or ascending power". Attacks such as the Bajaur bombing are thus useful for terrorist outfits to 'burnish their credentials' and attract recruits.

Moreover, there had been consistent indications of IS-K's presence in Bajaur, which is contiguous with Afghanistan's Kunar province — well known as a locale for terrorist training camps. The militant outfit had made an assassination attempt on Maulana Ziaullah last year as well and slain at least another cleric in the district. Had the attackers been tracked down, perhaps Sunday's tragedy could have been averted.

Some experts believe that IS-K militants, under pressure from the Afghan Taliban, have moved from their bases in Afghanistan and set up cells in major cities in Pakistan where they can more easily avoid detection. Several targeted killings in Peshawar this year of religious scholars as well as members of minority communities were traced to a network of IS-K militants — all Afghan nationals — in the city.

With an election around the corner, political parties must have security protocols in place in coordination with law-enforcement agencies. The intelligence apparatus should be streamlined and work in concert under an empowered Nacta. We cannot afford blurred lines between politics and national security — or a bloodbath could be in store.



Zahid Hussain

What the former FBR chief revealed in a TV interview last week only reinforces the perception of a failing oligarchic state. It provides an insight into the vested interests that control the country's power structure. Irrespective of their political affiliation they unite when it comes to safeguarding their corporate interests.

One such example, as narrated by Shabbar Zaidi, is how some 40 MNAs from the PTI, PPP and PML-N, led by the then foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, visited his office when the FBR issued a tax notice to a politically influential landowner in Multan, and asked him to withdraw the case. Did he have any choice in the face of such blatant political interference? Obviously not. It has certainly not

been the only such case where the authorities have succumbed under pressure from powerful lobbies seeking exemption from the tax net.

Shabbar Zaidi claims that he faced a similar situation when he tried to bring the tobacco industry in KP into the tax net. He was advised to back off as many of the tobacco barons were members of parliament belonging to the then ruling party, so that some of the richest people could be let out of the tax net because of political compulsions, thus shifting the financial burden onto the populace.

These disclosures by the former FBR chief shows the power of a rent-seeking ruling elite. It shows that the country's entire power structure is built to serve the corporate interests of powerful ruling classes, both civil and military.

It was revealing how the then army chief intervened to block adjustment of property valuation in Defence Housing Authority by the FBR as it affected the property business in the vicinity controlled by military authorities. It was apparently meant to protect the security establishment's ex-

panding corporate interests. Trading in property allotted to military officers has become a lucrative business. Perks come with the power that the establishment wields. There is certainly no check on its power.

It should, then, really not come as a surprise that while burdening the masses with more taxes, as part of the IMF's programme, the finance minister has refrained from broadening the tax net to real estate, retail business and big landlords. It is basically corporate interests that determine our financial policy priorities. The weakening of state institutions has prevented the country from embarking on the path of economic progress and ending financial dependence on multilateral agencies and external donors.

The failure to broaden the tax base is a manifestation of the continued stranglehold of a small narrow elite which has left the state with few resources for the development of economic infrastructure. It also makes the country more dependent on foreign aid. Tax revenue as a percentage of GDP has stagnated at 10 per cent over the last decade and has been declining. It is

shocking that the taxes paid by National Assembly lawmakers fail to match their lifestyle. The FBR has failed to take action despite this fact.

According to data compiled by the FBR, the salaried classes pay 200 per cent more taxes than the combined taxes paid by the country's exporters and highly undertaxed retailers. While more taxes have been piled on the salaried classes in the last budget, thousands of retailers have conveniently been left out of the tax net because of political reasons. How strong the business lobbies are, was witnessed last year when a tweet from Maryam Nawaz forced the then finance minister Miftah Ismail to withdraw even a nominal tax on the retailers. It was unprecedented that a budgetary provision passed by parliament was arbitrarily withdrawn on a tweet from a leader of the main ruling party.

The control of a narrow oligarchic elite over our political system has impeded the implementation of structural reforms that are critical to sustainable economic development and are required for strengthening economic and other institutions. In

nearly 76 years of independence, democratically elected governments have been mere punctuation marks in a long reign of military and autocratic political rule.

Unfortunately, there has been no fundamental change in Pakistan's political power structure during that period. A small power elite has dominated Pakistan's political scene under both civilian and military rule. For too long, the country has traded on the back of its strategic resources and geopolitical importance, making its rulers totally dependent on international financial aid. It is not only about reliance on external aid but also about an economy based on internal rents limiting our productive capacity.

A damning IMF report released last month pointing out "exceptionally high" risks and multifaceted challenges to our economy should have been a wakeup call for our rulers, but that was not to be. Nothing could be more ironic than the government celebrating the financial bailout by multilateral lending agencies and helped by friendly countries. It is not surprising that we have been in perpetual Fund programmes as we

don't want to increase our own resources and stand up on our own feet.

Just a few months are left for the elections, but economic and financial reforms are not on any party's agenda. Our electoral politics largely revolves around gaining control of state patronage. Therefore, it seems hard for our ruling elite to break away from their narrow interests and move towards a sustainable and self-reliant course. A continuing blame game and political instability have further underlined the severe challenges that the already ailing economy faces.

Pakistan appears to be fast sliding into the category of a failing state, with no serious attempt being made to arrest the drift and revive the country on the pathway to a modern democratic and economically developed state. With state power continuing to be dominated by the security establishment and a small power elite, there is little hope of the country achieving political and economic stability. The danger is that Pakistan may plunge deeper into instability after the elections, given the reckless power game that is going on. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Misguided fiscal policies



Atta-ur-Rahman

Earlier this year, bowing to the demands of the IMF, Pakistan raised its interest rates by a whopping 300 basis points to 20 per cent, the highest in Asia. This has meant that industries across the country that had borrowed money from banks to expand now have to pay 24 per cent interest or even more annually on existing loans. This has resulted in closure of many industries with a resulting loss of a huge number of jobs as well as rising poverty. According to experts, about seven million workers have been fired and hundreds of factories closed down in Faisalabad alone as Pakistan's textile exports collapse. The pharmaceutical sector, the automobile sector and many other industrial sectors are facing the same situation.

The closure of industries has resulted in lack of

job opportunities for our talented youth leading to hopelessness and mass migration to foreign countries. Young, educated Pakistanis are now leaving our shores in hundreds of thousands.

According to newspaper reports, approximately 765,000 people left Pakistan in 2022 — including 92,000 highly educated people like doctors, engineers, information technology experts and accountants. This number is about triple the 225,000 departures in 2021 and 288,000 emigrants in 2020. The number has further grown in 2023, highlighting the negative impact of IMF-driven economic policies. There can be no greater disaster for a nation than to be witness to mass migration of its talent.

High-interest rates can have a devastating impact on world economies as is evident from many international examples. There are negative consequences on trade, commerce, industrial manufacture, industrial expansion, socioeconomic development, and poverty.

For instance, in Brazil during the 2015-2016 period, the Central Bank raised its benchmark interest rate to combat surging inflation. As a result, Brazilian exporters

facied higher financing costs, leading to severely reduced exports and trade imbalances.

Argentina's exports were similarly impacted in 2001 as the high-interest rates made it difficult for manufacturers to access credit and maintain production levels. The textile industry in Argentina suffered due to reduced consumer spending, and the agricultural sector faced challenges in exporting their produce, leading to decreased foreign exchange earnings. The crisis plunged millions of Argentinians into poverty and caused the collapse of various industries.

Similarly, Zimbabwe suffered an industrial collapse due to high interest rates introduced by the government to control hyperinflation in the early 2000s. The damaged industrial sectors included agriculture, mining, and manufacturing, with the resulting sharp rise in poverty levels.

More recently in 2018-2019, Turkey too experienced the devastating effects of high interest rates. The construction industry, which heavily relied on loans for large-scale projects, experienced a sharp decline in invest-

ments. The automotive sector, one of Turkey's major export industries, also faced severe challenges due to reduced demand and increased costs of production, affecting its export competitiveness.

Another example is that of the experience of Nigeria in 2016-2017. To control inflation and stabilize the currency, the Central Bank of Nigeria raised interest rates significantly. The high-interest rate environment constrained economic growth, leading to widespread unemployment and poverty. As a result, major damage was caused to the oil and gas industry, the backbone of the Nigerian economy.

The experience of Thailand in 1997 is another glaring example of the dangers associated with hyper interest rates. During the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997, Thailand raised interest rates to protect its currency. The high-interest rates contributed to a sharp economic downturn, causing many businesses to collapse, leading to increased poverty and unemployment. The worst affected sectors were electronics, automobile manufacturing and Tourism. The electron-

ics industry, which constituted a significant portion of Thailand's exports, was particularly damaged as high interest rates hampered investments in technology upgrades and production.

Similar economic damages caused by high interest rates were witnessed in Greece (2010s), Mexico (1994), Indonesia (1998), Venezuela (2010s), and Russia (1998). There are many such examples highlighting the terrible consequences of high interest rates on national economies and making such countries completely dependent on foreign masters for all their needs. This is precisely what seems to be happening now in Pakistan.

The recipe for economic recovery by huge increases in interest rates is completely wrong. A country's socio-economic development rests largely on its ability to manufacture and export high value added goods, not to do the reverse and destroy whatever little industry that exists by huge increases in the cost of borrowing. In Pakistan many industrial sectors are being systematically destroyed by the high inflation. What Pakistan should be doing today is to reduce interest

rates to five per cent or less. We should also offer large interest-free loans to its manufacturing sector to expand this sector, make it more internationally competitive so that exports can be multiplied.

Inflation should be controlled by increasing production through expansion of the manufacturing sector, not by increasing interest rates and destroying the manufacturing sector. Inflation is intimately linked to the supply and demand equation. By following the IMF recipes we are doing exactly the opposite, as the manufacturing sector has been devastated, supplies have been reduced, and prices have shot up as a result of these myopic policies. We should also offer large grants to industries to enhance their capabilities for the manufacture and export of high technology products. Simultaneously with this, the country needs to immediately triple the budgets of schools, colleges and universities with emphasis on quality education and industrial applied research. There should be special focus on supporting the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). -- Courtesy TheNews

## External hazards



Fahd Humayun

With the government's tenure ending and an economic lifeline in hand after months of costly instability, it may be tempting to believe that the worst is over. But considerable uncertainty remains, not least on the question of the country's ability to complete a successful democratic transition later this year.

Pakistan is no stranger to the template of the hybrid regime. Indeed, hybridity occasionally seems to tide us over, eg, by buying us the outward appearance of stability, and momentary stakeholder convergence on key macro policy issues. But continuing hybridity comes with clear long-term costs. While the costs to Pakistan's own democratic health are fairly obvious, it is worth specifying a steep set of foreign policy costs likely to accrue over time, not least because of the singular importance the establishment tends to afford to Pakistan's external relations.

The first external area that ever-deepening hybridity at home will impact will be Pakistan's relations with the US. On paper, hybridity ought to work well because the relationship with the US is extraordinarily complex, and because hybridity is essentially a political arrangement that creates a single-window operation for interlocutors in D.C., who will have little trouble interpreting where the balance of power lies. In fact, hybridity may even allow

for clearer, more effective conversations on Pakistan-US military coordination, the main benefit of which will be counterterrorism. A revival of short- to medium-term economic engagement, furthermore, born of returning economic stability, may even create the impression of broad-based engagement with Washington — a long-held national desire.

However, the problem is that the shadow of either an extended caretaker set-up or contaminated elections later this year will likely damage the visibility of the Pakistan-US relationship well into the future. Democratic impotency at home weakens the case for a Pakistan-US relationship based on shared cultural aspirations. This is especially true at a time when global Indo-Pacific partnerships are being packaged as liberal-democratic, even if the strategic compulsions at play are unmistakable. Ultimately, unless Islamabad can patch together and retain a more convincing democratic profile, laying claim to any kind of non-partisan stakes in the Indo-Pacific will be difficult.

The second external area that hybridity will affect will be relations with India. Traditionally, hybridity in Islamabad plays to New Delhi's advantage because it cements the idea that civilians in Pakistan lack agency. But at home, too, India policy will continue to remain an unnecessary and dangerous tripwire. Specifically, the danger is that any potential policy pathways forward, including the potential resumption of commerce or trade, will never be seen as genuinely representative of the political aspirations of Pakistan's populace, which includes close to 10 million Kashmiris. Should civilian politicians attempt to flex greater agency on India policy, this will likely

prompt a familiar kerfuffle, the only outcome of which will be a further erosion of civilian power.

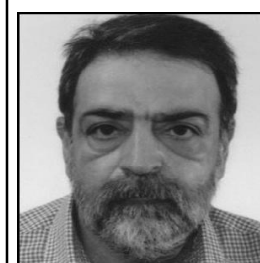
A related diplomatic area that hybridity will directly hurt will be Pakistan's ability to effectively keep the Kashmir dispute alive abroad. Since August 2019, drawing attention to the Modi government's revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A has been a mainstay of successive Pakistani governments' foreign policy agendas. But questions around even the most basic tenets of procedural democracy in Islamabad will curtail the ability of both the country's diplomats and the establishment to speak truth to power abroad — especially when that truth is geared towards calling India out for illiberal behaviour.

Finally, consider the very legitimate and growing issue of internal and external security. We currently face a resurgent terrorist threat emanating, quite possibly, from two fronts, and claiming the lives of citizens from Bajaur to Balochistan. While hybridity may give the impression of intense coordination and consultation on CT and national security, it is ultimately untenable. With the establishment distracted by extra-domain affairs such as the economy, or worse still configuring electoral outcomes, national security is likely to get the short end of the stick.

The most attractive solution to fixing capacity constraints will be for an overstretched security apparatus to start demanding an even larger share of the resource pie to keep Pakistan and Pakistanis safe.

For these reasons, if not more, it is worth paying careful attention to not just the path that is currently being laid internally, but to the external consequences that may follow. -- Courtesy Dawn

## American tentacles



Mahir Ali

Not long ago, a writer discussing Churchill's legacy singled out Britain and Australia as appendages to a rampaging Uncle Sam. The analogy might have been unkind, but it wasn't inaccurate. The thesis was verified by last weekend's Australia-US ministerial consultations in Brisbane, where the extent to which Canberra has embedded itself in Washington's alimentary canal became clearer.

The talks were overshadowed by a helicopter crash that claimed four lives during the Taliban Sabre joint military exercises. It should have served as a symbol of the human cost entailed by rampant militarisation. Predictably, what poured out, instead, were the usual blandishments about sacrifice in the service of a bigger cause.

Not to put too fine a point on it, that cause primarily involves the revival of what was instituted in the wake of World War II — Seato and Cento. Pakistan, to its eternal discredit, was a member of both. The 1954 Southeast Asia Treaty Organi-sation boasted only two members from the specified region. Thailand and the Philippi-nes, alongside the US, New Zealand, Australia and former colonial powers Britain and France. Cento, formed in 1979 and also known as the Baghdad Pact, coupled the UK with Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Pakistan.

Both were Nato outshoots with the primary aim of pushing back against Soviet-Chinese communism. Both withered away in the 1970s, following the American defeat in Vietnam and Iran's revolution.

So, there's nothing new about Nato's expansion into Asia, at least indirectly. This time it's likely to be a lot more direct, with a willing Australia as the key conduit. That makes it a direct target in the event of any confrontation between China and the West. In a sense, there is nothing particularly new about this strategy from Canberra's point of view. After all, it continued to consider itself part of the British Empire for decades after its ostensible independence, contributing manpower to every imperial endeavour from the Boer war to the Malaya insurgency and beyond. But during and after World War II, its eyes shifted from London to Washington.

There was a period after the Vietnam war — in which Australia participated, ob-v-iously on the losing side — when there was an effort to distance this colonial outpost from its genetic heritage, and to establish a comfort zone on the southern flanks of Southeast Asia.

But the endeavour was half-hearted, and when the then prime minister, John Howard, found himself stranded in the US as 9/11 and its aftermath unfolded, he offered up his nation as a deputy sheriff to Uncle Sam in Australia's neighbourhood.

Not much has changed since then. The present Labor government would resent being associated with Howard and his successors in the Liberal-National party coalition, but Labor doubled down on its predecessors' policies when it came to power in 2007.

Its first 21<sup>st</sup>-century PM, Kevin Rudd, is now the ambassador in Washington, and it was his successor as PM — Julia Gillard — who embellished the military relationship with the US by authorising more boots on the ground in Australia's north.

That led to the Aukus deal, whereby Australia expects to receive nuclear-powered submarines in the 2030s. Notwith-standing Canberra's claims about sovereignty, both the Pentagon and some members of Congress expect that underwater boats will be beholden to US interests — much like the nuclear weapons in western Europe.

Australia is also expected to manufacture long-range missiles for the Pentagon. It asked for almost nothing in return, apart from floating the idea that it might be worthwhile to bring the case of Julian Assange to a conclusion. He's an Australian jour-nalist in a top-security British prison, seemingly likely to be extradited to the US, where he faces decades of imprisonment — effectively a death sentence — for daring to publicise American atrocities in Iraq and Afghanistan.

US secretary of state Antony Blinken effectively told the Australians to go stuff themselves. His claim that Assange had jeopardised US security is nonsense, in the absence of any evidence that the information released by WikiLeaks harmed any individual. The motive for Assange's persecution is revenge for embarrassment.

No one expected Australia to push back against Blinken's nonsensical bluster. The US would be only too happy if Assange were to perish in Britain's Belmarsh prison, in which case, Canberra would offer thoughts and prayers, but acquiesce to America's prerogative. America's poison tentacles, after all, are sacrosanct, no matter how far they stretch. That does not exonerate China as a potential threat in its region, but for Australia to almost unquestioningly sign up again as a deputy sheriff to the American lord and master is folly that could lead to disastrous results long before the first nuclear submarine surfaces. -- Courtesy Dawn



## Naqvi vows to improve health infrastructure in province

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday vowed to improve health infrastructure in the province to provide best health facilities to the citizens.

He was addressing the senior doctors at the auditorium of Services Institute of Medical Sciences in Services (SIMS) Hospital here.

The CM emphasized that the responsibility for errors did not solely rest with leaders, politicians, and bureaucrats. He reminded everyone that despair was a sin and, as Pakistanis, 'it is our duty to remain hopeful and strive for better conditions'. He encouraged the belief that even small individual efforts could lead to significant positive changes.

After assessing the condition of Services Hospital, he firmly asserted that no enemy should even think of visiting the hospital. The CM mentioned that he had visited hospitals all over Punjab and had not encountered any facility in worse condition than

Services Hospital. He emphasized that doctors alone were not accountable for any faults; the government also shared responsibility for any deficiencies. The provision of essentials such as soap, floor cleaners, and air conditioning lies within the government's domain, he said and added creating a clean and conducive work environment for doctors was also the government's responsibility.

Mohsin Naqvi shared an incident he witnessed at a hospital in Multan where five children were being treated on a single bed. He made it clear that it was not the fault of the doctor but rather a testament to the dedication of doctors who worked diligently to treat multiple patients under challenging circumstances. He expressed gratitude to doctors for their unwavering commitment despite the unfavorable conditions in hospitals.

The chief minister stressed the need to change thinking and not hold doctors solely accountable for every issue. He explained that Services Hospital, located in the heart of Lahore, fell under the purview of the health

department and was a valuable asset. He lamented the fact that while new hospitals were constructed, old ones often received little attention. He highlighted the importance of providing adequate facilities for doctors to enable them to perform their duties efficiently.

The CM reaffirmed his commitment to invest billions in the coming months to improve Services Hospital without any limitations. He emphasized that Services Hospital would be transformed into a brand new facility in a short span of time, provided ownership and responsibility were ensured. He questioned why government hospitals were unable to match the standards of the best private hospitals. He stressed that if senior doctors did not fulfill their duty hours, it set a negative example for lower staff to follow. However, he assured that positive results would follow if everyone fulfilled their responsibilities. Doctors and paramedics should observe their duty timings and may perform their work after official duties were completed.



**PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali addressing during Women Excellence Award 2023 ceremony at Governor House.**

## Governor emphasizes vital role of Women in promoting women's entrepreneurship

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Wednesday emphasized the significant role of the Women Chamber in promoting and facilitating women's entrepreneurship and business activities.

He said this in a special ceremony was held at Governor House to honor women entrepreneurs with the Women Excellence Award, organized by the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Peshawar Division.

During the event, awards were distributed to women from various fields for their remarkable contributions and services in different sectors.

Prominent figures attending the ceremony included Provincial Minister Fazlullah, Women Chamber Azra Jamshid, Iranian Consul General Ali Banafsha Khawah, Head of UNHCR Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghairat Ahmad, Lieutenant General (Retd.) Nigar Johar, female police officers, and other dignitaries.

The Governor encouraged women to embrace modern technology to advance further in line with Islamic principles, highlighting that women play the most crucial role in shaping the future of their families and society.

Governor Haji Ghulam Ali also praised Islam for granting women a dignified position and inheritance rights, acknowledging that while business ventures are essential, the upbringing of families is primarily the responsibility of women.

## WHO donates 15 motorbikes ambulances to enhance emergency services in KP

**PESHAWAR (APP):** In a significant stride towards strengthening emergency medical services and fortifying disaster relief capabilities, the World Health Organization (WHO) has generously contributed 15 motorbike ambulances and two vehicle ambulances to the Relief Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

This benevolent donation marks a remarkable milestone in advancing healthcare accessibility and rapid response within the province. The official handover ceremony took place on Tuesday at the

Rescue 1122 headquarters in Peshawar, uniting distinguished representatives from WHO, the Relief Department, and the Health Department to mark this momentous occasion. The event underscored the spirit of collaboration and unwavering dedication to safeguarding public health and providing swift assistance during crises.

These agile and well-equipped vehicles will empower Rescue 1122 first responders to navigate rugged landscapes and swiftly reach remote communities, drastically reducing response times in life-threatening situations. Equipped with essential medical tools such as a backpack, pulse oximeter (CE/FDA), BP apparatus, cervical collar, nebulizer, glucometer, portable oxygen cylinder set, tourniquets, digital clinical ear thermometer, silicon Ambo bags, CPR mask, and dressing scissor.



**PESHAWAR: Head of sub-office, WHO Peshawar Dr. Palita Mahipala handing over fifteen motorbike ambulances and two mini ambulances for Rescue 1122 to Minister RR&SD Taj Muhammad at Rescue 1122 Head Quarter**

## Hurdles in overseas employment of nurses removed: Minister

**LAHORE (APP):** Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Dr. Jamal Nasir on Wednesday informed that hurdles in overseas employment of nurses had been removed.

In a statement issued here, the minister said that on direction of Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, the Primary and Secondary Healthcare department had also decided to process the applications of the nurses for ex-Pakistan leave on urgent basis. He observed that on return of these nurses from abroad, the local patients and hospitals

would be able to benefit from their experience, adding that the foreign remittances sent by the nurses during their employment would also be a service for national cause as Pakistan was in need for precious foreign exchange.

The Minister revealed that the Primary and Secondary Healthcare department had issued detailed guidelines to facilitate the nurses including Charge Nurse, Head Nurse or any other equivalent designation from BS-16 to BS-19 for ex-Pakistan leaves for the purposes of overseas employment.

## DDWP approves 3 schemes of public welfare

**FAISALABAD (APP):** Divisional Development Working Party (DDWP) approved three schemes of public welfare here on Wednesday. The approval was granted in a meeting held with Divisional Commissioner Silwat Saeed in the chair. The meeting approved a scheme of expansion of a road from Sargodha-Jhumra bypass road with Rajbah Chak 188/R-B Nulaywala at a cost of Rs 75 million.

## PMLN achieves remarkable success in all fronts in 16 months Govt: Wajid

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Former Provincial Minister, Wajid Ali Khan here Wednesday said that Pakistan Muslim League (N) has achieved remarkable success in all fronts in only 16 months coalition government and put country's back on right path.

Talking to APP, he said Pakistan Muslim League N has brought the national economy back on track and saved the country's from economic default.

Wajid Ali Khan who remained associated with ANP for 53 years have recently joined PMLN during a function at Swat district.

He said a state-of-the-art kidney hospital at Swat was established during tenure of former prime

## Sharjeel Memon presides 10th meeting of SMTA board

**KARACHI (APP):** Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon, presiding over the 10th board meeting of the Sindh Mass Transit Authority (SMTA), approved the decisions taken in the previous board meeting.

The significant decision taken in the meeting was the consideration of providing subsidies for the People's Bus Service, following the approval given by the provincial cabinet.

In a remarkable step towards empowering women, the board decided to initiate training programs for women drivers, specifically for women-only pink buses. With this decision, women drivers will operate pink buses exclusively for female passengers, enhancing the sense of safety and convenience during women's travel.

The board discussed the feasibility studies for the second phase of the People's Bus Service, which includes the addition of 500 buses, as well as the introduction of an environment-friendly electric taxi service.

During the meeting, the progress in the Red Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project was also

brought under consideration.

The Sindh government aims to expedite the completion of the Red Line BRT to ensure that the public can soon benefit from this modern transportation system.

The meeting was attended by prominent figures, including Secretary Transport Saleem Rajput, MD SMTA Kamal Dayo, DIG Traffic Ahmed Nawaz Cheema, P&D representative Sikandar Shaikh, and CEO Trans Karachi Tufail Paliju.

Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that empowering women in all fields is the vision of Chairman PPP Bilawal Butto Zardari. The inclusion of female bus drivers will not only promote gender equality but also strengthen the sense of safety and security during women's commutes. He said that the implementation of the second phase of the People's Bus Service is expected to significantly reduce travel problems for the people, bringing relief and convenience to the public. Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the introduction of an environment-friendly electric taxi service will not only create a positive environmental impact.



**GILGIT: Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Nazir Ahmad Advocate in a meeting with Minister Home Gilgit-Baltistan Shams Lone at Assembly Secretariat.**

## UNICEF-funded Oxygen plant made functional at DHQ hospital

**MUZAFFARGARH (APP):** One of the two Oxygen plants UNICEF installed in south Punjab at a cost of Rs 1.2 million dollars was made functional at DHQ hospital Muzaffargarh on Wednesday to facilitate patients with uninterrupted Oxygen supply and cut the hospital's annual expenses by Rs 50 million.

Secretary Primary and Secondary Healthcare South Punjab Mahr Muhammad Hayat Lak inaugurated the plant at a ceremony at DHQ hospital and heaped praise on UNICEF for extending invaluable assistance in the health sector to South Punjab people.

Chief field office UNICEF South Punjab Will-broad Nigambi, DG health south Punjab Dr. Mahr Muhammad Iqbal, UNICEF health specialist Dr. Qurat Ul Ain, CEO Health Muzaffargarh Dr. Zafar Iqbal, MS hospital Dr. Zia Ul Hassan and others were present in the ceremony.

Mahr Hayat Lak said, UNICEF would be extended all possible assistance in health services delivery in south Punjab.

Dr. Qurat Ul Ain said that the plant would save hospital resources to the tune of over Rs 50 million per annum.

Plant has the capacity to produce 200 litres of oxygen per hour and not only it would meet the requirements of Muzaffargarh but Oxygen could also be supplied to private hospitals.

She disclosed that a 250 Kilo Watt solar power plant would also be made functional to run the plant and energize other hospital facilities including wards.

She said UNICEF has installed two Oxygen plants in Muzaffargarh and Bahawalnagar at an overall cost of US\$1.2 million. Will-broad Nigambi said, UNICEF's initiative would help humanity and no newborn or mother would die due to the shortage of oxygen in Muzaffargarh.



**PESHAWAR: Pakistan Central Muslim League activists hold protest against petrol price outside PPC.**



**KARACHI: Federal Minister for IT & Telecom Syed Amin-ul-Haq along with Member Provincial Assembly Sindh (MPA) Ali Khurshid offering Dua after inaugurating Free Digital IT Lab at Ibrahim Ali Bhai Government Girls Secondary School Orangi Town.**

## Minister urges students to learn IT skills to compete across globe

**KARACHI (APP):** Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Aminul Haque on Wednesday urged youth especially the students to enhance their Information Technology skills so as to cope with the fast-changing trends in the globe.

He was addressing the inauguration ceremony of a Digital IT Laboratory at Ebrahim Ali Bhai Government Girls and Boys School at Orangi Town on 9 here.

The Minister said that a modern Digital IT Lab equipped with the latest desktop computers, printers and fast internet connection is established at Ebrahim Ali Bhai Government Girls and Boys School, to facilitate the students learn IT skills. He added that training in 15 different modern IT fields will be imparted to

the students in the facility free of cost, enabling them to learn IT skills including data analysis, freelancing, E-Commerce, Graphic Designing, Video Animation, Content Writing, online marketing, and advance data analysis, Artificial Intelligence and other modern skills and practices in the IT fields.

He said that the students of 9th and 10th classes as well as those who successfully passed out from the school should also learn and get training in the IT Lab.

He said that our youth has great potential and talent, it just needs to be nurtured, expressing hope that by the time of matriculation, the students will become the best IT professionals and every student who completes the training will appear as bread earners for his family. This skilled young

generation will also provide stronger support to Pakistan's economy, the Federal IT Minister added.

He said that measures to provide such training facilities at the level of schools and colleges is a step aimed to boost IT exports up to US \$ 15 billion. Syed Aminul Haque further said that his ministry has taken revolutionary steps for the further promotion of information and communication technology across the country. He maintained that steps were underway to take IT exports to a record level through the provision of maximum incentives and facilities and the freelancing policy. He said that the Ministry has established IT laboratories in the schools and now it is the responsibility of the students to take the maximum possible advantage of these.

## Ombudsman Pb takes 152 notices to resolve public issues in June

**LAHORE (APP):** In response to 152 notices taken by Ombudsman Punjab Maj (ret'd) Azam Suleman Khan in June, the administration of the various districts spent Rs 836,546,776 to resolve 45 diverse problems of people. However, 107 other public issues did not incur any government expenditures for the actions taken by the relevant departments.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the spokesman for the Ombudsman Punjab shared financial breakdown of actions taken.

An amount of Rs 57,644,089 was spent to address eight complaints

related to sewerage lines repair while a modest outlay of Rs 35,992 was made to cover open manholes. A significant amount of Rs 778,832,995 was invested in resolving 27 complaints regarding waste disposal and cleanliness of streets and roads in different districts. Additionally, Rs 33,700 was utilized to attend three complaints linked to maintenance of water filtration plants, ensuring access to clean drinking water for the public, the spokesman stated.

The administration and government departments also successfully addressed 24 own-motion notices

## 12 dead, 1153 injured in Punjab road accidents

**LAHORE (APP):** At least twelve people were killed while 1153 injured in 1120 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Of whom, 614 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 539 people with minor injuries were treated on the spot by Rescue Medical Teams. Analysis show that 553 drivers, 30 underage drivers, 127 pedestrians, and 485 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. Statistics show that 233 road accidents were reported in Lahore which affected 221 people placing the provincial capital at top of the list followed by 75 in Gujranwala with 74 victims.



**HYDERABAD: A view of flood water entered houses in Kacha area at Saharash Nagar near Indus River.**

## Govt constructs 37 small dams for storage of rains, flood water in KP

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has constructed 37 small dams for storage of flood and rains water to bring arid lands under agriculture cover. The spokesman of Small Dams Directorate, Irrigation Department told APP on Wednesday the designs of seven medium dams including Barwasa and Sher Dara Swabi, Sumri Payan Kohat, Surkhway Mardan, Naki Nowshera, Shaheed Banda Charssadda and Tora Warae

Hangu having a total accumulative water storage capacity of 13,014 AF with 14,935 acres CCA were completed. He said 24 small dams with accumulative water storage capacity of 75,008 AF having 49,523 acres CCA were being built in different districts of KP with assistance of Federal government.

He said that 37 small and medium dams were constructed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including 15 operated by the provincial government.



## Facilitating business community, resolution of their issues among govt's priorities: Shehbaz Sharif

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that provision of facilities to the business community and resolution of their issues were among the top priorities of the government.

During a meeting with a delegation of Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) led by its President Tariq Yousaf and Chief Executive Officer of Trade Development Authority Zubair

Motiwala, the prime minister lauded the contribution of traders in addressing the economic issues of the country, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori and Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, federal ministers Syed Naveed Qamar, Syed Ameenul Haque, Ahsan Iqbal, Eng. Khurram Dastagir Khan and Musadiq Malik, special assistants Tariq Bajwa, Tariq Pasha and Jahanzab

Khan, State Bank governor, FBR chairman and other relevant authorities attended the meeting.

The prime minister maintained that the incumbent government had taken steps for the creation of business friendly environment in the country and had set up a project of generating 10,000MW of solar power in which the foreign investors were showing keen interest.

He also welcomed the suggestions regarding

equitable distribution of electricity and gas.

With constitution of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), he said, huge foreign investment would be secured. The prime minister, during the meeting, directed the State Bank and Federal Board of Revenue to resolve the business community's issues with their cooperation.

He assured that the government would provide electricity to the traders in Karachi at similar rates.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses a meeting organized by Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI).



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar visited FBR (Hqr) today and extended felicitations to Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana on assuming the charge of Chairman FBR.

## Bank Alfalah disburses Rs.970m for flood-impacted communities in second phase

KARACHI (APP): Bank Alfalah, a leading commercial bank in Pakistan, reported the highlights of the first half of 2023 during Phase-2 of its comprehensive rehabilitation and rebuilding initiative, which started with immediate rescue and relief in phase-1 in 2022.

With a steadfast commitment to empowering communities and promoting sustainable development, the bank has joined forces with esteemed partners. It has disbursed around PKR 970 million to address critical sectors

such as healthcare, emergency care, housing, education, and livelihoods.

Bank Alfalah is embarking on phase-2 of its flood relief efforts, focusing on rehabilitation and rebuilding lives. This phase encompasses several key areas: sustainable housing, healthcare, education, and livelihood support, the statement said.

Amongst all initiatives, there is a strong dedication to healthcare and education. A partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation has been strengthened by a generous

donation of PKR 200 million, aiming to uplift pediatric healthcare in areas affected by floods. This collaboration seeks to bolster access to premier healthcare and reduce child mortality rates, predominantly in isolated areas.

Furthermore, an association with the Child Life Foundation has been augmented with a fund of PKR 50 million, earmarked for medicinal support in Children Emergency Rooms managed by Child Life, situated in flood-damaged areas in Larkana, Sukkur, Nawabshah, and Hyderabad.

## Advisor to US President, PCJCCI discuss trilateral ties

LAHORE (APP): Advisor to President of the United States of America, His Excellency Shahid Ahmed Khan discussed trilateral relations among America, Pakistan and China here at Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) Secretariat, on Wednesday.

The meeting was also attended by PCJCCI executive committee members and many top notch business leaders from Pakistan and China.

On this occasion PCJCCI President Moazzam Ghurki said that America and China are super powers which can complement Pakistan's economy in many fields, therefore, they should help in enhancing trade and economic ties with Pakistan to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Chairman of PCJCCI's Standing Committee on Diplomatic & Government Relations and Gwadar Tourism Promotion & CPEC Projects, Ali Raza Rizvi said that Pakistan's business climate has areas which need to be strengthened including regulation, intellectual property protection, and taxation. The United

States of America and China should help Pakistan to achieve business climate enhancements and also help in promoting business linkages between the private sectors of both countries.

Shahid Ahmed Khan exchanged his views by saying that United States has been Pakistan's largest export market – importing more than \$5 billion in Pakistani goods in 2021, far surpassing any other country. The US has also been a leading investor in Pakistan for the past 20 years. He added that in the most recent fiscal year, US direct investment in Pakistan increased by 50 percent – the highest in over a decade. Major US investments are concentrated in consumer goods, chemicals, energy, agriculture, business process out-sourcing, transportation, and communications, he added.

He stressed that a delegation of China and Pakistan must visit America to see the potential for business ideas and investment opportunities and assured that US embassy would provide them all possible support and cooperation.

## Khurram Dastagir says: Karachi's power related issues to be taken up at federal level

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Energy Khurram Dastagir on Wednesday said the concerns of the citizens of Karachi regarding power supply and its tariffs would be discussed at the federal level and all-out measures would be taken to provide relief in this regard.

Talking to official media after holding a meeting with KE management at the KE head

## Rupee sheds Rs 1.84 against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday weakened by Rs1.84 against the US Dollar in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs 289.38 against the previous day's closing of Rs 287.54.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 289 and Rs 292 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs 2.71 to close at Rs 317.71 against the last day's closing of Rs 315.77, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

office, he said the government was taking steps to address the issue of non-payment of bills and power theft so that the consumers who pay bills should not face power shortages.

The minister said the concerns were expressed by the MQM leadership on behalf of citizens of Karachi that since KE was a private power distribution company, it had no role in the circular debts of the country, so the KE should not charge the consumers in this respect.

He said the government was taking all-out measures for ensuring a smooth power supply across the country.

Khurram Dastagir

said the meeting discussed different matters including better and uninterrupted power supply to the citizens, regularity in supply system, issues pertaining to supply in different areas, policies of KE and others.

Speaking on the occasion, MQM Pakistan Member Rabita Committee and former federal minister Farooq Sattar said the federal minister for Energy had assured to raise the issues of Karachiites regarding power supply at the federal level.

He said KE was a private entity so it shouldn't be allowed to charge in respect of circular debts, and citizens be provided relief.

## ICCI president lauds excise to facilitate business community

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari lauded the reforms initiatives of the Excise and Taxation Department (E&TD) Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) to facilitate the people in vehicles registration and make a significant increase in its revenue.

He urged the Excise Director to set up facilitation desks in ICCI and markets for the convenience of the business community in the registration of vehicles. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with E&TD in raising better awareness about its services in the business community. Speaking on the occasion, Bilal Azam, Director, Excise & Taxation Department of ICT briefed the business community about various reform initiatives introduced by him due to which the tax revenue of E&TD has increased from Rs 4.6 billion to Rs.19 billion in just 3 years.

He said E&TD is ready to set up vehicle registration desks in markets in collaboration with ICCI.

He urged the FBR to emulate the good performance of E&TD to facilitate the taxpayers and improve its tax revenue.

He said this while talking to Bilal Azam, Director, Excise & Taxation Department ICT during his visit to ICCI.

Bakhtawari said that trackers should be embedded in the number plates of vehicles to control their theft.

He said that a penalty should be imposed on those buyers who delay

## SCCI rejects massive increase in fuel prices

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry acting President Ijaz Khan Afridi while rejecting the recent massive increase in fuel prices and feared the government's moves will prove detrimental to the national economy, businesses, and industrial growth.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, Ijaz Afridi said the economy, businesses, and industries are reeling owing to the flawed economic policies of the incumbent government. On the other hand, he said the consistent increase in prices of power, gas, and petroleum products has further pushed the country toward economic instability and added to the miseries of the business

community. The SCCI's acting chief expressed fear that a new wave of inflation will come after the historic increase in fuel prices, resultantly, the move will affect all traders' communities, poor masses, and different segments of the society.

He continued that the abrupt increase in the price of petroleum commodities is highly unjustifiable and incomprehensible, which is unacceptable to them. He said the cost of living and industrial production would increase after the whopping increase in fuel prices that could further push up prices of essential commodities, which were already out of the purchasing power of the common man.

## Gold rates up by Rs 800 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.800 and was sold at Rs.223,000 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs.222,200 on the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also increased by Rs886 to Rs 191,187 from Rs190,501 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold increased to Rs175,254 from Rs.174,626.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained unchanged at Rs2,800 and Rs2,400.54 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$1 to \$1,951 from \$1,950, the association reported.

## Lahore Chamber greets new Chairman FBR

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) here on Wednesday congratulated the newly appointed Chairman of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Amjad Zubair Tiwana and invited him to visit LCCI to share his future plans with the business community.

The LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt said that the business community pinned high hopes with new FBR Chairman because of his excellent performance.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Energy Khurram Dastagir, Federal Minister for Information Technology Syed Ameen-ul-Haque, MQM Pakistan senior leaders Farooq Sattar and Mustafa Kamal in a meeting with K-Electric Management at the KE head office.

## Over 35,405 landless farmers provided interest-free loans under Kissan Package

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government under the Kissan Package has provided Rs3,830.9 million in interest-free loans to landless farmers, which were badly affected due to torrential rains and flash floods during last year.

By the month of June 2023 the interest-free loans were provided to about 35,405 landless farmers in order to revive the agriculture sector in flood-hit areas across the country, said an official in the Ministry of National

Food Security and Research.

Talking to APP here on Wednesday, he said that the government has introduced a multi-billion rupee Kissan Package to revive the agriculture sector and enhance the per-acre output of major and minor crops, aiming to achieve sustainable agricultural growth and economic development.

Additionally, the government disbursed Rs12,817 million under Prime Minister Youth

Business and Agriculture Scheme to 23,857 farmers, which provides financial assistance and support to young farmers in a agriculture entrepreneurship, added.

He said that recognizing the importance of farm mechanization, the government had provided Rs1,056 million to 507 farmers under the markup and risk scheme, he said adding that the initiative aimed to enhance productivity and efficiency in the agriculture

## Tokyo stocks plunged tracking Wall Street losses

TOKYO (APP): Tokyo stocks plunged Wednesday, with the Nikkei suffering its largest drop this year, amid concerns over the downgrading of U.S. debt and gain-locking moves. Japan's benchmark Nikkei stock index, the 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average dropped 768.89 points, or 2.30 percent, from Tuesday at 32,707.69, after losing over 800 points at one point. The broader Topix index, meanwhile, lost 35.60 points, or 1.52 percent, to finish at 2,301.76.

Stocks opened the day with losses, primarily driven by prominent technology-related stocks, which mirrored the drop seen in U.S. technology shares during the previous

night.

Analysts here also pointed out that the market experienced selling pressure following a surge of over 700 points in the Nikkei earlier in the week.

Market sentiment was negatively affected after credit ratings agency Fitch on Tuesday downgraded the U.S. government's credit rating, marking the first downgrade in 12 years.

Over concerns about the "growing debt burden" and "an erosion of governance," Fitch, one of three major independent agencies that assess creditworthiness, lowered the U.S. credit rating from the top-notch AAA to AA+.

## Bullish trend continues at PSX

ISLAMABAD (APP): Bullish trend continued at the Pakistan Stock Exchange on Wednesday as the 100-index gained 534.04 points, a positive change of 1.11 percent, closing at 48,764.55 points against 48,230.51 points the previous trading day.

A total of 556,141,485 shares were traded during the day as compared to 556,930,694 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 19,989 billion against Rs 15,946 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 353 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 194 of them recorded gains and 128 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 31 companies remained unchanged.



FAISALABAD: Farmers seeding the rice crop on their field.



QUETTA: Patron-in-Chief Chamber of Commerce and Industry Pishin Asif Treen addressing a press conference

## PTCL Group introduces 6 months maternity, 30 days paternity leaves

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's largest telecommunication and integrated ICT services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G) has achieved a momentous milestone in organizational culture by introducing 6 months of Maternity and 30 days of Paternity leaves for its employees.

The policy guidelines provide ample time for new mothers and fathers to bond and care for their newborns through availing fully paid maternity and paternity leaves, respectively said a news release. To make it more flexible and convenient, paternity leaves can be availed on a staggered basis during the first year of childbirth.

The policy changes reflect the ongoing cultural transformation at PTCL Group that aims to promote employee well-being and help its team members support a healthier work-life balance.

PTCL Group is committed to transforming its policies and has introduced multiple initiatives to foster inclusion and support the physical and mental health and well-being of its employees.

Commenting on policy guidelines, Group Chief People Officer, Shoaib Baig said, "We're thrilled to introduce changes to our Maternity and Paternity policy guidelines, aligning them with the leading employers in Pakistan. Our cultural transformation journey, '#TayyarHo' thrives beyond the workplace, embracing every aspect of life. Being an inclusive organization, we cater a range of 'Family Friendly' policies, guidelines and benefits thoughtfully designed for our employees which enable them to give their best to the organization while managing other integral priorities in life.



## Putin reaffirms Russian stance on grain deal in call to Erdogan

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin told his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday that Moscow was ready to return to the Black Sea grain deal as soon as the West met its obligations with regard to Russia's own grain exports.

The deal, brokered by Turkey and the United Nations in July 2022, allowed for the safe export of grain from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. Last month Moscow exited the deal, accusing the West of hampering Russia's own grain and fertiliser exports.

In a statement on Putin's call with Erdogan,

the Kremlin said: "It was noted that in the conditions of a complete lack of progress in the implementation of the Russian part of the 'grain deal', its further extension has lost all meaning."

It added that Russia would return to the deal "as soon as the West actually fulfils all the obligations to Russia" contained within it.

Russia's grain and fertiliser exports are not subject to Western sanctions imposed on Moscow over its military actions in Ukraine. But Moscow has said restrictions on payments, logistics and insurance have been a barrier to shipments.

The U.S. envoy to the United Nations said on Tuesday there were "indications" that Russia might be interested in returning to talks about the deal. Asked about those comments on Wednesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stressed the need for the West to honour parts of the deal concerning Russian exports.

Erdogan's office said the Turkish leader had emphasised the importance of avoiding steps that could jeopardise the resumption of the Black Sea grain deal, which he described as a "bridge of peace".

The two leaders also agreed that Putin would

visit Turkey, it said. A senior Turkish official said that discussions between Ankara and Moscow were ongoing for a visit in late August.

Earlier on Wednesday, Russia attacked Ukraine's main inland port on the Danube River, sending global food prices higher as Moscow ramps up its use of force to reimpose a blockade of Ukrainian grain exports. The port, across the river from NATO-member Romania, has served as the main alternative route out of Ukraine for grain exports since Russia reintroduced its de facto blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports in mid-July.



A general view of damaged property, following a Russian drone attack, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, at IZMAIL, Odesa region, Ukraine.



Pope Francis and Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, right, converse at the Welcome Ceremony at the Belem presidential palace in Lisbon.

## North Korea calls US human rights envoy a 'political housemaid' in protest of criticisms

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korea hurled misogynistic insults Wednesday at a newly confirmed United States special envoy to monitor the country's human rights issues and warned of unspecified security consequences if Washington continues to criticize its human rights conditions. The statement published by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency described Julie Turner as a "wicked woman" who was picked by the Biden administration as a "political housemaid" to launch groundless attacks on the country's human rights record.

The U.S. Senate confirmed Turner's appointment July 27. She previously served as the director of East Asia and the Pacific at the State Department. The statement said the Biden administration's public criticism of North Korea's human rights situation highlighted its hostility toward Pyongyang in the face of an intensifying nuclear standoff

between the countries. KCNA described Turner's past criticisms of North Korea's human rights record as absurd, and said the U.S. "revels in meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign state and slandering it."

"Turner should know that she was chosen as a political housemaid and scapegoat for the 'human rights' plots to pressure the DPRK, a poor policy set forth by the Biden administration driven into a scrape in the DPRK-U.S. nuclear confrontation," the agency said, using the initials of the North's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The agency said the continued U.S. criticism on North Korean human rights issues could "backfire on it, spawning severe security issues." In defiance of Washington last week, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hosted senior delegates from Russia and China at a Pyongyang military parade that showcased his intercontinental ballistic missiles designed to target the U.S. mainland.

## Tunisia's president sacks prime minister, the first woman to hold that job in an Arab League nation

**Monitoring Desk**  
TUNIS: Tunisia's president has sacked the country's prime minister, who was the first woman to hold that job in an Arab League nation.

A brief statement from the presidential office late Tuesday did not give reasons for the dismissal of Najla Bouden Ramadhane.

President Kais Saied had appointed the engineering school professor as Tunisia's first female prime minister in September 2021.

Her replacement is retired central bank director Ahmed Hachani, who was sworn in Tuesday night.

Tunisia is in the midst of an economic crisis with shortages of basic necessities and, in recent days, long lines for bread.

## Saudi Arabia grants \$1.2 bln to Yemen for economic support

**Monitoring Desk**  
RIYADH: In a significant display of its commitment, Saudi Arabia on Tuesday pledged \$1.2 billion in economic support to the struggling Yemeni government.

The aid, which comes in response to Yemen's request to address its budget deficit, aims to bolster the country's economy, alleviate human suffering, and ensure food security.

The generous financial assistance is a testament to the strong ties between the two nations and the Kingdom's keenness to promote security, stability, and development in Yemen.

Yemen's Finance Minister, Salem bin Breik, expressed his gratitude for the substantial aid, emphasizing that it would go a long way in achieving economic stability in the country and supporting the government's efforts to cater to the needs of its citizens across various governorates.

He highlighted that the Saudi support was part of a long-standing tradition of developmental and economic aid provided by the Kingdom for decades.

## Iran's Revolutionary Guard runs drill on disputed islands as US military presence in region grows

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard launched a surprise military drill Wednesday on disputed islands in the Persian Gulf, just as the U.S. military increase its presence in the region over recent ship seizures by Tehran.

The drill focused primarily on Abu Musa Island, though the Guard also landed forces on the Greater Tunb Island as well, Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported. Swarms of small, fast boats took part, along with paratroopers, drones and truck-launched surface-to-sea missile systems, footage aired on state television showed.

"We always try for security and tranquility; it is our way," the Guard's chief, Gen. Hossein Salami, said in a televised address during the drill. "Our nation is vigilant, and it gives harsh responses to all threats, complicated seditions and secret scenarios and hostilities."

Salami later told state TV: "There is absolutely no need for the presence of America or its European or non-European allies in the region."

The drill comes as thousands of Marines and sailors on both the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan and the USS Carter Hall, a landing ship, are on their way to the Persian Gulf. Already, the U.S. has sent A-10 Thunderbolt II warplanes, F-16 and F-35 fighters, as well as the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner, to the region.

The Pentagon has said the deployment is "in response to recent attempts by Iran to threaten the free flow of commerce in the Strait of Hormuz and its surrounding waters."

Some 20% of the world's oil passes through the narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf to the wider world and the U.S. views it as crucial to both its national security and keeping global energy prices stable.

## Pope Francis urges Europe to work for peace as he lands in Portugal for World Youth Day

**Monitoring Desk**  
LISBON: Pope Francis challenged Europe to retake its role as a peacemaker and bridgebuilder as he arrived Wednesday in Portugal to open World Youth Day, hoping to inspire the next generation of Catholics to work together to combat conflicts, climate change and other problems facing the world.

Francis was spending five days in Lisbon, blending a state visit and pilgrimage to the Catholic shrine at Fatima with the raucous trappings of World Youth Day, the Catholic jamboree that aims to rally young Catholics in their faith. More than 1 million young people from around the world were expected to attend the gathering, which culminates with a papal Mass on Sunday.

As he was traveling to Lisbon, Francis vowed to continue urging young people to "make a mess" — a reference to his now-famous exhortation at his first World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro in 2013. It was a call for young people to shake things up in their parishes, and has come to symbolize Francis' own revolutionary reforms that have shaken up the church at large.

Francis' first stop was at the Belem National Palace, the official presidential residence in Belem, west of Lisbon, from where Portugal's maritime explorers of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries set sail. Francis referred to Portugal's sea-faring history, its place in Europe and its openness to others in his opening remarks to Portuguese government authorities and the diplomatic corps at a nearby conference center.

"We are sailing amid storms on the ocean of history, and we sense the need for courageous courses of peace," he said. "It is my hope that World Youth Day will be, for the 'Old Continent', the aged continent, an impulse towards universal openness."

## Indian navy ships dock in Papua New Guinea as interest in Pacific sharpens

**Monitoring Desk**  
SYDNEY: Two Indian navy ships docked in Papua New Guinea on Wednesday, underscoring the strategic importance of the country to global superpowers the United States and China and their allies.

The INS Kolkata guided missile destroyer and INS Sahyadri frigate will stay in PNG's capital Port Moresby for two days, an Indian embassy official said. The visit will "enhance maritime cooperation and security in the region", an embassy statement added. India currently holds the rotating presidency of the G20.

The ships will then join naval exercises in Australia as part of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad, a group that also includes Japan and the United States. The Malabar exercise begins next Friday.

The United States and its allies are seeking to deter Pacific island nations from forming security ties with China, a rising concern amid tension over Taiwan, and after Beijing signed a security pact with the Solomon Islands.

PNG struck a defence agreement with Washington

## China replaces nuclear force leadership in surprise shake-up

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: China's Xi Jinping has replaced two generals overseeing the country's nuclear and missile arsenal, a move that analysts say represents a major shake-up of the elite force's leadership.

State media reported that Gen. Li Yuchao, chief of the People's Liberation Army's rocket force unit, and his deputy, Gen. Liu Guangbin, were replaced by a naval officer and an air force officer. The new leaders, former deputy Chinese navy chief Wang Houbin and party central committee member Xu Xishen, have not previously served in the force — a dramatic break with practice, experts said.

"It's unprecedented in the history of China's missile forces," said M. Taylor Fravel, a professor of political science and director of the security studies program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

For decades, commanders were selected from within the rocket force, a

highly technical and specialized service that oversees the country's land-based nuclear weapons and its vast conventional missile arsenal, he said.

It also was unusual to have the commanding officer and the unit's political commissar — Xu — named at the same time, China experts said.

The two generals who were removed have not been seen in public for months. Bringing in outsiders to run a military unit suggested concerns in Beijing about how the organization was being run and whether it had loyalties or vested interests affecting managerial decisions, according to Fravel.

"I suspect the fact that its leadership was removed is a very clear signal to the rest of the rocket force to get in line," he added.

It was unclear what was behind the reshuffle. It comes after Xi has called for party discipline in the armed forces and for developing a "modern sys-

tem for military governance." The military office overseeing weapons purchases recently introduced measures to clamp down on corrupt procurement activities.

The South China Morning Post reported that the ousted head of the rocket force and his current and former deputies were allegedly under investigation by the Central Military Commission's anti-corruption unit. NBC News could not independently verify the report.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The White House National Security Council declined to comment.

There was no sign the change of command was related to the recent sacking of Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang, who had disappeared from public view for weeks before he was replaced by his predecessor, Wang Yi, analysts said.



Italian nationals and other European and American citizens, who have been evacuated from Niger, days after a junta seized power in the west African country, arrive at Ciampino Airport, near Rome, Italy.

## Taiwan detains army officer suspected of leaking military secrets to China

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: Taiwan has detained an army officer and several collaborators on suspicion of handing military secrets to China.

The defense ministry said Wednesday that a lieutenant colonel named Hsieh and other defendants were suspected of having been recruited by China to leak national defense secrets and other information.

The detentions come as military tensions between China and Taiwan continue to rise. China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and has run a long-standing campaign to recruit retired Taiwanese military personnel to supply state secrets in exchange for money or gifts.

## First planes carrying evacuees from Niger land in Paris and Rome

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: The first military planes carrying mostly European nationals evacuated from Niger landed in Paris and Rome on Wednesday, with France and other countries expected to fly of their citizens out of the West African country after last week's coup.

A military junta overthrew Niger's democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum and his government on July 26 in the seventh military takeover in less than three years in West and Central Africa. With the risk of conflict escalating, France, the former colonial power, Italy and Spain.

## Suspected militant attack in Yemen kills 5 troops loyal to secessionist group, spokesperson says

**Monitoring Desk**  
SANAA: A suspected militant attack early Tuesday in southern Yemen killed at least five troops loyal to a secessionist group, in the latest such assault blamed on an affiliate of al-Qaida, a military spokesman said.

The attack took place in Wadi Omran in Abyan province and also wounded four troops from the Southern Armed Forces, which is loyal to the secessionist Southern Transitional Council, spokesman Mohammed al-Naqib said

in a statement. The separatist council is backed by the United Arab Emirates and controls much of Yemen's south. It is at odds with the internationally recognized government.

Al-Naqib said suspected militants attacked their forces using mortars and rocket-propelled grenades.

He said their forces were chasing the assailants, who fled to a mountainous area between Abyan and neighboring Bayda province.

## Migrants sleep outside as New York mayor says city is full

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW YORK: New York, once the gateway to the United States through Ellis Island and a city built by immigrants, is full, according to the mayor — but migrants seeking a better life continue to arrive by the hundreds.

Dozens of asylum seekers, mainly from West Africa, have been sleeping on sidewalks outside a Manhattan hotel this week, waiting to be processed at a makeshift center following perilous journeys fleeing violence and poverty.

They are seeking shelter in the Big Apple two weeks after Mayor Eric Adams said the city had no more space, following an influx of migrants that has stretched services to their breaking point.

"There is no more room," Adams reiterated on Monday. And it's "not going to get better," he added.

His comments in late July encouraging migrants to go to other cities sparked accusations that he was violating the city's right-to-shelter laws and betraying the spirit of New York, as symbolized by the Statue of Liberty, which in years gone by welcomed new arrivals by sea.

Abdullahi Diallo was among those who waited outside the Roosevelt Hotel on Tuesday after traveling for two weeks from his native Mauritania, first to Turkey, then Nicaragua, before crossing the Mexican border into the United States. The journey cost him \$8,000 and he undertook it in search of "democracy" and "respect," the 25-year-old told AFP. Others seeking temporary accommodation were from Senegal. Some said they had slept on cardboard in storefronts for five days waiting to be accommodated.



Police officers stand near the Red Square in Moscow, Russia.



## Lawmakers rally behind four bills, unanimously approved in Upper House

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Upper House of the Parliament unanimously approved four bills during Wednesday's session, all introduced with specific objectives and receiving widespread support from the attending members.

Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazir Tarar, introduced The Pakistan Civil Aviation Bill 2023, which proposes a division of the Civil Aviation sector into two separate entities: the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) responsible for regulatory functions, and the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) in charge of commercial and operational aspects of airports.

The primary goal of this division was to enhance efficiency, improve services, and ensure compliance with international standards set by International Civil

Aviation Organization (ICAO).

The bill comes in the wake of the suspension of Pakistan International Airlines' flight operations in the UK and Europe, triggered by an irresponsible statement made by a former Aviation minister, Ghulam Sarwar Khan.

The Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazir Tarar, successfully had another bill titled The Pakistan Air Safety Investigation Bill, 2023, passed by the House.

Minister for Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain, presented The National Commission for Human Development (Amendment) Bill, 2023. The bill's objective is to enhance the effectiveness of over 7,000 employees of NCHD (National Commission for Human

Development).

Minister for Finance, Mohammad Ishaq Dar, moved The Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Funds Bill, 2023, in the National Assembly. The bill aims to establish Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Funds to promote sustainable economic development through the management of fund assets, following the best international standards, policies, and practices. The objective is to maximize the value of these funds for the benefit of future generations.

The Minister mentioned that Pakistan possesses the largest gas pipeline valued at 40 to 50 billion dollars and has reserves of minerals and mines worth \$600 billion. To start with, seven such valuable assets, amounting to \$8 billion, will be placed in the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Funds.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Turkiye's Vice President Ceydet Yilmaz and other dignitaries in a group photo at the launching ceremony of Pakistan's 4th MILGEM Corvette "PNS Tariq".

## President emphasises Muslim world coop. in S&T, innovation

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday stressed the need for enhancing cooperation among the Muslim countries in the fields of science and technology as well as innovations. The president said this while talking to a delegation of the management committee of the COMSTECH Nobel Festival.

The Ambassador of Kazakhstan in Islamabad Yezhan Kistafin also attended the meeting.

The committee members briefed the president about the objectives of the Nobel Festival aimed at ensuring

access of everyone to education and science.

The Festival is participated by Nobel laureates, scientists and representatives of international organisations.

The ambassador of Kazakhstan said that his country gave special importance to educational cooperation with Pakistan. The establishment of direct aerial linkage between the two countries was welcoming, he added.

The president appreciated the efforts of COMSTECH for enhancing cooperation among the Muslim nations in the field of science and technology.

## Pakistan stands with Kashmir: Kaira

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira

Wednesday said that entire Pakistani nation stands beside their Kashmiri brethren till they achieve freedom. Pakistan has a deep-rooted relationship with Kashmiris and their just struggle for the liberation of Indian Occupied Kashmir will continue, Advisor to PM said in an exclusive interview with PTV news.

He further highlighted that youngster foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is not shy away from raising the voice for Kashmiris rights at all

world forums, adding, he had exposed Indian prime minister Narendra Modi at international forums, adding, he had fulfilled the rights of Kashmiris the way he raised his voice for Kashmiris. He urges the international community and organizations to take practical steps to hold India accountable for its gross and widespread human rights violations in IIOJK. In a message on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day on August 5, he said we should pay tribute to the unparalleled commitment of the Kashmiris to the attainment of their legitimate right to self-determination.

## WHO striving to eliminate hepatitis from Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Pakistan, Dr Palitha Mahipala has said that the organization was striving to eliminate the hepatitis from Pakistan.

In a message, Dr Palitha said that Pakistan is facing a considerably high disease burden due to viral Hepatitis B & C.

He said that Pakistan has the highest prevalence of Hepatitis C (7%) globally and has the highest number of people suffering from HCV.

"Viral hepatitis affects 360 million people worldwide and claims 3,000 lives every day." He said that in 2015, the World Health Assembly adopted a strategy to eliminate hepatitis by

2030 through prevention, testing and treatment.

Around 15 million people are estimated infected with Viral Hepatitis C in the country. Another 5 million are estimated infected with Viral Hepatitis B in the country, he added. Dr Palitha said, "Unfortunately, our response to viral hepatitis has stagnated in recent years." He added testing for viral hepatitis has not been scaled up as tests and treatment are considered expensive.

He said that the theme of world hepatitis day this year was "Hepatitis Medicines are Cheaper - Treat to Save Lives" aims to raise awareness to scale treatment for people living with viral hepatitis.

He said that now the manufacturers have announced to lower the price of WHO prequalified hepatitis B and C drugs in low-and middle-income countries. This has been a concerted effort by partners to ensure affordability and accessibility to hepatitis treatment, he added. He said that these new drug prices will significantly reduce the cost of treatment to low and middle-income countries, and scale up hepatitis programs to meet growing demand, all towards eliminating hepatitis. He said that the WHO and all stakeholders will ensure the affordability and accessibility of medicines, testing and treatment to millions in low and middle-income countries.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Dr. Samuel Rizk, Resident Representative UNDP called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division.

## Rana inaugurates AIOU Model Study Centre in Dalbandin

QUETTA (APP): Federal Minister of Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain, on Wednesday inaugurated the Model Study Center of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in Dalbandin, District Chaghi, Balochistan.

Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Deans, Principal Officers, and faculty members were present on the occasion.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said that promoting education in remote and backward areas of the country is a sacred mission of AIOU which is appreciable.

He congratulated the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, and his team for the expansion of the regional network in the backward areas.

VC AIOU, Prof. Dr.

Nasir Mahmood said that collecting revenue is not our goal, but educating children is our top priority.

He said that the AIOU is striving hard to eradicate illiteracy in the country and we provide free matriculation education in Balochistan, merged districts, and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Dr. Nasir said that AIOU has allocated 6 crore rupees for scholarships and financial assistance, out of which 2 crores have been allocated only for the students of Balochistan.

The Vice Chancellor further said that AIOU has laid a special focus on promoting education in Balochistan and interior Sindh.

He shared that the number of local and international admissions is increasing every semester.

## UNDP resident Representative calls on Finance Minister

ISLAMABAD (Online): Dr. Samuel Rizk, Resident Representative UNDP called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division today.

SAPM on Revenue Me. Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Ms. Ammara Durrani, Assistant resident representative UNDP, Special Secretary Finance and senior officers from Finance Division attended the meeting.

Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar welcomed Dr. Samuel Rizk and shared the economic outlook of the country and measures taken by the Government for achieving economic stability and growth. He informed that the government has introduced reforms in various sectors for tackling persistent outstanding structural issues with a special focus on sustainable and inclusive growth.

## Dr Faisal assumes office of Pakistan HC to UK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr. Mohammad Faisal has assumed the office of the High Commissioner of Pakistan to the United Kingdom. On his arrival at the airport, he was received by Kathryn Colvin CVO FCIL, Special Representative of the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, a press release on Wednesday said.

"With rich experience of three decades in the foreign service of Pakistan, High Commissioner of Pakistan Dr. Faisal aims to further deepen and strengthen the historic relationship.

## BBISE Chairman appointed as head of Inter Boards Sports Committee Pakistan

QUETTA (APP): Inter Board Coordination Commission Islamabad has appointed Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Chairman Ejaz Azeem Baloch as the head of Inter Board Sports Committee. He was nominated at the 176th session of IBCC, a two-day national meeting of education boards across the country which was held on July 13-14 in Quetta, said a notification issued here on Wednesday.

According to the notification of the Inter-Board Coordination Commission, Ijaz Azeem Baloch has been appointed as the Chairman Inter-Board Sports Committee from 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2024.



QUETTA: National Coordinator NCO Islamabad Dr. Shahzad Baig briefed mediapersons about overall situation of polio in the province. Provincial Coordinator Emergency Operation Center Balochistan Syed Zahid Shah is also present.

## Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri Pakistan is proud of its everlasting and strong friendship with China

### CPEC project is a wonderful example of Pakistan-China friendship

Independent Report QUETTA: Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri has congratulated the governments and people of both countries on the completion of 10 years of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

She said that the CPEC project is a great example of Pakistan-China friendship. She welcomed the visit of China's Deputy Prime Minister to Pakistan and said that his visit will further strengthen Pak-China friendship.

In her congratulatory message, she said that Pakistan is proud of its eternal and strong friendship with China. Pakistan-China friendship is eternal and unique and keeps getting stronger with time. The CPEC project is a living example of our mutual commitment towards a long-lasting relationship between the two countries. She said that the journey of

Pakistan-China friendship spans decades and its scope have expanded to all spheres of life. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that China and Pakistan are the names of two brothers. 72 years ago, the seed of friendship planted by the two countries has become a vigorous and fruitful shade tree after the last seven decades. She further said that be it war or peace or any natural calamity, every difficult time and important occasion, China has fully supported Pakistan and Pakistan is also shown similar attitude. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that China's investment in Pakistan has played an important role in economic development and in the last ten years CPEC has Due to which billions of dollars have been invested in Pakistan, CPEC project is playing a key role in the development of Pakistan along with the elimination of unemployment.

## PAC directs NAB to investigate \$3b interest-free loans matter

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Wednesday directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to formulate a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) to probe the matter of interest-free loans of three billion dollars given to industrialists during the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

Chairing the PAC meeting, Noor Alam Khan asked for taking strict action against those not cooperating with the JIT in that regard.

## BISP board approves record Rs. 471bn budget for FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant development towards empowering women and enhancing social protection measures, the board of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), in its 60th meeting, approved a record Rs. 471 billion budget for FY 2023-24.

The board met under the chair of Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS) and Chairperson BISP, Shazia Marri.

The BISP Board approved Rs. 471 billion budget for FY-2023-24 which included Rs. 361.5 billion for Benazir Kafalat Programme, covering 9.3 million families, Rs. 32.7 billion for Benazir Nashonuma Programme covering 1.5 million



QUETTA: A view of national flag install onazaar for selling purpose on ahead of 76th Pakistan Independence Day

## Expected Monsoon rains, situation Quetta district admin to complete preparations well in advance, says DC

Independent Report QUETTA: The Deputy Commissioner Quetta, Shahab Baloch has stated that the district administration has been issued directives to complete all necessary preparations and precautionary measures well before the expected Monsoon rains in the district.

In this regard, the Chief Secretary, Abdul Aziz Uqaili has already directed, adding the Deputy Commissioner mentioned.

The Deputy Commissioner was chairing an emergent meeting held with him in the chair on Wednesday. The meeting attended by

the district officers and other concerned high ups reviewed the situation likely to be emerged due to the rains in coming days.

He on the occasion asked all concerned to take necessary steps for removing encroachments and hurdles established on the nullahs in different parts of the city and its suburb. He also directed to prepare plan for presence of the necessary machinery and ensure their functioning. He mentioned that the survey of all small and big nullahs have been completed in Quetta and all the concerned administrative officers are fully alert to tackle any emergent situation and shift the people to the safer places in case of the rains.



QUETTA: Head of Baloch Yakjehti Committee Dr. Mahrang Baloch addressing a press conference.

## Govt working day and night for welfare of people: Naeem Karim

QUETTA (APP): Central senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Chaudhry Naeem Karim on Wednesday said that the center of politics of PML-N was taking measures to develop the country and general election would be won on basis of exemplary performances.

He expressed these views while congratulating the party workers in which the delegation of Balochistan's political leaders met the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif in Islamabad. Among them are important political and tribal personalities from Balochistan who will soon announce their formal joining in PML-N, he said.

to peace and development in Pakistan linked with the leadership of Muslim League-N saying that the country would not be allowed to derail from the track of democracy in any case. He said that Muslim League-N would make the future of the country bright and shining saying that Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif taught the party workers the lesson of strengthening democracy, the party was taking it forward and the present government was also working day and night for the welfare of the people. He said that before the upcoming general elections, the important political and tribal figures of the province of Muslim League-N in Balochistan would join the regular party.



QUETTA: Provincial Education Minister Mir Naseebullah Marri, Secretary Colleges and Higher Education Lal Jan Jaffar and others addressing participant of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto District Topper Scholarship ceremony.