

# Independent

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Section for right of appeal declared in line with Constitution.

## Supreme Court upholds parliament's act clipping CJP's powers

Apex court by majority of 10 to 5 has upheld the Supreme Court (Practice & Procedure) Act 2023; Justices Ijazul Ahsan, Muneeb Akhtar, Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Ayesha Malik and Shahid Waheed dissent verdict; court rules retrospective right of appeal unconstitutional.

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday sustained the SC Practice and Procedure Act 2023, and dismissed the petitions against it while announcing the short order.

Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa pronounced the short order, which was reserved earlier by a 15-member full court bench after all respondents concluded their arguments.

The chief justice said that ten members of the full court bench out of 15 had declared the legislation passed by the Parliament with reference to the pow-

ers of the Chief Justice as correct. The CJP said that the full court has declared the petitions filed against the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Act, 2023 as inadmissible by majority opinion. The short order available with this scribe said, "By a majority of 10 to 5 (Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Ayesha A. Malik and Justice Shahid Waheed dissenting), the sub-section (1) of Section 5 of the Act (granting a right of appeal prospectively) is declared to be in accordance with the Constitution and to this extent the petitions are dismissed.

The short order read, "By a majority of 8 to 7

of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and to this extent the petitions are dismissed. It further said, "By a majority of 9 to 6 (Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Ayesha A. Malik and Justice Shahid Waheed dissenting), the sub-section (2) of section 5 of the Act (granting a right of appeal retrospectively) is declared to be ultra vires the Constitution and to this extent the petitions are allowed.

Earlier, the top court had reserved its verdict after all respondent concluded their arguments in the said case. During this day hearing Attorney Gen-

eral of Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan concluded his arguments before the bench.

He also gave answers of various questions raised by members of the full court bench. It should be noted that earlier, an eight-member bench of the top court headed by former Chief Justice Umar Atta Bandial had issued a stay order against this law in April this year, which has remained in place for about six months, but today (Wednesday) the full court has rejected the petitions filed against the act while declaring it inadmissible.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mr. Jiang Zaidong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China calls on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## Federal Cabinet calls for immediate halt of Israel's bombing on Gaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said the Federal Cabinet had called for an immediate halt to Israeli bombardment of civilian areas of Gaza, in addition to lifting of blockade for the provision of relief items to the civil population.

He said the Cabinet meeting, presided over by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, also called for prompt measures to allow international aid to reach the civilians in the Gaza.

Addressing a news conference along with Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad, he said the forum strongly condemned Israel's bombardment, particularly targeting civil population in Gaza besides expressing concern over the volatile situation, stemming from Israel's illegal occupation, oppression of Palestinians for decades,



and blatant violations of United Nations Security Council Resolutions in this regard.

The Federal Cabinet stressed that the issue of Palestine should be resolved in accordance with relevant UNSC resolution, he said, adding it also called for the restoration of pre-1967 status of Palestine.

He said the Federal Cabinet reiterated Pakistan's principled stance for the resolution of the Palestine issue in line with the aspirations of its people.

Solangi said the forum reiterated the proposal for

the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with its borders predating Israel's illegal occupation in 1967 as well as Beit-ul-Quds (Jerusalem) as its capital.

He said the prime minister had directed the federal ministers to undertake only essential foreign visits.

The Federal Cabinet had approved the appointments of former Lahore High Court judge Sohail Nasir as Deputy Chairman of NAB and Syed Ehtesham Qadir Shah as NAB Prosecutor General. Accountability, he added.

## Bahraini minister lauds Pakistani immigrants role in various fields

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Health, Kingdom of Bahrain, Dr. Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan on Wednesday appreciated the role of Pakistani immigrants in Bahrain in various fields.

She was talking to Caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr. Nadeem Jan during meeting in Cairo.

Both the ministers mentioned the enthusiastic and active cooperation between the people and the leadership of the two countries.

Both the health ministers expressed their determination to fully cooperate for the improvement of the health sector.

The Bahraini Minister for Health endorsed the decision of exchanges of nursing and physiotherapy staff between the two countries.

Pakistan is keen to benefit from the expertise and experiences in nursing and physiotherapy with Bahrain, Dr. Nadeem Jan said.

He also extended the invitation to the Bahraini minister for Global Health Security Summit to be held in Pakistan in December.

Dr. Jaleela appreciated the holding of Global Health Security summit in Pakistan. Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the objective of this summit was to make the world safe from global epidemics.



CAIRO: Caretaker Federal Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan met with H.E. Minister of Health, Bahraini Dr. Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan on the sidelines of the 70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Middle East held in Cairo.

## PML-N, JUI-F for moving ahead via mutual consultation, cooperation

LAHORE (INP): President Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Shehbaz Sharif and chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Maulana Fazlur Rehman have reiterated resolve for moving ahead through mutual consultation and cooperation. The JUI-F chief on Wednesday called on PML-N's President at his residence in Model Town, Lahore and discussed with him the country's overall situation, including upcoming general elections.

During the meeting, the key leaders of two political parties termed the consultation and cooperation imperative to tackle the crises faced by the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Shehbaz Sharif thanked Maulana Fazlur Rehman for "contributing" to saving Pakistan from bankruptcy in 16 months of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) tenure.

"During the 16 months, all political parties only thought of saving the state not the politics", the PML-N president said, adding that only consultation and cooperation can bring Pakistan out of crises.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi conferring the award of Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon the Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces, Lt. General (Pilot) Salem Hamad Eqail Al-Nabet, at a special investiture ceremony, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Alvi for stronger economic, defence ties with Qatar

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday called for further strengthening ties with Qatar in the fields of economy and defence for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries.

The president expressed these views while talking to the visiting Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces, Lt Gen (Pilot) Salem Hamad Eqail Al-Nabet, who along with the members of his delegation called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today.

Pakistan's Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber

Sidhu, and senior officials of the government also attended the meeting.

The president said that Pakistan and Qatar enjoyed excellent relations, which needed to be translated into mutually rewarding business and economic ties.

Welcoming the delegation, President Alvi said that year 2023 would mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Qatar and expressed the hope that cooperation between the two countries would be further enhanced in the years to come.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi held a meeting with Director Schools and Director Colleges FDE.

## WB delegation calls on Chairman WAPDA

ISLAMABAD (APP): A four-member World Bank delegation, headed by South Asia Region Practice Manager for Energy Simon Stolp on Wednesday called on Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd).

The delegation was briefed about progress on the World Bank-funded WAPDA projects, which included the Dasu Hydropower Project, the Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project and Tarbela Floating Solar Panel Project, said a press release.

The operation and performance of the World Bank-funded Tarbela 4th Extension Hydropower Project was also discussed during the meeting.

**REPATRIATION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS**

19 DAYS REMAINING

**19**

in f i @GovtOfPakistan

## Don't see any possibility of delay in polls: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday ruling out the possibility of any delay in general elections, said that the polls would be announced and conducted on time.

"I don't see any possibility (of delay in elections). I don't have any confusion at all. I feel the elections will be announced and conducted on time," the prime minister said in an interview with a private television channel.

Reiterating his government's resolve to hold free and fair elections, he said all the registered political parties had legal and constitutional rights to canvass, mobilize people and attract public support.

## ECP assures political parties of code of conduct revision

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has pledged to make essential changes to the draft code of conduct for the upcoming elections in response to the concerns of political parties.

In a meeting presided over by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja here Wednesday, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) pledged to amend the code of ethics based on feedback from political parties, with the aim of guaranteeing equitable and transparent elections.

Apart from the members of the Election Commission, representatives of various political parties and senior officers of the Election Commission participated in the meeting.

Convened under Section 233 of the Elections Act, this meeting aimed to engage with political parties regarding the code of conduct for the forthcoming general elections. The Election Commission collected input from political parties concerning the draft code of conduct and received their suggestions for its improvement.

## Balochistan delegation calls on PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from Balochistan headed by former Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik on Wednesday called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here.

In the meeting, they discussed the issues faced by Balochistan province and the steps for their resolution, under the prime minister's leadership.

The participants of the meeting viewed that the foreign investment in the mining sector of Balochistan under the Special Investment Facilitation Council was welcoming.

## PM reassures timely completion of CPEC projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday said that Pakistan and China were fully committed to ensuring the success of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the government would continue to work closely with the Chinese authorities to ensure timely implementation and completion of various projects envisaged under CPEC.

The prime minister was talking to Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Jiang Zaidong who called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The caretaker prime minister said that Pakistan and China enjoyed a unique relationship as 'All-weather Strategic Cooperative Partners, Iron Brothers' and trusted friends.

He lauded the vision and leadership of President Xi Jinping, particularly the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Prime Minister Kakar also noted the centrality of CPEC in enhancing economic, trade and technological ties between the two countries and highlighted its role as the flagship project of BRI.

This was Ambassador Jiang's first meeting with the caretaker prime minister since presenting his credentials as China's Ambassador to Pakistan. The prime minister congratulated Ambassador Jiang on assuming ambassadorial responsibilities in Islamabad and hoped that he would play a key role in further strengthening relations between the two countries.



MOROCCO: Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue & Economic Affairs Dr. Shamshad Akhtar held a meeting with the Governor of the Central Bank of Morocco.

## OIC's special envoy asks India to reverse illegal change of Jammu & Kashmir's status

ISLAMABAD (APP): Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Special Envoy on Jammu and Kashmir, Yousef M Al-Dobeay on Wednesday demanded India to reverse its illegal and unilateral action of changing the autonomous status of J&K and grant the people of the valley their due rights. In a joint press stakeout along with Foreign Secretary Syrus Sajjad Qazi here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the visiting OIC envoy said the OIC would continue to support Kashmiris for their right to self-determination.

The OIC's Special Envoy is in Pakistan and will also visit Azad Jammu and Kashmir to undertake a first-hand assessment of the human rights and the humanitarian situation in the valley. Yousef Al-Dobeay expressed concern over the illegal and unilateral actions taken by India on August 5, 2019, that turned the Kashmiris into a marginalized minority.

He said his visit to AJ&K was about getting knowledge about the factual and on-ground situation in the valley ahead of the upcoming 15th OIC Islamic Summit to be held in Gambia this December. He mentioned that Jammu and Kashmir was an old agenda at the platform of OIC, where the organization from time to time strongly condemned the human rights situation in the Indian-held Kashmir.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Farooq Ahmed Naek, Chairman Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and members of the Committee in a group photo with a delegation led by Ambassador Yousaf Mohammed S. Aldobeay, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs/Special Envoy of the OIC Secretary General for Jammu and Kashmir at Parliament House.

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**Crucial Apex committee session in Quetta**

The 14th meeting of Balochistan's Apex committee was held with the caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaarul Haq Kakar in the chair on Tuesday last. Also participated in the crucial session was by the Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir, Federal Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Chief Minister Ali Mardan Khan Domki, his cabinet members and other senior officials.

During the meeting, officials briefed the participants on the revised National Action Plan (NAP), law enforcement operations, anti-smuggling and anti-narcotics operations in Balochistan. The officials also briefed the participants on the security of foreigners employed on CPEC, non-CPEC and private projects, the repatriation of illegal immigrants, foreign currency regularization measures, and progress on SIFC initiatives in Balochistan. The PM expressed confidence in the progress made by the provincial government and assured full support from the Centre. He emphasized that Balochistan's socio-economic development was imperative to ensure peace and development of the province. "Initiatives taken by the SIFC at federal level should have a trickle-down effect in each province for the people of the area," the premier said.

The Premier said that Balochistan is rich in mines and minerals and development in this sector will generate economic activity and job opportunities for the people of the area. Moreover, investments in agriculture and IT should also be focused apart from human resource development. He highlighted that Balochistan possessed abundant mineral resources, and fostering development would stimulate economic activity and create job opportunities for the local population. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of directing investments toward agriculture and IT, in addition to human resource development. He stressed the necessity of collaboration and coordination among all relevant departments to maximize the positive impact of these initiatives. Mr. Kakar also mentioned that initiatives taken by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) at federal level should have a trickle-down effect in each province. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar said on Tuesday.

At the meeting, the Army Chief highlighted that the military would provide full support in concert with law enforcement agencies and other government departments to enforce actions against a spectrum of illegal activities with full force to deny pilferage of resources and economic losses that the country suffered due to these activities. The participants expressed their collective commitment, affirming that state institutions, government departments, and the people are unified in their pursuit of progress and prosperity for the province. While the crucial Apex meeting has expressed its firm resolve against certain issues, the Army chief has already asserted that the law enforcement agencies and the government would continue efforts against a "spectrum of illegal activities with full force to deny pilferage of resources and economic losses." What's great to note and commendable is that the state institutions, government departments and people were united for the progress and prosperity of the province. Above all, the COAS has also promised the interim government of the army's "all-out support" for continuity of policies in a bid to revive the economy and steer the country towards progress and prosperity.



Arif Azad

**Migration crisis**

Migration has been in the media and policy spotlight lately. Several international migration-related developments have refocused attention on migration and asylum issues. Recently, the small Italian town of Lampedusa received a sudden surge of new migrants. The surge, though small, was portrayed as gigantic as it exceeded the size of the local population which had been tiny anyway.

In the US, refugees are streaming into the state of Texas, which has chosen to bus them onward to bigger cities such as New York. In the UK, reducing the number of asylum seekers crossing the English Channel is one of the five policy ambitions of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. This has given the hard-line home secretary, Suella Braverman, carte blanche to employ whatever means necessary to stop boats carrying migrants. Here in Pakistan, we have seen new arrivals from Afghanistan after the Taliban's takeover of Kabul.

The Lampedusa migration crisis occasioned an emergency visit from EU President Ursula von der Leyen to the island town. While pledging extra help, she asserted it was the EU that would ultimately determine who could come into Europe. Her fleeting visit aimed at shoring up the struggling right-wing government was followed by an EU justice and home ministers' conclave on the new migration crisis. There remain differences over how to tackle the

crisis and chart a lasting way forward. The differences centre on the Italian objection to German-funded support to rescue operations at sea. The Italian proposal to do away with certain legal protection in asylum detention centres in a crisis is also a stumbling block.

Earlier, EU governments had agreed on the principle of 'mandatory solidarity', requiring member states located beyond the front-line states of Italy and Greece to accept 30,000 migrants a year. In case of a country not accepting the allotted number of refugees and asylum-seekers, that country would pay 20,000 euros per migrant to an EU-wide fund to boost the money available to the front-line states dealing with the growing number of new arrivals. The US has further extended protections to Venezuelan migrants already living in the country.

In a related development, Ms Braverman chose the venue of a Washington think tank to lay out her vision for a most reactionary immigration policy. She called for a new definition of 'refugee' to be fashioned, besides the updating of the Geneva Convention. In the same anti-migrant vein, she railed against multiculturalism and inadequate integration of incoming migrants. In recent times, she has also singled out the role of the European convention on and court of human rights in frustrating her plans to deport all asylum-seekers to Rwanda. Her speech attracted widespread criticism from the UN refugee agency, politicians and civil society in the UK, with UNHCR rejecting her calls for reforming the Geneva refugee convention and pointing out that rather than updating it, its provisions

must be implemented and adhered to by all signatory countries.

Many commentators linked her pronouncements on immigration to her domestic agenda of seeking the leadership of the Conservative Party. (Braverman has been very popular with the extreme right wing of the party for her hard-line views on migration and asylum.) The British prime minister has defended multiculturalism in an apparent rebuff to his own home secretary.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has received successive waves of refugees from neighbouring Afghanistan since the 1970s. Yet due to Pakistan's not signing the Geneva Convention on the status of refugees, the country's refugee and asylum policies have not been framed. Despite its long engagement with Afghan refugees, Pakistan has lived in denial insofar as the historical presence of Afghan refugees is concerned, and now wants them to leave the country.

Two contradictory impulses are at work. On the one hand, the Afghan refugees have been given a final date by which to leave the country. On the other, in a landmark judgement of the Islamabad High Court, the judiciary has ruled that Pakistan recognises the right to asylum. This sets a new judicial precedent in the evolving refugee law in Pakistan, with implications for all those being rounded up with a view to deporting them to Afghanistan. This news can only be welcomed. Yet in the long term, as well as in the light of revising our flawed foreign policy towards Afghanistan, Pakistan needs to work towards signing the Geneva Convention and fulfilling its obligations in line with international law. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Distant echoes**



Mahir Ali

Israel prides itself, not unreasonably, on its intelligence-gathering capabilities. This applies internationally, with Israeli apps offering the go-to spying software to a range of reprehensible regimes. But within Israel and the Palestinian territories it occupies, it's on a different scale.

The sweeping up of electronic data is supposedly supplemented by informers in every Palestinian organisation. Further, as former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter puts it, "Gaza is the most photographed place on the planet, and between satellite imagery, drones and CCTV, every square metre of Gaza is estimated to be imaged every 10 minutes."

How Shin Bet and the various military intelligence agencies were apparently clueless in advance about last Saturday's events may perhaps be explained by the Israeli inquiries that inevitably lie ahead. Ritter blames it on an overreliance on AI to sift through massive data troves, and suggests that Palestinian tech warriors worked out how to fool Israeli algorithms. If true, that exposes the inadequacies of state-of-the-art surveillance technology. It has also been reported, though, that Egyptian warnings about Hamas planning "something big" went unheeded, reflecting a parallel with the Yom Kippur war when, 50 years earlier, a joint Egyptian-Syrian attack took Israel by surprise. Back in 1973, the information suggesting

something was in the offing was disregarded because, surely, 'they wouldn't dare'. Israel shortly regained the upper hand with US help, but that war shifted the dynamics in the Middle East. So will the current conflict, even though this time the surprise blow to Israel's arrogance comes not from the largest Arab army, but from a relatively small militant group that controls a festering wound called the Gaza Strip.

But there's another imperfect parallel to be drawn from 80 years ago, when the surviving inmates of what was then the world's largest prison — superseded only by Gaza more than 60 years later — decided to resist the odds. The Warsaw Ghetto had been set up in late 1940 by the Nazi occupiers to incarcerate the Polish capital's Jewish population. It was essentially a way station to Treblinka or other death camps where the hellish process of industrialised mass slaughter was being honed. The fewer than 60,000 Jews who remained in the ghetto by early 1943 resolved they would not take any further deprivations. Despite being infiltrated by informers, they mapped out their response, mostly with improvised weapons, and when the Nazis came for them in April, they fought back almost for a month, the last of them dying when the Germans burned the area down. Jürgen Stroop, the SS commander in charge of the extermination, was later hanged. What's striking is the similarity between the language he used for the Jews, and the words Benjamin Netanyahu and his colleagues are deploying in describing Gaza's imminent fate, with the prime minister talking about reducing the enclave to rubble, and his defence minister, Yoav Gallant, decreeing that "no electricity, no food, no water, no gas" will be allowed into Gaza, because "we are

fighting animals". Such terminology might once have been considered verboten but the Zionist hierarchy has always looked upon the natives of Palestine as Untermenschen — lesser beings — and treated them accordingly. It seems the lesson they learned from the Nazi experience wasn't 'never again, full stop', but rather, 'never again until we are the unchallengeable arbiters of everyone's fate'.

Not surprisingly, that hasn't worked out well for Palestinians since 1948, and the vague promise of the Oslo Accords 45 years later has since been buried alongside the fantasy of a two-state solution. There have been sporadic explosions ever since, and what's surprising about the latest one is that it did not occur in the West Bank, which has lately been the focus of brutalisation under the neo-fascist reincarnation of the Netanyahu regime.

No one can condone the war crimes committed by Hamas after its audacious prison break-out last Saturday. At the same time, no one who condemns them should ignore the state and settler terrorism to which Palestinians are subjected, with no end in sight. Israel will no doubt reclaim the hierarchy in the mathematics of death — at the time of writing, Israeli fatalities apparently outnumbered Palestinian casualties — but what lies beyond is uncertain. Likewise, the international dynamics, stretching from Iran and the Saudis to the US and the moribund Palestinian Authority. What cannot be overlooked, though, is the reminder of the past few days that peace in the Middle East will remain elusive as long as the occupation persists. The so-called international community recognises that much in Ukraine. Whether it can stretch its horizons as far as Palestine remains to be seen. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**SOEs running into losses add to economic woes: PM**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday said that the country was facing financial problems and those state owned enterprises (SOEs) which had been incurring losses, were adding to these economic woes. During the meeting, the prime minister expressed his concerns over the delayed decision making with regard to issues of PIA. He stressed upon

briefing over the different issues of PIA. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad, Adviser to PM Ahad Cheema and other relevant authorities, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. During the meeting, the prime minister expressed his concerns over the delayed decision making with regard to issues of PIA. He stressed upon

expediting the privatization process of PIA and other SOEs running into losses, adding that their losses could not be met with the public tax money. The caretaker prime minister said that reforms in the aviation sector could bring better facilities to the public. Transparency in the privations process should be ensured, he emphasised, adding fixing of responsibility for the losses was requisite so that necessary



ISLAMABAD: General Manager, China Energy International Group Company, Mr. Wang Huihua met with Caretaker Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed on Wednesday to discuss matter related to energy sector.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Simon J. Stolp, Practice Manager (Energy & Extractives), World Bank South Asia Region along his WB team called on Federal Minister for Privatisation Fawad Hasan Fawad.

**Fawad vows to privatize all loss making SOEs to reduce financial burden**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad here on Wednesday reiterated his government's commitment to privatize all loss-making State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) to reduce financial burden and enhance capabilities, and efficiencies for the sustainable economic development of the country. He said that current economic conditions were not able to bear further losses of these SOEs, adding that the other objective of the

privatization of such enterprises was to attract potential foreign investment for the development of these enterprises. Addressing a news conference along with Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, he said that the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar was also briefed about the privatization of such loss-making enterprises including Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

**PTA, SECP sign MoU to promote mutual cooperation**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalise mechanisms for information sharing and cooperation between both regulators. The MoU was signed by Director General PTA, Muddasir Naveed, and Executive Director SECP, Khalida Habib, at a

ceremony held here, according to a press release issued here. Chairman PTA, Maj Gen @ Hafeez Ur Rehman; Chairman SECP, Akif Saeed; Commissioner SECP, Mujtaba Ahmed Lodhi; Member Compliance and Enforcement PTA, Dr. Khawar Siddique Khokhar; and senior officers from both organisations were in attendance. The objective of the MoU is to establish a framework for bilateral

cooperation between the PTA and SECP in various areas of mutual interest, encompassing a wide spectrum of initiatives and objectives, including the realisation of a digital society to contribute towards the Government of Pakistan's "Vision 2025"; e-government initiatives; the exchange of information; the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—ICTs as contributors and enablers to achieve respective targets.

**Rashakai SEZ project vital for industrial uplift: Dr. Aamir**

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts Affairs Dr. Aamir Abdullah has said that Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Rashakai was vital project of the provincial government towards industrial development, which had been established under China Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC) through mutual cooperation. He said that this project would prove to be a milestone for the promotion of industrialization and economic development in the province, while it was the government's effort to provide all facilities to the entrepreneurs and companies setting up industries here.

**Gold rates up by Rs. 5,500**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs. 5,500 and was sold at Rs. 205,500 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs. 199,500 the previous day of trading. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 4,715 to Rs. 175,754 from Rs. 171,039 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs. 161,108 from Rs. 156,786 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

**ICCI for re-activation of SME Bank to promote SME sector**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Wednesday urged the government to re-activate the SME Bank to provide easy financing options to the SME sector as its winding up would deprive SMEs of the affordable credit facility. He said that already SMEs are facing great problems in getting credit

from banks as the SME sector in Pakistan receives only 6-7% of the private sector financing as compared to 25% in Bangladesh and 18% in India. He said that the closure of SME Bank would create more hurdles for SMEs in expansion and growth. He said this while talking to a delegation of employees' unions that called on him led by Zahoore Awan, Chairman, Pakistan.

**Pak, IsDB explore ways to promote economic cooperation**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar met the Chairman of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser in Morocco on Wednesday. According to a press statement issued by the finance ministry, the meeting aimed to foster productive discussions on economic cooperation and development initiatives.

**Planning minister, Chinese official discuss energy projects**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami on Wednesday met with the General Manager of China Energy International Group Limited Wang Huihua and discussed matters pertaining to bilateral relations with a special focus on energy projects. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on exploring new opportunities for cooperation in diverse fields including

energy and green energy, a news release said. The Planning minister appreciated the China Energy International Group Limited's investment efforts in Pakistan, which is working on various projects including Suki Kinari (SK), Neelum-Jhelum and Mohmand Dam projects. Highlighting the importance of all the projects being carried out by the Chinese Energy International Group, Sami Saeed assured the Chinese companies of the government's full support.

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During the meeting, officials briefed the participants on the revised National Action Plan (NAP), law enforcement operations, anti-smuggling and anti-narcotics operations in Balochistan. The officials also briefed the participants on the security of foreigners employed on CPEC, non-CPEC and private projects, the repatriation of illegal immigrants, foreign currency regularization measures, and progress on SIFC initiatives in Balochistan. The PM expressed confidence in the progress made by the provincial government and assured full support from the Centre. He emphasized that Balochistan's socio-economic development was imperative to ensure peace and development of the province. "Initiatives taken by the SIFC at federal level should have a trickle-down effect in each province for the people of the area," the premier said.

The Premier said that Balochistan is rich in mines and minerals and development in this sector will generate economic activity and job opportunities for the people of the area. Moreover, investments in agriculture and IT should also be focused apart from human resource development. He highlighted that Balochistan possessed abundant mineral resources, and fostering development would stimulate economic activity and create job opportunities for the local population. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of directing investments toward agriculture and IT, in addition to human resource development. He stressed the necessity of collaboration and coordination among all relevant departments to maximize the positive impact of these initiatives. Mr. Kakar also mentioned that initiatives taken by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) at federal level should have a trickle-down effect in each province. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar said on Tuesday.

At the meeting, the Army Chief highlighted that the military would provide full support in concert with law enforcement agencies and other government departments to enforce actions against a spectrum of illegal activities with full force to deny pilferage of resources and economic losses that the country suffered due to these activities. The participants expressed their collective commitment, affirming that state institutions, government departments, and the people are unified in their pursuit of progress and prosperity for the province. While the crucial Apex meeting has expressed its firm resolve against certain issues, the Army chief has already asserted that the law enforcement agencies and the government would continue efforts against a "spectrum of illegal activities with full force to deny pilferage of resources and economic losses." What's great to note and commendable is that the state institutions, government departments and people were united for the progress and prosperity of the province. Above all, the COAS has also promised the interim government of the army's "all-out support" for continuity of policies in a bid to revive the economy and steer the country towards progress and prosperity.



Arif Azad

**Migration crisis**

Migration has been in the media and policy spotlight lately. Several international migration-related developments have refocused attention on migration and asylum issues. Recently, the small Italian town of Lampedusa received a sudden surge of new migrants. The surge, though small, was portrayed as gigantic as it exceeded the size of the local population which had been tiny anyway.

In the US, refugees are streaming into the state of Texas, which has chosen to bus them onward to bigger cities such as New York. In the UK, reducing the number of asylum seekers crossing the English Channel is one of the five policy ambitions of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. This has given the hard-line home secretary, Suella Braverman, carte blanche to employ whatever means necessary to stop boats carrying migrants. Here in Pakistan, we have seen new arrivals from Afghanistan after the Taliban's takeover of Kabul.

The Lampedusa migration crisis occasioned an emergency visit from EU President Ursula von der Leyen to the island town. While pledging extra help, she asserted it was the EU that would ultimately determine who could come into Europe. Her fleeting visit aimed at shoring up the struggling right-wing government was followed by an EU justice and home ministers' conclave on the new migration crisis. There remain differences over how to tackle the

crisis and chart a lasting way forward. The differences centre on the Italian objection to German-funded support to rescue operations at sea. The Italian proposal to do away with certain legal protection in asylum detention centres in a crisis is also a stumbling block.

Earlier, EU governments had agreed on the principle of 'mandatory solidarity', requiring member states located beyond the front-line states of Italy and Greece to accept 30,000 migrants a year. In case of a country not accepting the allotted number of refugees and asylum-seekers, that country would pay 20,000 euros per migrant to an EU-wide fund to boost the money available to the front-line states dealing with the growing number of new arrivals. The US has further extended protections to Venezuelan migrants already living in the country.

In a related development, Ms Braverman chose the venue of a Washington think tank to lay out her vision for a most reactionary immigration policy. She called for a new definition of 'refugee' to be fashioned, besides the updating of the Geneva Convention. In the same anti-migrant vein, she railed against multiculturalism and inadequate integration of incoming migrants. In recent times, she has also singled out the role of the European convention on and court of human rights in frustrating her plans to deport all asylum-seekers to Rwanda. Her speech attracted widespread criticism from the UN refugee agency, politicians and civil society in the UK, with UNHCR rejecting her calls for reforming the Geneva refugee convention and pointing out that rather than updating it, its provisions

must be implemented and adhered to by all signatory countries.

Many commentators linked her pronouncements on immigration to her domestic agenda of seeking the leadership of the Conservative Party. (Braverman has been very popular with the extreme right wing of the party for her hard-line views on migration and asylum.) The British prime minister has defended multiculturalism in an apparent rebuff to his own home secretary.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has received successive waves of refugees from neighbouring Afghanistan since the 1970s. Yet due to Pakistan's not signing the Geneva Convention on the status of refugees, the country's refugee and asylum policies have not been framed. Despite its long engagement with Afghan refugees, Pakistan has lived in denial insofar as the historical presence of Afghan refugees is concerned, and now wants them to leave the country.

Two contradictory impulses are at work. On the one hand, the Afghan refugees have been given a final date by which to leave the country. On the other, in a landmark judgement of the Islamabad High Court, the judiciary has ruled that Pakistan recognises the right to asylum. This sets a new judicial precedent in the evolving refugee law in Pakistan, with implications for all those being rounded up with a view to deporting them to Afghanistan. This news can only be welcomed. Yet in the long term, as well as in the light of revising our flawed foreign policy towards Afghanistan, Pakistan needs to work towards signing the Geneva Convention and fulfilling its obligations in line with international law. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Distant echoes**



Mahir Ali

Israel prides itself, not unreasonably, on its intelligence-gathering capabilities. This applies internationally, with Israeli apps offering the go-to spying software to a range of reprehensible regimes. But within Israel and the Palestinian territories it occupies, it's on a different scale.

The sweeping up of electronic data is supposedly supplemented by informers in every Palestinian organisation. Further, as former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter puts it, "Gaza is the most photographed place on the planet, and between satellite imagery, drones and CCTV, every square metre of Gaza is estimated to be imaged every 10 minutes."

How Shin Bet and the various military intelligence agencies were apparently clueless in advance about last Saturday's events may perhaps be explained by the Israeli inquiries that inevitably lie ahead. Ritter blames it on an overreliance on AI to sift through massive data troves, and suggests that Palestinian tech warriors worked out how to fool Israeli algorithms. If true, that exposes the inadequacies of state-of-the-art surveillance technology. It has also been reported, though, that Egyptian warnings about Hamas planning "something big" went unheeded, reflecting a parallel with the Yom Kippur war when, 50 years earlier, a joint Egyptian-Syrian attack took Israel by surprise. Back in 1973, the information suggesting

something was in the offing was disregarded because, surely, 'they wouldn't dare'. Israel shortly linked the upper hand with US help, but that war shifted the dynamics in the Middle East. So will the current conflict, even though this time the surprise blow to Israel's arrogance comes not from the largest Arab army, but from a relatively small militant group that controls a festering wound called the Gaza Strip.

But there's another imperfect parallel to be drawn from 80 years ago, when the surviving inmates of what was then the world's largest prison — superseded only by Gaza more than 60 years later — decided to resist the odds. The Warsaw Ghetto had been set up in late 1940 by the Nazi occupiers to incarcerate the Polish capital's Jewish population. It was essentially a way station to Treblinka or other death camps where the hellish process of industrialised mass slaughter was being honed. The fewer than 60,000 Jews who remained in the ghetto by early 1943 resolved they would not take any further deprivations. Despite being infiltrated by informers, they mapped out their response, mostly with improvised weapons, and when the Nazis came for them in April, they fought back almost for a month, the last of them dying when the Germans burned the area down. Jürgen Stroop, the SS commander in charge of the extermination, was later hanged. What's striking is the similarity between the language he used for the Jews, and the words Benjamin Netanyahu and his colleagues are deploying in describing Gaza's imminent fate, with the prime minister talking about reducing the enclave to rubble, and his defence minister, Yoav Gallant, decreeing that "no electricity, no food, no water, no gas" will be allowed into Gaza, because "we are

fighting animals". Such terminology might once have been considered verboten but the Zionist hierarchy has always looked upon the natives of Palestine as Untermenschen — lesser beings — and treated them accordingly. It seems the lesson they learned from the Nazi experience wasn't 'never again, full stop', but rather, 'never again until we are the unchallengeable arbiters of everyone's fate'.

Not surprisingly, that hasn't worked out well for Palestinians since 1948, and the vague promise of the Oslo Accords 45 years later has since been buried alongside the fantasy of a two-state solution. There have been sporadic explosions ever since, and what's surprising about the latest one is that it did not occur in the West Bank, which has lately been the focus of brutalisation under the neo-fascist reincarnation of the Netanyahu regime.

No one can condone the war crimes committed by Hamas after its audacious prison break-out last Saturday. At the same time, no one who condemns them should ignore the state and settler terrorism to which Palestinians are subjected, with no end in sight. Israel will no doubt reclaim the hierarchy in the mathematics of death — at the time of writing, Israeli fatalities apparently outnumber Palestinian casualties — but what lies beyond is uncertain. Likewise, the international dynamics, stretching from Iran and the Saudis to the US and the moribund Palestinian Authority. What cannot be overlooked, though, is the reminder of the past few days that peace in the Middle East will remain elusive as long as the occupation persists. The so-called international community recognises that much in Ukraine. Whether it can stretch its horizons as far as Palestine remains to be seen. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**SOEs running into losses add to economic woes: PM**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday said that the country was facing financial problems and those state owned enterprises (SOEs) which had been incurring losses, were adding to these economic woes. During the meeting, the prime minister expressed his concerns over the delayed decision making with regard to issues of PIA. He stressed upon

briefing over the different issues of PIA. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad, Adviser to PM Ahad Cheema and other relevant authorities, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. During the meeting, the prime minister expressed his concerns over the delayed decision making with regard to issues of PIA. He stressed upon

expediting the privatization process of PIA and other SOEs running into losses, adding that their losses could not be met with the public tax money. The caretaker prime minister said that reforms in the aviation sector could bring better facilities to the public. Transparency in the privations process should be ensured, he emphasised, adding fixing of responsibility for the losses was requisite so that necessary



ISLAMABAD: General Manager, China Energy International Group Company, Mr. Wang Huihua met with Caretaker Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed on Wednesday to discuss matter related to energy sector.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Simon J. Stolp, Practice Manager (Energy & Extractives), World Bank South Asia Region along his WB team called on Federal Minister for Privatisation Fawad Hasan Fawad.

**Fawad vows to privatize all loss making SOEs to reduce financial burden**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad here on Wednesday reiterated his government's commitment to privatize all loss-making State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) to reduce financial burden and enhance capabilities, and efficiencies for the sustainable economic development of the country. He said that current economic conditions were not able to bear further losses of these SOEs, adding that the other objective of the

privatization of such enterprises was to attract potential foreign investment for the development of these enterprises. Addressing a news conference along with Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, he said that the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar was also briefed about the privatization of such loss-making enterprises including Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

**PTA, SECP sign MoU to promote mutual cooperation**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalise mechanisms for information sharing and cooperation between both regulators. The MoU was signed by Director General PTA, Muddasir Naveed, and Executive Director SECP, Khalida Habib, at a

ceremony held here, according to a press release issued here. Chairman PTA, Maj Gen @ Hafeez Ur Rehman; Chairman SECP, Akif Saeed; Commissioner SECP, Mujtaba Ahmed Lodhi; Member Compliance and Enforcement PTA, Dr. Khawar Siddique Khokhar; and senior officers from both organisations were in attendance. The objective of the MoU is to establish a framework for bilateral

cooperation between the PTA and SECP in various areas of mutual interest, encompassing a wide spectrum of initiatives and objectives, including the realisation of a digital society to contribute towards the Government of Pakistan's "Vision 2025"; e-government initiatives; the exchange of information; the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—ICTs as contributors and enablers to achieve respective targets.

**Rashakai SEZ project vital for industrial uplift: Dr. Aamir**

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts Affairs Dr. Aamir Abdullah has said that Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Rashakai was vital project of the provincial government towards industrial development, which had been established under China Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC) through mutual cooperation. He said that this project would prove to be a milestone for the promotion of industrialization and economic development in the province, while it was the government's effort to provide all facilities to the entrepreneurs and companies setting up industries here.

**Gold rates up by Rs. 5,500**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs. 5,500 and was sold at Rs. 205,500 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs. 199,500 the previous day of trading. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 4,715 to Rs. 175,754 from Rs. 171,039 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs. 161,108 from Rs. 156,786 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

**ICCI for re-activation of SME Bank to promote SME sector**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Wednesday urged the government to re-activate the SME Bank to provide easy financing options to the SME sector as its winding up would deprive SMEs of the affordable credit facility. He said that already SMEs are facing great problems in getting credit

from banks as the SME sector in Pakistan receives only 6-7% of the private sector financing as compared to 25% in Bangladesh and 18% in India. He said that the closure of SME Bank would create more hurdles for SMEs in expansion and growth. He said this while talking to a delegation of employees' unions that called on him led by Zahoore Awan, Chairman, Pakistan.

**Pak, IsDB explore ways to promote economic cooperation**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar met the Chairman of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser in Morocco on Wednesday. According to a press statement issued by the finance ministry, the meeting aimed to foster productive discussions on economic cooperation and development initiatives.

**Planning minister, Chinese official discuss energy projects**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami on Wednesday met with the General Manager of China Energy International Group Limited Wang Huihua and discussed matters pertaining to bilateral relations with a special focus on energy projects. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on exploring new opportunities for cooperation in diverse fields including

energy and green energy, a news release said. The Planning minister appreciated the China Energy International Group Limited's investment efforts in Pakistan, which is working on various projects including Suki Kinari (SK), Neelum-Jhelum and Mohmand Dam projects. Highlighting the importance of all the projects being carried out by the Chinese Energy International Group, Sami Saeed assured the Chinese companies of the government's full support.

## President stresses upon role of mosques in social development, imparting education to children

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday stressed upon the effective role of mosques and pulpits in imparting education to children, besides preaching on social issues through Islamic teachings.

The president chaired a meeting on the role of the mosques and the pulpits in social development, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed and provincial ministers of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Relevant provincial secretaries, including from Azad Jammu and Kashmir and chief secretary of Gilgit Baltistan were also present.

The president observed that mosques and

pulpits were the source of imparting education and local connectivity and played an important role in the social training and formulation of Islamic society.

Providing education to 27 million out of school children was a huge challenge and for this purpose thousands of schools were required, he said, adding that about 250,000 mosques across the country could be used for increasing literacy rate.

The president suggested that during the Fajar and Zuhar timings, children could be taught religious education, latest skills and education in mosques.

He also called upon ulema, khatibs and religious seminaries to play their role for the social reforms, eradication of social evils like back-biting, intolerance and fake news.

Increasing population, women's rights, interfaith harmony and promotion of tolerance were the significant social issues, he added.

Commending the role of ulema, mosques and pulpits during Coronavirus pandemic, he said they created public awareness.

The president opined that ulema could also create awareness in the society about different issues like diseases, malnutrition and mental and physical weakness.

The social linkages would be further strengthened with intensifying of religious, educational and social activities, he observed.

During the meeting, the participants also presented different proposals regarding role of ulema on various important national and social subjects.



ISLAMABAD: President, Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on the role of the mosques and the pulpits in social development held at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad.

## Solangi says: CPEC bolsters people-to-people contacts between Pakistan-China

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi Wednesday said the launch of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) had not only deepened the economic cooperation between the two brotherly countries but also bolstered people-to-people contacts in a remarkable way.

"Over 28,000 Pakistani students were currently studying in China. This aspect of cooperation is of prime importance in the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative," the minister said while addressing the Art Exhibition & Cultural Show at Pakistan National Council of Arts.

Since the launch of CPEC, he said people-to-people connectivity between Pakistan and China had soared to new heights.

In Pakistan, the minister said the number of Chinese language learners was growing exponentially with the establishment of Confucius institutes in top universities like the University of Punjab, NUML University and others.

Likewise, Pakistani students also visited Chinese universities on Chinese government scholarships to learn Chinese language and do professional degrees/diplomas, he added. He said similarly artists from Pakistan and China frequently exchanged visits to show-

case their artwork in each other's countries through art exhibitions. In the Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (2022), he said both sides reiterated the importance of people-to-people contacts, tourism cooperation and cultural exchanges for strong bilateral relations.

Building on the MoU on Tourism Exchanges and Cooperation signed in November 2021, Solangi said the two sides agreed to celebrate the Pakistan-China Year of Tourism Exchanges in 2023 and to establish strong linkages between the tourism promotion agencies and private enterprises of the two countries.

## Pakistan, UNICEF join hands to eradicate Polio

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a monumental step towards the eradication of polio, the Government of Pakistan, in collaboration with UNICEF, marked a historic milestone on Wednesday as they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at a formal ceremony.

The journey to this moment began with the Government of Pakistan declaring a state of emergency in 2011, launching an unwavering effort to combat polio.

Substantial financial resources, including grants and loans, were channelled into the Polio Emergency Program.

During this crucial phase, the government committed \$155 million to the cause and, in a testament to global solidarity, secured an additional \$100 million in support from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

Secretary National Health Services Iftekhar Shallwani expressed profound gratitude for this vi-

tal financial support.

The meticulous groundwork is evident as all necessary documentation was successfully completed, and ISDB recently formalized its commitment by signing the Murabaha agreement just two days ago.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Federal Secretary Iftekhar Shallwani made a priority call to UNICEF, leading to the signing of the MoU today. This document paves the way for the procurement of vaccines critical to the Polio Emergency Program, bringing hope to countless lives.

The signing ceremony saw the Federal Secretary and the country representative of UNICEF exchange signed documents, cementing their shared vision to eliminate polio.

In a heartfelt expression of appreciation, the Federal Secretary extended gratitude to all individuals and organizations that have steadfastly supported this program during these critical times.



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong viewing painting at "Art And Cultural Show 2023" powered by China Media Group in collaboration with PNCA during 10 Year celebration of CPEC.

## Meeting of senate standing committee on interior held

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: A Meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Interior was held here at Parliament House on Wednesday with Senator Mohsin Aziz in Chair.

The Senate Committee deliberated on the bill titled "The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2023." Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi, the mover of the bill, stated that the increasing trend of false accusations and malicious criminal prosecution has become an alarming issue these days.

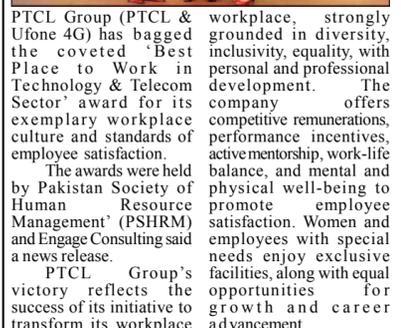
The bill aims to en-

hance the time period of punishment for these offenses by amending Section 182 of the Pakistan Penal Code and Schedule-II of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The Special Secretary of the Interior informed the committee that the matter falls under the ambit of the provinces, and a letter has also been written to request their response which is still awaited. However, the committee will be updated after receipt of response. The committee directed the Ministry to submit the provinces' intake within the next ten days.

## PTCL awarded 'Best Place to Work in Technology & Telecom'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's largest telecommunications and ICT services provider, culture. Over these years, the Group has undertaken profound initiatives to foster a progressive

workplace, strongly grounded in diversity, inclusivity, equality, with personal and professional development. The company offers competitive remunerations, performance incentives, active mentorship, work-life balance, and mental and physical well-being to promote employee satisfaction. Women and employees with special needs enjoy exclusive facilities, along with equal opportunities for growth and career advancement.



## France to organize 2nd edition of "Choose France Pakistan - Edu. Tour" in Lahore, Karachi

**Independent Report**  
KARACHI: Following the success of the first edition in Lahore and Islamabad, the "Choose France Pakistan - Education Tour" is back in 2023 to explore Lahore and Karachi. The program includes a wide range of fields such as management, engineering, humanities, finance, business and sciences. Eleven top-notch French universities are part of the delegation, such as Sciences Po Paris, Centrale Nantes, and EDHEC.

"Choose France Pakistan-Education Tour" is a government initiative from France, organized by the

French Embassy in Pakistan, Campus France Pakistan, and their local partners, to promote studying in France.

The 2 Education fairs to be organized in Lahore on October 17 and in Karachi on October 19, will give the opportunity to students to interact directly with French universities, learn more about the 1700 programs taught in English at the Bachelor and Master levels, and get details about the 183 scholarship programs available for Pakistani students.

This year, four French business schools are part of the delegation.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting regarding Pakistan International Airlines.

## Minister for providing basic facilities in schools prior to curriculum reforms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindh on Wednesday said that curriculum reform cannot be effective until basic facilities in all public schools across Pakistan are provided.

While addressing the opening session of the National Curriculum Summit held here, Mr Madad Ali Sindh lauded the efforts of the NCC towards its role of coordination among the federating units.

He expressed satisfaction with the completed tasks of the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP).

The Federal Minister praised the role of provincial governments' stakeholders in upholding the cause of quality education for all children of the nation by championing international standards in cur-

riculum reforms.

He further said the caretaker government will take all possible steps for the improvement of education in the country.

The summit was organized by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives.

Education experts from public, private, non-government, and development sectors participated in the summit.

Mr Madad Ali Sindh ensured that the initiatives regarding the development of the curriculum standards for a range of elementary subjects and streamlining technical education across the country will continue in coordination with the stakeholders across the country.

## Cabinet gives green signal for auction of 5G spectrum: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif Wednesday said that the Federal Cabinet has given the green signal for the auction of the much-anticipated 5G spectrum.

Dr. Saif in a statement said that a Spectrum Auction Advisory Committee, led by the finance minister, had been established to oversee the impending spectrum auction.

He said that this committee included members from the Ministry of Information Technology, Telecommunication and the Ministry of Industries and Production.

The eagerly awaited 5G spectrum is set to make 300 Megahertz of spectrum available, with the potential to revolutionize Pakistan's telecommunications landscape, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, visited 'Benazir One Window Center'.

## Dr. Saqib conducts surprise visit to One Window Center; interacts with beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, made an unannounced visit to the Benazir One Window Center in Islamabad on Wednesday.

During this visit, he was accompanied by Mr. Naveed Akbar, Director General National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER).

The purpose of the visit was to personally inspect the operations and interaction with the beneficiaries present at Benazir One Window Center.

Dr. Amjad Saqib was given a comprehensive brief by staff of One Window Center about its functions and operations.

The Benazir One Window Center is a unique initiative that brings together multiple organizations, including BISP, NADRA, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund

(PPAF), Pakistan Bai-ul-Mal, Akhuwat, and HBL, under one roof.

This consolidated approach streamlines and enhances the efficiency of services offered to beneficiaries. At the One Window Center, beneficiaries can access services related to registration in BISP, eligibility assessment, enrollment of their children in the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif program, and benefits from the Benazir Nashonuma Programme. On average, the center serves approximately 200 to 500 women beneficiaries daily. During his visit, Dr. Amjad Saqib took the time to engage with beneficiaries who were there for registration and to receive their stipends under the Benazir Kafalat program. He expressed keen interest in understanding the challenges and issues faced by beneficiaries and inquired how BISP's financial support has positively impacted their lives.

## Ambassador designate to Morocco calls on Caretaker PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador designate to Morocco Sami Malik Wednesday called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

The prime minister felicitated the ambassador designate on his new assignment and expressed his good wishes, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

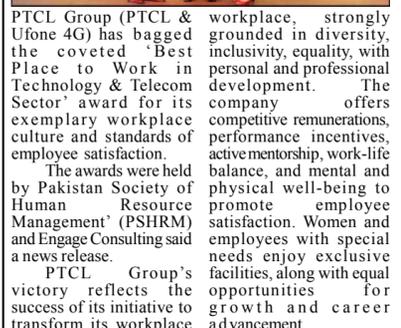
The caretaker prime minister directed the ambassador to make efforts for further strengthening Pakistan-Morocco bilateral ties and taking the steps to increase bilateral cooperation between the two countries in diverse fields.

## Mushaal urges HR world orgs to help end rights violations by India in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Caretaker Prime Minister Mushaal Hussain Malik on Wednesday urged international human rights institutions and international rights organizations to end human rights violations in India's illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and to protect human rights defenders. Talking to a private news channel, she expressed his concern over the plight of illegally detained Hurriyat leaders and appealed to the UN Secretary-General to release the detainees and resolve the Kashmir issue by the Security Council resolutions.

She said that the silence of world powers has encouraged India to conduct a cold-blooded campaign of human rights atrocities against innocent Kashmiris.

He said that giving self-determination to the Kashmiri people is very important for world peace and development, adding that India is involved in state-sponsored terrorism at the regional and global levels. SAPM said the international community should stop appeasing India and should contain India's fundamentalism and extremism because it will affect the peace and stability of the entire world.



## Delegation of students from IIU visits Safe City

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: According to the details, a delegation of students from International Islamic University Islamabad visited Safe City Islamabad, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the CPO Safe City/ Traffic gave an overview of the Safe City Islamabad operational duties to the delegation. The delegation visited the command and control center, data hub unit, modern technology-equipped cameras, and the Police operations center hall. They were fully briefed about the procedures and its effectiveness.

Furthermore, the delegation was also briefed that Safe City Islamabad is playing a significant role in various sectors through modern techniques, including the Police Operations Center, Emergency Control Center, Data Hub, Dispatch Control Center, E-Challan System, and the "Pukar-15" helpline.

Face recognition cameras have been installed at the entry and exit points of the city which are playing an important role in identifying suspicious elements. The delegation was also apprised of the functionality and benefits of the Safe City cameras in the city and its crucial role in ensuring the safety of the city, preventing crimes and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens.

The delegation acknowledged the modern technical

system of the Islamabad Capital Police and its benefits. The delegation expressed special gratitude to Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and his team for this successful visit.



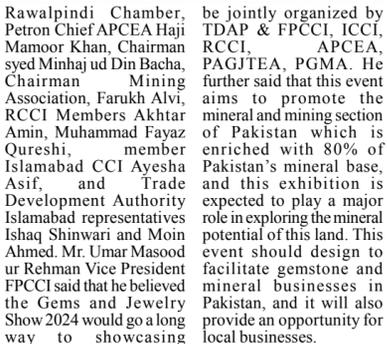
ISLAMABAD: Deputy Country Representative of UNFPA Latika Maskey Pradhan presents Souvenir to a girl student of grade 9th Malaika Arif during conference entitled "Ending Child Marriages" at local hotel to mark the International Day of the Girl Child, in Federal Capital.

## FPCCI-TDAP Success of Gems, Jewelry show can boost exports

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: The Core Committee meeting on Gems and Jewelry Show 2024 was held at FPCCI Capital Office Islamabad yesterday led by Mr. Umar Masudur Rahman Vice President FPCCI. The meeting was attended by Mr. Saqib Rafiq President

gemstones in the international market. He appreciated the role of TDAP Islamabad to bring all related trade bodies on our platform under the patronage of TDAP and FPCCI to organize a befitting show to attract foreign buyers.

The Gems expo will



## Motorway police reunites lost child with family

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) north zone has reunited a lost child with his family after a tireless search on Wednesday.

The child, who is around seven to eight years old, was found wandering alone at the M-1 toll plaza in Islamabad.

According to NHMP officials, the child was initially unable to provide any information about his identity or family. However, after some gentle coaxing, he was able to tell the police that his family had recently shifted from Bannu to Rawalpindi.

