

# Independent

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## PML-N ready for opposition if independents show minority: Shehbaz

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif said on Tuesday that independent candidates backed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) can form a government in the Centre if they have the required number of seats.

Addressing a press conference at the party secretariat in Model Town, he said that if PTI-backed candidates could show majority in the National Assembly then they were welcome to form a government. "The PML-N is ready to sit in the opposition if PTI-backed candidates prove their majority in the lower house of parliament. The PML-N will accept the government of the PTI-backed independent candidates but if they fail to do so, then the PML-N will use its legal and constitutional right as the PML-N has a majority in Punjab and is the largest in the Centre in terms of party," he added.

The PML-N president said that after independent candidates' induction

into the party the number of elected members was now 80, adding that more independent lawmakers would join the PML-N in the coming days. He said that despite PML-N failing to secure a majority in the elections, PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif was still the party's candidate for the slot of prime minister. "Nawaz Sharif will become the prime minister for the fourth time," he added.

Shehbaz Sharif said that the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz would invite everyone to form a coalition government in the Centre, adding that all stakeholders would have to move forward together in the country's larger interest. He said that the PML-N was in contact with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (Pakistan) MQM-P, and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) while deliberations were underway to make an alliance under the leadership of PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif.



ISLAMABAD: President PML-N Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Co-Chairman PPP Asif Ali Zardari, President PML-Q Chaudhary Shujaat Hussain, MQM's Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and BAP's Sadiq Sanjrani addressing a joint press conference.

## PML-N, IPP, PPP, MQM, PML-Q join forces for coalition govt

Asif Zardari vows to extend reconciliation efforts to PTI; Shehbaz says "war" is against country's challenges; Aleem Khan hopes Shehbaz-led govt will take decisions beneficial for the country; MQM-P's Khalid Maqbool vows 'full support' to Shehbaz to 'strengthen' democracy

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Political leaders from various parties, including the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Pakistan Muslim League, Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), and Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), have announced plans to form a coalition government.

This decision emerged following a meeting held at Chaudhary Shujaat Hussain's residence, where leaders discussed strategies for governance.

Speaking to media after the meeting, Asif Ali Zardari expressed determination to establish the coalition government. He em-

phasized the importance of a unified agenda, focusing on economic, defense, and other critical issues to ensure Pakistan's success.

Zardari highlighted that despite competing against each other in elections, they are not ideological opponents and can collectively manage the country, adding that reconciliation efforts will extend to include PTI as well.

"Thank you, Chaudhary Shujaat, for hosting us all here," expressed Shehbaz Sharif as he acknowledged the gathering. "The election phase has concluded, and Parliament is on the brink of formation," he continued, emphasizing the transition. "It is imperative for the

economy to stabilize," he asserted, underlining the significance of financial strength. "National unity is paramount for progress," Sharif remarked, highlighting the need for solidarity among diverse factions. "The recent IMF agreement has bolstered the country's economic standing," he added, acknowledging the pivotal role of international support.

"I extend my gratitude to Bilawal Bhutto for his voting decision," Sharif expressed appreciation for Bhutto's stance. "The nation has spoken; these parties now hold a two-thirds majority," he asserted, indicating the significant electoral mandate received. "Inclusive representa-

tion from Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, and KP signifies our collective strength," Sharif noted, emphasizing the diverse yet unified representation. "With our majority, we pledge to address the nation's challenges," he assured, committing to effective governance.

"Did we not rescue Pakistan from the brink of bankruptcy?" Sharif questioned, highlighting past achievements and future aspirations. Despite past rivalries, MQM's Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui emphasized, "We may differ in ideology, but the well-being of Pakistan supersedes all. We have supported Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif previously, and now we stand united again."

## PPP to back PML-N candidate for PM's slot but won't become part of govt in Centre: Bilawal

PPP chairman says will not put himself forward for the candidacy of prime minister, wants to see Asif Ali Zardari as president.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday announced to support the candidate of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) for Prime Minister and abstain from joining to be coalition government's federal cabinet.

Addressing a press conference here after the meeting of party's Central Executive Committee (CEC), he said that PPP was accepting the election results despite its concerns in the larger interest of the country.

He said the reality was that his party did not have a mandate to form the government in the federation, adding that the PML-N and the independents had greater numbers in the Centre. "I will not be putting myself forward for the candidacy of the prime minister," he said.

Bilawal Bhutto said the PPP had formed a committee to engage with other political parties for the formation of government and political stability in the country.

"PPP has decided that we ran this general election on a manifesto based on issues of public importance; we want to restore political stability and end this environment of political toxicity," he added.

The PPP chairman said that his party had raised concerns regarding a level playing field with former President Asif Ali Zardari during the PPP's CEC meeting and the latter had assumed that these complaints would be addressed.

"I am assuring the public that the Parliament will be formed and it is a forum where their issues will be resolved," Bilawal Bhutto said.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addresses a press conference.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Dr. Gohar Ejaz chairing a briefing at NADRA headquarters.

## PTI to ally with MWM in Punjab and Centre, with Jamaat-i-Islami in KP

Raoof Hasan says Imran has given instructions to make contact with all political parties except PML-N, PPP, MQM-P; Ali Amin Gandapur named Khyber Pakhtunkhwa CM by PTI founder

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has claimed that the former ruling party, upon directions of its founder Imran Khan, will join hands with Majlis-e-Wahdat-Muslimeen (MWM) to form its governments in Centre and Punjab.

Speaking to the media in Islamabad on Tuesday, PTI spokesperson Raoof Hasan said that the former prime minister, while ruling out the prospects of any talks with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Muttahida Qaumi Move-

ment-Pakistan (MQM-P), has directed the party to form a coalition with Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) over reserved seats.

"Those who have emerged victorious in the [February 8] polls, should be allowed to form the government as it is their right [do so], he said while conveying Khan's message. "I have been given the mandate [by Khan] to approach all political parties to continue the party's political struggle for democratic values with the exception of the PML-N, MQM-P and the PPP," Hasan added.

## Efforts underway for revival, financial stability of Radio Pakistan: DG PBC

KARACHI (APP): Director General Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) Saeed Ahmed Sheikh, Tuesday, said that efforts were underway for revival of past glory of Radio Pakistan and for resolving financial issues of the corporation.

He was speaking during visit of New Broadcasting House PBC Karachi on the occasion of World Radio Day being observed on February 13. Station Director PBC Karachi Mehboob Sultan, Deputy Controller News Malahat Soulat, DC Engineering Imranullah Khan, DC Admin Arbab Ali Rajhujo, other officers and

staff member were also present at the occasion.

The DG PBC said that to make the corporation financially viable a new business plan has been envisaged and it will be presented in next meeting of Board of Directors of PBC for approval.

The business plan contains 15 points including creation of audio books, collaboration with National Book Foundation, rationalization of electricity tariff for PBC, utilization of PBC properties across the country for revenue generation in public private partnership mode and audio signal levy on vehicles travel on motorways, he informed.



KARACHI: Director General Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) Saeed Ahmed Sheikh, taking part in live transmission of program 'Surahi Sanjh' on World Radio Day during visit of Radio Pakistan Karachi.

## PTI founder rules out talks with PML-N, PPP, MQM-P

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former prime minister and the PTI founder on Tuesday ruled out the possibility of talks with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Pakistan People's Party and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan for the formation of the government.

Ex-PM, whose party secured 84 seats in the KP assembly is in a position to form the government. In the National Assembly, PTI-backed candidates emerged as the largest group with over 90 seats followed by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) which won 75 seats.

## Pakistan, Somalia discuss increased coordination at OIC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Somalia have discussed ways and means for increased coordination at the platform of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) besides other issues of mutual interest including regional and international developments.

The discussion came during a meeting between Pakistan's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to OIC Syed M Fawad Sher and Somalia's Permanent Representative to OIC Abdul Rahim Osman, the envoy posted on X.

During the meeting, the two sides vowed to continue cooperation in diverse fields.

## MPA elect Abdul Aziz Junejo passes away

KARACHI (APP): Engineer Abdul Aziz Junejo, the recently elected MPA from Khairpur Nathan Shah, district Dadu, has passed away due to health complications here on Tuesday. Abdul Aziz Junejo was elected MPA from PPP on PS-80 on the February 08 polls.

He breathed his last in a private hospital here in the early hours of Tuesday morning due to health complications.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr Nadeem Jan presides a meeting of DRAP at Central Drugs Laboratory.

## Drug app launched to ensure availability of medicines: Dr. Nadeem Jan

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health Services Dr. Nadeem Jan on Tuesday said that a drug app had been launched to ensure availability of the medicines.

He said that his ministry took measures to ensure registration of sugar, blood pressure and life-saving medicines on emergency basis.

Expressing his views during his visit to Karachi Drug Testing Laboratory here, the Minister said that he had laid a foundation stone of large-scale reforms in the Ministry of Health Services in a short period of time.

Dr. Nadeem Jan said that it was his priority to keep the cost of medicines within the reach of the commonman.

He said that the Caretaker government would not allow the sale of sub-standard medicines and hoarding of the medicines.

The Minister said that concerted steps had been taken to make the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) public friendly.

The facility of testing medical equipment was now available in the laboratory, he said adding that the registration and licensing system in DRAP had been digitized.

## UN Chief continuing to monitor situation in Pakistan post-elections

WASHINGTON (INP): United Nations (UN) Secretary General Antonio Guterres is "continuing to monitor the situation following the general elections", according to his spokesperson.

In a media briefing, the UN chief's spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said Guterres "calls for the resolving of all issues and disputes through the established legal frameworks and for human rights and the rule of law to be fully respected in the interest of the people of Pakistan". "The secretary general urges the authorities, political leaders to maintain a calm atmosphere and to reject and refrain from all forms of violence and avoid any actions that could increase or enflame tensions," the spokesperson added.

## PPP to form next govt in Sindh, says Murtaza Wahab

HYDERABAD (INP): Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab has said that the metropolis will progress substantially in the next few years in accordance with PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's vision for the city.

"Bilawal sahib says that when federal, provincial and local government work together then the system, in a cosmopolitan city like Karachi, will work better," he said.

## Taekwondo is sport of body, mind: CM

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar has said that Taekwondo is a Korean traditional martial art that teaches physical fighting skills, and it has been taught in Pakistan for many decades.

Taekwondo has earned global recognition and is now considered an official sport in the Olympics. This discipline teaches us how to improve our body and mind by training our spirit. Today, it is widely recognized as a means to enhance our overall well-being.

This he said while speaking at Bazel Siddiqui Taekwondo organised by Universal Tigers Taekwondo in collaboration

with Sindh Scouts Association at Mohammad Siddique Scouts Sports, Abul Hassan Ispahani Road on Tuesday. The program was attended by Secretary DEPDTuha Farooqi, Faim Siddiqui, and parents of the children in a large number.

In the championship differently abled children also participated in a large number and won different competitions.

The CM stated that Taekwondo involves synchronizing the mind with the body's movements to create inner peace and extend that harmony to one's life and society. In Taekwondo, the principles of physical movements, mind training, and life are all interconnected.



KARACHI: Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) Leader, Safdar Abbasi addresses to media persons during press conference, at Functional House in Karachi.

## PPP worked hard for five years to win Sindh, says Murad Ali Shah

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former chief minister Murad Ali Shah has said that the People's Party forming government in Sindh.

He was talking to media ahead of the Central Executive Committee meeting of Pakistan People's Party that will decide that the party will join or not join the coalition government in Centre.

"The election was not easy for the PPP in Sindh, we have worked hard for five years," he claimed. "We can give account, how we won each and every seat," he said.

"I will advise Pir Pagara to change his friends, these friends are not sincere with him," Murad Ali Shah said.

He said the People's Party was standing on the side of the people of Sindh at every difficult moment.

Former CM said that the PPP has bagged more than 80 percent votes in Sindh. "We want to work with all political parties," he said.

"If the PML-N forms its government in centre, they have counted the MQM votes," Murad Ali Shah said and added that the MQM has to change its mindset.

He said the GDA has



## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Economic uncertainty

Pakistan is facing enormous macroeconomic challenges, as evident in its fragile balance-of-payments, weakening growth, and soaring prices. The new government is expected to quickly set about dealing with these issues.

Its most pressing challenge is to formulate a longer-term financing plan to meet Pakistan's growing external debt obligations, beginning with negotiations for a longer and larger IMF bailout as the present \$3bn package ends in April.

Islamabad's ability to secure loans and investments from other commercial, bilateral and multilateral lenders will be constrained without an IMF package. The Fund's support is also required to avoid the prospect of default. Even with such support, the government's willingness and ability to implement politically unpopular reforms will be tested.

Thursday's elections should have reduced the instability in the country. However, the unanticipated results, with no party securing a clear majority in parliament due to the surprise win of a very large number of individuals associated with the PTI, has intensified the uncertainty, which could impact economic stability and efforts to execute structural reforms.

Allegations of rigging have also cast a shadow on the incoming set-up's credibility. Many suspect that the political insecurity might last through the next election cycle, as the split mandate is pointing to the formation of a coalition — most likely between the PML-N and PPP, with smaller parties demanding a share — on the lines of the erstwhile PDM that ruled the country for 16 months after ousting Imran Khan in 2022.

The question is that, given the divergent political interests of its component parties, will the coalition be in a position to deal with the formidable economic challenges the country faces?

The last ruling coalition did not have an enviable track record when it came to taking difficult decisions. The way the PDM coalition government mismanaged the economy is known to all. The price for the mismanagement is now being paid by the people and has cost the PML-N heavily in Punjab in the polls. It is no wonder that many believe a 'weak' coalition government will dampen the prospects of the economic reforms Pakistan so desperately needs to be able to attain sustainable growth. The presence of a strong and noisy opposition in parliament might also impede required legislation, as the PTI is unlikely to accept the legitimacy of a government by its rivals. Some are of the view that the military-backed SIFC will act as the main economic policymaking forum, reducing policy uncertainty despite potential political chaos, and providing some comfort to investors. Yet, that may also lead to an uneven field for investors and frictions between the political and military leadership. So far, the future of the economy appears quite uncertain because of the split mandate following tainted elections.

### Preventing suicide

Ali Burhan  
Mustafa

In a significant stride towards mental health reform, Pakistan decriminalised attempted suicide (later challenged in the Federal Sharia Court) by repealing Section 325 of the Pakistan Penal Code, a change that stands out for its compassion and understanding. The repeal is complemented by the Mental Health Act's Section 49, which introduces mandatory psychiatric assessments to ensure that individuals experiencing mental distress receive the care they need. This reform became possible due to the steadfast advocacy of mental health experts, including those in the Pakistan Psychiatric Society, the efforts of legislators in 2022, and the support of religious and educational groups.

Suicide is a critical global public health concern, accounting for over 800,000 deaths worldwide. Globally, it is the third leading cause of death among 15- to 19-year-olds, and the second leading cause of death among 15- to 29-year-olds. Alarmingly, 90 per cent of adolescent suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries, with recent analyses reporting a pooled suicide rate of 3.77 per 100,000 in these regions.

In Pakistan, where 10.37pc of the population falls in the 15- to 19-year age group, there are no official national suicide statistics due to the absence of vital registration systems. Nonetheless, estimates indicate 130,000 to 300,000 suicide attempts per year, and 13,000 to 15,000 deaths by suicide. It is concerning that the healthcare budget for 2023-24, totalling Rs24.21 billion, lacks designated allocation for mental health, high-

lighting a worrisome gap in mental health funding.

A series of tragic events has shone a harsh spotlight on Pakistan's mental health crisis, marked by the untimely deaths of individuals grappling with severe psychological distress. In one instance, the 40-year-old son of a renowned religious cleric succumbed to a prolonged battle with severe depression. In July 2023, a life was lost to this crisis when a 63-year-old industrialist took his own life, leaving behind a note revealing his struggle with a chronic, undisclosed illness.

Such heart-wrenching incidents followed the shocking deaths by suicide of a 66-year-old psychiatrist from Multan, who ended both his own life and that of his daughter. In addition, there is the still-unresolved suicide of a celebrated actor who met a tragic end from a gunshot wound in 1986.

The concerning rise of 'kala pathar poisoning', caused by paraphenylenediamine, in districts like Rahim Yar Khan and Sahiwal is a significant public health issue, with a high mortality rate of 50.5pc among rural women.

These incidents, often linked to self-harm, emphasise the urgent need for an improved mental health infrastructure and strict regulations regarding dangerous substances. Investigations in Pakistan reveal the high prevalence of suicide attempts through pesticide ingestion and benzodiazepine overdose. The key risk factors among adolescents include mental health disorders, substance addiction, previous suicide attempts, a family history of suicide, and thoughts of suicide and homicide.

According to a 2023 study by Nazish Imran, et al, the ingestion of toxic substances was the suicide method for 50pc of the individuals in their sample (140 out of 279). Hanging was the second most common method. These findings stress the need for prompt intervention and widespread preventive measures.

Recent circumstances have intensified the demand for improved mental health services in Pakistan, a country where psychological autopsies are rarely conducted. These autopsies are crucial as they can illuminate the psychological state prior to death, inform preventative actions, provide comfort to bereaved families, and influence policy reform.

Psychological autopsies involve a detailed postmortem examination of the deceased's mental state through investigations into their life, emotions, and thoughts before death, typically by interviewing those close to them. Outcomes from these autopsies are instrumental in informing suicide prevention initiatives, enhancing mental health support, and deepening the understanding of suicide's multifaceted nature.

Despite evidence that proactive measures can prevent suicide, the unique cultural and religious context of Muslim countries, such as Pakistan, hinders data-gathering, thus emphasising the need for customised research to create effective suicide prevention strategies. As a nation, we must commit to nurturing a society where mental health is prioritised, the stigma attached to mental illness and death by suicide is eradicated, and where every individual has access to the support they need — to not just survive but thrive. -- Courtesy Dawn

### Happy workers

Parvez Rahim

Research shows a causal link between happy workers and an increase — 13 per cent — in productivity, while unhappiness at work costs the world \$8.8 trillion. According to a survey conducted by Gallup, there is a "strong relationship between worker happiness and workplace engagement. Happy and engaged employees are much more likely to have a positive relationship with their boss, are better equipped to handle new challenges and changes, feel they are more valued by their employers, handle stress more effectively, and are much more satisfied with their lives".

There are three types of employees within organisations: a) 'engaged employees' who work with passion and feel a deep connection with their organisation. "They drive innovation and move the organisation forward"; b) workers who are 'not engaged' and sleepwalk through their workday, putting "time, but not energy or passion, into their work"; and c) employees who are 'actively disengaged', not only unhappy at work, but also busy acting out their unhappiness. They undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish.

An employee contributes to productivity, if his supervisor focuses on his strengths or positive traits. At the same time, having a positive interaction with coworkers is also important. Employees who are not happy at the workplace don't maintain a positive relationship with their peers. Engaged employees feel less frustrated at work in comparison to those not engaged or actively disengaged.

Supervisors play a crucial role in workers' well-being and engage-

ment. If the employee feels uncomfortable while interacting with his supervisor, it will adversely affect his morale and performance. Such employees often take home their tension and frustration, which impacts their relations with family and friends.

In her article 'Creating a happier workplace is possible — and worth it', Jennifer Moss describes three steps organisations can take to turn around a negative environment. An expert on workplace well-being, employee happiness and workplace culture, Moss delves into the following three factors for generating happiness at work: flexibility, a sense of belonging among employees, and finding purpose in their work.

Flexibility at work: A 2023 ILO report found that greater flexibility — from staggered start times to shift-sharing, to remote working options — leads to greater productivity and improved work-life balance. A global survey of 28,000 full-time employees by Cisco shows that over 80pc of employees find that their ability to work from anywhere has made them happier.

The Covid pandemic forced organisations to allow some of their employees to work from home. However, post-pandemic, the concept of working from home has not taken root in Pakistan. Few companies here allow flexible work timings. Besides, 60pc of the workforce can't work from home, such as those engaged in the manufacturing process, in running shops, or managing hospitals, etc. Build a sense of belonging: Happiness is negatively impacted at the workplace without social interaction. People should have a sense of belonging to their organisation, which is generated by making friends, who may also be of help in their hour of need. A pleasant work

environment is created when employees contribute meaningfully to shared goals. Having social get-togethers, shared activities, etc, outside the workplace boosts people's attachment to their organisations.

Purpose in work: Businesses should responsibly and ethically serve all stakeholders, including employees, communities, and the environment — not just their management teams and shareholders. The hospitality industry suffered the most during Covid. But Hilton Hotels continued to retain recruiters that placed their employees in outside sectors that needed talent. Similarly, they announced a million empty rooms for patients who had to quarantine away from their own homes.

In 1972, I had joined a factory at Kot Lakhpat, Lahore, which was nationalised by the government. Most employees had no sense of belonging to the enterprise nor had any purpose at work to keep them motivated. Their output started to decline after the government takeover and the only purpose left for them to come to work, was their monthly salary. The number of not-engaged and actively disengaged employees started escalating.

Thereafter, I worked in an American and a British multinational company for around 27 years. There, besides a system that ensured lucrative salaries, the companies' leadership would take good care of employees' health, general well-being, fulfilling their personal needs and maintaining a work-life balance by providing recreational activities. The employees in both the above companies remained happy and motivated and delivered greater output in terms of productivity. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Umar Saif distributes Rs 825m to IT companies

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications (MoITT) Dr. Umar Saif distributed Rs825 million as cash prizes to companies playing a significant role in IT and IT services exports during the "IT and ITeS Export Award" organized by the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), an organization of the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication, here at a local hotel on Tuesday.

Dr Umar Saif said that the IT industry was playing a pivotal role in the country's economy and it deserved maximum incentives, facilities and rewards. "These companies are strengthening the country's

economy by earning huge foreign exchange in return for the services of digital talent of Pakistan worldwide. If the performance of the IT sector continues like this, it is hoped that the target of 10 billion dollars for IT exports will be achieved soon," he added.

The federal minister said that the IT Ministry had decided to encourage companies with a positive growth in IT exports, for which the government had allocated Rs1 billion in the annual budget. He said that due to timely decisions of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) on the recommendations of the Ministry of IT, the overall IT exports in the country have increased by a record 32 percent in the

last 60 days. In the first and second quarters of the current financial year, the performance of many companies in IT exports also showed a positive trend. In such a situation, it was decided to give cash prizes from the allocated fund of one billion rupees to encourage the companies and accelerate growth. Dr. Umar Saif said that out of the Rs1bn fund, Rs825 million had been distributed to 550 companies with positive growth. "For this purpose, six categories have been made; the first top 100 companies awarded Rs 2.5 million, the second 100 companies Rs 2 million, the third 100 companies Rs 1.5 million, the fourth 100 companies Rs 1.25 million.

### First plenary meeting for cotton crop to be held today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The first plenary meeting for the cotton crop will be held on February 14 (Wednesday) to discuss and deliberate the ways and means to enhance the output of the crop during the coming season to achieve sustainable agriculture growth and economic development in the country.

The meeting will evaluate the per-maund cotton price during the forthcoming season to ensure a proper rate of return to local growers, besides encouraging the farming community to bring maximum area under cotton cultivation, said Cotton Commissioner in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research Anjum Shahzad.

Talking to APP here on Tuesday, he said that the meeting will also make deliberations to overcome the challenges faced by the cotton growers and suggest innovative measures.



ISLAMABAD: Director (CIMMYT) an international maize & wheat improvement center Dr. Kevin Pixley called the Caretaker Federal Minister for national Food Security & Research.

### PSDP 2023-24: Govt releases Rs 507.979b funds in seven months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal government has authorized the utilization of development funds amounting to Rs 507.979 billion, out of a total allocation of Rs 940 billion, for various ongoing and new social sector uplift projects of the federal ministries and divisions during the first seven months (July-January) of fiscal year 2023-24 under its Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

Out of the total authorized/disbursed amount, the total amount spent so far on the

development projects during the corresponding period stood at Rs 190.443 billion, according to the latest data released by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

According to the disbursement mechanism of the Planning Division, the development funds allocated in the federal budget are released at the rate of 20% in the first quarter (July-September), followed by 30% each in the second and third quarters, and the remaining 20% in the last quarter (April-June) of a fiscal year.

The detail showed that Rs 127.066 billion out of a total allocated amount of Rs 211.777 billion had been disbursed to corporations including National Highway Authority (NHA), National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) and Pakistan Electric Power Company (PEPCO). For the Aviation Division, funds amounting to Rs 3.270 billion have been disbursed and Rs 668.86 million for the Board of Investment.

Similarly, the government authorized Rs 61.312 billion.

### Real estate pain for US regional banks is piling up, say investors

Monitoring Desk NEW YORK/WASHINGTON: New York Community Bancorp's (NYCB.N), opens new tab exposure to commercial real estate has intensified investor scrutiny around regional banks, with some expecting more pain for those with office and multifamily property loans.

Fears about the health of the smaller banks have

escalated again a year after the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank in spring of 2023 triggered a regional banking crisis. NYCB's recent earnings release which sparked a dive of about 60% in its shares has particularly focused investors on combing through portfolios of regional banks, as small banks account for nearly 70% of all commercial real estate (CRE) loans outstanding.

### Rupee gains 01 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Tuesday gained 01 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs279.31 against the previous day's closing of Rs279.32.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs280.5 and Rs282.25, respectively.

### Punjab Governor says: SIFC established to promote investment in the country

Independent Report LAHORE: Continuity of policies is very important for the economic development of any country. Countries that have developed rapidly have one thing in common; there has been continuity of policies for many years. These views were expressed by Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman while talking to the delegation of Pakistan Industrial and Traders Association Front (PIAF) at Governor House Lahore today. The delegation was led by Chairman (PIAF), Senator

Zafar Iqbal Chaudhry. Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman further stated that it is very important to provide a conducive environment to businessmen for the development of the economy.

He said that issues pointed by the delegation are very important in boosting the country's economy.

He said that Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has been established to promote investment in the country, adding that priority has been to the agriculture sector under SIFC.



Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif addressing IT & ITES Export Awards 2024 Ceremony in Lahore

### CDNS achieves Rs 1020 billion targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 1020 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to February 09, 2023-24. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Tuesday. The senior official said this was a Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. "The CDNS has

set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the current financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said.

Given the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he said. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. "At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users."



KARACHI: A stock broker watches share prices during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in the Provincial Capital.

### SCCI to organize conference to highlight business community issues

PESHAWAR (APP): President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Fuad Ishaq announced organizing a conference titled "Watan Kay Maimar Tajir Aur Sanatkar" (Builder of Nation, Trader and Industrialist) in the first week of May.

He said the conference aims to introduce current economic turmoil and business community problems in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa between the federal and provincial governments and frame a

charter of the economy. Political leaders, high government officials, important dignitaries and members of the business community would be invited to the conference. Fuad Ishaq announced while chairing a meeting of SCCI's executive committee held here at the chamber house on Tuesday.

The meeting was attended by the chamber Senior Vice President Sanauallah Khan, Vice President Ijaz Khan Afridi, former Presidents Zahidullah Shinwari, Riaz Arshad.



## CM chairs 40th cabinet meeting, approves provision of 10,000 interest free e-bikes to students

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: The 40th session of the provincial cabinet, convened under the chair of Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office, commended the police, administration, and law enforcement agencies for their commendable efforts in ensuring peaceful conduct of the general elections on February 8.

The CM conveyed his congratulations to the chief secretary, IG police and others for successfully overseeing the elections in a tranquil manner, emphasizing the effective role played by the caretaker government. He noted that voters exercised their democratic right in a calm atmosphere, electing their representatives

through transparent and free voting procedures. Expressing gratitude for the achieved objectives, he stated that the caretaker government made earnest endeavors to provide immediate relief to the populace. He further asserted the team's satisfaction in having dedicated themselves to serving the public to the best of their abilities.

It was decided to provide seven thousand electric bikes to male students and three thousand to female students on interest-free and convenient terms through The Bank of Punjab to mitigate the issue of smog. Additionally, the formation of an appellate committee for the Punjab Charity

Commission was approved, along with the allocation of funds for business facilitation centers. Furthermore, the installation of automated external defibrillators in Rescue 1122 ambulances for the prompt treatment of heart attack patients received the cabinet's nod. Approvals were also granted for the appointment of chairpersons for drug courts in Bahawalpur, Lahore and Multan, alongside the endorsement of decisions made in the 16th meeting of the standing committee on law and order. Provincial ministers, advisers, chief secretary, advocate general Punjab, IGP, Chairman P&D, SMBR and others were also present.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi presides over the 40th Provincial Cabinet meeting.

## Revolutionary reforms made in Punjab's Sehat Sahulat Program: Minister

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Professor Dr. Javed Akram, the Caretaker Punjab Health Minister, has spearheaded transformative changes in the Sehat Sahulat Program, emphasizing the welfare of the people.

During a recent meeting of the Cabinet Standing Committee for Universal Health Insurance, Dr. Akram highlighted the significant improvements made under the guidance of Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi.

Addressing the challenges faced by the program, Dr. Akram emphasized the

government's commitment to allocating health facility cards exclusively to the deserving populace of Punjab. He revealed efforts to rectify deficiencies and streamline operations, including the establishment of a comprehensive database.

Notably, Dr. Akram highlighted the staggering daily expenditure of Rs 260 million on Sehat Sahulat cards prior to the reforms, underscoring the need for fiscal responsibility. Through innovative initiatives, costs have been slashed by up to 50 percent, alleviating the financial burden on Punjab's residents.

## KP Governor to launch innovative online campus management system

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR (APP): Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali is set to introduce a groundbreaking 'Online Campus Management System' through the Governor's official portal. This initiative has been designed to enhance transparency and accountability in the education sector which will provide comprehensive compliance details, including adherence to the 2% minority quota in education and the 5% employment quota.

This announcement was made by Governor KP, Haji Ghulam Ali in

recent meeting with Program Manager Qamar Naseem here on Tuesday.

The governor reiterated the government's commitment to safeguarding the rights and entitlements of all communities, particularly vulnerable groups. He underscored the importance of this campus information management system in realizing the said objectives. The online system will offer a wide array of information, such as the number of teachers, students, and persons with disabilities, gender-segregated data, and financial details including

revenue, budget, grants, and expenses.

This system marks a significant step forward in streamlining campus management and ensuring that educational institutions comply with government quotas and regulations. Furthermore, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali also announced the imminent launch of an online complaint redressal mechanism. This platform also aims to offer swift responses to aggrieved students regarding quota issues within ten days and ensuring that grievances are addressed promptly and efficiently.



PESHAWAR: Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali and Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ali Banafsheh Khah along with other officials cutting cake during 45th National Day of Iran last night.

## Funeral prayers of Ali Amin Gandapur's father offered

**Independent Report**  
DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The funeral prayer of Major © Aminullah Khan Gandapur, father of former Federal minister Ali Amin Gandapur was offered at Besaki ground in Dera Ismail Khan on Tuesday.

The funeral prayer was attended by many prominent figures and large number of people belonging to different walks from DI Khan division and it's neighbouring towns amidst tight security.

Major (Rtd) Aminullah Gandapur was passed away on Monday due to a heart attack.

Aminullah Khan Gandapur had served as a former provincial minister as well.

He has left behind two daughters and three sons including former Federal Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Former Provincial Minister Faisal Amin Gandapur, and Tehsil Mayor Umar Amin Khan Gandapur.

## KP Minister inaugurates child protection unit in Abbottabad

**Independent Report**  
ABBOTTABAD: Provisional Caretaker Minister for Social Welfare, Special Education, and Women Empowerment, Justice retired Arshad Qaiser on Tuesday stated that the government is determined to fulfill its international and national responsibilities for the protection of children.

He expressed these views while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Child Protection Unit in collaboration with UNICEF, under the supervision of the Department of Social

Welfare, Special Education, and Women Empowerment Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The minister said that establishing Child Protection Units in every district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and strengthening the Child Protection Help Line 1121 are among the priorities of the government for the welfare of children.

Arshad Qaiser said that the inauguration of the Child Protection Unit in Abbottabad is a crucial milestone in strengthening the child protection system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## RWMC ensures cleanliness of Tehsil Gujar Khan

**Independent Report**  
RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) was ensuring the cleanliness of all tehils of the district including Tehsil Gujar Khan.

According to a RWMC spokesman, the company had deployed additional workers in evening shift in Gujar Khan to ensure the sanitation of the rural areas.

He informed that camps were being organized across the district to create awareness about the importance of cleanliness. He said that cleanliness was necessary to eliminate smog and dengue and urged the residents not to burn waste or any chemical.

## PFA shuts down four bakeries, fines two food outlets

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Food Authority's enforcement teams on Tuesday shut down four bakeries and levied fines of Rs200,000 on two food business operators (FBOs) during the inspection of bakeries and their production units in different areas of Lahore.

PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid said that food safety teams thoroughly inspected several bakeries in Sundar Industrial Estate, Bhotian, Jalo Park and on Defence Road. He said that the purpose of the inspection was to ensure the provision of food in the market as per the food safety standards and

quality parameters defined in the Punjab Pure Food Regulations. The PFA also served warning notices for improvement on four bakeries besides discarding inferior quality of khoya, poor quality of food flavours, 40kg of substandard flour and more than 20kg of prohibited food ingredients. Moreover, PFA confiscated 5,000 gum base, 720kg of fruit pulp and 150 litres of essence (Arq), he said.

Muhammad Asim further said that the provincial food regulatory body had stopped the production of four bakeries and cake shops by imposing emergency prohibition orders (EPOs).

## 4,199 Polio teams to administer drops

**Independent Report**  
RAWALPINDI (APP): A week-long anti-polio drive will commence in the Rawalpindi district on February 26. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of District Health Authority Dr Ejaz Ahmad told APP that as many as 4,199 polio teams would go door-to-door and administer polio drops to 10,15,262 children of less than five years of age in all tehils and union councils of the district during the campaign.

The CEO said 243 Union Council Medical

Officers and 858 area incharges would also participate in the drive. In addition, "361 fix centers will be set up to administer the drops". Ejaz added that anti-polio drops would also be administered at 182 transit points while teams would also be deputed at toll plazas so that no child could miss immunization.

He said that the second campaign of the year was being started after the detection of positive sample of Polio virus circulating in the area.

# International News

## India, UAE sign pact on trans-continental trade corridor

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: India and the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday signed an agreement on a trade corridor that aims to connect Europe with India through parts of the Middle East by sea and rail, an ambitious plan backed by the US and the European Union.

His trip comes ahead of India's national election which is expected to begin in April.

Modi was due to inaugurate the Middle East's largest Hindu temple on Wednesday, a day after he addresses thousands of expatriates in a community event

in the capital Abu Dhabi. The visit is largely focused on galvanising the diaspora, according to experts, even though Indians in the UAE can't vote from abroad. The UAE is home to about 3.5 million Indian nationals—the largest expatriate community in the Gulf country.

Today, Modi met the UAE president Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, according to the Indian foreign ministry and local state media, their fifth meeting in eight months.

They inked several deals, including a bilateral investment treaty, building on a Comprehensive Eco-

nomie Partnership Agreement signed in 2022, India's foreign ministry said.

"This would build on previous understandings and cooperation on this matter and foster India and the UAE cooperation furthering regional connectivity," the ministry statement said.

The corridor, announced last September on the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi, aims to extend from India across the Arabian Sea to the United Arab Emirates and through Saudi Arabia before connecting through Jordan and Israel to Europe.



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi walks next to the President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during a ceremonial welcome upon his arrival in Abu Dhabi for a two-day visit to the UAE.

## Israel bans UN expert's entry over 'oppression' remarks

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: Israel announced on Monday a visa ban on the United Nations special rapporteur for the occupied Palestinian territories over recent comments denying Hamas's Oct 7 raid was "anti-Semitic".

The UN-appointed independent expert, Francesca Albanese, said last week she disagreed with French President Emmanuel Macron's description of the attack as "the biggest anti-Semitic massacre of our century".

"No", Albanese wrote in French on social media platform X. "The victims of 7/10 (Oct 7) were not killed because of their Jewishness, but in response to Israeli oppression." Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz and Interior Minister Moshe Arbel called her online remark "outrageous" and said in a statement she was now "denied entry to the state of Israel". The immigration authorities had been instructed not to issue Albanese a visa, they added, also calling for her dismissal.

## North Korea tests new rocket launcher control system

**Monitoring Desk**  
PYONGYANG (INP): North Korea said on Monday it had developed a new control system for a multiple rocket launcher that would lead to a "qualitative change" in its defence capabilities.

Pyeongyang's Academy of Defense Science successfully carried out a "ballistic control test firing of 240-mm caliber multiple rocket launcher shells" on Saturday to develop a "controllable shell and ballistic control system" for the launcher, state news agency KCNA reported.

## Gunman kills three at Greek shipping company

**Monitoring Desk**  
ATHENS: A former employee of a Greek shipping company shot dead three people including his own before killing himself on Monday in a coastal suburb of Athens, police said.

The shooter, 70, broke into the company's building in Glyfada and killed two men and a woman on the first floor before barricading himself inside.

"We heard gunshots and I hid under my desk before police officers helped us out of the building," another employee of the company.

## Hezbollah leader, Islamic Jihad chief urge steadfastness to achieve 'promised victory'

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIRUT (Online): The top resistance leaders of Lebanon and Palestine assert that it is necessary to remain steadfast and work tirelessly to achieve the promised victory.

Secretary General of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and Secretary General of Palestine's Islamic Jihad movement Ziad al-Nakhleh held a meeting on Monday.

During the meeting, the two resistance leaders discussed the latest devel-

opments in the war-torn Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, encompassing both political and on-ground situations, amid incessant Israel's brutal attacks against the people of Palestine. Nasrallah and Nakhleh also exchanged views about the condition of their fronts opened by the Axis of Resistance in support of the Palestinian people and resistance in the face of Israel. The discussions also touched upon existing possibilities and expected developments.

## IMF, WB warn Gaza conflict and Red Sea attacks may imperil global economy

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: The IMF and World Bank warned on Monday that the Gaza conflict and the related attacks on shipping through the Red Sea pose threats to the global economy.

The conflict in Gaza, raging since October, has already hit the Middle East and North Africa region's economy, said the International Monetary Fund's managing director Kristalina Georgieva.

Its knock-on effects could impact the world that longer the fighting drags on, Georgieva told the World Governments Summit, an annual gathering of business and political leaders in Dubai.

"I fear most a longevity of the conflict because, if it goes on and on, the risk of spillover goes up," she said.

"Right now we see a risk of spillover in the Suez Canal," she said, as Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels have attacked Red Sea shipping leading to the crucial maritime passage.

The Houthis say they are targeting what they consider Israeli-linked shipping in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, pushing some cargo carriers to take longer and more expensive routes to avoid attacks.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development warned late last month that the volume of commercial traffic passing through the Suez Canal had fallen more than 40 percent in the previous two months.

Georgieva said that if there are other "consequences in terms of where the fighting goes, it could be more problematic for the world as a whole".



Geneva-based doctor Raouf Salti holds 17-month-old Zeina, next to 16-year-old Yusef, both of whom were evacuated from Gaza to Switzerland to receive medical treatment, at Geneva airport, Switzerland.

## Civilian vessel attacked off Yemeni coast - UK Navy

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON (Online): A civilian ship has come under fire off the coast of Yemen, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) has confirmed. No casualties or significant damage have been reported.

Since the start of Israel's military operation against Hamas in Gaza, Houthi militants controlling large swaths of Yemen have been targeting merchant ships traversing the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The Shiite group

had initially focused on vessels they believed to be linked to Israel, claiming they were acting in protest over the country's actions in Palestinian territory. However, after the US and the UK conducted a number of strikes on Houthi facilities, the group said it would now also attack ships affiliated with either nation.

On Monday, the UKMTO, which is a monitoring service operated by the British Navy,

## Indian police fire tear gas as protesting farmers march to capital

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Indian security forces fired tear gas on Tuesday to stop thousands of farmers demanding minimum crop prices from marching on the capital New Delhi after talks with the government failed.

Local broadcasters showed thick clouds of tear gas fired to disperse protesters near Ambala, about 200 kilometres north of the capital, with police also dropping canisters from the air by drones.

Police have set up a fearsome blockade of metal spikes, cement, and steel barricades on the highways from three surrounding states leading to New Delhi.

"Maximum numbers have been deployed," Ranjay Atrishya, assistant commissioner of Delhi Police, told AFP. Public gatherings of more than five people have been banned in the city. Farmers in India have political heft due to their sheer numbers, and the threat of renewed

protests comes ahead of national elections likely to begin in April. Two-thirds of India's 1.4 billion people draw their livelihood from agriculture, accounting for nearly a fifth of the country's GDP, according to government figures.

Farmers have called for a "Delhi Chalo", or "March to Delhi", echoing January 2021 when farmers breached barricades and marched into the city on Republic Day during their then-year-long protest.

"The farmers are peaceful, but tear gas is being used against us through drones," Sarwan Singh Pandher, a top farmer's union official from Punjab, told reporters. "The protest will continue till the government agrees to our demands." Indian broadcasters showed columns of hundreds of tractors moving towards the capital from the surrounding states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, with some using their machines to drag barricades off the roads.



# ECC approves Rs.7.4 bln 'Ramzan Relief Package'; tariff rationalization

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet here on Tuesday approved Rs. 7,492.75 million proposed Ramazan Relief Package-2024 to provide relief to the general public during the upcoming holy month of Ramazan.

The package is aimed at providing subsidy to the targeted beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) with net amount of Rs. 7,492.75 million, which is provided for in the budget for 2023-24, according to a press statement issued by the finance ministry.

The ECC meeting was presided over by Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar.

The ECC meeting was attended by the Minister for Privatization and Inter-Provincial Coordination, Fawad Hasan Fawad; Minister for Interior, Commerce & Industries, Gohar Ejaz; Minister for Energy

and Petroleum Division, Mohammad Ali; Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Sami Saeed; Minister of Maritime Affairs, Communication and Railways, Shahid Ashraf Tarar; Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Dr. Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan; Advisor to PM on Finance, Dr. Waqar Masood, federal secretaries, and other senior government officers of the relevant ministries.

The committee approved a summary of the Ministry of Commerce (Tariff Policy Wing), regarding "Individual Tariff Rationalization Proposals from Different Sectors for Review of Custom Duties" and advised that tariff rationalization should be coordinated with the trade policy.

ECC also approved a proposal regarding "Permission to Import Wheat and Export of Wheat Flour under Export Facilitation Scheme 2021" presented to

the forum by the Ministry of Commerce and directed the relevant Ministries to prepare comprehensive proposals for enhancing the opportunities for value added exports.

The ECC also approved a summary of the Power Division regarding the "Commissioning of 1263 MW CCPP Punjab Thermal Power (Pvt) Limited, Jhang (PPTL)".

Another proposal of the Ministry of Commerce regarding "Sharing of Subsidy on Imported Urea at 50:50 Basis Technical Supplementary Grant for Ministry of Commerce" was considered by the Committee. ECC approved the proposed release of Rs. 6 billion to the Ministry of Commerce.

The funds are meant for clearing the arrears of subsidy for the previous financial year. It was clarified that no subsidy on this account has been allowed by the government during the current year.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif distributing cheques to position holder IT experts on the occasion of IT and ITES Export Awards 2024 ceremony.

## Alvi writes to Swiss President for gift of documents related to Quaid-i-Azam's brother

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has written a letter to the President of the Swiss Confederation, seeking assistance in providing copies of archival documents about the life of Ahmad Ali Jinnah (brother of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah) to Pakistan.

The documents, currently in possession of Zurich's City Archives, are a compilation of photographs, history and details of the life of Ahmad Ali Jinnah and related to late Fatima Goeppfert Jinnah, niece of the Founder of Pakistan, a President Secretariat press release said.

The President, in the letter, stated that given the status and importance of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, having access to these documents was a matter of national value and

interest for Pakistani people.

President Alvi conveyed that First Lady Samina Alvi had visited Zurich Archives in January 2024, and after reading most of the documents, had taken a personal interest in the matter.

The President has requested Switzerland to gift this historical document collection to the National Archives of Pakistan.

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## Solangi reads news bulletin to give message govt considers radio important communication medium

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday created new history by reading English news bulletin on Radio Pakistan on World Radio Day.

The minister read 1.00 pm news bulletin on Radio Pakistan and gave an important message that the government considered radio as an important medium of communication.

This move by the caretaker information minister also indicated that the government was committed to promoting radio broadcasting in the country.

Radio Pakistan is the oldest and largest broadcasting organization in the country with a wide audi-

ence in different languages.

This initiative of the minister would strengthen Radio Pakistan as a national broadcaster and help promote digital radio broadcasting in Pakistan.

Solangi also participated in Radio Pakistan's podcast program and expressed his views on various issues.

The minister said that the government was committed to strengthen Radio Pakistan and make it a more effective and dynamic medium of communication.

The government was also working to promote digital radio broadcasting in Pakistan, he maintained.

"Radio Pakistan is a national broadcasting organization with a long and rich history," Solangi added.



LARKANA: Political Secretary to PPP Chairman, Jameel Ahmed Soomro addresses to media persons during press conference, at his residence in Larkana.

## IGP chairs police executive board meeting

KARACHI (APP): A Police Executive Board convened at the Central Police Office Karachi, chaired by IGP Sindh Riffat Mukhtar Raja, saw the attendance of various high-ranking officials including Additional IGPs - Karachi, Welfare and Works Karachi, Zonal DIGPs, DIGPs of Headquarters Sindh, Establishment, CTD, Special Branch, RRF, and other senior officers.

The meeting, presided over by IGP Riffat Mukhtar Raja, delved into several significant topics outlined in a comprehensive agenda, with a detailed briefing provided by the DIGP Establishment.

Key discussions centered around the career progression of newly recruited Inspectors Legal, Investigations, and ex-military police personnel. In response, IGP Riffat Mukhtar Raja established a 5-member committee tasked with formulating thorough recommendations encompassing actionable

proposals concerning the primary responsibilities, promotions, appointments, and transfers of these newly recruited personnel. These recommendations are to be meticulously reviewed and further acted upon. The committee comprises three senior DIGPs, two SSPs, and a SP, ensuring a broad spectrum of expertise and perspectives.

IGP Riffat Mukhtar Raja expressed optimism regarding the transformative impact anticipated with the inclusion of Inspectors Legal and Investigation within the Sindh Police, particularly in enhancing the efficiency of the investigation department and expediting the resolution of pending cases in courts. Emphasizing the importance of ongoing training for these officers to align with modern investigative standards, Riffat Mukhtar Raja underscored the need for proactive measures to equip them with requisite skills.



LAHORE: Captains of PSL teams poses with PSL-9 trophy during inauguration ceremony of PSL-9 in Provincial Capital.

## Miftah Ismail foresees PTI as 'strong' opposition

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said that after Pakistan People's Party (PPP) decision not to become part of the centre, it would be a 'minority' PML-N's government.

In a statement, Miftah Ismail said that if the PML-N is able to form the federal government, it would be a minority government and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) would be a

'strong' opposition.

He said that the PML-N would find it very difficult to fulfill its promises to the people. "The next two years will be very difficult for the government as many reforms are to be done," he added.

Miftah Ismail said that the new government would have to engage with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), adding that the PML-N should be very cautious in dealing with the challenges.

## SHC halts further arrests of PTI leader Haleem Adil Sheikh

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court on Tuesday issued an order restraining the police from arresting PTI leader Haleem Adil Sheikh in any additional cases. During a hearing at the Sindh High Court, Haleem Adil Sheikh petitioned against his arrests in multiple cases. The court ruled in favor of Sheikh, directing that his name should not be included in any new case or chargesheet.

Furthermore, the Sindh High Court mandated the distribution of the court order to the Inspector General of Sindh Police and the Jail Superintendent. Referring to a police report dated November 2, 2023, which stated that Haleem Adil Sheikh was implicated in 21 cases, Justice Nimatullah Phalputo queried about the extent of Sheikh's legal entanglements.

The Additional Advocate General disclosed that a total of 21 cases have been filed against Sheikh. In response, Sheikh's lawyer, Anwar Mansoor Advocate, expressed frustration over the repetitive cycle of arrests.

## No child to deprive of polio vaccine: Commissioner Sukkur

SUKKUR (APP): Divisional Commissioner Sukkur, Fayyaz Hussain Mahesar on Tuesday said that no child up to the age of five should be deprived of the polio vaccine during the anti-polio campaign starts from February 26<sup>th</sup>.

He emphasized the need for monitoring of members of mobile teams, transit teams and fixed teams on the ground.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of the Divisional

Anti-Polio Committee at his office here on Tuesday.

He said that polio physically weakens children and it is essential to administer polio vaccine drops to protect children from polio and for parents to cooperate with the polio teams.

The Divisional Commissioner said that polio was a deadly disease and every child under 5 years of age must be given an anti-polio vaccine every time during the polio campaign.



LARKANA: Vice Chancellor SMBBMUL Professor Dr. Nusrat Shah addressing to First International Conference (Emerging Trends in Basic Medical Science) at Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University.

## Strict action ordered against traffic violators in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): The Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Traffic has issued strict orders and directed to take strict action against the traffic violators, leading to a surge in traffic congestion and accidents.

A crucial meeting led by the DIG Traffic of the Sindh Police took place in Karachi, attended by all Superintendents of Police (SPs) from the Traffic Police department, along with the participation of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Admin and DSP Security and Operation.

The DIG in the meeting directed all Section Of-

ficers to be in constant touch with the Traffic Monitoring Unit Room to clear double parking from the roads and improve the flow of traffic across the metropolis. He directed the officers to take strict legal action against the individuals violating the traffic rules, particularly those using the wrong side of the road.

In the meeting, the DIG also emphasized the need to address rickshaws, specifically those modified with additional space behind their vehicles to accommodate excess passengers, which can potentially lead to accidents at any time.

## Police constable killed while on duty with judge in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): A police constable assigned to guard a judge was ambushed and killed by unknown armed assailants who managed to escape the scene on Tuesday. The victim, identified as Shaheed Ahlkar, was serving as a gunman in Security One alongside the judge.

According to Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Central, the attack is being treated as a targeted killing. Reports indicate that the assailants targeted the constable as he was leaving his home for duty on Tuesday morning.

Police investigators recovered two 9mm pistol shells from the crime scene, which have been taken into custody as part of the ongoing investigation. Authorities are exploring various angles to unravel the circumstances surrounding the incident.

## Dry weather forecast for Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department on Tuesday predicted dry weather for most parts of the Sindh province during the next 24 hours.

Mainly, dry weather is likely to prevail in the province including Karachi.

## Karachi Mayor lays foundation stone of water supply, sewerage system in Essa Nagri

KARACHI (INP): Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Tuesday laid the foundation stone for the restoration of water supply and drainage system in Essa Nagri at the cost of Rs 630 million. Addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony, the Mayor said that Essa Nagri was facing water and sewerage problems since long.

We promised them to solve the issue and now this 52-acre slum is being made a model Katchi-Abadi, while seven more slums in Karachi's seven districts will be made a model, he added.

The mayor said that there is nothing ultimate in politics, the next Chief Minister of Sindh will be a great Jiyala. He said that we were going to form a government in Sindh and large-

scale development works would be started in the city.

Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad, mayor's special representative for political affairs Karamullah Waqasi, deputy parliamentary leader in the city council Dil Muhammad, UC Chairperson Sanam Baloch, Project Director Usman Moazzam and other officers were also present on this occasion.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that Sanam Baloch is the elected UC chairman in Essa Nagri, due to his attention, this project has been started under WSSIP here, but work could not be started earlier due to the ban of the Election Commission, people of different nationalities live here, new lines are being laid to restore the sewerage and water system.

## Sharjeel grieves over Eng. Abdul Aziz Junejo's death

KARACHI (APP): Former Minister for Information Sindh Sharjeel Inam has expressed sorrow and grief over the sad demise of MPA elect Eng. Abdul Aziz Junejo, who breathed his last here in Karachi on Tuesday morning.

In a statement, Sharjeel Memon said late Junejo was a committed party leader and his death was a great loss for the Pakistan People's Party.

While paying tribute, Sharjeel said the services of late Abdul Aziz Junejo for the party will be remembered forever.

He expressed condolence and sympathies with the bereaved family and prayed for the departed soul to be in eternal peace.



QUETTA: A view of closed shops of commercial centers of the city due to strike against the alleged rigging of the election call by Four Party Itihad.

## Commissioner visits BIUT

HYDERABAD (APP): Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Division Syed Muhammad Sajjad Haider visited Benazir Institute of Urology and Transplantation (BIUT) and inspected various departments here on today.

While giving briefing to the commissioner coordinator Muhammad Amin Dhranj said that BIUT Shaheed Benazirabad is currently working under the management of SIUT, more than 50 patients are being examined daily in OPD while severely affected patients are sent to PMC Hospital for admission.

He further informed that BIUT Shaheed Benazirabad consists of 250 beds, with the regular functioning of which these patients will be admitted in this institution like Sukkur, free treatment facilities will be provided, including ad-

vanced robotic OT and dialysis.

It is hoped that after the approval of the budget and getting a separate feeder for electricity, the BIUT will be made regular and provided to the patients other than dialysis, on this occasion Commissioner Syed Muhammad Sajjad.

Haider said that HESCO administration will be contacted for a separate electricity feeder so that by making this institution fully functional, better health facilities can be provided to the kidney patients of Shaheed Benazirabad and other districts.

The Commissioner said that the establishment of this institution is no less than a blessing for the patients of Shaheed Benazirabad and its surrounding areas.

They used to have to go to the other cities, now they will have the facility of treatment here.

## Nafeesa condoles over death of Prof Siraj's mother

SUKKUR (APP): Newly elected MNA Dr Nafeesa Shah along with MPA Ghazala Siyal visited the residence of the Chairman of the Pakistan Study Department, Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU) Khairpur, Prof Dr Siraj Ahmed Soomro on Tuesday and met his brothers Agriculturist Mushtaq Ahmed Soomro and Revenue Officer Razaq Soomro.

They expressed condolences over the death of Prof Dr Siraj Soomro's mother.

MNA Dr Nafeesa Shah prayed to the Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant fortitude to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

## Joint Wedding of 53 deserving persons

SHIKARPUR: A Combined Mass marriage program of 53 couples was held here by Sajjadiah Trust at a Local Hotel which was supervised by Allama Abdul Majeed Bihishti and Ali Ahmed Burro on Tuesday.

During the ceremony of the Marriage of 53 couples of Shikarpur District were also given necessary dowry.



KARACHI: Residents of Lyari are holding protest demonstration against high handedness of police, at Lyari area in Karachi.

## SFA to work on self-assessment program

KARACHI (APP): Director General Sindh Food Authority (SFA) Agha Fakhar Hussain said that in the first phase, SFA is providing training to food handlers while in the next phase, it will work on a self-assessment program.

He said this while distributing certificates to the staff members of a five-star hotel here after a training session, said a statement on Tuesday.

He said that SFA is providing training to food

handlers/staff from small hotels to five-star hotels regarding food safety/hygiene principles. Gradually it will bring the business of food items under its jurisdiction.

On this occasion, the General Manager of the hotel Khurram Awan thanked the DG SFA for providing training to the staff of the hotel and expressed hope that the Authority will continue its cooperation in training the staff.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Kotri Khurshed Colony are holding protest demonstration against high handedness of land grabbers, at Hyderabad press club.

## Abdul Rehman Kalpar Bugti killed in firing by robbers

By Tanveer Ahmed Soomro

MIRPUR MATHELO: Armed robbers opened fire on vehicles on Motorway M5. Kalpar Bugti tribe chief's son was killed, two passengers were injured, a decisive operation will be conducted against the robbers in Ghotki district soon, SS P. Ghotki.

According to the details, armed bandits started firing on the M5 Motorway with the intention of looting, as a result of which Abdul Rehman Kalpar Bugti, the son of Jalal Kalpar Bugti, the chief of Balochistan's famous Kalpar Bugti clan, who was riding in a Vigo vehicle, died

on the spot. While two passengers were seriously injured in the firing on the passenger coach, on the other hand, as soon as the information about the incident was received, DIG Sukkur Abdul Hameed Khoso immediately arrived and held an important meeting with the district police officers and took full action against the accused involved in the incident.

On the other hand, SSP Ghotki Muhammad Anwar Khetran while talking to the journalists said that they will be eliminated soon by carrying out a vigorous and decisive operation against the dacoits in Ghotki district.