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## SC rejects petition seeking annulment of general elections

Three-member bench headed by CJP Isa imposes Rs500,000 fine on petitioner for skipping hearings and requesting withdrawal of plea; barred from adding 'brigadier' before his name

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday dismissed a petition seeking to annul the February 8, 2024 general elections and imposed a fine worth Rs 500,000 on petitioner for non-appearance.

A three-member bench presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice

Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali, announced the verdict.

The order read, "The application for withdrawal of the petition is allowed and the case is dismissed as withdrawn with costs of five hundred thousand rupees which are directed to be paid equally to the Pakistan Bar Council and to the Supreme Court Bar Association within thirty days, failing which they be recovered from the petitioner as arrears of land revenue."

It said, "We trust that the government will be ensuring that the petitioner does not use the rank of a Brigadier or Ex or former Brigadier with his name."

The order said, "This petition has also consumed valuable court time, which is to be spent on deciding the cases of genuine litigants; not use the media for ulterior and nefarious purposes. The petitioner got prominent coverage and then the petition was abandoned and the petitioner left the country. Responsible media will undoubtedly want to disclose this

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ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a group photo with a delegation of military officers from friendly countries undergoing training at Command and Staff College Quetta, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Miracle Salt Collective Inc called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## Mineral sector achieving new development goals under SIFC: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday said Pakistan's mineral sector, valued in billions of dollars, was achieving new heights of development under Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

He was talking to a delegation of Miracle Salt Collective Inc which called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here.

During the meeting, the prime minister hoped that salt export from the country would increase after the signing of joint venture between Pakistan Mineral Development Cooperation

(PMDC) and Miracle Salt. He said it would also further strengthen the trade ties with the U.S.

"This joint venture is a manifestation of the fact that Pakistan has the most suitable destination for foreign investment," he added. He said Himalayan pink salt was the identity of Pakistan in all over the world and its export in international markets would be a welcome sign.

He said during its short tenure, the caretaker government took several steps to promote foreign direct investment and to facilitate the businesses in the country which yielded positive results.

## Four parties alliance has nothing to do with development & prosperity of nation: Jan

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has stated that the four parties alliance has nothing to do with existence, development and prosperity of nation, rather it (alliance) has been formed for the sake of their lost seats in the elections only.

He said that there is a legal course with the Election Commission for every candidate contesting election and one can register complaint using it (legal course).

In an official statement issued here on Wednesday,

the caretaker Minister said Qadir Nayal belongs to an Afghan family but declares himself to be Pakistani.

He said that one may ask him (Qadir Nayal) that whether the people of election constituency knows his name from where he lost election.

Qadir Nayal has lost identity of Pakistani Hazaras just for his seat by registering thousands of Afghan refugees, said the caretaker Minister for Information adding where he (Nayal) was when the bodies of deceased Hazaras

## Govt jacks up prices of 146 life-saving medicines

Price hike targets primarily essential medications crucial for treating conditions such as cancer, vaccines, and antibiotics

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a major blow to the inflation-hit people of the country, the caretaker federal government on Wednesday increased the prices of 146 life-saving medicines.

The decision, according to a notification issued today, primarily targets essential medications crucial for treating conditions such as cancer, vaccines, and antibiotics. The prices of life-saving medicines crucial for treating heart disease diabetes, physical pain, epilepsy and injections were also increased.

It is pertinent to mention that the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) had sent a summary to the caretaker government to increase the

prices of 262 drugs. However, the government opted to implement adjustments exclusively for 146 medicines vital for saving lives.

Of the medicines listed for price increments, 116 are slated for price adjustment to be executed by pharmaceutical companies themselves.

In a bold policy shift, the government has deregulated drug prices, granting pharmaceutical companies the autonomy to independently raise prices. This move underscores a paradigm shift in the governance of pharmaceutical pricing, potentially reshaping the dynamics of the healthcare industry.

Under the proposals, prices of medicines other

than essential medicines in the national list would be exempted from the Drugs Act, of 1976 and necessary amendments will be made in the Drug Pricing Policy 2018.

Meanwhile the notification regarding fixation of price of medicines has been challenged in Lahore High Court (LHC).

The petition has been filed by a citizen Muhammad Aslam making federal government and others respondents.

The petitioner took the plea the care taker government issued notification against law for fixing the prices of medicines. The prices of medicines will increase after notification.

## Meeting of joint Parl party of coalition government to take place next week

ISLAMABAD (Online): All newly elected members of coalition government have been directed to reach Islamabad next week.

The joint parliamentary party meeting of coalition government will take place next week. The allied parties will nominate Shehbaz Sharif as joint candidate for premiership.

The allied parties will go for show of power in parliamentary party. The National Assembly (NA) session will be summoned after nomination.

As per sources under clause 2 of article 224 of the constitution the na-

tional assembly session is must after 21 days of election.

After oath taking of members of assembly the election of speaker and deputy speaker will be held under article 53 of the constitution.

Sources said consultations have been started in PML-N for nominating the candidate for the post of speaker. Former speaker Ayyaz Sadiq once again is strong candidate for speakership, Khawaja Asif and Tanvir Ul Hassan are also in the race for speakership post. PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif will make final decision.

## MQM demands governorship of Sindh

ISLAMABAD (Online): MQM Pakistan has demanded governorship of Sindh from PML-N.

MQM sources said the alliance cannot be forged without any post with a party having 17 seats in national assembly. First of all local bodies system and constitutional amendments will be discussed and then the decision will be made to join cabinet.

It is pertinent to mention here that as per sources MQM and PML-N will hold talks today in Islamabad.

MQM Pakistan will stress for the post of governor Sindh in the meeting.

## Senior journalist Nazir Naji passes away

LAHORE (APP): Senior journalist and columnist Nazir Naji passed away here on Wednesday after a prolonged illness.

According to sources, the 81-year-old breathed his last at a private hospital in Lahore where he was admitted. He had remained associated with different mainstream media groups for the last several decades.

Naji served 27 years for Urdu publication Daily Jang as senior columnist. He was formerly chairman of the Pakistan Academy of Letters. The veteran journalist has been honored by Hilal-i-Imtiaz for his services.

## BBC decides to hold provincial, country-wide and All Parties Conferences

Independent Report QUETTA: The Balochistan Bar Council (BBC) has decided to hold Balochistan Lawyers' Conference, All Parties Conference and country-wide Conference at the earliest. This was announced in a press release issued here by BBC bearing signatures of Member Executive Committee, Rahib Khan Buledi and Muhammad Ayub Tareen on Wednesday.

According to the press release, the decision about holding the conferences was made in view of the alleged riggings in recent general elections, undue interference of the institutions, corruption and theft of public mandate.

It was stated that the future course of action would be decided after conducting the Lawyers and All Parties conferences.



QUETTA: Abdul Rahim Ziaratwal, Qadir Nayal, Khair Jan and Agha Khalid leading a rally organized by four-parties alliance

## PTI demands 'constitutional right' to form govts in Centre, Punjab and KP

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Wednesday demanded its 'constitutional right' to form governments in Centre, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) due to public mandate given to Imran Khan-led party in general elections 2024.

Taking to Twitter, PTI leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said that the country's future was linked with 'complete supremacy' of the Constitution. "The country always engulfed in crisis whenever it derailed from Constitution," he added.

He pointed out Imran Khan-led party emerged single largest party in the elections despite the challenges it faced, which included the "snatching" of iconic symbol bat. "We weren't allowed to conduct an election campaign," he regretted.

"Daylight robbery of public mandate is a desecration of votes," he said, stressing the need for political stability and put Pakistan on the path of development.

opment. Barrister Gohar also demanded the election commission issue election results in sync with Form-45.

"The seats that were robbed should be returned to PTI," he said, adding that his party would fulfill the responsibility of safeguarding the public mandate.

The presser came after PML-N and PPP reached an agreement on forming a government in Centre as both parties have agreed on a 'power-sharing formula' following days of negotiations.

"PPP and PML-N have achieved the required number and [now] we are in a position to form the government in Centre," PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said while addressing a joint press conference at Zardari House in Islamabad.

Bilawal Bhutto pointed out that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed candidates and Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) failed to achieve a simple majority to form government in the Centre.

## Govt constitutes JIT to probe 'malicious campaign' against ECP, govt officials

ISLAMABAD (INP): The caretaker federal government has formed a joint investigation team (JIT) to conduct an investigation into the ongoing malicious campaign on social media against the government officials, including Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The JIT is headed by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Wing additional director general and includes Grade-19 officers of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Inter-Services Intelligence, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and NADRA.

The JIT will be tasked with probing various facets of the nefarious activities, including the dissemination of false information on social media platforms, the printing of fake ballot papers, and propaganda aimed at influencing public sentiment.

The committee will collaborate with IT experts to gather evidence and ascertain the extent of the wrongdoing. It will meticulously register cases and recommend appropriate actions against the responsible individuals.



QUETTA: DG Audit Balochistan Shuja Ali presenting Annual Report 2023-24 to Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## Bringing transparency & financial discipline necessary for strengthening country's system: Governor Kakar

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has emphasized that we have to ensure the mechanism of assessing performance of institutions on regular basis for providing true base to the good governance.

He also stressed that it is also very necessary to establish transparency and system of accountability in the administrative and financial matters of the national institutions.

The Governor was speaking to the Director General Audit Balochistan,

Shuja Ali, who called on him here at the Governor's House on Wednesday. He said that the fast development and especially it's impacts on the accounting and auditing has increased the modern and innovative trends.

He said that we can create convenience for all serving and retired officers with use of modern technology.

In this connection, the incumbent government has improved the administrative and financial discipline. However, more steps are required to ensure good governance, adding Governor stressed.

## Chairman PkMAP says Non-acceptance of genuine demands of Chaman dharna intolerable



Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chairman Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Mehmood Khan Achakzai has stated that the protest dharna (sit-in) is being staged for last four months in Chaman, but their "genuine" demands are not being met.

He asserted that not accepting the "genuine" demands of Chaman dharna participants is not tolerable

at all.

The Chairman PkMAP was addressing the participants of dharna in Chaman on Wednesday.

Addressing the dharna, he said that a large number of people have been staging protest against enforcement of passport policy on the Pak-Afghan border.

He asserted that if the people decided to put out the fence at the border, his hands would be the first to

do so.

He said that he is representative of his nation, and his obligation to resolve the issues being faced by it.

He said that he would go to any extreme to resolve the issues facing his people at large. He on the occasion asserted that the decision of enforcement of the one document regime, passport at the Chaman, Durand line

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## Maryam Nawaz unveils plans for Punjab as Pak first woman CM

LAHORE (INP): PML-N senior vice-president Maryam Nawaz, who is set to become Pakistan's first-ever woman chief minister (CM), vowed to set 'new records' in Punjab while fulfilling her duties as the provincial chief executive.

Maryam Nawaz, the political scion of PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif, was nominated as the party's candidate for the coveted position of the chief minister of the country's most populous province, Punjab.



Addressing PML-N's first parliamentary party meeting in Punjab, the CM nominee said there is a "clear majority" of the party in the provincial assembly as she congratulated the MPs on their successful election and praised the inclusion of young MPs among the lot.

From today, Maryam said, a "new era" will begin for Punjab, as per the traditions and examples laid down by Nawaz Sharif and party president Shehbaz Sharif during their terms as chief ministers. "We will set new records of development in the province," she added.

## ECP completes probe into alleged rigging in election 2024

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) high-level committee completed probe into allegations of the former Rawalpindi Commissioner regarding the alleged rigging in general elections 2024, sources said on Wednesday.

According to sources, the committee's last meeting will be held in Islamabad where the report on Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatha's election rigging allegations will be finalized and the report will be submitted to the ECP.

Sources further said that the recorded statements of DROs and RO of 13 National Assembly constituen-

cies and 26 provincial assembly constituencies of Rawalpindi division will be included in the committee report. Earlier, the high-level committee of ECP recorded statements of District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) of concerned constituencies.

The sources privy to the development said that Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) also submitted the transcript of former Rawalpindi Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatha's presser, accusing ECP and Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa of involvement in the 'election rigging'.

## Pakistan key to South Asia's security: Masood Khan

WASHINGTON (Online): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan has said it is in the strategic interest of both the United States and Pakistan to remain productively engaged.

Speaking at Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington DC on "The Future of Pakistan and the U.S.-Pakistan Relations", he said Pakistan is key to South Asia's security. He said Pakistan should be a meeting point, not a battleground for the United States and China. He said both the countries are most welcome to invest in Pakistan in the areas of their respective competencies and competitiveness.

Addressing a hybrid session, attended by members of the think tank community, former ambassadors and opinion makers and also viewed online by thousands of viewers, Masood Khan stressed the need for stability and cooperation in South Asia, advocating for a resolution of issues like Jammu and Kashmir through diplomatic means in accordance with international law. He said South Asia's security needs to be prioritized in its own right, not as a subset of the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

He said that American decisions on the restoration for Pakistan of military sales and military financing and supply of critical equipment to keep the strategic balance

and fight the raging threat of terrorism was being awaited. He reiterated Pakistan's unwavering commitment to further strengthen and promote bilateral relations with the United States, including security cooperation and people-to-people exchanges. He emphasized the importance of bilateral trade, with the US being Pakistan's largest single-country export destination, and highlighted successful engagements like the U.S.-Pakistan Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) ministerial meeting.

Highlighting Pakistan's economic potential, Ambassador Masood Khan pointed out that Pakistan ranks as the 24th largest economy by purchasing power parity (PPP) and is the fifth most populous country, with a youthful demographic where 64 percent are below the age of 30. He emphasized the nation's tech-savvy populace and the rapid digitization of the economy.

Outlining Pakistan's priorities, including wealth creation, human capital development, modernization of key sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, and preparation for climate change, he invited international partners to leverage Pakistan's strategic economic position in West Asia, emphasizing ongoing structural economic reforms to capitalize on recent challenges as opportunities for growth and development.



DUBAI: Muhammad Zubair Motiwala, Chief Executive, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan exchanges views with an exporter at the Pakistan Pavilion during his visit to the Gulf Food Exhibition, Dubai World Trade Centre.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Wazir Ahmed Tareen meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## Pakistani food items exports sets o cross \$7 bn by year's end: Motiwala

ISLAMABAD (APP): A total of 100 Pakistani exhibitors are taking part in the ongoing Gulf Food festival of which 45 are sponsored by TDAP while others are participating on a self-sponsorship basis.

The chief executive was also accompanied by the Commercial Counselor, Director General TDAP and other senior officials of Pakistan's diplomatic mission in the UAE. On the occasion, Motiwala said that they had specifically focused on enhancing the food and food allied items which was paying dividends in the form of substantial increase in their exports in this sector.

The TDAP chief executive expressed these views during his visit to the Pakistan Pavilion at the ongoing Gulf Food Exhibition, Dubai Trade Centre, the Consulate General of Pakistan in Dubai, said in a press release.

Motiwala also interacted with exhibitors at various stalls showcasing Pakistani products.

## Non-acceptance... Continued from page 1

should be withdrawn immediately.

He said that the people are facing immense financial problems due to the policies of government, and it has become very hard to make their both ends meet.

He demanded of the rulers to withdraw the decision of passport for across the border movement and provide livelihood to the thousands of people.

He said that he would accept whatever decision to be made by the people of Chaman regarding dharna.

The Chairman PkMAP also said that Pakistan can't afford second Bengal. He said that while our people are deprived of livelihood and buying bread for them and their families. Referring the recent general elections, Mehmood Khan Achakzai alleged that the recent elections were the most rigged ones, which are not acceptable to us.

He charged that the state institutions made the people as representatives of the parliament, which would spoil the country.

## Four parties alliance has... Continued from page 1

were lying at western by-pass.

Jan Achakzai said that he was also not part of the protest of women of Hazara Town who had blocked road for want of drinking water.

But now he (Nayal) has been making the women bothered in the name of protest, he added.

The caretaker Minister also said that Abdul Khaliq Hazara won elections twice, but one may ask from him whether he ever staged protest or raised voice for basic rights of one's constituency.

This clearly speaks that they have nothing to do with development or prosperity of the people, but they just know how to use the masses for their interests.

He said that we honour the public opinion and mandate. If anyone has complaints about rigging in elections then there's a legal course to resolve them.

Jan Achakzai insisted that the people have rejected the politics of Baloch, Pashtoon and Hazara nationalists based on the racism.

## Babar Azam sets new world record in T20

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan star batsman Babar Azam has become the fastest player to complete 10,000 T20 runs in fewest innings.

The right-hand batsman achieved the milestone in 271 innings, surpassing West Indies player Chris Gayle's record, who made it in 285 innings.

Babar Azam clinched the title while playing for Peshawar Zalmi in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) match against Karachi Kings. He made 72 runs, helping his side to set a target of 155 runs for Kings.

Furthermore, Indian player Virat Kohli stands at the third spot as he had completed 10,000 runs in 299 innings followed by David Warner, who had taken 303 innings.

## ISSI hosts public talk on 'Stabilizing Pakistan's Economy'

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on Wednesday organized a Public Talk on 'Stabilizing Pakistan's Economy'.

The guest speaker at the event was Mueen Afzal, former Secretary General Finance and Economic Affairs.

Director CSP Dr Neelum Nigar, in her introductory remarks, emphasized the significance of the talk, saying the national economy had faced severe macroeconomic imbalances, with the recurring balance of payments crises, shortages of foreign exchange, and above all a lot of fiscal indiscipline.

"The economy has not been able to take off even with the series of financial stimuli provided by international financial institutions. This underscores the necessity to comprehend the fundamental aspects of the economy, allowing us to present practical policy recommendations," she stressed.

ISSI Director General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the significant economic challenges that Pakistan is currently facing, fostered by both internal and external factors, including the impact of global economic slow-down, Covid-19 pandemic, and food and fuel crises in the wake of Russia-Ukraine conflict and situation in the Middle East.

He noted that Pakistan was grappling with a dual

## SC rejects petition seeking... Continued from page 1

order and the petitioner's conduct to redress the damage done."

It further stated, "The petitioner did not disclose the fact of being court martialled and mentions the rank which he held before being court martialled. He misused the rank which he had previously held in the Army which he could not do so. The petitioner must have used his rank to attract publicity and to ensure that the contents of his petition are widely broadcast in the media and published in the newspapers. And after having achieved such purpose, the petitioner immediately bought a ticket to catch a flight out of the country."

The usual practice is to buy a return ticket, but the petitioner bought a one-way ticket. He also did not disclose when he will return to Pakistan. The petitioner also did not disclose CIO 18/24 4 the reason for his sudden departure from Pakistan nor why he had to go to Bahrain. It is also not disclosed why, just one day after filing the petition, he sought its withdrawal. The petitioner's conduct demonstrates that he wants to undermine the credibility of constitutional bodies, which is neither in the citizens nor in the country's interest."

## SC rejects petition seeking... Continued from page 1

The order said that, "The Fixation Branch of this Court has informed that they had received an e-mail dated 19 February 2024, wherein the petitioner stated that 'I am ex-Brigadier Ali Khan' and that he had sought withdrawal of this petition by filing withdrawal application (CMA No. 1211/2024)."

The e-mail confirms that 'I don't want to pursue the said petition anymore as I am currently out of the country.' The copies of the petitioner's passport with exit from Pakistan stamp of FIA Immigration dated 17 February 2024, boarding pass and e-ticket have also been provided by the petitioner."

The verdict said, "The Attorney General of Pakistan AGP states that the petitioner cannot refer to himself as an ex-Brigadier because he was court martialled by the Army for committing sedition, mutiny and insubordination in the year 2012. He was sentenced to five years rigorous imprisonment and was released after serving out four years of his sentence as he was granted remissions. The learned AGP further states that the petitioner was stripped of his rank, which he can no longer use and the normal benefits which would accrue to a retired officer were not given to him."

## IHC rejects unconditional apology of DC Islamabad, stops him from going abroad

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has rejected unconditional apology of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon in contempt of court case besides restraining him from going abroad.

Justice Babar Sattar has remarked "Mr Memon you did not know about the order of court. Will the benches be constituted on your will. Delay in this case was caused due to your lawyers. Give the reply to second show cause notice Monday. More MPO orders were issued on the source report of same nature despite court's observation. We suspended their powers and then they stopped issuing MPO orders. Not only this bench but also other benches nullified about 40 MPO orders."

The contempt of court case against DC Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon, SSP operations and others came up for hearing before Justice Babar Sattar of IHC Wednesday.

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## New NFC Award with enhanced share to reinvigorates provinces' economy: Khuhro

LARKANA (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party leader Nisar Ahmed Khuhro on Wednesday said the new NFC Award to be announced by the new government, would eventually reinvigorates the economy of provinces.

He expressed the optimism that PPP Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari, who was expected to assume the office of President, would pave the way for the new National Finance Commission (NFC) Award with enhanced share of provinces, he said while talking to media-persons.

The NFC Award was among the provisions of the 18th Constitutional Amendment related to the provincial autonomy, which had not been fully implemented as yet, he added.

Congratulating Asif Zardari on his nomination for the office of President, Nisar Khuhro said it was the PPP which could help the country come out of the economic and political crises. He said the new governments to be formed as the result of February 8 elections, would complete their 5-year constitutional term.

Khuhro said strong provinces were the hallmark of a strong federation. Unfortunately, the new NFC Award was not announced despite considerable time had lapsed since the passage of the 18th Amendment.

With the new Award, the provinces would get more share in the country's financial resources and thus become economically stronger, he added.

Khuhro said that the provinces would get the federal ministries, which were to be transferred to them after the elimination of the Concurrent List. The provinces would be able to use their resources to reduce unemployment and alleviate poverty, he added.

He said the PPP was the architect of the 18th Amendment and it was included in its manifesto to get it implemented, which would strengthen the provincial autonomy.

He said as no party was in a position to form the government at the Centre alone, so the PPP joined the hands with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz in the larger national interest.



Provincial Secretary Health Abdullah Khan inaugurating Oxygen Generation Plant at Shaheed Nawab Ghaus Bakhsh Raisani Memorial Hospital Mastung

## Punjab Police reaches Peshawar to arrest PTI's Mian Aslam

By M.Ilyas  
PESHAWAR - The Punjab Police reached Peshawar to arrest PTI Punjab nominee Chief Minister Mian Aslam.

According to sources, the Punjab Police tried to arrest Mian Aslam from outside the Speaker's House Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Sources said that during the arrest of Mian Aslam, PTI workers resisted and brought him back to the Speaker House.

Earlier, the Peshawar High Court granted PTI leader Mian Aslam Iqbal bail till March 4.

The court ordered that the petitioners should appear before the Lahore High Court or relevant courts by March 4, failing which the order will be reversed. The High Court also ordered to send a copy of the order to the concerned court and police station.

## Talha represents Pakistan in Asian Indoor Athletics C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): For the first time in Athletics history, Talha Iftikhar represented Pakistan as technical official in the 11th Asian Indoor Athletics Championships held at Tehran, Iran from February 17 to 19.

The Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP) expressed pride and honour in this regard, said a press release. Talha was the first World Athletics Silver Level Referee of Pakistan.

## Pak-Korea nutrition center conference concludes

HYDERABAD (APP): The two-day Pakistan-Korea Nutrition Center (PKNC) conference organized by the Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) held at Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam in collaboration with Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Pakistan and the University of Agriculture Faisalabad.

The conference concluded here on Wednesday with expert recommendations presented during the closing session of the conference.

During the session, national and international experts presented recommendations aimed at transforming the country's food system, promoting sustainable agricultural development, addressing nutritional deficiencies, and providing education and nutritious food to marginalized and vulnerable segments of the society. The conference focused on revolutionizing the food models to combat nutritional deficiencies, enhance food quality, and reduce losses in crops. It also emphasized on the importance of promoting awareness regarding nutrition through curriculum, mass media, and social media as well as improving the quality of food through Food Value Chain Model.

Additionally, the experts proposed eighteen different recommendations including the development of seasonal resilient crop varieties through research, improving women's health for the development of a healthy generation, and enhancing diversity in food models.

Addressing at the concluding ceremony, Vice

Chancellor Dr. Fateh Marri expressed concerns over weakening of future generation due to poor nutrition. He mentioned that government has allocated 8.5 billion rupees for a three-year National Multi-spectral Nutrition Program, to address children's nutritional deficiencies and promote healthy dietary practices. He also announced the degree programs focusing on nutrition at Sindh Agriculture University.

Former VC Dr. Bekharam Dewrajani speaking on the occasion emphasized that lack of nutritious and quality food is causing health issues particularly for women and children in rural areas, while 24% of people in cities suffering from diabetes.

Dr. Jae Han Kim, Dean of Chungnam National University, Republic of Korea stated that information and research obtained from this conference need to be disseminated to society.

He stressed the importance of implementing recommendations made in the conference for better results and suggested that they should be referred to the government and relevant authorities for implementation. On this occasion, chief of party Dr Kenneth Holland, Dr Maqsood Sadiq Butt, Dr. Aijaz Soomro, Dr Tauseef Sultan, Dr Shahzad Gul Khaskheli, and Dr Tahseen Fatima also addressed the gathering.

Additionally, Ms. Julian Holland, representative of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), along with deans of various faculties, professors, lecturers, and a large number of students were also present during the ceremony.

## FDE, NH&MP organize road safety awareness lecture

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) in cooperation with the National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) has organized a comprehensive road safety awareness lecture here at the Islamabad Model College for Girls PG Margalla College in F/4.

The event was headed by Senior Patrol Officer Younus, Senior Patrol Officer Nabeela, and Patrol Officer Asifa. The collaborative effort aimed to enlighten students on crucial road safety measures by utilizing informative videos and slides.

The Principal MCG PG Margalla College, Ayesha Kiayani talking to APP on Wednesday said that this awareness session, conducted by the esteemed officers, proved to be highly informative and engaging. The team provided students with valuable insights into road safety, equipped with visual aids and relevant presentations, enlightening the audience



ISLAMABAD: Motorcyclists crossing Srinagar Highway from the pedestrian bridge, in the Federal Capital.

## Delegation of NIM Karachi visits Safe City Islamabad

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the SSP Safe City welcomed the Mid-Career Management Course delegation from National Institute of Management (NIM) Karachi at the Safe City Islamabad, a public relations officer said.

He said that the delegation visits the command and control center, the data hub unit, modern technology-equipped cameras, and the Police operations center hall. They were fully briefed about the procedures and advantages of this project.

Furthermore, the delegation was informed that Safe City Islamabad is playing a significant role in various departments through modern techniques, including the Police Operations Center, Emergency Control Center, Data Hub Unit, Dispatch Control Center, E-Challan



ISLAMABAD: Labourers are busy installing new water pipeline at sector F-5 in the Federal Capital.

## COMSTECH, PEC ink MoU upscale engineering capacity of OIC states

ISLAMABAD (APP): OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) and Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Wednesday at COMSTECH Secretariat to upscale engineering capacity of OIC states.

The MoU was signed by the Coordinator General COMSTECH Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and Secretary/Registrar of the Council, Engr. Dr. Nasir M. Khan.

Chairman PEC, Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon, and the senior officials of the two organizations were also present in the signing ceremony.

COMSTECH and PEC agreed to collaborate in organizing workshops and training programs to enhance the knowledge and skills of professionals in science and technology with a focus on engineering, healthcare sectors and innovations.

They agreed to transform information to know-

about the dos and don'ts of road safety, she added.

The interactive nature of the lecture allowed the students to grasp essential information efficiently.

The officers highlighted the significance of adhering to traffic laws, using pedestrian crossings, and the hazards of reckless driving, ultimately emphasizing the importance of responsible behavior on the road.

The initiative also included a lively question and answer session, providing students with an opportunity to seek clarifications on road safety issues. This dynamic approach fostered an environment for active participation and allowed students to engage directly with the knowledgeable officers. Upon the culmination of the session, the students were conferred with tokens of appreciation as the police officers distributed gifts, serving as a tangible reinforcement of the lessons imparted during the lecture.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi chaired the steering committee meeting of NAVTTC.

## Madad Sindhi directs NAVTTC to increase quota for disables, transgenders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi on Wednesday directed the chairperson NAVTTC to increase the quota for disables and transgenders in all programs.

He was chairing Steering Committee meeting of the Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Program (PMYSDP) at Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training.

The caretaker minister said that the meeting played a pivotal role in facilitating essential discussions to propel the program's objectives forward. He further said that this was the second meeting of NAVTTC steering committee under his tenure as minister. He pointed out that this is also the second meeting in five years. He highlighted the importance of this commit-

tee meeting. The caretaker minister said that in the last meeting, he had increased the quota for women which has been implemented in letter and spirit.

Madad Ali said that domain of NAVTTC should be expanded to provinces to achieve the progress. He was of view that it would be prudent to include universities for increasing scope of NAVTTC in future. He took notice of the absence of Secretary Education Punjab and Sindh. Meanwhile, the Executive Director NAVTTC/Secretary of the Committee, Muhammad Aamir Jan briefed the committee on the current status and progress of PMYSDP 2023-24 project, achievements and outlining future goals. A significant decision was made regarding the High-Tech IT and High-End IT Training Components.

The committee endorsed the consolidation and strategic reallocation of seats, not only to enrich industrial training opportunities but also to lay the groundwork for a groundbreaking collaboration with esteemed universities like COMSATS, NUST, NUML, and NSU to facilitate the pilot project being implemented with the Federal Directorate of Education. This collaborative effort is crafted to launch High-Impact IT Training with 16 FDE Colleges, intending to bridge the gap between academia and industry. The initiative aims to provide cutting-edge IT skills to the youth, ensuring their relevance in the ever-evolving job market, he told. Waseem Ajmal, Secretary Ministry of Federal Education, endorsed the pilot program and emphasized that the modalities may be formulated with the

help of Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) and Pakistan IT Industry Association (P@SHA).

In a bid to streamline implementation, the committee sanctioned the exemption of Bank/Insurance Guarantee for TEVTA, PVTC, PWDs, and other public institutes excluding public sector universities.

Furthermore, various courses under the program, spanning High-Tech IT, High-End IT Training Component, Hospitality, Languages, Care Workers, and Gym/Sports Trainer, will now confer international certification, thereby enhancing the global recognition of the program.

Ms. Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, chairperson NAVTTC, expressed optimism about the program, and said, "We aspire for these 56,000 youth to become valuable assets for the country."

## Int'l Mother Language Day being observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): International Mother Language Day is being observed on Wednesday to promote cultural and linguistic diversity.

The theme this year is "Multilingual education is a pillar of intergenerational learning". International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 1999.

The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day was the initiative of Bangladesh. The UN General Assembly welcomed the proclamation of the day in its resolution of 2002.

## ICT admin launches anti encroachment operation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration on Wednesday carried out an anti-encroachment operation in Aabpara market to ensure its smooth functioning.

According to a spokesman of ICT, the operation was conducted to enhance traffic flow and curb illegal encroachments under the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad.

The accused involved in collecting extortion from roadside vendors, cart pullers, fruit shop owners, and hotels were also arrested. Cases have been registered against them.

## Court cancels Faisal Javid's arrest warrants

ISLAMABAD (APP): A local court of Islamabad on Wednesday cancelled the arrest warrants of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Senator Faisal Javid in the case of threatening a journalist.

Senator Faisal Javid along with his lawyer Sardar Masroof appeared before the court of Senior Civil Judge Qudrat Ullah.

The court sought the case record and adjourned the hearing till March 13.

The case of threatening a journalist was lodged against Faisal Javid at the Federal Capital's Bari Galla Police Station in 2022.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of the delegation of National Institute of Management Karachi mid-career management course during their visit of Safe City.

## BISP partners with six banks to expand payment system; serve 9.3 mln beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a landmark development, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) signed an agreement with six banks for disbursement of funds among its 9.3 Million beneficiary households in a ceremony held here Wednesday.

The agreement was signed in an impressive ceremony that was witnessed by the Chairperson, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmed, Heads of partner banks and development partners of the programme.

The secretary BISP speaking at the event explained that initially, the programme was utilizing the services of only two banks and the contracts of the same had expired some years back.

However, this expansion signifies the introduction of wider service provider banks thus leading to greater transparency.

The BISP will annually save Rs 2 billion on account of competition introduced through this new payment system.

As a consequence, there will be 15 clusters and 6 banks providing service to BISP beneficiaries now with broader partnership service being provided by Bank Al Falah, Bank of Punjab, Mobilink Microfinance, Telenor Microfinance Bank, Habib Bank Limited, and HBL Microfinance.

He further stated, "With beneficiary awareness and a grievance redressal system created in collaboration with banks, we are poised to overcome challenges and achieve a more responsive System".

Chairperson BISP Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, in his address, emphasized the importance of collective responsibility towards uplifting the marginalized.

"Irrespective of designation, as human beings and citizens of Pakistan, we must perform our duties. Through our love and respect for our women, we can bring about positive change in their lives," he asserted.

This ceremony, he stated, solidified the commitment of all parties involved to the mission of serving the most vulnerable members of society with dignity and transparency.

The ceremony witnessed the participation of key representatives from Bank Al Falah, Bank of Punjab, Habib Bank Limited, HBL Microfinance, Mobilink Microfinance, and Telenor Microfinance, along with representatives of international development partners.

After the ceremony, an exchange took place as representatives of the partner banks and Naveed Akbar, DG NSER on behalf of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) signed the agreements.

## NUST, WWF-Pak join hands to collaborate on research and innovation

ISLAMABAD (APP): National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and WWF-Pakistan have joined hands to collaborate on research and innovation to promote sustainable development, the use of technology, and academic linkages in Pakistan through signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Wednesday.

According to the NUST, the MoU signing ceremony was held with presence of officials from NUST as well as WWF-Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, Pro-Rector Research, Innovation and Commercialization (RIC), Dr. Rizwan Riaz highlighted NUST's endeavors in sustainable technology, industry-academia linkages, and the university's global reach. Director General, WWF-Pakistan, Hammad Naqi Khan spoke about WWF's key areas of work and discussed many potential areas of collaboration.

DG WWF-Pakistan,

Hammad Naqi's visit to NSTP advanced the institutional commitment to collaborate, emphasizing their combined strength in fostering sustainable solutions through research, advocacy, and entrepreneurial ventures.

Both the officials expressed the hope that this MoU marks a significant step towards a greener future through the collaboration of these institutions.

The WWF-Pakistan (Worldwide Fund for Nature Pakistan) is a leading environmental conservation organization in Pakistan, established in 1970 as part of the global WWF network.

Over the past five decades, WWF-Pakistan has been at the forefront of nature conservation in the country initiating numerous projects and programs aimed at preserving biodiversity, promoting environmental education, and advocating for sustainable development.



ISLAMABAD: Models walk on the ramp during the BFW Bridal Fashion Walk at Local Marquee.

## Saudi Embassy marks 'Founding Day' with show of cultural festivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Cultural Mission of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia on Wednesday celebrated the Founding Day of Kingdom, with the show of cultural festivity.

The event witnessed a congregation of foreign dignitaries and individuals hailing from diverse backgrounds. A focal point of the celebration was the customary cake-cutting ceremony, emblematic of unity and jubilation, a news release said.

A lavish luncheon offering an array of delectable traditional Saudi Arabian dishes was also served. The guests savored the intricate flavours and culinary marvels that epitomize the cultural richness of Saudi Arabia. Cultural Attaché Khalid Bin Modhi Al Toom, in his welcome address, accentuated the profound historical bonds between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He expounded upon the enduring camaraderie and collaborative endeavours that have defined the relationship between the two nations over

the years. Press Attaché Dr. Nair Al Otaibi said, "As we mark the Founding Day of Saudi Arabia, it offers a momentous opportunity to reflect on the shared values, cultural heritage, and enduring friendship with Pakistan."

He emphasized that the day not only signified the genesis of a nation but also underscored the robust bilateral relations and mutual respect between the two countries.

Dr. Al Otaibi commended the pivotal role of the cultural attaché in fostering understanding and bolstering cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan through cultural exchange, educational collaboration, and diplomatic initiatives. He reiterated his commitment for fortifying ties, advancing cultural diversity, and collectively striving towards a brighter and more prosperous future for both nations.

The guests on the occasion expressed their gratitude to the hosts for the opportunity to partake in the joyous occasion.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of the private school children who visited Islamabad Capital Police Traffic Office, Faizabad.

## Admin MCI assures to address issues of business community

ISLAMABAD (APP): Administrator, Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) Rana Waqas Anwar on Wednesday said that MCI wanted to move forward with the consensus of the business community to address their issues and facilitate them in business promotion.

The administrator along with his team visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and interacted with the business community to learn about their issues.

He said that he would visit markets to see the situation of encroachments and take measures to remove them in coordination with ICCI and concerned market associations.

He said that MCI was making a uniform policy to remove all billboards in Islamabad as they were affecting the beauty of the city.

He said that vending zones were being considered for shifting pushcarts

from markets. He said that law-abiding citizens would get some rebate in property tax.

He said that board tax and trade license fees should be paid to only one entity from MCI or UC.

He said that open spaces would be allotted only to the shopkeepers.

He said that no brand would be damaged and only violations would be removed from markets.

He said that if anyone gives notice to traders using the name of the Punjab Government, he should be handed to the police for appropriate action.

Speaking on the occasion, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari briefed the MCI delegation about the key issues of the business community.

He said that encroachments should be removed in consultation with ICCI and concerned market associations.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Taj Haider, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Parliamentary Affairs presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament Lodges.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

Thursday February 22, 2024

## Silencing the public

The stench of desperation hangs heavy over Islamabad. The powerful have had a lot of trouble lately keeping the public under their thumb. Short of ideas, they have decided to block Pakistan's access to X (formerly Twitter), one of the most popular digital mediums for self-expression.

The authorities are seemingly so afraid of the public setting the narrative agenda that they have decided to simply pull the plug. Such repressive actions are a shame in this day and age: millions of opinion-makers and citizens around the world converge virtually each day on the platform to exchange important news and views — why can Pakistanis not be among them?

There has been no word from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority or the IT ministry, which would previously issue at least a mealy-mouthed explanation when denying the citizenry access to mainstream internet services. Even they have not figured out how to justify what is being done.

One marvels at the hypocrisy of some of our caretaker ministers, who have ostensibly been using VPN services to continue posting on X even as their own people are being denied the same privilege.

The IT minister's behaviour, in particular, is galling: during this latest blockage, he has celebrated the 'take-off' of Pakistan's IT industry and achieving 13 items on his agenda, while also announcing two new schemes for the industry — all while not saying a word about why Pakistani users suddenly cannot access one of the world's most popular social mediums.

It seems he is more interested in self-promotion while the state is busy broadcasting its abject disregard for the digital economy. He should be asked: why would any entrepreneur bother investing in Pakistan, especially when the country's internet access and telecom policies always seem subject to change without notice?

As for the PTA, the less said the better. In suspending mobile phone services without any prior warning throughout election day and well after, it had already wreaked immeasurable damage on Pakistan this month.

Many citizens were left unable to exercise their constitutional rights due to the communications blackout, which also contributed towards worsening the political instability by providing a convenient cover for the alleged irregularities that occurred later that night. And yet, the authority refuses to learn. Acting as if it is unaccountable, it is now curtailing citizens' digital rights without even bothering to come up with a justification.

It seems that the PTA has quietly become just another tool in the hands of our habitually oppressive state, to be used against the people of Pakistan whenever they start inconveniencing the powers that be. It is important that it be checked immediately. With precedents available thanks to prior court rulings on internet bans, it should be sued for its actions.

# How to end the scourge of missing persons?

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



The Islamabad High Court's response to the disappearance of 12 Baloch students from Islamabad reveals a profound frustration with the violation of their fundamental human rights, as guaranteed by the constitution and the law. The court expressed dismay over the failure to recover the missing individuals even after two years, attributing responsibility to state institutions. In a stern warning, the judge highlighted the paradox of citizens needing protection from their own security agencies, which are mandated to ensure their safety. The court's summons of high-ranking officials, including the caretaker prime minister, reflects a commitment to accountability, with the judge cautioning that future disappearances could lead to legal action against top government officials. The judge's assertion that if those in power are unable to control the institutions under their purview, they should resign underscores the gravity of the situation and the need for effective governance and oversight.

The statements made by the High Court judge during the hearing reveal a deep-seated frustration with the issue of enforced disappearances. The judge's remarks underscore the failure of state institutions, including security agencies, to safeguard citizens as mandated by the constitution and the law. The formation of the committee comprising heads of top spy agencies and summoning the caretaker prime minister, the court aims to ensure a thorough investigation and provide answers regarding the missing persons, regardless of political considerations. The judge's warning to state officials about potential consequences if such issues persist reflects the urgency and seriousness with which the court views the matter, emphasizing accountability and the judiciary's role in upholding human rights and the rule of law.

Ironically, the interim prime minister's inability to enforce authority on the powerful spy agency likely stems from a combination of factors, including institutional resistance, complex power dynamics, and political constraints. The spy agency operates with a degree of autonomy and influence that may make it challenging for the prime minister to compel them to release the missing persons. Additionally, the sensitive nature of intelligence operations and national security concerns may further limit the prime minister's ability to intervene directly.

The issue of missing persons has drawn condemnation from various quarters, both domestically and internationally which are tarnishing the soft image of the country. International bodies such as the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International have extensively documented and criticized the human rights abuses in Balochistan, including enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Additionally, the European Parliament has passed resolutions urging the Pakistani government to address these issues. Within Pakistan, organizations like the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and Baloch political leaders have been vocal in con-

demning the actions of security forces in Balochistan and advocating for justice for the victims.

Despite these condemnations, the situation in Balochistan remains dire, with ongoing human rights abuses continuing to affect the lives of the Baloch people. Pakistani civil society organizations have also joined the chorus of voices calling for an end to these violations and for accountability for those responsible. International leaders and activists have echoed these sentiments, urging the Pakistani government to respect human rights and address the grievances of the Baloch people and restore their fundamental human rights such as the right to liberty, fair trial, and protection from enforced disappearance, as guaranteed by the UN Charter and the Constitution of Pakistan.

Enforced disappearances, a global phenomenon, extend far beyond the borders of Pakistan. Numerous countries grapple with this issue, where individuals vanish without explanation, often with impunity. Mexico contends with tens of thousands of missing persons, primarily linked to organized crime and drug cartels, while Syria's civil war has led to widespread disappearances attributed to government forces and armed factions.

Colombia's history of enforced disappearances, though improving, remains a concern, particularly regarding paramilitary groups and drug trafficking. Similarly, Sri Lanka's civil war aftermath includes ongoing cases, often involving state security forces. Unlike the examples quoted above, established democracies distinguish themselves by their robust

systems, where occurrences of missing persons are exceptionally rare. This is attributed to optimized institutions with high levels of accountability, including law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Transparency is a cornerstone, ensuring adherence to constitutional and legal frameworks, thus resolving political intricacies. Non-state actors are brought within legal bounds, eradicating covert operations. Parliament, judiciary, and government operate independently, devoid of coercion or intimidation, and are subject to rigorous accountability measures for any lapses in fulfilling their mandates. This unwavering commitment ensures the effective functioning of democratic processes, fostering public trust and stability.

The unrest and insurgencies, like in Balochistan primarily stem from a combination of historical grievances, political marginalization, economic disparities, and cultural identity issues. Historically, Balochistan has faced marginalization and exploitation of its natural resources by the central government, leading to feelings of neglect and resentment among the Baloch population.

Additionally, the lack of political representation and autonomy, coupled with human rights abuses and military operations in the region, have fueled grievances and resistance. Resultantly, during ensuing struggles individuals vanish into a void of uncertainty and fear. The lack of accountability for those responsible perpetuates a cycle of anguish and injustice, echoing the urgent need for international cooperation and concerted efforts to address this pressing human rights concern.

Together, these short-term, medium-term, and long-term measures exemplify a multifaceted approach that can serve as a model for addressing the issue of missing persons and promoting human rights worldwide.

In light of Argentina's example, there are several actions that parliament,

judiciary, government, and civil society in Balochistan could take to resolve the issue of missing persons once and for all.

Firstly, parliament could enact legislation to establish a commission or task force dedicated to investigating cases of enforced disappearances in Balochistan. This body should be granted sufficient powers and resources to conduct thorough and impartial investigations into each case.

Secondly, the judiciary should prioritize cases of missing persons and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions. This may involve repealing laws that shield military officials from prosecution for human rights abuses. This legislative action enabled the judiciary to prosecute and convict numerous perpetrators through landmark trials like the Trial of the Juntas in 1985. These legal proceedings underscored the importance of judicial independence and accountability in addressing state-sponsored violence.

Civil society organizations, notably the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, played a pivotal role in advocating for justice for the victims of disappearances. Their tireless activism, alongside broader societal pressure and international scrutiny, contributed to the dismantling of impunity and the pursuit of truth, justice, and accountability.

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## Punjab Governor says: Government fully focused on providing Intl standard medical services in provincial hospitals

**Says Pak pharmaceutical industry providing employment chances to millions of people: Governor**

### Independent Report

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman today inaugurated the 16th Pak Pharma and Healthcare Exhibition and Conference organized by Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PPMA) at Expo Center Lahore.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rahman while speaking to the media on this occasion, said that Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry is not only playing a positive role in the country's economy, but it is also providing employment opportunities to millions of people.

He said that organising Pak Pharma and Healthcare Exhibition is a good initiative which will give boost to the pharmaceutical industry. Governor Punjab said that it is encouraging to see that 115 foreign and local exhibitors are participating in this exhibition.

He said that he appreciates the organizers of the exhibition for their efforts in arranging this exhibition regarding pharmaceuticals manufacturing and associated health related products and services. Governor Punjab said that this exhibition will provide an excellent opportunity to all those who are interested

in promoting their products and services. Governor Punjab further said that the Punjab government is fully focused on providing international standard medical services in the provincial hospitals.

Governor Punjab said that it is a good sign that Pakistani pharmaceutical companies are exporting medicines to different countries of the world, which is increasing the country's foreign exchange.

In response to a question, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that it is the responsibility of the government to maintain balance in the regulation of drug prices.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur-Rehman inaugurates 16th Pak Pharma and Health Care Exhibition at Expo Center Lahore.

## Punjab govt trying to bring more improvement in Children's Hospital Lahore: Minister

### Independent Report

LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Health Minister Professor Dr. Javed Akram has said that the provincial government is trying its best to bring more improvement in Children's Hospital Lahore.

Addressing the 10th syndicate meeting of the University of Child Health Sciences held under the chairmanship of the caretaker provincial health minister here on Wednesday, he said that fundamental steps are being taken to make the University of Child Health Sciences paperless. He said that under the leadership of Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi, the revamping

project has been successfully completed in the hospital.

The minister said that Children's Hospital Lahore is the second largest hospital in the world and the first in Asia in terms of treatment of children. At the University of Child Health Sciences, special attention is being paid to qualitative research, he said. Professor Dr Javed said that the orders of the Lahore High Court regarding the quality and performance assessment report of the Children's Hospital Lahore have been implemented in its letter and spirit. He said that a historic decision has been made to bear all costs of cochlear implants except

for hearing aids for patients visiting Children's Hospital.

During the syndicate meeting, all the decisions of the 11th meeting of the academic council were approved. During the meeting, the ongoing progress on the complex under construction of the University of Child Health Sciences was also reviewed in detail. The officers of Infrastructure Development Authority Punjab also gave a briefing during the syndicate meeting in this regard. During the syndicate meeting, the post of Professor of Genetics in addition to the approval of various statutory positions.

## Chinese, Iranian CC call on CM Naqvi

### Independent Report

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi held separate meetings with the Consul General of China Mr. Zhao Shiren and the Consul General of Iran Mehran Mowahid Far, here on Wednesday.

The Chinese and the Iranian Consul Generals felicitated CM Mohsin Naqvi on being elected as the Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Mohsin Naqvi extended an invitation to the Chinese and Iranian Consul Generals to witness a PSL match. Both of them accepted the invitation and thanked the CM.

The Chinese and the Iranian Consul Generals lauded the performance of CM for extending exemplary services for the people of Punjab during the last one year. The Chinese Consul General acknowledged that the CM accomplished public welfare projects with an extraordinary speed in a

highly short span of time, adding that his public services are highly appreciated at every level. The CM worked in a highly proactive manner and delivered to the optimum for the welfare of the people of Punjab. Mr. Zhao Shiren also expressed his good wishes for the CM. Mohsin Naqvi thanked the Chinese Consul General on extending enormous assistance in order to cope up with the smog challenges and in other sectors. The CM remarked that China is a strategic partner of Pakistan, adding that China has stood with Pakistan in every time of trial and tribulation. The relationships with China have further deepened during the last one year. "The level of acknowledgment which has been accorded to me during my visit to China by the Communist Party of China will always be remembered," the CM maintained.



KARACHI: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Muhammad Ahmed Shah and Caretaker Provincial Minister for Cultural Dr. Junaid Ali Shah addressing a joint press conference.

## Mayor Karachi calls for a peaceful and prosperous city

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that he would like to have a peaceful and prosperous city for him and everyone's children.

No one from London or Canada will come to fix Karachi, if we connect hearts and adopt each other, then the problems of this city and province will be solved. He said this while addressing a seminar on Digital Sindh and oath taking ceremony of newly elected office bearers of Sports Journalists Association Sindh (SJAS) at Karachi Gymkhana on Wednesday.

Caretaker Sindh Minister for Sports and Culture Dr Junaid Ali Shah, central office bearers of SJAS, representatives of sports associations and a large number of sports journalists were also present on the occasion.

The Mayor Karachi expressed hope that the newly elected governing body of SJAS would take sports journalism to a higher standard and the interests of journalists associated with sports journalism would be protected. It is expected that sports activities will be promoted at the Sindh level and new talent will emerge, he said.

He said Metropolitan Museum is being established in the historical Denso Hall where all historical materials and documents related to Karachi will be available for visitors. He said that in 1961, the Queen of England came to the KMC Building and she was welcomed by the Deputy Mayor Karachi, but people do not know about it, we will try to show the assets of our city in the museum.

## Life imprisonment for murdering elderly Father

### By Adeel Ahmed SHIKARPUR.

First Additional District & Session Judge Shikarpur awarded life imprisonment to accused for murdering the elderly Father here on Wednesday.

According to reports reached here that while hearing the ongoing case by First Additional District & Session Judge Shikarpur Tarique Ahmed Bhatti awarded life imprisonment and 02 lac rupees fine and 05 lac as extra to accused Adam Jaffery who found guilty for murdering his older Father Hairudeen Jaffery who was murdered by him son some five years ago in the jurisdiction of Sultankot police Station.

On the failure of payment in cash the accused would have 06 months more imprisonment. After the verdicts of Court, accused Adam Jaffery was sent to Sukkur Central Jail for imprisonment.

## South Punjab Secretariat aims to pace development

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Captain (ret'd) Saqib Zafar on Wednesday said that the South Punjab Secretariat is addressing the gaps of development by enhancing infrastructure in health, education, and other sectors.

Addressed officers undergoing the 39th Mid-Career Management Course at the National Institute of Management in Islamabad during their visit to the South Punjab Secretariat, he said that major projects in education and health have been completed in all major cities of South Punjab. He said that proposals for 58 major projects in the new budget have been submitted to the government, with an

estimated cost of Rs 132 billion.

Zafar emphasized that eliminating poverty and backwardness from the region is the top priority of the South Punjab Secretariat along with focusing on providing necessities, increasing literacy rates, and promoting agriculture.

He highlighted the importance of agriculture in the country's prosperity, mentioning the revival of cotton cultivation in South Punjab which is known as the Cotton Belt. He said that a project proposal of investing Rs 5 billion for the revival and increased production of cotton is part of the plan.

He mentioned the plans to connect all major cities of South Punjab through CPEC.

## PHC Chief stresses rule of law, justice

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Ibrahim Khan stated on Wednesday that efforts would be made to ensure the innocent are not punished and the guilty do not escape punishment.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of a bachelor hostel in the Judicial Complex Karak, he emphasized that no one is exempted from accountability, and he presents himself first. The chief justice highlighted that piety is the greatest wealth and emphasized the importance of judges being pious.

He highlighted the gap between police and courts and stated that efforts will be made to resolve it. He acknowledged the sacrifices made by the police.

Furthermore, he pledged to address issues faced by lawyers.

## Khuhro congratulates Zardari on nomination for slot of President of Pak

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan People's Party Sindh president Senator Nisar Khuhro has congratulated Asif Ali Zardari on his nomination for the post of President of Pakistan and said that only PPP can get the country out of the current economic and political crisis.

In a statement, Nisar Khuhro said that on becoming Asif Ali Zardari as the President of the Pakistan, the parliament and the new governments will complete their 5-years constitutional term.

Other provisions of

provincial autonomy under the 18th constitutional amendment will be implemented during the upcoming government, Khuhro claimed.

He said that after the election of Asif Ali Zardari as President of Pakistan, way will be paved for the launch of new National Finance Commission Award and the share of the provinces in resources distribution would also be increased.

He said the strengthening of the provinces were necessary for the strong foundation of the federation.

## Sindh Police Chief for joint strategy to combat riverine bandits

KARACHI (APP): During a meeting chaired by IGP Sindh Riffat Mukhtar Raja, comprehensive discussions were held on issues and measures about the adoption of a joint strategy, plan of action, and implementation decisions aimed at ensuring success in the operation against bandits in the riverine areas (Katcha areas) of Sindh and Punjab. Decisions were made with a focus on concrete and effective measures.

Various officials including RPO Bahawalpur, DIGPs Sukkur, Larkana, along with their respective SSPs

and DPOs, briefed on the outcomes and successes of the joint strategy and measures between Sindh and Punjab Police against dacoits in Katcha areas. The operation garnered unanimous support and approval.

The IGP Sindh highlighted the significant challenge posed to law enforcement agencies by criminals who lure unsuspecting citizens into traps through deception and greed in the riverine areas of Sindh and Punjab. He emphasized the need for active and effective police check posts in Katcha areas.



KARACHI: Inspector General Police Sindh Riffat Mukhtar Raja presides over the high level meeting.

## LHC orders to consolidate pleas about withdrawal of poll symbols from parties

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday ordered the registrar office to consolidate all petitions regarding the withdrawal of electoral symbols from political parties.

A two-member bench, headed by Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, passed the orders while hearing an intra-court appeal challenging powers to withdraw the electoral symbols from political parties. The court also issued notice to the federal government and Election Commission and sought reply.

Advocate Muhammad Azhar Siddique represented the petitioner before the bench and questioned the commission's powers to withdraw electoral symbols from political parties, adding that Section 215 of Election Act was in

violation of the constitution.

Responding to a query about intra-party elections, he submitted that these were crucial, adding that the commission lacked the authority to withdraw election symbols. He further submitted that the commission could levy fines for failure to conduct intra-party elections while responding to a bench observation that the Election Act was collectively formulated by all political parties.

However, at this stage, Justice Najafi noted the absence of any political party representation before the court.

Subsequently, the bench issued notices to the respondents and ordered to consolidate all identical petitions, besides adjourning further hearing.

## Sindh Excise dept collects Rs.5.88m taxes

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Excise and Taxation department, on the second day of ongoing road checking campaign for recovery of outstanding taxes, collected over Rs.5.88 million across the province.

Director General Excise and Taxation Aurangzeb Panhwar, in a statement issued here on Wednesday, said that a total of 6692 vehicles were checked till the second day of the campaign by inspection teams of the department.

The inspection teams checked 1589 vehicles in Karachi, 1789 in Hyderabad, 1206 in Sukkur, 885 in Larkana, 725 in Mirpur Khas and 498 vehicles in Shaheed Benazirabad, he said adding that a total of 651 vehicles were confiscated by the inspection teams and documents of 670 vehicles were also seized while tax collection.

## PSC schedules ability test in various departments

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission on Wednesday scheduled ability tests for various posts.

The posts including Speech Therapist (BPS-17) Health Department, Quantitative Analyst (BPS-16) Home and Tribal Affairs Department, Industrial Development Officer (BPS-16) in Industries, Commerce Technical Education Department, Assistant Forest Economist (BPS-17) Forestry, Environment and Wildlife Department, Bio-Chemist (BPS-17) Forestry, Environment and Wildlife Department, Senior Research Officer (BPS-18) Agriculture, Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Biomedical Engineer (BPS-17) Agriculture and Dairy Development Department, Librarian (BPS-17) in Law Parliamentary Affairs And Human Rights Department, Librarian (BPS-16) in Inspectorate

Of Prison, Home and Tribal Affairs Department, Assistant Research Officer (BPS-16) in Directorate Of Archives and Libraries.

Similarly, Research Assistant (BPS-16) In Directorate Of Labour Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Deputy Director (Network) (BPS-18) In Board Of Revenue Department, Research And Statistical Officer (BPS-16) In Directorate Of Labour Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Statistical Investigator (BPS-16) In Directorate Of Labour Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Female Subject Specialist In Pashto 2 (BPS-17) In Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Account Assistant (BPS-16) In Population Welfare Department, Assistant Director (BPS-17) In Relief Rehabilitation and Settlement Department, Budget, Environment and Wildlife Department, GIS Expert (BPS-17) in Agriculture Livestock Fisheries and Cooperative.

## Two LESCO employees dismissed

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has dismissed two employees for showing poor performance in the dues recovery campaign against dead defaulters in the BRB Sub-Division of LESCO, according to LESCO spokesman here Wednesday.

He added that on the instructions of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider, the recovery campaign is going on throughout the LESCO region. The relevant officers and employees of LESCO are working day and night to ensure the recovery from defaulters as well as the elimination of electricity theft.

In this regard, he said, Basit Salim Lineman Grade-I and Muhammad Sarfaraz, Assistant Lineman, of the BRB Sub-Division were dismissed for non-fulfillment of recovery target and continuous poor performance. Despite several warning letters by their high-ups.



LAHORE: Australian High Commissioner, H.E. Neil Hawkins with Embassy delegation visiting stall during visit to the shrine of Bibi Pakdaman.

## Commissioner reviews upgradation work at Services Hospital

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Divisional Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa has announced significant advancements in the construction of the new collection centre at Services Hospital. Expressing satisfaction, the commissioner revealed that the state-of-the-art diagnostic and collection lab at Services Hospital is nearing completion. During a morning visit here on Wednesday, Commissioner Randhawa personally

inspected the ongoing work and received a comprehensive briefing.

Beyond the lab, Commissioner Lahore meticulously reviewed the construction of parking and waiting areas, emphasizing the holistic approach to healthcare infrastructure. The successful completion of the new lab, equipped with cutting-edge technology, is expected to greatly enhance residents' access to medical facilities.

## Pak focusing on increasing exports to improve economic situation: Alvi

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Dr. Arif Alvi has said Pakistan is focusing on increasing exports to improve its economic situation.

Talking to a delegation of Miracle Saltworks Collective, a USA-based salt mining and processing company, in Islamabad Wednesday he said Pakistan wants to promote foreign investment and joint ventures in various sectors. He said we want mutually beneficial business partnerships with foreign companies.

The President noted that better processing, packaging and marketing can add value to our salt. He said Pakistani salt can be obtained with high quality and very low

investment.

The delegation apprised the President about the potential of Pakistani salt mines in earning foreign exchange, saying that quality and mineral rich rock salt is found only in Pakistan.

The delegation acknowledged that Pakistani salt is of low cost and high quality, emphasizing that the country can benefit from the largest salt market in the world.

It noted that the quality of Pakistani salt in terms of mineral content is the best in the world, and responsible mining, better processing and marketing can increase the value of Pakistani salt.

The delegation

informed the President that Miracle Salt Works Collective will invest in Pakistan's salt sector. The company will mine and process Pakistani salt using high-quality technology.

APP add: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday said that Pakistan desired to build mutually beneficial partnerships with foreign firms by building joint ventures and attracting foreign investment in multiple sectors.

He in a meeting with a delegation of Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc, a USA-based salt mining and processing company here, said Pakistan was fully focused on boosting its exports to improve its economic condition.

In the meeting, the

president was briefed about the company's performance in salt mining, processing and marketing.

President Alvi said that Pakistan could make value addition to its salt products through better processing, packaging and marketing.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to facilitate the investors, he appreciated Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc for its investment in Pakistan as well as its joint venture agreement with Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation.

The delegation members apprised the president of the potential of Pakistan's salt mines to earn foreign exchange, adding that Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc, a USA-based salt mining and processing company, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif chairing meeting regarding Spectrum Availability in Islamabad.

## Saqib Fayyaz says: Industry demands implementation of 9 cents/kwh power tariff

**Independent Report**  
KARACHI: Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, has apprised that the industries in general, and industries in SMEs sector in particular, are on the verge of total collapse and shut down due to the unbearable and unsustainable financial losses emanating from unprecedented cost of doing business; primarily caused by prices of electricity and gas - which has made Pakistani exporters uncompetitive in the export markets by a large margin. Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, categorically stated that FPCCI unequivocally

demands that the announced 9 cents / kWh power tariff by the government should be implemented with immediate effect.

We are paying 17 cents / kWh; whereas, our regional competitors are getting electricity at half of that price, he added. Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon explained that the power purchase price has increased by 95.82% since July 2018; which is mainly due to the higher capacity component in the power tariff.

Last year, we witnessed a 10% reduction in power generation; which resulted in a higher per unit capacity component.

## PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 1,094 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 1,094.91 points, a positive change of 1.81 percent, closing at 61,559.16 points against 60,464.24 points the previous trading day.

A total of 362,771,035 shares valuing Rs 12.492 billion were traded during the day as compared to 364,443,122 shares valuing Rs10.928 billion the last day.

Some 347 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 242 of them recorded gains and 84 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 21 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 35,437,903 shares at Rs 6.24 per share, K-Electric Limited with 28,619,621 shares at Rs 4.30 per share, and WorldCall Telecom with 21,425,569 shares at Rs 1.29 per share.

Indus Motor Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 53.66 per share price, closing at Rs 1,548.08, whereas the runner-up was Mari Petroleum Company Limited with a Rs 45.11 rise in its per share price to Rs 2,202.46.

Pakistan Services Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 50.00 per share closing at Rs 820.00, followed by Thal Limited with Rs 9.46 decline to close at Rs 260.54.

## IT exports up by 39% in January: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Dr Umar Saif has said that IT exports in January witnessed an increase of 39.4 per cent to \$265 million compared to \$190 million in the same month of the last fiscal year.

"Pakistan's IT industry continues to grow and sets new records. IT exports in January are up

by 39.4 per cent to \$265 million, compared to \$190 million in the same month in 2023," the minister posted on X.

Additionally, the minister disclosed that IT exports during the first seven months of the current fiscal year (July-January) reached \$1.7 billion, marking a 13 per cent increase from \$1.5 billion in the corresponding period of the last year.

## Sudanese envoy, LCCI chief want more trade between his country, Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): Ambassador of Sudan Salih Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Siddiq has said that Sudan and Pakistan have very good relations but the economic ties are below the ambitions. Sudan is very rich in natural resources, agriculture, mining and livestock, and is keen to make mutual trade and economic ties stronger.

He expressed these views in a meeting with President of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kashif Anwar, here at LCCI Wednesday. Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Executive Committee Members were also present.

The ambassador said that Pakistan and Sudan

have very good relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties. Besides good diplomatic relations, both countries have very good cultural ties and many Sudanese students are studying here in Pakistan, he added.

"The goal of this visit is to boost economic relations and the first thing Sudan needs is ensuring food security.

In this regard cooperation with countries like Pakistan is very important," he mentioned.

Salih Mohamed said, "Promotion of relations between the private sectors of Sudan and Pakistan is our goal. Lahore Chamber is very old and experienced chamber and is a big contributor in Pakistan's economy.

## FBR working on extension of EFS to whole textile value chain: chief collector

LAHORE (APP): Punjab's Chief Collector Customs (Appraisal) Muhammad Sadiq has said that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is working on extension of Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS) to the whole textile value chain.

Talking to members of APTMA [All Pakistan Textile Mills Association] during an interactive session on exports and other Customs related issues here on Wednesday,

he said that a committee of stakeholders had already been constituted in this regard. Ms. Azmat Tahira, Collector Customs (Appraisal-East) Lahore, Ms. Nazia Saleem, Additional Collector Customs, and Ms. Irum Sohail, Additional Collector Customs also accompanied the Chief Collector, while APTMA (North) Chairman Kamran Arshad, senior members Anjum Zafar, Faisal Perviz and APTMA Secretary

General Raza Baqir were also present.

The Chief Collector Customs assured APTMA of removing all irritants in the EFS and other customs procedures, formalities to facilitate exporters by helping them in focusing on how to boost exports. Talking high of the importance of exports in general and textile industry in particular, he said no stone would be left unturned in facilitating textile industry.



Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, is addressing a press conference on the rising electricity & gas prices for industries at Federation House, Karachi.

## Pak, Saudi Arabia agree to enhance bilateral trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Wednesday agreed to enhance bilateral trade between the two brotherly countries and improve investments in various sectors including construction, digital economy and infrastructure.

The agreement was reached during a meeting of Caretaker Minister for Commerce, Gohar Ejaz with the Saudi Minister for Commerce, Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Kassabi.

Gohar Ejaz is leading a business delegation to Saudi Arabia, according to a statement issued by the Commerce Ministry.

The other delegation

members visiting Saudi Arabia included Punjab Minister S.M. Tanveer and notable businessmen; Arif Habib, Muhammad Ali Tabba, and Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) President Atif Ikram. Highlighting the importance of enhancing trade with Saudi Arabia, Ijaz expressed Pakistan's commitment to making comprehensive efforts in this regard, noting ample opportunities for bilateral investment between the two countries.

The Saudi Minister of Commerce praised the efforts to strengthen bilateral trade relations, the statement added.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships, Maersk Brooklyn, Beks Nazik, Sea Champion, Simaisam and Torm Elizabeth carrying Containers, Wheat, Canola seeds, LNG and Gas oil, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Grain Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Tuesday. Meanwhile eight more ships, Xpress Salween, Jade Prosperity, Chemroad Haya, Medi Chiba, Fame, Sunny Bay and Ullswater carrying Containers, Chemicals, Canola seeds, Soyabean seeds, Coal and LPG also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the last 24 hours.

A total of six ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Maersk Brooklyn and Weco Madelein left the port on today morning.



SIALKOT: A worker is stitching a cricket ball at manufacturing unit.

## PARC, GAIN imparts training on diet quality monitoring in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) Wednesday conducted a comprehensive training session on use of Diet Quality Questionnaire (DQQ) for collecting data on diet quality.

The training was executed in collaboration with the research entities from PARC and the provincial governments i.e. Pakistan Bureau of statistics, provincial bureau of statistics and planning and development departments.

The training, held at the PARC premises, aimed to enhance understanding and capacity in monitoring diet quality across the country, a news release said.

Head of Policy & Advocacy at GAIN, Faiz Rasool said, "The training session was instrumental in equipping participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to contribute effectively to diet quality monitoring efforts in Pakistan".

He mentioned the partnership aimed to embed this tool into other existing data tools for collecting and utilizing the data to inform public policies.

Talking on the occasion member social science division at PARC Dr. Ghulam Sadiq Afridi said, "We are grateful to GAIN for their partnership and support in advancing this critical aspect of public health in the food system".

The session covered various crucial aspects, including the Government.

## Gold rates up by Rs 750 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola 24 karat gold increased by Rs 750 and was sold at Rs 215,200 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs 214,450 on the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 644 to Rs 184,500 from Rs 183,856 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 169,124 from Rs 168,535, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,570 and Rs 2,203.36 respectively.



QUETTA: Mir Nawab Mengal of All Pakistan Mazada Truck Goods Association addressing a press conference.

## NICL offers to assume financial risks of AJ&K state owned assets

MIRPUR (APP): A high-level joint meeting between the AJK government and the State-run National Insurance Company Ltd emphasized effective risk management and NICL's role in safeguarding government assets. Chief Secretary of AJK, Dawood Muhammad Breach, and CEO of NICL, Khalid Hamid, led the discussions, signifying a significant step in enhancing the partnership.

NICL, represented by CEO Khalid Hamid, Zonal Head Khuram Irshad, and AJ&K Head Abdul Basit Khan, discussed assuming financial risks associated with AJ&K government

assets. The meeting, attended by officials including Zafar Mehmood, Secretary S&GAD, C&WD, and Chairman CBR, focused on NICL's role as the primary state-owned insurance provider.

CEO Hamid highlighted NICL's status as a state-owned entity operating under the Ministry of Commerce, providing comprehensive coverage since 1976. The legal framework, including the Insurance Ordinance, 2000, and AJ&K Insurance Act, 2007, mandates placing insurance business exclusively with NICL.

The Chief Secretary emphasized compliance.

## JazzCash assigned task of BISP fund disbursements

ISLAMABAD (APP): JazzCash, country's leading fintech organisation, has been assigned the task for disbursements of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) aimed at empowering underserved communities, with a particular emphasis on women inclusion.

JazzCash, as part of this partnership, will leverage its extensive nationwide network of agents and retailers to disburse funds to over 1.3 million beneficiaries, said a news release issued on Wednesday.

Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz, said, "In

collaboration with BISP, we are working to uplift the economic well-being of Pakistani women. Leveraging JazzCash's network, we aim to provide accessible digital financial services, hence, contributing to the gradual financial empowerment of BISP's beneficiaries. This effort is a reflection of our purpose of improving the lives and livelihoods of women through digital and financial inclusion." Speaking at the signing ceremony, Murtaza Ali, Head of JazzCash, said, "JazzCash and BISP, together, envision a future where financial inclusion acts as a catalyst for social upliftment.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

## US vetoes Algerian resolution demanding immediate ceasefire in Gaza

NEW YORK (Online): The US has vetoed a UN Security Council draft resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Thirteen countries on the 15-member body backed Algeria resolution, while the UK abstained. Washington's ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield said it was not the right time to call for an immediate ceasefire. The UN Security Council met again in emergency session in New York on Gaza Tuesday, where the United States vetoed a resolution put forward on behalf of Arab States by Algeria demanding "an immediate humanitarian ceasefire that must be re-

spected by all parties". The latest Council meeting on the Middle East crisis spiralling outwards from the war in Gaza has ended, with another US veto and an abstention on the part of the UK, while Algeria's resolution gained support from 13 out of the 15 members around the iconic horseshoe table. Qatar's Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani speaking on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council, called on the UN to assume its responsibilities and condemn the Israeli threat of unleashing its military operation in Rafah. More than a million displaced are sheltering there with nowhere else to run to.

"We are living the worst humanitarian disaster the world has ever seen," she said. "We also condemn the forced displacement of civilians and regret the suspension of the financing of UNRWA," she said. For its part, Qatar will continue its facilitating efforts to free all hostages, to protect civilians in Gaza and to secure a ceasefire. Riyadh H. Mansour, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, said the Algerian-led draft resolution was brought to the Council "precisely" because Israel persists with its onslaught "despite near unanimous" calls by the international community for a ceasefire.



US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield is seen alongside Algerian Ambassador Amar Bendjama during a UN Security Council vote calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, at UN Headquarters.

## EU approves 13th round of Russia sanctions ahead of war anniversary

**Monitoring Desk**  
ANTWERP: The European Union agreed on Wednesday to a new round of sanctions on Russia ahead of the second anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Welcoming the decision, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on X, formerly Twitter, that the latest salvo of sanctions keeps "the pressure high on the Kremlin."

EU representatives in Brussels signed off on the package, which targets persons and organizations

linked to the Russian government and the Russian invasion. Almost 200 people have been included in the 13th package, top EU diplomat Josep Borrell said. The package also includes measures to clamp down on sanctions evasion, he said. The EU recently targeted companies based in China, Uzbekistan, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, for example, which are allegedly involved in circumventing the EU's punitive measures.

## Israeli missile strike on Damascus flat kills two, Syria says

**Monitoring Desk**  
DAMASCUS: At least two people have been killed in a suspected Israeli missile strike in Syria's capital, Damascus, Syrian state media and activists say. The Syrian military said two civilians died when several missiles hit a block of flats in the Kafri Sousa district. A monitoring group said two foreigners and a Syrian civilian were killed, and that the area was frequented by senior figures from Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

## Russia reacts to US vetoing Gaza ceasefire

MOSCOW (Online): By again vetoing a UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, the US has shown a disregard for human life, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has claimed. On Tuesday, Washington blocked a third attempt by UNSC members to pause the fighting in Gaza. The Algerian-drafted resolution, calling for an immediate humanitarian truce, was backed by 13 nations in the 15-member body, including Russia and China. The US was the only country to vote 'no,' while the UK abstained. The Americans "are blocking the call for a ceasefire. That's it. This is their attitude towards people, not towards people of a certain nationality, but towards people in general," Zakharova said in an interview with Sputnik Radio on

Wednesday. "The solution [to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict], towards which the US is pushing people and regions, does not exist," she stressed, without explaining what she believes Washington is trying to achieve in Gaza. While the Americans continue to obstruct a truce, the situation in Gaza "only deteriorates," the spokeswoman added. Zakharova also commented on Washington's decision in early February to sanction several Israeli settlers, who were accused of stoking violence in the occupied West Bank. "Just think about it. Did these settlers come out of nowhere?.. They are part of the [Israeli] government system, which was supported by the US in the first place. The US was the guarantor of the well-being of the people who developed these lands," she stated.



Villagers and rescue personnel search for survivors amid debris in a mountainside at Nakre village in the Dara Tateen area of Noorgram district in Nuristan province, after a heavy snowfall triggered a landslide.

## At World Court, Palestinians seek end to Israeli occupation

**Monitoring Desk**  
THE HAGUE: Palestinian representatives on Monday asked judges at the U.N.'s highest court to declare Israel's occupation of their territory illegal, saying their advisory opinion could contribute to a two-state solution and a lasting peace. The requests came at the opening of a week of hearings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. The U.N. General Assembly sought an advisory, or non-binding, opinion on the occupation in 2022. More than 50 states will present arguments through Feb. 26. "We call on you to confirm that Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territory is illegal," Riad Mansour, the Palestinian representative to the United Nations, said in a speech in which his voice cracked and he shed tears. "A finding from this

distinguished court... would contribute to bringing (occupation) to an immediate end, paving a way to a just and lasting peace," he said. "A future in which no Palestinians and no Israelis are killed. A future in which two states live side by side in peace and security." The latest surge of violence in Gaza, promoted by the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel by Hamas has complicated already deeply-rooted grievances in the Middle East and damaged efforts towards finding a path to peace. The ICJ's 15-judge panel has been asked to review Israel's "occupation, settlement and annexation... including measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and from its adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures."

## Palestinians to Hague court: Israeli occupation is illegal

**Monitoring Desk**  
PALESTINIAN: Israel has been deliberately violating international law for decades, the Palestinian Authority argued on the first day of an International Court of Justice (ICJ) hearing on Israel's policies in the occupied Palestinian Territories. "The force of law must prevail," said Riyadh al-Maliki, the foreign minister of the Palestinian Authority (PA) on Monday before the highest court of the United Nations in The Hague. The PA argues that Israel has been violating international law since 1967, when Israel took control of the areas in the so-called Six Day War, by annexing wide strips of land and not granting Palestinians the right to self-determination. The UN General Assembly asked the court for an opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's actions towards Palestinians in the occupied territories in late 2022, before the beginning of the latest Gaza war last year.

## Russian agents may be to blame Poland is concerned by pro-Putin slogans at farmers' protests

**Monitoring Desk**  
WARSAW: Polish authorities voiced grave concerns Wednesday after slogans praising Russian President Vladimir Putin and his war against Ukraine appeared at Polish farmers' protests. The Foreign Ministry said it believed that extreme groups were trying to take over the farmers' protest movement "perhaps under the influence of Russian agents." On Tuesday, one tractor at a protest in the southern region of Silesia carried a Soviet flag and a

banner that said: "Putin, put things in order with Ukraine, Brussels, and our rulers." Interior Minister Marcin Kierwinski called the banner "scandalous," and said that it was immediately secured by police, and that prosecutors were also investigating. "There will be no consent to such criminal activities," he said. The public promotion of a totalitarian system can be punished with up to three years in prison under Polish law.

## Biden administration to cancel another \$1.2 billion of student loans

WASHINGTON (Internews): President Joe Biden's administration said on Wednesday it is cancelling \$1.2 billion worth of student loans for some 153,000 people who are eligible under a program used to make good on promises to increase loan forgiveness. Biden last year pledged to find other avenues for tackling debt relief after the Supreme Court in June blocked a broader plan to forgive \$430 billion in student loan debt. The administration has now canceled some \$138 billion in student debt for nearly 3.9 million people through executive actions.

## South Africa budget boosts welfare grants ahead of May election

**Monitoring Desk**  
JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's finance minister has boosted welfare payments to more than 18 million people in his last budget ahead of May's general election. The governing African National Congress (ANC) is facing a tough political challenge as it battles to maintain its outright majority in the 29 May poll. Left-wing rival the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) has already pledged to double payments to the less well off. But harsh economic conditions leave the government little room for manoeuvre. Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana was under pressure to curtail the government's growing budget deficit while also maintaining spending, and keeping taxes low, in order to not put voters off. The ANC won the 2019 election with 57% of the national vote. Opinion

polls suggest that for the first time since it took power at the end of apartheid in 1994, the party's share of the vote could fall below 50% in the upcoming election. To cheers from ANC MPs, Mr Godongwana said monthly payments to the elderly, war veterans and those with disabilities, among others, would go up by 100 rand (\$5.32; £4.22) a month - an increase in line with inflation of nearly 5%. The minister also announced a rise in grants to others, including those with children. There had been speculation, in line with what President Cyril Ramaphosa had said earlier this month, that the government would increase monthly payments to low earners and those most in need. This Social Relief of Distress Grant (SRD grant) of 350 rand (\$5.33) is currently paid to nine million people.

## SK doctors submit resignations in a spat with the government over school admission quotas

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: Trainee doctors in South Korea began submitting their resignations en masse Monday in protest of a government medical policy, causing reported delays in surgeries and other treatments at hospitals. Doctors' groups and the government have been squabbling over a government plan to increase the number of medical school admissions by 2,000, starting from next year. Health authorities say it's urgent to have more doctors considering South Korea's fast-aging population. They say the number of doctors in the country relative to the size of the population is among the lowest in the developed world. But doctors' groups say the government must use available resources to raise medical fees and resolve other problems first. Some doctors say raising

admissions could result in unnecessary medical treatments because of a competition among doctors and could burden the public health insurance plan. On Monday, trainee doctors at the country's five major hospitals began submitting letters of resignation before formally walking off their jobs on Tuesday. Their association, the Korea Intern Resident Association, decided on the collective action during an emergency meeting last week. Seoul's Asan Medical Center said that a number of interns and resident doctors there submitted resignations and that it was trying to reschedule surgeries and other treatments for some patients. Seoul's Severance Hospital said some of its trainee doctors also handed in resignations and suggested it could rearrange surgery schedules as well.

## Google releases 'open' AI models after Meta

**Monitoring Desk**  
SAN FRANCISCO (Internews): Google on Wednesday released new artificial intelligence (AI) models that outside developers potentially can fashion as their own, following a similar move by Meta Platforms (META.O), opens new tab and others. The Alphabet (GOOGL.O), opens new tab subsidiary said individuals and businesses can build AI software based on its new family of "open models" called Gemma, for free. The company is making key technical data such as what are called model weights publicly available, it said. The move may attract software engineers to build on Google's technology and encourage usage of its newly profitable cloud division.

## Ukraine outnumbered, outgunned, ground down by relentless Russia

KRAMATORSK (Internews): As the Ukraine war enters its third year, the infantry of 59th Brigade are confronting a bleak reality: they're running out of soldiers and ammunition to resist their Russian invaders. One platoon commander who goes by his call sign "Tyr" estimated that just 60-70% of the several thousand men in the brigade at the start of the conflict were still serving. The rest had been killed, wounded or signed off for reasons such as old age or illness. Heavy casualties at the hands of Russian forces have been compounded by dreadful conditions on the eastern front, with frozen soil turning into thick mud in unseasonably warm temperatures, playing havoc with soldiers' health. "The weather is rain, snow, rain, snow. People get ill with simple flu or angina as a result. They're out of action for some time, and there is nobody to replace them," said a company commander in the brigade with the call sign "Limuzyn". "The most immediate problem in every unit is lack of people."

On the cusp of the second anniversary of its Feb. 24 invasion, Vladimir Putin's Russia is in the ascendancy in a conflict.

## More than half the world faces high measles risk, WHO says

GENEVA (Internews): More than half the world's countries will be at high or very high risk of measles outbreaks by the end of the year unless urgent preventative measures are taken, the World Health Organization warned on Tuesday. Measles cases have been increasing across most regions mainly due to missed vaccinations during the COVID-19 years when health systems were overwhelmed and fell behind on routine vaccinations for preventable diseases. "What we are worried about is this year, 2024, we've got these big gaps in our immunisation programmes and if we don't fill them really quickly with the vaccine."

## Japan's industry minister chides utility president over radioactive water leak at Fukushima plant

**Monitoring Desk**  
TOKYO: Japan's industry minister summoned the president of the utility that runs the Fukushima nuclear power plant to his office Wednesday and chided him for a radioactive water leak at the plant earlier this month. Mishaps related to the massive amount of contaminated water at the tsunami-damaged Fukushima Daiichi plant are especially sensitive while the government tries to get support for discharging treated wastewater into the sea — a process that will take decades and has worried people inside and outside Japan. Industry Minister Ken Saito called for heightened safety awareness and preventive measures and urged company President Tomoaki Kobayakawa to take it seriously as a management issue. The move followed a series of mishaps led by human errors at the plant, where three nuclear reactors melted down after the massive 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Most recently, 1.5 metric ton of highly radioactive water escaped in early February during valve checks at a SARRY treatment machine designed to remove cesium and strontium from the contaminated water, according to the plant operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, or TEPCO. The leakage has been downgraded from an initial estimate of 5.5 tons. No one was injured and the spill did not escape the plant compound. Saito called on TEPCO to fully examine the mishaps to find whether they may have common causes, while considering using digital technology as a way of preventing human errors. "The mishaps would trigger uneasiness in the local community as well as many others in and outside Japan about the safety of the ongoing decommissioning carried out by TEPCO."

Germany's economic advisers plan to follow the federal government's lead and reduce their forecast for economic growth in 2024, adviser Ulrike Malmendier told Media in an interview. "I think we will definitely be going in the same direction... that is what our numbers are indicating," Malmendier said. The November forecast of the council of advisers to the government estimated growth would hit just 0.7% in 2024. The next official update is due in mid-May. The gloomy outlook for Germany comes amid concerns over its status as an industry location, as the government tries to reconcile its strict fiscal rules with the need to attract investment and help fund a costly green transition. The draft government report points to a "normalisation" of fiscal policy in 2024, after a constitutional court ruling forced the coalition to make painful cuts in its 2024 budget.

## German economy in stormy waters as government slashes forecast

BERLIN (Internews): The German government expects the economy to grow 0.2% this year, far less than a previously forecast 1.3%, as weak global demand, geopolitical uncertainty and persistently high inflation dent hopes for a swift rebound. The revised forecast was approved by the cabinet on Wednesday as part of the government's annual economic report, government sources said. Economy Minister Robert Habeck is scheduled to give details later in the day. Europe's largest economy shrank by 0.3% in 2023 and is broadly expected to enter another technical recession in the first quarter of this year. The German economy continues to find itself in difficult waters at the beginning of the year, said a draft of the report seen. It listed high inflation and a resulting loss of purchasing power among the challenges, as well as geopolitical crises and interest

rate hikes. Germany's economic advisers plan to follow the federal government's lead and reduce their forecast for economic growth in 2024, adviser Ulrike Malmendier told Media in an interview. "I think we will definitely be going in the same direction... that is what our numbers are indicating," Malmendier said. The November forecast of the council of advisers to the government estimated growth would hit just 0.7% in 2024. The next official update is due in mid-May. The gloomy outlook for Germany comes amid concerns over its status as an industry location, as the government tries to reconcile its strict fiscal rules with the need to attract investment and help fund a costly green transition. The draft government report points to a "normalisation" of fiscal policy in 2024, after a constitutional court ruling forced the coalition to make painful cuts in its 2024 budget.



Lyudmila Navalnaya, the mother of late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, and lawyer Vasily Dubkov arrive at the regional department of Russia's Investigative Committee in the town of Salekhard in the Yamalo-Nenets Region, Russia.

## UK's Trident nuclear-deterrent missile system misfires during test

LONDON (Internews): Britain's Trident nuclear-deterrent system misfired during a test last month, sending a missile crashing into the ocean off the Florida coast near the submarine that launched it, The Sun newspaper reported on Wednesday. The Ministry of Defence confirmed an 'anomaly' had occurred during the test but said the country's "nuclear deterrent remains safe, secure and effective." With defence secretary Grant Shapps on board

the HMS Vanguard to witness the test, The Sun said the first-stage boosters on the missile - equipped with dummy warheads - had failed to ignite. The result marked the second successive test failure of a Trident missile after one was reported to have veered off course in 2016, an embarrassing outcome for a country that once boasted the largest and most powerful naval force in the world. "It left the submarine but it just went plonk, right next to them," The Sun quoted a source as saying.

## Protesting Spanish farmers drive hundreds of tractors to Madrid

MADRID (Internews): Convoys of tractors disrupted traffic around the Spanish capital on Wednesday as farmers protesting against what they see as excessive red tape and insufficient state aid converged in downtown Madrid to march towards the Agriculture Ministry. Farmers have been protesting for weeks across Europe, most recently including Poland, Greece and the Czech Republic.

## Kakar calls for promoting harmony & acclimatization among different languages & civilizations

*Says every conscious person bound to honour every mother language like his own*

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has underlined the need to promote harmony and acclimatization among different languages and civilizations in the present global village. He emphasized that every conscious person has to honour every mother language of the world as he does his own mother tongue. In a message issued here on occasion of International Mother Language Day observed on Wednesday, the Governor said that the basic objective behind observance of the International Mother Language Day is to promote multilingualism and awareness about linguistic and cultural diversity. It may be mentioned here that the theme for International Mother Language Day 2024 is "Multilingual education is a pillar of intergenerational learn-

ing". He said that every mother tongue is not only recognition of any nation, but also spirit of any native culture. The Governor said that mother language is an effective source of mutual contact and coordination along with the source of expression. In addition to this, mother language is also long continuance of transferring heritage from one generation to the other, he maintained. Malik Abdul Wali Khan said that the United Nations charter and Constitution of Pakistan 1973 are guarantor of the protection and promotion of mother languages, as such there is a dire need to promote concordance and coherence among different languages and civilizations. In this regard, it is also necessary that our intelligentsia and literary figures should get the precious literary and scientific material of the world's developed languages translated.



QUETTA: Syed Asif Ali Shah meeting with Caretaker Home Minister Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali.

## Resignation to not annul SJC's proceeding against judge: SC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday ruled that the resignation or retirement of a judge would not stop the underway proceeding of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) against him. The court announced the verdict with the majority of 4/1 as Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi gave disagreement. A five-member bench of the top court headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan announced the verdict which was earlier reserved after hearing arguments from respondents in the intra court appeal (ICA). Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan were also

part of the bench. The written order said, "For the reasons to be recorded later, the delay in filing both the appeals is condoned. Both the appeals are partially allowed to the extent that if the proceedings have already been initiated by the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) against a Judge, same shall not abate on his resignation or retirement, as the case may be, during such proceedings. It is the prerogative of the SJC to proceed with the matter accordingly. The impugned judgment is modified to that extent. This order is with the majority of four by one disagreeing (Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, J.) on the point of limitation as well as on merits."



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Health Abdullah Khan and Provincial Coordinator MNCH Program Dr. Gul Sabeen distributing certificate among master trainers on conclusion of two days training of child specialists in collaboration with UNICEF.

## Every eye is tearful on ongoing Israeli brutality in Palestine: Samina

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri has expressed her deep sorrow and anger and her deep concern over the ongoing brutality on Palestine by Israel. She said in her statement that Pakistan has serious reservations about the Israeli aggression on Palestine in the Middle East. Hundreds of Palestinians are being martyred on a daily basis, which is a slap on the face of humanity. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said in her statement that the Israeli attacks schools, hospitals and even ambulances are being targeted, which is also against the rules humanity and international law. More than 30,000 Palestinian Muslims have been martyred in Israeli brutality, including a large number of innocent children. She said that we are concerned about the ongoing Israeli brutality in the Middle East and the fragile and fragile situation of Palestine. Pakistan has always advocated a two-state solution for lasting peace in the Middle East. It has called on the United Nations and other organizations to establish a viable,

independent and contiguous state based on the pre-1967 borders. Palestine should be established with Jerusalem as its capital. She called on the international community to unite for the survival of the lives of Palestinian citizens and the protection of Palestine and lasting peace in the Middle East. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri also said that in the Middle East World peace has been threatened by increasing violence and this situation can turn into a major tragedy at any time. She said that there is an urgent need to solve the Palestine problem, for which the United Nations must play its full role. She said that sustainable peace in the Middle East lies only in the two-state solution. Palestine is an independent state founded on the pre-1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri also called on the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) to raise its voice for Palestine and the helpless Palestinian citizens in the recent war clashes between Israel and Palestine and to be truly effective for the long-standing Palestinian issue.



ROMANIA: Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami in a group photo with Pakistan Navy and M/s DAMEN Shipyard Galati officials during launching ceremony of state-of-the-art 4th Offshore Patrol Vessel, PNS YAMAMA (Design) being built for Pakistan Navy was held at M/s DAMEN Shipyard Galati, Romania.

## Pak calls for boosting UN peacekeeping missions' role to deal with conflicts

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has called for strengthening the role and capacity of UN peacekeeping in hotspots around the world, saying the missions must be part of the effort to address and resolve the underlying causes of conflict and violence. Ambassador Munir Akram told the U.N. Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which held its first 2024 session on Tuesday. The Pakistani envoy said that peacekeeping—U.N.'s flagship activity—was a "success story." Pakistan, he said, has over the years contributed more than 200,000 personnel to 47 peacekeeping missions in "often challenging theatres" of conflict around the world, in addition to hosting one of the first such operations—the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), which monitors the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in disputed Jammu and Kashmir. Ambassador Akram called for accountability of the growing attacks against UN peacekeepers, noting the increasingly difficult challenges—from terrorists' criminal groups, and tribal rivalries, with unprecedented levels of threats to the peacekeepers' safety and security. "Often there is no peace to keep," he added. "We are also concerned by the increased misinformation and disinformation against UN Peacekeeping Missions and Peacekeepers resulting in threats to their safety and security," the Pakistani envoy said. In this regard, Ambassador Akram suggested an updated strategy that would ensure provision to each Mission with adequate financial, human, material resources and advanced capabilities—UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicle), radar, early warning, intelligence and counter-IED (improvised explosive devices)—to implement its mandate. "The distinction between peacekeeping and peace enforcement must always remain clear and distinct" he emphasized, adding that an enforcement mission would require strong and clear mandates, adequately trained, experienced and equipped troops, allocation of the substantial resources which such missions require, and above all, the cooperation of the host government. In this context, the Pakistani envoy said the role of regional organizations could play a critical role in peace enforcement efforts.

## WB delegation visits T-5 project Tarbela to review progress

TARBELA (APP): A delegation from the World Bank (WB) conducted a thorough inspection of the ongoing work at the Tarbela Dam T-5 extension project aimed at enhancing the dam's capacity. During the visit they received a detailed briefing regarding the project's progress, highlighting its significance in generating 1530 megawatts of electricity upon completion. The World Bank delegation inspected the site of the fifth extension project of Tarbela Dam, GM Tarbela Anwar Shah and Chief Engineer T-5 Wasim Raza gave a detailed briefing to the delegation about the project's progress and achievements thus far. The project's completion is advancing at a rapid pace, promising to deliver 1530 megawatts of electricity, upon its culmination.



ISLAMABAD: Feb 21- Leader of Jamaat-e-Islami Siraj-ul-Haq addressing press conference at Al-Falah Hall sector F-8, in the Federal Capital.

## Annual Urs of Fatehpur Dargah: Caretaker Minister Home directs to make adequate security arrangements

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Captain (Retd) Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali has directed the Deputy Commissioner Jhal Magsi to make adequate security arrangements on eve of annual Urs of Dargah Fatehpur so that no untoward incident is occurred there. The directives were issued by the caretaker Minister during meeting with a delegation from Dargah Fatehpur who called on him under leadership of Syed Asif Ali Shah, here on Wednesday. The members of delegation extended formal to the caretaker Minister to participate in the annual Urs of Dargah Fatehpur. They requested the Minister for making strict security measures for the annual Urs. On this, the Minister Home called Deputy Commissioner Jhal Magsi Ejaz Sarwar and directed him to make necessary security arrangements.

## Vigilance teams constituted to curb cheating in SSC exams: Chairman

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE), Ejaz Azeem Baloch said on Wednesday that vigilance teams have been constituted to curb cheating in the SSC exams kicked off across the province. He expressed these views during his visit to the examination centers in the provincial capital. The Chairman BBISE, during his visit, examined the facilities at the examination centers for students and examination staff besides reviewing the digital system installed to ensure attendance of the staff. He, on the occasion said that 1,43,000 students are appearing in the 430 examination centers. Terming cheating course for the society, he called for taking concrete steps to eradicate the course more effectively.

## Poliovirus detected in Lasbela sewage samples

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Ministry of Health sources on Wednesday confirmed the presence of poliovirus in sewage samples of the Lasbela. According to sources within Health Ministry, Type-1 Wild Poliovirus (WPV1) was detected in sewage samples collected from Lasbela district. "The genome sequencing of the virus, found in samples collected from Lasbela and Hub, showed that it belonged to Gadap Karachi. Last month, the Ministry of Health confirmed the presence of poliovirus in environmental samples from nine districts of the country. According to the spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, the virus was found in one sample each from Quetta, Mastung, Multan, Peshawar, Nowshera, and Hub. The Poliovirus was also found in samples from Karachi Malir, Karachi South and Dera Ismail Khan. It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan reported its sixth polio case of 2023 after a nine-month-old child in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Orakzai district became the latest victim of the crippling disease in December last year.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting.

## PNS Yamama launching ceremony held at Romania's DAMEN Shipyard Galati

RAWALPINDI (APP): The launching ceremony of state-of-the-art 4th Offshore Patrol Vessel, PNS YAMAMA (Design) being built for Pakistan Navy was held at DAMEN Shipyard Galati, Romania. Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami attended the occasion as Chief Guest, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff underscored the importance of maritime security under the prevailing conventional and non-conventional maritime threats to energy and trade highways passing through Indian Ocean Region. In this context, he highlighted that Pakistan Navy had tremendous contribution in maintaining safe and secure sea environment for maritime trade. The Admiral expressed his confidence that induction of these multipurpose and highly adaptive platforms; equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors will further strengthen combat capability of PN Fleet in safeguarding maritime frontiers while ensuring Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region, especially in the Arabian Sea. Earlier during his welcome address, Chief Operations Officer of DAMEN Group Netherlands highlighted that DAMEN Shipyard.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council & Special Assistant for interfaith Harmony, Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi addressing a Press conference during the Misaq-e-Pakistan Convention.

## Political parties urged to forge national accord to steer country out of crises

ISLAMABAD (APP): Religious scholars and leaders on Wednesday urged political parties to forge a national accord requiring collective efforts to steer the country out of crises. In the joint declaration adopted at the "Convention for Pakistan Accord", the scholars and leaders from all religious schools of thoughts emphasized the necessity for all stakeholders, including state institutions, and political and religious parties to jointly formulate a covenant for the betterment of the nation. The covenant, named the Pakistan Accord, should outline the trajectory for the country's next 25 years addressing both internal and external challenges and finding effective solutions for economic crisis and combating extremism, terrorism, and youth radicalization, they added. The convention organized by the Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) was chaired by its Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi. They said it should outline a unified plan for steering beloved country for the next 25 years. The Ulama and scholars urged the political parties to accept one another's mandate and resolve their electoral disputes as per the Constitution and law. They emphasized that economic stability was intricately linked with political stability. "As Pakistan faces several challenges, which can be addressed through cooperation from all democratic forces," they added. The religious scholars and leaders stressed the importance of fostering an environment of tolerance and mutual respect among all political leaders, aiming to eliminate past animosities. They proposed that Pakistan's foreign policy, along with improving relations with friendly countries, should also focus on alleviating poverty and unemployment through a plan for youth rehabilitation, aiming to eliminate extremism and terrorism.



QUETTA: Provincial President Pakhtoonkha National Awami Party Nasrullah Zarey addressing a ceremony held on eve of World Mother Languge Day.

## Scouting has profound impact on youth, says provincial commissioner

QUETTA (APP): Scouting has a profound impact on youth and plays a vital role in personality development in their lives, said Balochistan Boys Scouts Association Provincial Commissioner and Provincial Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs on Wednesday. "As we celebrate Lord Baden-Powell's birthday, Scouting's impact on youth personal development, environmental protection and community involvement is deeply felt in our region," he said in a statement issued here. Commemorating World Scouting Day, he said scouting provides our youth with an essential platform for self-exploration, leadership development and service to others. Besides, it empowers individuals, provides training for physical and mental development and value enhancement, and fosters inter-connections, harmony and solidarity with social evolution, leading to positive change among youth. It is worth mentioning that we could witness the strength of Scouting, which nurtures compassion and empathy in our youth.

## Fixation of prices of medicines notification challenged in LHC

LAHORE (Online): The notification regarding fixation of price of medicines has been challenged in Lahore High Court (LHC). The petition has been filed by a citizen Muhammad Aslam making federal government and others respondents. The petitioner took the plea the care taker government issued notification against law for fixing the prices of medicines. The prices of medicines will increase after notification. It was further said in the petition government is removing the section of fixing prices of medicines from drug act. Care taker government does not have these powers. Democratic government is coming and this step can be taken only by it. The petitioner requested the present notification runs contrary to law and constitution. The