

# Independent

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Gwadar

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QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti enquiring about the health of Harnai blast victims.

## Bugti inquires about health of Harnai blast injured: Writ of State would be maintained at every cost, vows Chief Minister

### Chief Minister also greets Christian community on Easter; shares joys of religious festival

#### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that the terrorists would be taken to task and the writ of State would be maintained at every cost.

The Chief Minister was speaking on occasion of the visit of hospital here on Sunday. The Chief Minister inquired about the health of those injured in the bomb explosion in Harnai the other day.

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti expressed best wishes for the injured besides praying for their early recovery.

The Chief Minister said that the sacrifices of security forces and other people would not go wasted at all.

He vowed that the ter-

rorists would be taken to task.

He expressed satisfaction over provision of better facilities of medical treatment to the injured.

It may be mentioned here that the injured persons of Harnai blast were being provided medical treatment in the hospital.

The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has extended greetings of Easter to the Christian community.

In a felicitation message issued here on eve of the Easter celebrations on Sunday, the Chief Minister said that we equally share joys of Easter with the Christian community.

He said that Easter expresses promotion of social harmony.

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed

Bugti referred the role of Christian community in economic development of the province and country saying that the role played by the Christians can't be forgotten. The Chief Minister said that Pakistan is a beautiful bouquet of different cultures and beliefs.

He said that the Constitution of Pakistan has provided complete protection to the rights of religious minorities.

The provincial government also ensures religious freedom and protection to all the minorities including Christian community in the province, he mentioned adding that on this day, we once again reiterate our resolve to work for social development and welfare of all the minorities.

## Responds to Biden's letter Pakistan attaches high importance to its ties with US: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has said that Pakistan attached high importance to its ties with the US.

Respond to a letter of US President Joe Biden, the prime minister said that both countries had been working together on various significant initiatives in energy, climate change, agriculture, health and education sectors.

The cooperation between the two countries on energy sector and Green Alliance framework was welcoming, PM Office Media



Wing, in a press release on Sunday, quoted the prime minister as saying.

He further wrote that Pakistan desired to work with the US for the achievement of shared goals of global peace and stability and regional progress and prosperity.

Earlier, the US President had addressed a letter to the prime minister in which he extended felicitation to the new government.

President Biden further emphasized upon the "enduring partnership" between the US and Pakistan.

## Petrol prices increased by Rs 9.66 per liter, diesel reduced Rs 3.32

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government on Sunday increased the price of Motor Spirit (MS) Petrol by Rs 9.66 per liter and reduced high speed diesel by Rs 3.32 per litre.

The price of MS petrol was fixed at Rs 289.41 per litre as against its existing price of Rs 279.75 per litre, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance on Sunday.

However, the price of High-Speed Diesel was reduced by Rs 3.32 per litre as HS-Diesel would be available at Rs 282.24 per litre as compared to its previous price of Rs 285.56 per litre during next fortnight starting from April 1, 2024.

It said that the prices of petrol (Motor Gasoline) has increased in the international market during the last fortnight, while the price of HSD has marginally declined.

## Ministries given targets to provide early relief to people: Attaullah Tarar

### Says Govt committed to ensuring equal rights for Christians

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Sunday that all ministries had been given targets aimed at overcoming challenges facing the country. In a press conference at the PML-N's Secretariat here, he said that in yesterday's meeting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif gave short, medium and long term targets to all ministries aimed at bringing betterment to

the people. "The Cabinet consist of experienced people, youths, seasoned politicians and technical



LAHORE: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar speaking at a press conference.

## Indian Air Force admits incapability in Brahmos Missile technology

NEW DELHI (INP): Finally, the Indian Air Force (IAF) proved the stance of Pakistan correct by admitting its incapability in missile technology, especially in the Brahmos Missile case.

The IAF has filed its report in the Delhi High Court that combat connectors of the Brahmos missile "remained connected to

the junction box" which landed in Pakistan in March 2022.

The Economic Times said in its report that the IAF revealed its incapability in missile technology in a reply filed in the Delhi High Court.

Revealed in a report filed in the Delhi High Court, the IAF detailed findings from a Court of



QUETTA: Inspector General Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

## No one would be allowed to dislocate local people from Gwadar: Jahanzaib Baloch

QUETTA: The central Secretary General of Balochistan National Party (BNP), Jahanzaib Baloch has stated that no one would be allowed to dislocate the local Baloch people from Gwadar.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, the BNP's senior leader said that it is no less than cruelty to fence the Gwadar.

He asked the state to review its decision in this regard as such a behavior with people of Gwadar is sorrowful.

He said that we would allow anyone to dislocate the local people of Gwadar from anywhere.

He said that the gov-

ernment has the funds for fencing in Gwadar, but doesn't have the same for the rain affected people.

He said that BNP would defend rights of the people and their land at every front.

He stressed that the people of Balochistan should be given right in their land and resources.

He said that we don't want such development at the cost of our identity, culture, language and rights.

He said that the BNP and its leadership has always voiced for the issues of the province including recovery of the missing persons and we are proud of Sardar Akhtar Mengal.



PESHAWAR: Activists of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) are holding protest demonstration for release of Imran Khan, Former Prime Minister, at Peshawar press club.

## 10 people killed, 12 other injured in rain, hailstorms related incident in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): As many as 10 people were killed and 12 others injured in the heavy rain and hail storms related incident, said Provincial Disasters Management Authority report issued on the loss of life and property in the province since the last two days here.

According to details, 10 people died and 12 people were injured as a result of accidents due to rain and hailstorm during the last two days in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the PDMA report said.

The deaths include 8 children and 2 women, while the injured include 9 children, two women and 1 man, the reports said.

A total of 27 houses were damaged due to the collapse of walls and roofs in different districts, in which 3 houses were com-

pletely damaged and 24 houses were partially damaged, the PDMA report said.

Due to recent rains, 4 people died and 3 were injured in Shangla with 2 houses were partially damaged and three children killed and 1 injured and 1 house partially damaged in Bannu, a woman and a child were killed and 2 were injured in Bajaur with three houses were partially damaged.

Three persons including a woman were injured and a house partially damaged in Peshawar and in Nowshera, three people were injured and several houses were partially damaged, the report said. One woman was killed and three houses were partially damaged in Mansehra and one house in Mardan, three in Mardan and two in Waziristan were damaged.

## Two policemen shot dead in Naushehro, Ghotki

NAUSHEHRO FEROZ/ GHOTKI (NNI): Two policemen were shot dead in Naushehro Feroz and Ghotki districts of Sindh.

ASI Noor Ahmed Lashari was killed in firing at Bhiria Road in Naushehro Feroz district while going to his duty, police said.

Another policeman, Ghulam Nabi Sehto was killed in firing at the National Highway in Ghotki. The police has called the murder of head constable Ghulam Nabi likely to be result of personal enmity.

Police inquiring into the murder incident, officials said. At least five policemen were injured as the bandits' fired rockets at a police mobile in Shikarpur district.

## Millions of Pakistanis observe Itikaaf

ISLAMABAD (INP): Just like other parts of the world, millions of Muslims in Pakistan also entered a state of seclusion known as "Itikaaf", following the Asr prayer on Sunday.

During the final ten days of the holy month of Ramadan, people observe Itikaaf, a time to pray in private for the blessings of Allah Almighty and in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

## Governor exhorts philanthropists to give zakat & sadqat to poor orphans, widows, patients during this Ramadan

#### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has exhorted the philanthropists of the province to give their zakat and Sadqat to the poor orphans, widows, patients and those students who can't afford to pay their fees.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, the Governor said that the Allah's appeasement is in meeting the needs of people and in their service.

Addressing to the philanthropists, the Governor said that they should provide

financial assistance to the deserving relatives and neighbors not to those who are unknown to them or those unregistered institutions as this trend can be disastrous for us.

While giving donations to the people, one should be careful as the same may not be taken by any miscreant, adding the Governor stressed.

He said that this is also necessary to give right to the rightful persons.

The Governor said that the poor and destitute people can become useful citizens of society with

small financial assistance.

He said that if one wants that any zakat or khairat taking person this year may include in the list of the zakat giving persons next year then one should be helped to start one's own small business.

By extending financial assistance to the deserving people to start their own business, we can save them and their families from seeking zakat and khairat from others, he believed adding that this would enable them to make their both ends meet.



QUETTA: MPA Mir Asadullah Baloch shaking hand with Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

## ECP issues final list of 59 candidates for Senate elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has published a final list of candidates vying for the Senate election for the vacant 48 seats which will be held on April 2.

Overall 59 candidates are vying for 48 seats while it is pertinent to mention that out of 48 seats, 18 can-

didates have been elected unopposed. However, the Senate election on 11 seats of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was in jeopardy, while the election on the remaining 30 Senate seats will be held on April 2.

Elections will be held on 12 seats in Sindh, 5 seats in Punjab, and 2 seats in the federal capital Islamabad.

## Special arrangements made in Quetta: Christian community celebrates Easter with religious enthusiasm

QUETTA: The Christian community of Quetta celebrated the Easter festival with religious respect and enthusiasm in the metropolis on Sunday.

While the big religious gatherings were held at different churches located in the metropolis with large number of people from

Christian community participated in them, the families also celebrated the festival at their homes.

Such a gathering on eve of the Easter was held at the Methodist Church, Zarghoun road where special service was held. A large number of people belonging to Christian community including

men, women and children wearing new clothes and dresses participated in the special service.

Special security arrangements were made by the police in and around the churches to prevent any untoward incident.

Meanwhile, the people exchanged greetings of Easter with each other.



QUETTA: The Christian community member celebrated Easter with religious zest.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**In limbo**

FOLLOWING the Dec 13, 2023, order from the Supreme Court — wherein it had suspended the operation of an earlier judgement declaring military trials for civilians 'illegal' and allowed hearings against May 9 suspects to be completed — more than 100 citizens were consigned to a legal purgatory of sorts.

They were neither to be convicted nor acquitted till the country's top judges made up their minds regarding whether or not military trials for civilians are acceptable under the law. The matter was then shelved for months.

This Monday, a six-member bench of the SC realised, perhaps a tad belatedly, that the decision had also delayed the release of those who were to be handed shorter jail terms by the military courts, as well as those against whom no case was proven.

As a 'remedy', the SC this Thursday allowed the military courts to pronounce reserved verdicts in these specific cases, which would allow nominated suspects to be released before Eid. It was reported that 15 to 20 people would benefit from the order — subject, of course, to the army chief's approval.

However, the approximately 80 civilians still left in military custody would have to wait till the appeals against the SC's military court verdict are decided because it is that decision which will ultimately determine whether or not any of these trials was legally valid.

It bears recalling that the SC had in October last year ruled that military courts had no business prosecuting civilians for rioting and that all May 9 suspects should be tried in criminal courts instead. If the six-member apex court bench hearing the appeals against this judgement upholds it, it could mean that all suspects, including those who are about to be released, may have to undergo a retrial in a criminal court. The judges who suspended the Supreme Court's October ruling ought to have factored this into account. They should have realised that they were prolonging the suspects' legal battle and, thereafter, taken the appeals up with more urgency. Now, they have allowed the military courts to issue verdicts without determining whether or not the trials are even lawful. This matter needs to be put to rest. The time the suspects have already spent in custody will not be returned to them. The principle of presumption of innocence exists so that no one faces punishment for a crime till it has been proven in a competent court of law.

It is most unfortunate that the Supreme Court created this situation, which allowed the state to continue depriving civilians of their constitutional liberties without any finding of guilt against them. As some observers have pointed out, in our legal system, the process itself seems to be the punishment. This should not be allowed to continue.

**"Beyond Interference: Redefining the Scope of Judicial Protection"**

By Qamar Bashir

Press Secretary to the President(Rtd); Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



Chief Justice Qazi Faez Esa, nearing the end of his tenure, chose not to address the complaint filed by six serving judges through the Supreme Judicial Council or by convening a full court of the Supreme Court. Instead, he passed it onto the civilian government, which many perceive as being under the complete influence of the powerful establishment. This decision has been viewed as a missed opportunity to restore judicial independence from the alleged overwhelming control exerted by the establishment, which is often equated with the state itself. This control extends to all facets of governance, including the parliament, governments, cabinets, electoral processes, judicial proceedings, and foreign policy decisions, as well as the management of trade, business, investment, agriculture, and livestock.

The Chief Justice's decision to avoid addressing the complaint prompted over 300 members of the legal fraternity to stage a protest before the Supreme Court today (31.03.2024), urging the Court to take responsibility for adjudicating the matter under Article 184(3) of the Constitution. They argued that any government-led commission would lack the necessary independence and authority to properly investigate the

claims. Analysts, jurists, and lawyers have widely criticized the appointment of Tassaduq Hussain Jilani, who served as the 21<sup>st</sup> Chief Justice of Pakistan from 2013 to 2014, to head the one-man commission tasked with adjudicating the complaint of six judges. Many have deemed this appointment highly inadequate, inappropriate, and out of context, given Jilani's age—barely two years younger than Pakistan itself. They argue that since the complaint directly implicates the executive branch as the culprit, appointing a commission headed by someone associated with the executive undermines the integrity of the process. It's seen as illogical and unfitting for the accused to be tasked with providing justice to the complainants.

Meanwhile, the PTI, emerging as one of the largest stakeholders, has been particularly affected by judicial decisions allegedly manipulated by the establishment. These decisions have targeted the incarceration of PTI's former chairman and top-tier leadership, resulting in significant upheaval within the party. PTI has not only lost its founding chairman, top and second-tier leadership, but also its iconic symbol and brand name. Currently, it has been absorbed into an irrelevant and sectarian party, Sunni Itehad, thereby alienating sympathizers from other sects. The heavy toll this has taken on PTI appears irreversible at this juncture.

The terms of reference assigned to the

commission are notable for their focus on investigating direct involvement of officials in judicial interference and recommending appropriate action against implicated agencies, departments, or state institutions based on evidence uncovered. However, the absence of mention regarding indirect involvement suggests a potential gap in the scope of the inquiry. Additionally, the commission's starting assumption that no interference has occurred places the burden of proof on the six judges, who must substantiate their claims comprehensively with evidence, witnesses, and circumstantial evidence. Failure to do so could lead to the judges facing accusations of lodging false or concocted complaints, adding a significant layer of complexity to the proceedings. Moreover, granting the commission the authority to explore additional matters deemed totally inappropriate.

The analyst and jurists believe that the TORs assigned to the commission lack specificity and urgency in addressing the issue of unlawful interference. While they include provisions for investigating interference and recommending action, they may not adequately address the need for proactive measures to prevent future interference or hold accountable those responsible. Additionally, the assigned TORs may not fully acknowledge the complexity of the issue or provide clear guidance on how to address challenges such as fixing re-

sponsibility in the absence of concrete evidence.

Rejecting the Terms of Reference (TORs), analysts and jurists argue the letter written by the six judges transcends mere complaints or allegations. Instead, it resembles a decision by a six-member high court bench. After conducting investigations, gathering facts, and recording witness testimonies, the bench unequivocally declared the unlawful elements within the country's prime spying agency and the establishment guilty of blatant and brute interference in judicial matters.

The bench highlighted that the unlawful elements within the establishment use coercive tactics, including intimidation, blackmail, and eavesdropping, to influence bench formations and court decisions aligning with their political and administrative agendas. Furthermore, by openly defying or frustrating court orders that contradict their objectives, the unlawful elements within the establishment undermines the judiciary's independence. The bench sought guidance from the Supreme Judicial Council on defensive measures to safeguard against such unlawful interference and ensure the judiciary's autonomy to dispense justice impartially and transparently.

Analysts and jurists criticize the use of the phrase "interference of the executive". They argue that the type of interference faced by the judiciary transcends constitutional boundaries and legal frame-

works. Rather than being categorized as executive interference, it should be characterized as unlawful coercion perpetrated by rogue elements within state institutions. These elements employ illicit means to manipulate and intimidate the judiciary, undermining its independence and impartiality therefore cannot be legally termed as executive. As such, they should not be regarded as lawful actors but as unlawful elements seeking to subvert the rule of law through coercion and intimidation tactics.

Henceforth, the Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Commission should reflect a proactive approach, beginning with the acknowledgment that unlawful interference with the judiciary has already been substantiated. The Commission should then focus on recommending measures to safeguard the judiciary from undue, unlawful, and blatant interference perpetrated by rogue elements within state security institutions.

Secondly, the Commission should provide practical and actionable recommendations regarding how the lower and higher judiciary can respond effectively to such unlawful interference. These recommendations should empower the judiciary to maintain its independence and integrity in the face of external pressures.

Thirdly, the Commission must address the challenge of fixing responsibility on unlawful elements within the state security apparatus, even in the absence of concrete evidence and witnesses. Given the

sophisticated techniques employed by these elements to conceal their activities, the Commission should explore innovative strategies for holding them accountable.

Fourthly, the Commission should propose the enactment of new legislation and regulations aimed at establishing dedicated security forces tasked with protecting the lower and higher judiciary from unlawful interference, whether originating from within state institutions or external non-state actors.

Lastly, the Commission should recommend mechanisms to ensure the implementation of court decisions and prevent their violation or frustration through selective administrative, legal, or illegal means. These measures should reinforce the rule of law and uphold the authority of judicial decisions in the face of external pressures.

The proposed Terms of Reference (TORs) present a comprehensive and proactive approach to addressing the issue of unlawful interference with the judiciary. They prioritize acknowledging the existing problem and recommending concrete measures to safeguard judicial independence and integrity. By focusing on empowering the judiciary to respond effectively, holding accountable those responsible for interference, and proposing legislative reforms, the proposed TORs offer a robust framework for addressing the challenges at hand.

**Commerce News****Kyrgyzstan keen on joint ventures with Pak businessmen, investors**

LAHORE (APP): Kyrgyzstan has offered a basket of incentives to fully facilitate Pakistani entrepreneurs and investors in joint ventures. Ms Asel Begmatova, Head of External Relations Department of Kyrgyz Ministry of Economy and Commerce, presented these offers to Pak trade delegation led by Meher Kashif Younis, honorary Consul of Kyrgyzstan in Pakistan. The delegation is on a two-week visit to Kyrgyzstan to study the scope of further strengthening bilateral trade and promotion of exports. Kyrgyzstan Trade House (KTH) President Dr Shahid Hassan was also present, according to Meher's spokesman here Sunday. Briefing the Pakistani delegation, Ms Begmatova said that joint ventures would not only cater to Kyrgyz needs but also generate profits of investors with sovereign guarantees. She added, "Our welcoming stance

towards Pakistani entrepreneurs and investors signifies a mutual desire to strengthen economic ties and foster bilateral cooperation by providing ample support and assistance. Kyrgyzstan aims to create an environment conducive to investment and business collaboration."

The emphasis on joint ventures underscores the importance of partnerships that leverage the strengths and resources of both nations, she remarked, citing that collaborative efforts between Pakistani and Kyrgyz businesses hold the potential to tap into diverse markets, capitalize on comparative advantages, and drive economic growth. "Our assurance of facilitating investments in areas of choice reflects Kyrgyzstan's recognition of the importance of encouraging investors especially from Pakistan to take full advantage of

ample opportunities that align with their interests and expertise," she maintained. By offering flexibility and support, Kyrgyzstan seeks to attract diverse investments that contribute to the country's development while also benefiting investors, she added.

Ms Begmatova said the emphasis on garnering profits underscores the pragmatic approach to attract investments that yield tangible returns. By prioritizing profitability, Kyrgyzstan aims to create sustainable partnerships that endure beyond short-term gains and foster long-term economic prosperity. Other Kyrgyz officials Takirov Urmat, Director Centre for Development and Promotion of Exports, Ministry of Economy and Commerce, Tilek Zhumaliev, Head of the Export Promotion Department, Export Center Asel Turgunbaeva, an expert of the department.

**PIAF says GDP drops to 1% as LSM shows -0.52% growth in Q2**

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has pointed out that the GDP growth has stood at one percent in the second quarter of the current fiscal year, as the LSM has registered a negative 0.52 percent growth, leading to drop in overall the GDP growth of the country.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the decline in LSM may have been due to a massive slash in the credit to the private sector, as the credit to the private sector during July-Jan 2024 plummeted 41 percent to Rs180.7 billion

from Rs393.6 billion for the same period a year before mainly due to high markup rate.

He said that business friendly policies must be adopted as other neighboring countries of the region are giving to trade and industry. The amount specified in trade policy should be utilised for the promotion of exports by giving incentives to the trade and industry and by exploring new markets, he suggested. The PIAF chairman said that the high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for Pakistan's industry, discouraging investment both in capacity and capability.

**FBR collects Rs6,710 billion, revenues grew by 30% in 9 months**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had collected Rs6,710 billion revenues during first 09 months of current financial year as against the set targets of Rs6,707 billion.

During the period from July-March, 2023-24, the FBR had collected Rs6,710 billion against the set targets of Rs6,707 billion for the first nine months, said a press release issued here Sunday.

Meanwhile, the FBR had also cleared refunds amounting to Rs369 billion were as compared to Rs254 billion issued during the same period last year.



HYDERABAD: Women busy in Eid shopping at Resham Bazaar during upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations.

**Pak, Canada reiterate to explore economic prospects, skillful manpower**

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan and Canada have reaffirmed their commitment to remain constructively engaged to further reinforce bilateral relations, as there were a number of sectors that had a huge potential for cooperation, especially the export of skillful manpower to improve the national economy.

These views were discussed in a tripartite meeting of the All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF), Punjab Board of Investment & Trade (PBIT) and Member Parliament of the House of Commons of Canada Ms. Salma Zahid, held here on Sunday, to discuss various trade opportunities between Pakistan and

Canada with major focus on export of skilled labour force from Pakistan.

Salma Zahid, who was also the Member Standing Committee of Immigration and Citizenship of Canada, has recently been awarded with the Pakistan civil award of 'Sitara-e-Quaid-e-Azam' for her remarkable services to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Member Parliament of the Canadian House of Commons emphasized Pakistan's deep appreciation for its relationship with Canada and its commitment to fostering enduring and multifaceted bilateral relations. She stressed the importance of increasing

trade between the two nations and called for closer collaboration among business communities. Promoting bilateral cooperation across public, commercial, and parliamentary spheres was highlighted as pivotal to strengthening the Pakistan-Canada partnership.

Ms. Salma Zahid expressed gratitude to APBF and PBIT for inviting her and said that Canada and Pakistan have all the resources for business collaboration and export of skilled workforce.

She pledged to return with different new ideas of JVs, collaborations and export of demand base skilled workforce to boost the bilateral trade ties.

**ICCI delegation visits Embassy of Libya**

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari along with a delegation of businessmen on Sunday visited the Embassy of Libya.

They met with the Libyan ambassador and discussed matters relating to promoting bilateral trade

and investment opportunities between both countries, according to a press release. They discussed ways and means for further strengthening the existing bilateral relations between Libya and Pakistan and further cementing them for the mutual benefit of the people of both countries.

**KP govt contacts FBR to discuss arrears**

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Adviser Muzamil Aslam Sunday contacted Chairman Federal Board of Revenue of Pakistan (FBR) on the telephone to discuss arrears of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority on Sunday.

**Bilal Yasin says: Efforts on to ensure availability of quality food items at fixed rates**

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin has said that public representatives are in the field to ensure the availability of quality food items at low prices to people.

He said this while presiding over a meeting in the Punjab Assembly Committee Room on Sunday, said a handout. The meeting was briefed about food prices, supply chain, and actions taken against hoarders and adulteration across the province. The meeting was also briefed about the

upcoming wheat crop situation and the department's preparations. The food minister said that there was plenty of wheat in the market, so flour and bread should be available to the public at fixed rates.

The minister directed the administration to ensure their presence in markets across the province to keep a close eye on demand and supply and ensure availability of high quality commodities.

Bilal Yasin said that providing all possible relief to the people was the first priority of the government.



FAISALABAD: Workers cutting iron boilers on Maqbool Road, in the city.

**PM Ramadan Relief package: USC achieves 80pc sale target across region**

MULTAN (APP): Utility Stores Corporation (USC) achieved about 80 percent sale target so far across the region under PM Ramadan Relief Package.

Regional Manager USC Multan Region, Chaudhary Sajjad Hussain, while talking to APP here on Sunday said that the PM Ramadan Relief package 2024 was underway successfully across the region as 2,58,247 customers visited the USC stores so far to avail the government subsidy during holy month. He said that the incumbent government was providing targeted subsidy

on various commodities to masses to alleviate the financial burden of the one million people across the region. He informed that they had collected Rs 680 million out of Rs 820 million total sale target set for Multan region.

He said that flour was available at six mobile stores, seven static stores and 72 regular stores across the region to facilitate the citizens. Mr Sajjad informed that the maximum people were taking benefit from the PM Ramadan Relief package as incumbent government enhanced PMT score upto 60.





KARACHI: A large number of supporters of Jamat-e-Islami (JI) are gathered to attend rally against Israeli cruel and inhumane acts and express unity with the innocent people of Palestine, at Shahrah-e-Quaideen in Karachi.

## Ashrafi hails SIFC as catalyst for Pakistan's economic progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Sunday commended the establishment of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a pivotal stride towards economic revitalization.

He, speaking to the press, lauded SIFC as a visionary initiative spearheaded by Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir. He emphasized that this landmark initiative has garnered trust not only from fraternal Islamic Arab nations but also from both local and foreign investors.

Expressing optimism, Ashrafi underscored the potential of SIFC under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to navigate Pakistan out of its prevailing economic challenges, aligning with the visionary strategies advocated by the army chief.

Acknowledging SIFC as a testament to the collaboration between the military and civilian leadership, the PUC chairman hailed it as a substantial boon for both Pakistani and foreign investors. He reiterated his belief that SIFC would serve as a cornerstone for the development and prosperity of Pakistan, encapsulating the shared vision of the government and the armed forces.

With the establishment of SIFC, Ashrafi said Pakistan stands poised to attract increased investments, foster economic growth, and pave the way for a brighter future. As stakeholders rally behind this transformative initiative, he said hopes are high for a sustainable economic resurgence that benefits all segments of society.

Ashrafi issued a resolute statement in response to the recent attack on Chinese guests in Besham, declaring that those responsible would face the full force of justice.



SIALKOT: Federal Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif is listening to the public's problems at his residence.

## QMC faces acute shortage of machinery

QUETTA (APP): Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) is facing an acute shortage of machinery and tools as the authority has not purchased new machinery and vehicles for the last thirty years.

The QMC could not collect the total waste produced per day by the city due to a shortage of staff and equipment. The total of 800 sanitary workers were carrying out cleanliness work in the city of four million people.

QMC seeking waste lifting machinery from the Provincial Disaster Management Authority as the corporation lacks of machinery and tools to launch a cleanliness drive in the city.

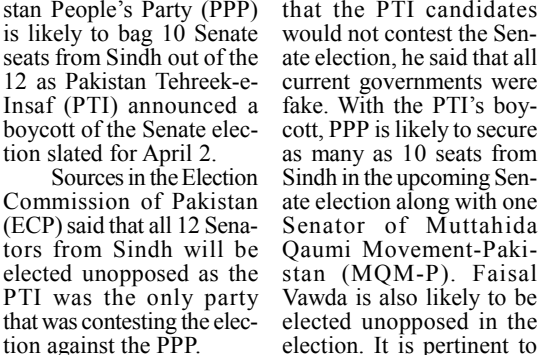
Talking to APP, Administrator Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat said the QMC authority had not purchased new machinery and vehicles since 1994.

He said an operation would be launched to clean the water courses and nullahs for efficient working of the sewerage system so that the rain and waste water could not cause inconvenience to the public.

Under the supervision of Administrator Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, the corporation has collected over 10000 tons of trash from the city in a short period of 12 days.

Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat said the authority is set to collect door-to-door garbage to make Quetta the cleanest city within two weeks.

The commissioner said the government had made efforts to increase the waste collecting capacity of QMC by 500 tons to 1600 tons daily by outsourcing the Quetta solid waste management.



QUETTA: Workers of People's Party celebrate on unopposed elected senator Sardar Haji Umar Gorgage.

## PPP likely to sweep Sindh amid PTI boycott of Senate election

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is likely to bag 10 Senate seats from Sindh out of the 12 as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) announced a boycott of the Senate election slated for April 2.

Sources in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) said that all 12 Senators from Sindh will be elected unopposed as the PTI was the only party that was contesting the election against the PPP.

PTI leader Haleem Adil Sheikh announced the boycott, saying that the PTI could elect four Senators from the province if the party had been given its mandate in the February 8

## CTD arrests two suspects in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Sindh police claimed to have arrested two wanted accused in Orangi Karachi.

As per details, CTD conducted a targeted operation with police and Rangers in Karachi and carried out checking of 117 individuals.

The suspects were arrested and cases were registered against them.

## PBC, HCBA Abbottabad support Jilani-led commission while PTI rejects

LAHORE (INP): The Punjab Bar Council (PBC) has welcomed the commission led by former chief justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani, appointed to investigate allegations levelled by six judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

PBC Vice-Chairman Kamran Bashir Mughal expressed optimism that Justice Jilani would conduct an unbiased, fair, and free inquiry into the matter.

He stated that the recommendations provided by Justice Jilani would enhance the independence, transparency, and honor of the judiciary.

Similarly, the High Court Bar Association Abbottabad (HCBA) has extended its full support to Justice Jilani's appointment for the commission.

HCBA is hopeful that the commission will thoroughly investigate the matter and propose recommendations to prevent interference in judicial affairs.

HCBA labelled the MQM-P warns to demonstrate against law, order situation

KARACHI (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) Sunday warned the Sindh government of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to hold protest demonstrations against the law and order situation in Karachi.

MQM-P senior leader and former minister Dr Farooq Sattar MNA has expressed concern over the deteriorating law and order situation in the city.

Dr Farooq Sattar said that hundreds of heinous crime-related incidents including kidnapping and dacoity are happening in the city every day. He said that the citizens of Karachi have been handed over to bandits.

## Adverse effect of IMF conditions, Pakistan loses tax revenue of Rs3bn

ISLAMABAD (INP): The adverse effects of implementing the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) stringent conditions on revenue sectors have begun to surface. During the recent fiscal year, there has been an approximate decrease of \$3 billion in annual tax revenues. The sources said in the fiscal year 2022, tax revenues recorded stood at \$19.3 billion, while in 2023, they declined to \$16.5 billion. Concerns persist regarding a further potential decrease of \$1 billion in tax revenues in the upcoming year, despite government efforts. Notably, despite the government's endeavors, the revenue sector has not been provided electricity and gas at competitive rates as demanded by the IMF. The sources said despite the efforts of the caretaker government, the export sector was not given electricity and gas at competitive rates and at the request of the IMF, the competitive rates of energy for the export sector were abolished.

## Agreement between jail admin, Imran termed open mockery of law, prison manual

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N), Irfan Siddiqui Sunday said that the written agreement between the superintendent of Adiala Jail and PTI founder Imran Khan under the directions of Islamabad High Court paramount to an open mockery of the law, regulations and prison manual.

"Such a written agreement between the jail administration and a convicted prisoner is unprecedented", he said.

Irfan Siddiqui said, "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari, Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz, Yusuf Raza Gilani and other dozens of prominent political leaders have been in jails but there is no example of such a written agreement with any of them despite the fact that no one was convicted in such cases of serious nature as Imran Khan".



QUETTA: People are busy in Eid shopping ahead of Eid-ul-Fitar during the Holy Month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, in Quetta.

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## PM reiterates resolve for social, economic uplift of all minorities

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday reaffirmed the resolve to work for the social uplift and integration of all the minorities in Pakistan.

"I extend my heartfelt greetings to the Christian community of Pakistan and around the world, on the occasion of Easter," the prime minister said in a message.

He said much more than festivity and celebration, Easter was an occasion to reinforce and reflect on the values of love, tolerance and forgiveness as espoused by Prophet Isa (AS) and was a reminder to emulate these in their daily lives to bring harmony and peace in today's strife and conflict-ridden world.

On this auspicious occasion, the prime minister also lauded the immense contributions of the Christian community in struggle for the creation of Pakistan and its socio-economic development and firmly believed that they would continue to play their proactive role in the progress and stability of Pakistan.

## President felicitates Christian community on the eve of Easter

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday felicitated the Christian community on observance of Easter. The president said that the Constitution of Pakistan guaranteed constitutional rights to all religious communities. The president, in a message, said that all the communities enjoyed religious, political, social and economic rights in Pakistan.

"The Christian community is a precious asset for Pakistan," he said, adding that Easter was an occasion that brought a message of hope, affection and prosperity. President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Appreciating the Christian community's contributions to national progress, he further observed that the Christian community had always played their role in the progress and prosperity of the country.

The president reaffirmed that Pakistan was committed to the protection of the rights of all communities and would ensure all steps for their prosperity.

While we celebrate diversity of faiths as a source of strength and enrichment in our nation, let us join hands towards building a society that is tolerant and cohesive and together defeat the forces of discord that are trying to cause harm to the fabric of our society," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, MPAs and others participating in the Iftaar Dinner hosted by former Chairman Senate and MPA Mir Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani.

## Quetta-bound PIA flight PK-235 suffers bird hit in Islamabad

QUETTA (INP): Quetta-bound Pakistan International Airline (PIA) flight PK-235 suffered a bird hit on Sunday morning, which partially damaged the flight's operation, however, all the passengers in the plane remained safe.

PIA spokesperson said that all passengers on board were safe despite the bird strike. The flight was safely brought back to Islamabad airport amid security measures.

The spokesperson of the national carrier said after the incident flight was damaged partially and an alternative flight was arranged. The next flight will depart for Quetta at 12.30 pm carrying all the passengers, PIA spokesperson said.

## Gilani stresses imparting services for well-being of people

MULTAN (APP): Former Prime Minister Syed Yousof Raza Gilani said that Ramadan was a month of mercy, blessings, sacrifice, and forgiveness and everyone should come forward to serve the humanity.

He expressed these sentiments during an Iftar dinner organized by Syed Zighum Gilani and Syed Madani Gilani at Union Council Muhammadpur Ghotla. Addressing the attendees of NA-148 constituency area.

## Naqvi greets Christian community on Easter

LAHORE (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has felicitated the Christian community on Easter.

In a message here on Sunday, he said Easter is a festival that teaches piety, repentance, purgation, purity, peace, love, reconciliation, and salvation, adding that it is more about mere rejoicing.

## AJK PM vows indiscriminate socio economic uplift, unveils development initiatives

MIRPUR (APP): Amidst an Iftar dinner hosted in his honor by Minister Wildlife Fisheries and Development Authority Muzaffarabad Sardar Javed Ayub, Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to prioritize the comprehensive socio-economic development of the region.

Emphasizing the pivotal role of tourism and road infrastructure in generating local employment opportunities, the PM underscored the imperative of improving the livelihoods of residents, including those in remote and far-flung areas. PM Anwar ul Haq on this occasion, outlined the government's dedication to uplifting the economically disadvantaged segments of society, citing the provision of financial assistance to widows, orphans, divorcees, the elderly, and disabled individuals through the endowment fund scheme.

## Debt Inquiry Commission reveals irregularities in utilization of foreign loans

ISLAMABAD (Online): Debt Inquiry Commission has revealed irregularities in the use of foreign loans worth billions of rupees in a report.

According to media reports, the inquiry commission submitted its report on foreign loans taken between 2008 and 2018 in June 2020.

And there are scandalous details in this report. According to reports, 300 people associated with two dozen institutions have used foreign loans worth billions of rupees against the rules taken between 2008 and 2018.

The complete record of 420 foreign loans received by the commission.

## Hackers stealing sensitive information of federal ministries and divisions

ISLAMABAD (Online): Hackers have become active to steal sensitive information of federal ministries and divisions, efforts are being made to obtain information of ministries and divisions through fake e-mails.

According to media reports, the Cabinet Division has sent a letter to all federal ministries and divisions and warned them in this regard. According to the post, fake e-mails known as 'JS Code' are circulating, dangerous 'payloads' are attached to the fake e-mails, these fake e-mails compromise the network or system security of the ministries. According to the sources, in the letter, the ministries and divisions are advised to adopt a cautious attitude when receiving unknown e-mails.



QUETTA: Workers are busy in cleaning works of sewerage drain over the directions of Metropolitan Corporation Administrator Hamza Shafaqat.