

# Independent

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## Pakistan greatly values its ties with Bahrain: Zardari

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has said that Pakistan attaches great value to its fraternal ties with Bahrain which are based on shared religion, culture and history. He highlighted the need to translate the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bahrain into a mutually rewarding economic partnership. The President expressed these views while talking to the Commander of the National Guard of Bahrain, General Sheikh Mohammad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Tuesday.

The Ambassador of Bahrain to Pakistan, Mr Mohamed Ibrahim Mohamed Abdul Qader, was also present during the meeting. Welcoming the visiting Commander, the President said that Pakistan and Bahrain enjoyed excellent relations, which needed to be further strengthened

in the areas of mutual interest. He stated that it was his firm belief that Pakistan would grow stronger as it became a prosperous country. During the meeting, the Commander of the National Guard of Bahrain felicitated the President on assuming the office for the second time and expressed the hope that Pakistan would move forward under his leadership. He said that both countries enjoyed excellent defence cooperation and expressed his gratitude for the supportive role of the Armed Forces of Pakistan. He also reiterated Bahrain's continued support to Pakistan. General Sheikh Mohammad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa extended an invitation to the President to visit Bahrain. The President thanked the Commander of the National Guard of Bahrain for his visit and felicitations.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari welcoming the Commander of the Bahrain National Guard, General Sheikh Mohammad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Pakistan denounces fresh round of curbs on Kashmiri political parties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Tuesday denounced the Indian authorities' decision to declare the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Freedom League and four factions of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League as "unlawful associations".

It also denounced the decision to extend the ban on Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (Mohd Yasin Malik faction) for five more years. Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

India's ongoing campaign to crush dissent in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) contravened the international human rights and humanitarian law as well as democratic norms, the spokesperson further said.

"The Government of India is urged to lift the curbs on the banned

Kashmiri parties; release all the political prisoners, including Yasin Malik; and implement the UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir," it was reiterated.

With the fresh notifications, a total of 14 Kashmiri political parties have become outlawed in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The affiliates of these parties are also facing persecution. Most notably, a death penalty has been sought for Yasin Malik, who was awarded life sentence in 2022.

"However, such oppressive tactics cannot suppress the Kashmiri people's aspirations for realization of their inalienable right to self-determination, as enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions," it was stressed.

## PPP issues party tickets to five candidates for Senate general seats

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) issued the party tickets to five candidates contesting elections on the general seats of Senate from Balochistan on Tuesday.

The PPP tickets were issued to the PPP's senior leader from the province Sardar Umar Khan Gorgej, provincial President of PPP, Mir Changez Khan Jamali, Mir Tariq Mesori, Ejaz Baloch and Kiran

Baloch. The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Mir Changez Jamali, Mir Sadiq Umrani and other party leaders handed over the party tickets to the candidates.

It may be mentioned here that elections are to be held on seven general seats of Senate from Balochistan. The polling would be held on April 2, 2024 at the provincial assembly.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti hands over party ticket to Kiran Baloch for general election of Senate on behalf of PPP.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif being briefed about the relief and rehabilitation activities in the wake of recent torrential rains as well as weather forecast and preparedness.

## Terrorists to be given befitting reply: Naqvi

LAHORE (APP): Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi has said that terrorists who attack on Pakistan will be given a befitting reply.

Talking to the media after appearing for scrutiny of his nomination papers for Senate elections at the Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab Office on Tuesday, he emphasized that there would be no compromise on terrorism and no one would be allowed to infringe upon the country's sovereignty. He added that no leniency would be shown in this regard.

In response to a question, he stated that illegally residing foreign nationals would be repatriated, and the Federal Investigation Agency would be revamped and strengthened.

To another question about the current wave of terrorism in the country, he affirmed that it would be countered and eliminated at any cost. Responding to inquiries about social media, he clarified that there are no restrictions on freedom of expression, but it should not be misused.

## PM directs for a report over provision of relief to recent rain affected people

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for submission of a report regarding quick and transparent provision of relief to the people affected by recent torrential rains across the country.

He also directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to accomplish a joint survey report in collaboration with the provinces, besides enhancement of cooperation with the provinces to face the future calamities.

The PM also sought an implementation report over his directive in the previous tenure regarding technical improvement of NDMA, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister was given a detailed briefing by the NDMA about the relief and rehabilitation activities in wake of recent torrential rains as well as weather forecast and preparedness.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Economic Affairs and Es-

tablishment Ahmad Khan Cheema, Chairman NDMA Lt Gen. Inam Haider Malik and relevant senior officials. Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal attended the meeting through video link.

The meeting was apprised of the recent damages, rescue efforts and distribution of assistance amount. The NDMA with assistance of provinces; specially Balochistan would soon complete a collective verification survey over number of complete and partially damaged houses.

Under the PM's directive, a total of 766,000 kg dry ration would be distributed in Gwadar till March 24, out of which about 388,000 kg ration had been distributed so far till March 16. Moreover, 97,000 kg ration had been distributed in Quetta and Dalbadin, it was further informed.

The PM directed that the relief process should be completed immediately, besides ensuring transparency in its distribution.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif being briefed during his visit to Naval Headquarters.

## Court acquits Hassan, Hussain Nawaz in three references

ISLAMABAD (APP): An Accountability Court (AC) on Tuesday acquitted Hassan and Hussain Nawaz from three references including Flagship, Avenfield Property and Al-Azizia Steel Mills.

The court announced the verdict which was earlier reserved after hearing arguments from respondents.

During the course of proceeding, the defence lawyer argued that Islamabad High Court (IHC) had already acquitted former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz in same reference.

The running of trial against his clients would be wastage of court time, he said.

## Kh Asif, Naval Chief discuss Regional Maritime Security, operational preparedness

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf and discussed with him matters pertaining to Regional Maritime Security milieu and operational readiness of Pakistan Navy.

Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters Islamabad, the Defence Minister was received by Chief of the Naval Staff and was presented guard of honour. The Defence Minister was also introduced to the Principal Staff Officers at Naval Headquarters. Naval Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf apprised the Defence Minister on roles, capabilities and future modernization plans of Pakistan Navy. He briefed the

minister on recent acquisitions of state-of-the-art platforms and equipment to ensure an invincible seaward defence of the country.

Later on a detailed briefing was presented by Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) on the prevailing maritime environment, challenges being faced by Pakistan Navy and response by Pakistan Navy to meet the challenges. At the end of the briefing recommendations were given to the Defence Minister for capability enhancement of PN and promotion of maritime sector (Blue Economy) for revival of the national economy. Khawaja Muhammad Asif appreciated the importance of Pakistan Navy to safeguard maritime interest of the country.

## Balochistan cabinet to be formed by April 4: No difference within Govt.'s ally parties on formation of Balochistan cabinet: CM Bugti

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has announced that the Provincial cabinet would be formed by April 2, and adding he made it clear that there is no difference among the ally parties of the government on formation of the cabinet.

The Chief Minister was speaking informally to the media persons at the Chief Minister Secretariat on Tuesday.

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti maintained that he would be meeting the ally parties included in the government on March 22.

During the meeting, he would speak about the formation of cabinet, he said adding that the cabinet would comprise 14 minis-

ters and five advisers. The Chief Minister asserted that no special Assistant and coordinator would be made part of the Provincial cabinet.

On the occasion, he regrettably pointed out that the health department couldn't deliver well.

Similarly, the Project Director could also not be appointed for the flood rehabilitation project for last eight months, he noted.

Referring the Reko Dik project, he said that it would benefit the province very much.

He said that corruption is the biggest and complex issue.

He said that a senior police officer is being posted on the post of Director General Anti-Corruption Department.

The Chief Minister said that the poverty and unemployment are also major issues of the province.

He said that we would resolve the issues of province together.

The Chief Minister announced to send youngsters of the province abroad for employments and livelihood.

He mentioned that 1,000 youngsters would be sent abroad during one year period.

Referring the issue of missing persons, Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that we want to resolve the issue of missing persons.

However, there is difference in the data of voice for missing persons, family members and that of Sardar Akhtar Mengal.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti talking with media men

## Zardari felicitates Putin on victory in Presidential elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has felicitated Russian President Vladimir Putin on his victory in Presidential elections.

In a post on his X handle, he expressed the confidence that relations between Pakistan and Russia will grow further under the dynamic leadership of Vladimir Putin

## CM announces to nominate Dr Rubaba Buledi for prestigious civil award

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has announced to nominate member Provincial Assembly, Dr. Rubaba Buledi for the prestigious civil award, Sitara-e-Imtiaz for her remarkable contribution in the health sector.

While chairing a review meeting of the health development here on Tuesday, the Chief Minister announced nomination of Dr. Rubaba Buledi for the civil award on preparation of the draft of Healthcare Commission and performing extraordinary services during COVID situation and making important legislations in the province.

## May 9 case ATC issues arrest warrants for CM Gandapur, 12 other PTI leaders

RAWALPINDI (INP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday issued arrest warrants for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and 11 other PTI leaders in cases relating May 9 mayhem.

According to details, the ATC Judge Malik Ijaz Asif directed to produce the accused before the court on April 2.

The accused have been named in the light of 164 statements of Wasiq Qayyum Abbasi, Sadaqat Abbasi, and Umar Tanveer Butt.

The ATC has issued the warrants of KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur, Shabbir Awan, Shehbaz Gill, Musrat Jamshed Cheema, Murad Saeed, Dr Shireen Mazari, and Shibli Faraz.

## PM calls for ensuring early implementation of Pak-Kuwait agreements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called for concerted efforts from both sides to ensure the early implementation of seven agreements worth US\$ 10 billion signed between Pakistan and Kuwait in November last year.

The bilateral ties were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Pakistan Nassar Abdulrahman Jasser Almutairi who called on him here.

The prime minister noted with satisfaction that both countries had signed seven agreements for cooperation in diverse areas including food security, technology, hydel power, mining and minerals, water supply and mangrove rehabilitation, a PM Office press release said.

In this context, he emphasized the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) which provided a robust

and efficient mechanism to attract foreign investment into Pakistan.

He said that Pakistan attached great importance to its historic and deep-rooted ties with Kuwait.

He thanked the Kuwaiti leadership, including Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, for the warm wishes and felicitations on his reelection.

The PM expressed the desire to work closely with them to further strengthen the bilateral relationship with a focus on trade and investment. He also extended an invitation to Amir of Kuwait to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

The Kuwaiti ambassador thanked Pakistan for its support to Kuwait in difficult times.

He thanked former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for his strong public support to Kuwait's independence and sovereignty during the 1990-91 crisis.



QUETTA: MPA Mir Ziaullah Lango meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## US asks Taliban to stop terrorist attacks against Pakistan from Afghan soil

WASHINGTON (APP): The United States has called on the Taliban to ensure that terrorist attacks against Pakistan are not launched from Afghan soil.

Asked to comment on Pakistan's "intelligence-based anti-terrorist operations" inside the border regions of Afghanistan, State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said that the US "deeply" regrets the loss of life and "injustices" sustained during an attack in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Seven Pakistani troops were killed in the terrorist attack at a security post in North

Waziristan's Mir Ali area on Saturday.

"We urge the Taliban to ensure that terrorist attacks are not launched from Afghan soil and we urge Pakistan to exercise restraint and ensure civilians are not harmed in their counter-terrorist efforts," Patel told his daily news briefing on Monday.

"And we urge both sides to address any differences. We remain committed to ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists who wish to harm the United States and our partners and allies," he added.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Afghan turbulence

Relations between the newly formed government and Afghanistan's de facto Taliban rulers have begun on an inauspicious note. After seven security personnel were martyred in a terrorist attack in North Waziristan on Saturday, Pakistan hit targets in Paktika and Khost provinces early on Monday targeting "terrorists belonging to [the] Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group", according to an FO statement released yesterday.

Afghan officials, on the other hand, claimed "civilian homes" had been struck. Moreover, there were reports of cross-border exchanges of fire in Kurram district on Monday. Militants had also staged attacks in Mohmand, Nowshera and Bannu over the weekend.

What is important at this juncture is that matters do not escalate with Kabul. While terrorist attacks targeting civilians as well as security personnel are a red line and cannot go unanswered, and the frontiers must be defended, unilateral action should not become the norm. This will only cause further deterioration of ties with the Afghan Taliban, and Pakistan may lose whatever leverage it has with Kabul, adding to our security concerns. Soon after the new government took over, there was a routine exchange of pleasantries between the foreign minister and his Afghan counterpart, as both vowed to expand cooperation in various sectors, including security. The North Waziristan attack and its fallout, however, have come as a painful reality check, and are the government's first test on the Afghan front of its management of relations with Kabul.

Both sides must verify where the attacks targeting Pakistan originated from. While Afghan Taliban officials insist their territory is not being used by terrorists, there is a lot of evidence suggesting otherwise. Pakistan has raised the issue of militant sanctuaries in Afghanistan at the UN whose officials have similarly highlighted the presence of numerous militant groups in Afghanistan. Instead of feigning ignorance, the Afghan Taliban should take action to stop anti-Pakistan fighters from launching attacks inside this country, especially if they are serious in their quest to be accepted as Afghanistan's legitimate government. While clear threats to national security must be immediately neutralised, Pakistan has to use carrots and sticks with the Taliban to permanently solve the militancy problem. The FO has hinted at a similar line of action and of working "towards finding joint solutions in countering terrorism". Communication channels should remain open, and Pakistan should ask Afghanistan to take action against verified terrorist sanctuaries across the border. Moreover, China, which offers a financial lifeline to the Kabul regime, can also be asked to take punitive measures if the Taliban refuse to crack down on militants on their soil. The terrorist threat from Afghanistan-based groups can destabilise the entire region, which is why all regional states should work on a common counterterrorism agenda with Kabul, along with using bilateral channels.

### Blood carbon

Masood Lohar

Amid the pressing need to confront climate change, the emergence of carbon markets has gained prominence. In these markets, industries acquire the privilege of emitting carbon dioxide by committing to safeguarding forests or implementing other offsets. Although widely seen as a potent tool for conservation, apprehensions persist regarding its potential adverse effects on local communities, particularly in developing nations where mangroves face clearance for profitable endeavours such as fish and shrimp aquaculture or real estate development. The term "blood carbon" describes the dark side of these carbon trading schemes. The aggressive land acquisition strategies employed by certain entities have raised concerns about the unjust eviction of indigenous communities from their ancestral lands. The Ogiek people's plight in Kenya serves as a stark reminder of the human cost associated with these carbon credit initiatives.

For example, in the pursuit of carbon credits, a UAE-based firm has been criticised for embarking on an extensive land acquisition initiative for mangrove plantation and conservation. This programme spans multiple African nations, including Kenya, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Zambia, and Tanzania, and has drawn the attention of environmentalists and human rights activists, raising concerns about potential displacement of indigenous people.

The characterisation of current events as a contemporary form of colonialism has stimulated ethical deliberations on the prioritisation of carbon sequestration initiatives

over the well-being of vulnerable communities. A striking illustration of this concern unfolds with the ongoing predicament of the Ogiek people in Kenya's Mau Forest. Kenyan President William Ruto, justifying their coerced displacement, presents it as a climate-driven measure to safeguard the forests from what he deems "illegal settlers". This justification has triggered profound ethical debates regarding the potential adverse impact of carbon sequestration efforts on marginalised communities, with some activists drawing parallels with a modern form of colonial exploitation.

The Ogiek, acknowledged as the traditional custodians of the Mau Forest, have endured violent evictions and land seizures spanning decades. Despite legal triumphs, including a 2017 ruling by the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights affirming their land rights, the Kenyan government has drawn criticism for persistently flouting these judgements.

The situation faced by the Ogiek is not isolated; it mirrors the struggles of numerous first nation communities globally. These communities find themselves fighting not only for their lands but also against the exploitative mechanisms of carbon credit trading. The term "blood carbon" aptly captures the injustice and human rights violations associated with these schemes.

In Pakistan, for the first time Sindh Forest Department has entered into a carbon credit agreement, selling 3.1 million credits valued at \$40m to the Delta Blue Carbon company. The 60:40 partnership prompts questions about transparency and inclusiveness, especially considering that a significant portion of the

population in the mangroves of the Indus deltaic districts lives below the poverty line. The fate of these communities remains uncertain, echoing the concerns raised by the Ogiek people in Kenya. Similarly, questions arise as to whether there was a proper tendering process, encouraging competition and giving enough leverage to local stakeholders.

Recent research underscores the critical role that mangroves play in sequestering carbon dioxide. Daniel Donato from the US Department of Agriculture's Forest Service reveals that mangroves store around three to four times more carbon per hectare than rainforests in temperate or tropical zones. However, the rapid loss of these ecosystems, estimated at a third to half globally in the last 50 years, releases substantial quantities of greenhouse gases, equivalent to up to 10 per cent of the global toll from deforestation.

In light of these challenges, there is a call for a paradigm shift in carbon credit systems. Rather than trading carbon as a financial commodity on global markets, the focus should be on rewarding indigenous communities and land managers for their ecosystem services.

The story of "blood carbon" highlights the need for a more equitable and just approach to climate change mitigation. Instead of evicting traditional landowners like the Ogiek, the world should recognise and compensate them for the invaluable services they provide in combating climate change.

It's time to move away from the exploitative carbon credit system and embrace a model that prioritises environmental justice and community well-being. -- Courtesy Dawn

### Kafkaesque set-up

Dr Niaz Murtaza

The emerging contours of our new set-up depict a murky labyrinth hiding the conflicting pulls of the elite interests of multiple power centres, none of them aligned with the public interest. Given these deep cracks, can the byzantine set-up last and deliver?

A structure's strength reflects that of its base. This set-up's weak base is rigged polls. Over it, a huge ivory tower has been built by the actual powers to house willing elites to project a strength they lack. Each faction has conflicting interests that increase the set-up's instability. The interests of the establishment — the proverbial elephant in the room — include pulling us back from doom's edge, where its past actions got us, while retaining its political and economic sway, with other elites footing the costs of reform.

Then there is the PML-N, the 'lion' and main ruler, which is actually a façade for the new hybrid dispensation and its weakest cog, given its dubious mandate, infighting and 20th-century mindset. Its aims are to protect its empire and that of allied Punjab elites. But it sees the wrath of the masses and wants to drop them enough crumbs to win next time.

By foxily avoiding the cabinet, the PPP wants to hunt with the hounds and run with the hares. It will hug the set-up when it does well, but oppose it when it doesn't. Its aims are to protect its own empire and allied Sindh and Balochistan elites and seeing Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, the crown prince, enthroned soon.

The fox alone can topple the lion at the centre but only if the es-

tablishment agrees. The smaller parties need crumbs too.

There are groups outside the Leaning Tower of Pisa pushing to join the party inside or topple it. The PTI, the main one, represents populist middle-class fantasies and assorted elite interests. The cornered tigers want to rejoin the real powers while evicting the lion, or topple the tower if rebuffed. There are religious lobbies (the Jamaat-i-Islami, the JUI and TLP) with nuisance street power. The banned TTP and Baloch militants aim to topple it outright. Many global actors and events can harm it too, for example, India, Afghanistan, Middle East wars and Sino-US tiffs.

The set-up can defeat all these threats only if it performs very well. Unfortunately, internal conflicts and poor capacities can stymie this task. The prime minister is better at supervising local projects than leading federal policy work. He may not have control over the three key posts: finance, interior and foreign. The interior ironman is a newbie, said to have been picked by the establishment — apparently, to clamp down on the PTI, militants and progressives. Dar lacks the experience or finesse for his job and will toe Nawaz Sharif's line, not the prime minister's, but will be checkmated by picks like Gilani. The finance guru has no loyalty to PML-N and his selection, too, is supposed to have been influenced by non-political elements. For many, Muhammad Aurangzeb is the new saviour we want to transform our economy. Economic progress needs macroeconomic stability, productivity/growth, equity and sustainability. The last two will barely

hit the agenda. But can he even deliver stability and growth? Ensuring stability requires solid macroeconomic credentials and public and IMF experience (like Shamshad Akhtar's), which he lacks. He may outshine Dar, but experimenting with inexperience with a very shaky economy is risky.

We only chase macroeconomic stability once we are in the midst of a full-blown crisis via IMF's austerity policy. But durable stability comes by creatively ex-panding exports, industry and in-v-estments. This requires able persons in commerce, industry, investment, IT, etc., with dynamic glo-bal experience that the incumbents badly lack. Aurangzeb has good credentials in these business areas. Can he alone transform our non-dynamic economy?

One can answer this hard query about the future via a simpler one about the past. Like Pakistan, its banks non-dynamically make money by investing in safe public debt. Did he put his bank on a new, dynamic investment path? No. Can he do that then for a much bigger, complex and politicised economy?

With productivity and growth ruled out by poor cabinet appointments, we will again chase stability via IMF's menu. This will harm elite interests and more so the masses. Each faction will try to avoid the cost of inevitable reform as per its power and guide, possibly leading to conflict. So, this tower may implode in a few years. The PML-N can avoid all that by having able hands in a dozen key economic and social ministries to ensure productivity and equity before it's too late. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Awais directs

## PPMC to prepare proposals for technological interventions in power sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, directed the Power Planning and Monitoring Company (PPMC) on Tuesday to prepare proposals for technological interventions in the power sector.

"This step aims to improve the efficiency of the power sector by utilizing modern technology and to provide maximum benefit to consumers," the minister said while chairing a meeting, according to a news release.

During the meeting,

the Power Planning and Monitoring Company (PPMC) gave a comprehensive briefing regarding the performance of DISCOs.

The minister issued a directive for an immediate assessment of the senior executive management of DISCOs. The minister has tasked PPMC with comprehensively evaluating Disco's Board of Directors.

The move signals a potential shake-up in leadership, demonstrating the government's proactive approach to driving positive change within the sector.

While chairing the meeting on the development projects of NTDC, the minister expressed dissatisfaction with NTDC's performance and instructed the timely completion of transmission lines, which would affect the evacuation of cheap energy from hydel and other sources. The minister warned that no lapse would be tolerated at any cost.

Meanwhile, Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, who has been assigned the portfolio of the Ministry of Power by the Prime Minister, is the architect of transformative sectoral reforms in Pakistan.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Fiveships namely, MSC Precision-V, Xpress Salween, Kotka, Crater and Umm Bab, carrying Container, Wheat and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Grain Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Nimble Nicky and MSC Shy scheduled to load/offload Iron Ore and Container also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Kotka, Xpress Salween and Hafnia Shanghai left the Port on today morning, while three more ships, MSC Precision-V, Elephanta and Melody are expected to sail on today afternoon. Cargo volume of 191,327 tonnes, comprising 117,963 tonnes imports cargo and 73,364 tonnes export cargo carried in 5,520 Containers (2,194 TEUs Imports and 3,326 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours. Eight ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, MSC Shy.



Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, chairing a meeting with Power Planning and Monitoring Company in Islamabad.

## Commerce Minister briefs on tariff reforms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan chaired a meeting on Tuesday at the Ministry of Commerce during which he was briefed on tariff reforms and rationalization.

The meeting was also attended by the Secretary, Mr. Khuram Agha and key officials from the Ministry.

The Minister was briefed on the tariff reforms and tariff rationalisation undertaken by the Ministry since the formation of the Tariff Policy Board (TPB) and explored the role of tariffs in boosting exports

by ensuring the availability of raw material at competitive prices.

He was also briefed on working of the TPB. The meeting highlighted the strategic importance of the TPB in shaping Pakistan's tariff policy. Discussions centered on the role of Tariffs in Industrial, especially export growth.

He was informed that there was no Customs duty on about one third of the raw materials required by the industry.

He was also informed import of the machinery and capital goods was also facilitated via the Tariff Policy.

He was also briefed on the progress on various tariff rationalisation measures which were in pipeline.

The Minister stressed on strategic use of tariffs to promote industrialization in conjunction with other policies, like targeting tariffs towards protecting export oriented industries for a limited period, allowing them to gain a foothold without permanent dependence on protection.

He directed the Ministry to work on a plan for tariff rationalisation along these lines.

## Shaza Fatima, PTCL President discuss roll out of 5G technology

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and President and Group CEO of PTCL, Hatem Bamatraf, discussed the rollout of 5G technology, right-of-way issues, and the crucial aspect of fiberization within the telecommunications sector. The minister, during a meeting, emphasized the significant role of the telecommunications sector in the national economy.

Shaza Fatima stated that efforts are underway to expedite matters such as 5G, right-of-way, and other issues related to the telecom sector. The PTCL President expressed a desire to further strengthen bilateral relations between Pakistan and the UAE. Shaza Fatima Khawaja also met with the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission, Dr Mukhtar Ahmed, and discussed in detail the issues of IT graduate training programs.

## S. Korea's corporate bond sale rises in February

SEOUL (Xinhua/APP): South Korea's corporate bond sale rose in single digits last month due to solid funding demand from financial companies, financial watchdog data showed Tuesday.

The issuance of corporate bonds amounted to 26.24 trillion won (19.7 billion U.S. dollars) in February, up 4.5 percent compared to the previous month, according to the Financial Supervisory Service (FSS).

## Minister reviews development projects

Independent Report

PESHAWAR: Agriculture Minister, Muhammad Sajjad on Tuesday visited the Directorate General Agricultural Engineering Office to oversee ongoing projects.

During his inspection, the minister emphasized the timely completion of all projects.

He personally examined the agricultural machinery workshop and urged for its effective utilization to enhance agricultural productivity.

The minister underscored the importance of maximizing benefits for farmers and boosting agricultural output to address food scarcity.

Various ongoing

projects were discussed, including the installation of solar pumping systems, establishment of tube wells, and the promotion of mechanized agriculture.

These initiatives, part of different development programs, aim to increase agricultural productivity and meet the rising demand for food.

The Minister was accompanied by officials, including Director-General of Agricultural Engineering Nasim Javaid, DG Agriculture Extension Jan Muhammad, and DG Soil Conservation Muhammad Yaseen Wazir.

The visit provided an opportunity to assess progress and ensure the effective implementation of development initiatives.



Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a meeting with President and Group CEO PTCL Hatem Bamatraf in Islamabad.

## PML-N to provide relief to farmers: Musadik Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum and Energy, Musadik Malik on Tuesday said that

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) led government would deliver all benefits directly to the farmers to promote agriculture sector.

Talking to a private news channel, he said the government had extended subsidies to fertilizer firms in order to boost agricultural production but the fertilizer companies could not

forward the benefits to the farmer community which is a matter of concern.

In reply to a question, he said the government has planned to control gas theft cases.

He said that Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGC) were working to install smart meters in all parts of the country.

The smart meter, he said would directly benefit the consumers.



Federal Minister of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain in a meeting with the President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari in Islamabad.

## Sri Lankan envoy for increasing bilateral trade up to \$800m with Pak

ISLAMABAD (INP): High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan, Ravindra Chandrasiri Wijegunaratne has said that Pakistan and Sri Lanka intend to double the bilateral trade between the two countries to \$800 million, for which the potential in various sectors in both countries should be exploited.

At present, the bilateral trade potential between the two countries is \$1 billion, which is

achievable, but it will take the bilateral trade to the target of 800 million dollars, the Ambassador said.

The Sri Lankan Ambassador in Pakistan said here while talking to the delegation led by President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, said a press release issued by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) here on Tuesday.

## WHO refurbishes 63 health facilities damaged by devastating climate induced disasters in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): World Health Organization (WHO), in its strive for ensuring health service, has refurbished around 63 health facilities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that had become almost non-functional after being badly impacted by climate induced disasters especially the devastating floods of 2022.

The initiative of refurbishment of health facilities was taken in response to the disastrous floods in Pakistan during year 2022 and other climate change related incidents including erratic rains, hailstorms, windstorms

etc. said Dr. Babar Alam, WHO head in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Talking to APP after inauguration of a flood affected Basic Health Unit (BHU) at Kotkay village in Charsadda district, Dr. Babar said the rehabilitation process is in progress in the whole country.

The refurbished health facilities in KP are in districts including Charsadda, Chitral, D.I.Khan, Kohistan Upper, Nowshera, Swat, Tank, Hangu, Dir Lower, Haripur, Manshera and Abbottabad.

The rehabilitated health facilities included Basic Health Units



**GILGIT:** Member Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Anjad Hussain advocate chairing a meeting GB Assembly Committee on Telecommunication issue in Gilgit-Baltistan at Assembly Secretariat.

## Minister directs HERA to take steps for quality education in KP

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education, Archives and Libraries, Meena Khan Afridi on Tuesday issued directives to the concerned officers of KP Higher Education Regulatory Authority (HERA) to take steps for promotion of quality education in the province.

He also issued directives that the authority must take action against those private educational institutions which do not fulfill the

criteria of standard institution.

"Provision of quality education in the entire province is the top most priority of the government," he said while chairing meeting of HERA at Civil Secretariat here.

Sajid Inam, Secretary HERA, Chairman Sharif Hussain and other officers attended the meeting.

A detailed briefing was given to the provincial minister about the work and performance of the authority.

## CM approves Rs 100mln compensation package for SW roof collapse victims

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur has approved Rs 100 million compensation package for the victim family of roof collapse incident in Ragzai area of south Waziristan in which six members of a family had lost lives.

On the directives of the CM, the provincial disaster management authority has released the cheque to Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan for payment to the affected family.

## AJK PM pays tribute to col Kashif and Captain Ahmed Badar shaheed

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq on Tuesday visited the residence of Shaheed Lieutenant Colonel Syed Kashif Ali to offer his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Prime Minister Haq was accompanied by senior Minister Col. (Retd) Waqar Noor, Government Ministers Mian Abdul Waheed, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq and Chaudhry Akbar Ibrahim.

Extending his heartfelt sympathies to bereaved family the AJK premier prayed to Allah the Almighty to grant the martyred highest place in

Janatulfridous.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister visited the residence of Captain Ahmed Badar Shaheed in Talagang to offer his condolences to the bereaved family.

He prayed to Allah the almighty to elevate the ranks of the martyred Captain and grant patience to the bereaved to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude.

Speaking briefly on the occasion, Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq said that the entire nation was proud of its Pakistan Army, which has rendered unprecedented sacrifices while fighting against terrorism and terrorists.



**LAHORE:** Visitors look at paintings in an exhibition at Al Hamra Art Council in the Provincial Capital.

## No negligence to be tolerated in Ramadan Dastar Khawan: Advisor

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Zakat and Ushar, Social Welfare and Women Development Mashal Azam Yousafzai on Tuesday urged the concerned officers to inform her about statistics of Ramadan Dastar Khawan on daily basis and no negligence will be tolerated in Ramadan Dastar Khawan.

She said this while presiding over the introductory meeting of the officers and district directors of the Social

Welfare and Women development Department.

She said that every officer and official will not be posted in one place for more than three years.

She directed District directors to take proactive measures to include poor widows in the Ramadan relief package so that no poor widow is deprived of this package and the facilities in Darulaman should be improved.

"Wherever there is a need for the Zamong Kor project, mark it so that steps can be taken in this regard."



**RAWALPINDI:** Volunteers distribute food among the people in fast during the Holy Month of Ramadan at Satellite Town.

## Minister for completing ongoing development projects in education dept

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Education Faisal Khan Tarakai on Tuesday said that all ongoing projects of the education department should be completed in time so that problems of male and female students could be resolved in a proper manner. While issuing instructions to the planning authorities for completing PC-I and other requirement of the projects, he said the projects which are in the pipeline could also be approved by the relevant forums after completion of the ongoing projects. He

expressed these views while presiding over the budget meeting of the Education Department.

Secretary Education Masood Ahmed and other officials of the Education Department also participated in the meeting.

During the briefing, the education minister was told that the education department is working on 107 projects including 58 of the planned districts, 19 of the merged districts and 30 of the AIP, and timely completion of these projects would be ensured at all cost.

## May 9 violence cases RWP police obtain arrest warrants of Murad, Pervaiz Elahi

**RAWALPINDI (Online):** Rawalpindi Police have obtained arrest warrants of PTI leader Murad Saeed and former Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi in 9 May violence related cases registered against them under terrorism and others clauses in different police stations.

Civil Lines and Cantt circles of Pothohar division have filed their report.

According to this report, former federal minister Murad Saeed is nominated in the case registered against him against number 836/23 in police station cantt under terrorism and other clauses and case No 708/23 registered against him in RA Bazar police station under these clauses. Arrest warrants have been obtained in this regard.

No case is registered against Senator Faisal Javed Khan, Azam Swati, Azhar Mashwani and Khurram Zeeshan in five police stations of Cantt circle.

## PDMA DG reviews procurement plan 2024-25

**LAHORE (APP):** Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Director General Irfan Ali Kathia, during a meeting here on Tuesday, reviewed the Procurement Plan 2024-25.

The meeting saw participation from officers representing the Pakistan Army, Rescue teams, and various other departments.

Key focus of the meeting was the assessment of required equipment for potential

rescue operations, particularly in flood-prone scenarios. Detailed deliberations unfolded regarding the machinery and apparatus essential for effective rescue operations during such exigencies.

Attendees extensively discussed the specifics and cost aspects of the procurement. During the proceedings, both Rescue and Pakistan Army officers put forth their requisitions for the supply of requisite rescue equipment.

## ANF recovers 52 kg drugs in five operations

**RAWALPINDI (APP):** Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 52 kg of drugs and arrested four suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that in an operation, 440 grams of Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Islamabad Airport. In another operation at Islamabad Airport, 54 heroin-filled capsules.

# International News

## Gaza faces famine, unprecedented crisis, warns UN

**Monitoring Desk**  
ROME: Half of Gazans are experiencing "catastrophic" hunger, with famine projected to hit the north of the territory by May without urgent intervention, a United Nations-backed food security assessment warned on Monday.

"People in Gaza are starving to death right now. The speed at which this man-made hunger and malnutrition crisis has ripped through Gaza is terrifying," said the head of the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) Cindy McCain said.

"To have 50 per cent of an entire population in catastrophic, near-famine levels, is unprecedented," Beth Bechdol, the deputy director general of the UN's Food and Agriculture

Organisation (FAO), said.

This amounts to around 1.1 million people "struggling with catastrophic hunger and starvation", according to the WFP.

It added: "This is the highest number of people ever recorded as facing catastrophic hunger" under the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) partnership, which published its latest report on Monday.

The situation is particularly dire in the north of the besieged Palestinian territory, where there are about 300,000 people, the UN says — and where aid agencies have reported huge difficulty distributing food and other aid.

Aid charity Oxfam on

Monday accused Israel of continuing to "systematically and deliberately block and undermine" the delivery of aid into Gaza, in violation of international humanitarian law.

The IPC system, conducted by the UN and aid agencies, is used by the UN or governments in deciding whether or not to officially declare a famine.

"Famine is imminent in the northern governorates and projected to occur anytime between mid-March and May 2024," the IPC report said of Gaza.

"All evidence points towards a major acceleration of deaths and malnutrition. Waiting for a retrospective famine classification before acting is indefensible," it said.



**A Palestinian woman and children rush to safety after Israeli air strikes in Gaza City.**

## Netanyahu's claims about UNRWA 'flat-out lies', says US senator

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: US Senator Chris Van Hollen has refuted Israel's allegation that the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA is a proxy for Hamas, arguing that the accusations by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are "flat-out lies."

The Maryland Democrat is among a group of senators who

demand last week that US President Joe Biden comply with the Foreign Assistance Act and cut off military aid to Israel.

They argued that Section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act requires the Biden administration to stop the sale and transfer of weapons to Israel if Netanyahu's government continues to block humanitarian assistance to Gaza.

## IAEA to help Iraq develop peaceful nuclear plan

**Monitoring Desk**  
BAGHDAD: The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi met Iraq's prime minister Naim al-Aboudi on Monday as part of a visit to help the country develop a peaceful nuclear programme.

"We have discussed several projects in Iraq, including building a nuclear reactor for peaceful purposes," Iraqi Education Minister Naim al-Aboudi told reporters following a meeting between Grossi and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani.

Grossi said that a team of Iraqi experts would visit the agency's headquarters in Vienna in a few days to hold meetings to "set out a road map for the Iraqi peaceful nuclear programme" amid growing interest in nuclear energy in the region, including among Arab Gulf countries.



**head of Israeli intelligence is expected to lead ceasefire talks in Qatar in response to a new proposal from Hamas.**

## West decries Putin's landslide election victory

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: Western governments lined up on Monday to condemn Vladimir Putin's landslide election victory as unfair and undemocratic, but China, India and North Korea and some other countries congratulated the veteran Russian leader on extending his rule by a further six years.

The contrasting reactions underscored the geopolitical fault lines that have gaped wider since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine two years ago, triggering the deepest crisis in relations with the West since the end of the Cold War.

Arriving in Brussels

on Monday, EU foreign ministers roundly dismissed the election result as a sham ahead of agreeing sanctions on individuals linked to the mistreatment and death of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny. "Russia's election was an election without choice," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said at the start of the meeting. Playing on Moscow's reference to its war in Ukraine as a "special military operation", French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne said Paris had taken note of the "special election operation".

## Taiwan's vice president-elect makes Czech visit after US trip

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: Taiwan's vice president-elect and former de facto ambassador to Washington, Hsiao Bi-khim, is on a visit to the Czech Republic following a low-key trip to the United States, the foreign ministry said on Tuesday.

Hsiao, who takes office with president-elect Lai Ching-te in May, is detested by China which calls her a "diehard Taiwan independence separatist" and has placed sanctions on her.

## Blinken to push for Gaza ceasefire on Middle East trip

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit the Middle East this week, aiming to reach a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, and secure the release of hostages held by the Palestinian militant group.

During a visit to the Philippines, Blinken said his trip to meet senior leaders in Saudi Arabia and Egypt would aim to "discuss the right architecture for lasting regional peace".

Providing more humanitarian aid into Gaza as well as discussing post-war planning for the enclave are among the topics he will discuss with Saudi and Egyptian officials.

"One hundred percent of the Gaza population is in need of humanitarian assistance," Blinken said, adding that it was "absolutely incumbent" upon Israel to prioritise assistance for those in desperate need.

## Afghan refugee convicted in New Mexico Muslim killings case

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW MEXICO: A New Mexico jury found an Afghan asylum seeker guilty of murdering a Pakistani immigrant in one of three ambush-style shootings of Muslim men that terrified the Islamic community in the state's largest city during the summer of 2022. Muhammad Syed, 53, faces life imprisonment for the first-degree murder of 41-year-old Aftab Hussein who was found dead in southeast Albuquerque on July 26, 2022.

## US warned Niger about ties to Russia, Iran before junta revoked accord, Pentagon says

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: US officials traveled to Niger last week to express concerns about the country's potential development of ties to Russia and Iran before the ruling junta on Saturday revoked an accord governing the roughly 1,000 US military personnel there, the Pentagon said on Monday.

The Pentagon added it was seeking clarification about the way ahead Niger said on Saturday it had revoked "with immediate effect" its military accord with the United States that had allowed Pentagon personnel to operation on its soil.

Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh said the US government had "direct and frank" conversations in Niger ahead of the junta's announcement, and was continuing to communicate

with Niger's ruling military council known as the CNSP.

"The US delegation was there to raise a number of concerns. ... We were troubled (about) the path that Niger is on. And so these were direct and frank conversations, to have those in person, to talk about our concerns and to also hear theirs," Singh said. "US officials expressed concern over Niger's potential relationships with Russia and Iran."

Since its July 2023 coup, the military junta that seized power in Niamey has kicked out French and European forces, and quit the Economic Community of West African States regional bloc. Like juntas in neighboring Mali and Burkina Faso, it has also strengthened military ties with Russia.

## North Korea's Kim oversees firing drills with 'super-large' rocket launchers, state media says

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has overseen firing drills by artillery units in the western region involving "newly-equipped super-large" multiple rocket launchers, state media KCNA said on Tuesday.

The drills came a day after South Korea and Japan reported North Korea's launch of several short-range ballistic missiles into the sea, its first such missile test in about two months.

Kim guided the drills on Monday that were aimed at testing the "real war capabilities" of 600 millimetre multiple rocket launchers and improving the operators' combat morale and readiness posture, KCNA said.

The drills also included simulating an air explosion of a shell of the super-large multiple rocket launcher at a pre-set altitude above the target, it said.

The unit displayed "high mobility and accurate and strong striking power" in carrying out a sudden combat mission, eliciting the young leader's praise, it said.

"They fully demonstrated their excellent crack-shot artillery marksmanship and prompt and thorough combat readiness," KCNA said.

Kim called for modernising and scaling up artillery forces, highlighting the 600 mm rocket launchers' "strategic duties as the core central striking means" in war preparations.

"The destructive offensive means possessed by our army should more thoroughly fulfil their missions to block and suppress the possibility of war with the constant perfect preparedness to collapse the capital of the enemy and the structure of its military forces," Kim told the troops, according to KCNA.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a review meeting of Health Department.

## Speakers call for addressing women's plight in occupied territories like Palestine, Kashmir

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Prominent speakers at a panel discussion, hosted by Pakistan's Mission to the UN, Monday called for greater global efforts, including uniform implementation of the UN resolutions, treaties and conventions, to end the situations of foreign occupation and conflicts facing women around the world, especially in Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine.

The discussion, a side event, was part of the ongoing 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68). It took place at UN Headquarters in New York.

Panelists, representing UN-based diplomatic corps, academia, women rights organizations and civil society underlined the challenges and hardships facing the women, girls and children under occupation.

Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram opened the discussion in which taking part were Algerian Ambassador Amar Bendjama, OIC Ambassador to the UN Hameed Ajbaiye Opeleyeru, Dr. Dalal Kanaan, Professor at Fordham University, New York, and Dr. Ameena Zia, Professor at CUNY Lehman College & Founder of Blue Ridge Impact Con-

sulting, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, former Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, sent a special video message on the occasion. The panelists demanded that all future UN reports and resolutions of the Security Council on the women, peace and security agenda should include provisions and information relating to the situation of women and girls under foreign occupation. They proposed the creation of a UN monitoring mechanism to register all crimes and violations committed against women and girls under foreign occupation.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kuwait, Nassar Abdul Rehman Almutari calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## AJK PM claims eradication of corruption and mafia focuses on development

MIRPUR (APP): Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq of Azad Jammu Kashmir asserted his government's success in eliminating corruption and mafia influence from the state.

In an interview at Jammu Kashmir House, he stated that the timber, cigarette, and food mafias were now obsolete.

Haq emphasized the restoration of good governance, stressing that it relies on law enforcement and accountability.

He ensured equal application of the law, starting from top-level officials down to society's grassroots.

The PM highlighted key appointments made on merit, aiming to revitalize

the governance structure. He mentioned initiatives to enhance education and healthcare, alongside an austerity drive reducing expenditures.

Under Haq's leadership, illegal use of government vehicles was halted, with surplus vehicles auctioned.

The PM personally restricts his vehicle use after 2 PM. He announced a 51% budget cut for the Prime Minister's Secretariat by June 30, a significant departure from past practices of supplementary grants.

Plans include a social protection program for vulnerable groups, and establishment of a ten billion rupees endowment fund for regular relief.



QUETTA: Provincial Election Commission Farid Ahmed Afridi checking document peppers of candidates submitted for senate general election in last date at Election Office.

## Chinese Karachi Consulate donates ration for 2000 Gwadar flood victims

GWADAR (INP): As a part of humanitarian endeavours to mitigate acute plight of Gwadar flood victims, Consulate General of People's Republic of China in Karachi has delivered essential food items (Ration) for 2000 flood affected families in Gwadar City.

The ration consists of flour bags and cooking oil. The consignment that reached Gwadar by road is being handed over to Gwadar district administration by China Overseas Ports Holding Company, Gwadar RP reported.

Earlier this month, following the torrential rain, COPHC also distributed food to 1000 local families. General Consular of Karachi Mr Yang Yundong in a letter to DC Gwadar had expressed solidarity

with the people of Gwadar and assured their fullest support in the wake of unprecedented rain early this month. China has been a regular supplier of food in Gwadar the past few years.

On March 14, Chinese government also provided \$100,000 emergency cash assistance to Pakistan for rain-hit areas in Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). A donation ceremony was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for emergency aid provided by the Chinese government to rain-hit areas in Balochistan and KP.

On behalf of the Chinese government, Ambassador Jiang Zaidong handed \$100,000 emergency cash assistance over to the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Mohammad Syrus Sajjad had expressed solidarity

## Magnitude 5.4 earthquake shakes parts of Balochistan

QUETTA (INP): An earthquake of magnitude 5.4 jolted Southern and Northern parts of Balochistan on Tuesday early morning.

The magnitude of the quake was 5.4 on Richter Scale, the seismic center reported. The tremors were felt in Quetta, Noshki, Chagai, Chaman, Qila Saifullah, Pashin, Mastung and other parts.

The epicentre of the earthquake was some 150 kilometers away from Quetta and its dept was 35 kilometers in South and West, according to the seismic centre.

However, no loss of life and damage to property was reported from any part of Loralai so far. People came out of their houses in fear by reciting Kalma-e-Tayyaba.

## CPPA files application in NEPRA seeking hike in power tariff

ISLAMABAD (Online): Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) has filed application in NEPRA seeking hike in power tariff. Under this application the tariff of electricity is likely to be increased by Rs 5 per unit for one month.

The increase in tariff has been sought under Monthly Fuel Adjustment (MFA).

In the event of acceptance of application, financial burden of over Rs 40 billion is likely to be shifted to the consumers.

According to CPPA application 6 billion 87 crore and 60 lac units electricity was sold in the month of February, out of it 24.77 percent electricity was generated from water. 13.94 percent electricity was generated from local coal and 1.89 percent electricity was generated out of imported coal. 11.04 percent electricity was generated from local gas and 2.33 percent electricity was generated from imported LNG.

## PTI moves IHC for rally permission in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has approached the Islamabad High Court seeking permission to hold a rally in the federal capital on March 30th. A petition filed by PTI leader Amir Mughal, represented by lawyer Sher Afzal Marwat, requests the court's authorization for the gathering.

The petition names the Interior Secretary, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, and Inspector General Islamabad as respondents. PTI seeks court orders allowing the rally to proceed at 10 pm on March 30th, with Parade Ground F9 Park or D Chowk as their preferred venues.

## Pakistan, US discuss bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the United States to Pakistan, Donald Blome, paid a courtesy visit to Minister for Finance & Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb here Tuesday to discuss important matters related to bilateral cooperation and mutual interests between Pakistan and the United States.

The ambassador extended felicitations to Muhammad Aurangzeb upon his appointment as Minister for Finance and Revenue and conveyed confidence towards further strengthening of economic ties between the two countries, according to press

statement issued by finance ministry.

He congratulated government on positive step taken so far that resulted in visibly positive signs in the economy and hoped that it will help further stabilize the economy. The minister warmly welcomed the ambassador and underscored the significance of Pakistan-US bilateral relations, highlighting their importance at political, economic, and security levels. He shared that the new government was fully prepared to tackle the economic challenges and is determined to bring about macroeconomic stability in the country.

## CM pays surprise visit to Quetta city, Sheikh Zayed Hospital

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti paid surprise visit to Quetta city on Tuesday.

The Chief Minister reviewed the cleanliness situation of the city.

The Administrator Quetta Metropolitan Corporation, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat briefed the Chief Minister about the cleanliness situation.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister said that Quetta is our face and people from all over the province come here.

He said that first of all,

the Commissioner Quetta had been given the task to resolve problems of Quetta city.

The Commissioner has also been given the task to dispose of the garbage of Quetta in next couple of months.

The Chief Minister pointed out that 150,000 tons of waste is present in Quetta and adjoining areas.

Meanwhile, he also visited the Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Hospital the same night. He reviewed the facilities available for the patients besides meeting the patients and their attendants.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb was called on by H.E. Mr. Donald Blome, Ambassador of the United States of America & discussed matters of mutual interest, economic & financial relations between the two countries.

## Siraj dissatisfied with prevailing law & order situation

KASHMIRE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq expressing dissatisfaction over the prevailing law and order situation especially in Sindh has said that the populace feels unprotected as lawlessness and reign of dacoits prevails. Speaking to media persons after leading the funeral prayer of JI local leader Maulana Abdul Hafeez Bajarani on Tuesday, he emphasized the necessity for the government to ensure security for the

masses. Despite assuming power through a contested mandate, he urged the government to prioritize peace-building efforts and economic development.

Sirajul Haq highlighting inflation, unemployment, and lawlessness as the primary challenges confronting the populace, criticized the government's reliance solely on IMF intervention to address economic woes, stressing the need for alternative solutions.

## Fissures intensify in PTI ranks, forward blocks can emerge soon

ISLAMABAD (Online): Fissures have emerged openly in the ranks of PTI over the issue of parliamentary posts. Party divided into three factions on the matter of pursuing aggressive or compromising attitude. Party is likely to be divided into different forward blocks. Reliable sources said PTI is facing both external and internal challenges at present. The cold war intensified among PTI leaders. Sources said

Taimore Saleem Jhagra conducted lobbying for making Amin Gandapur as chief minister KP but he was ignored in the cabinet. Due to it he is estranged and he has formed his separate group. He started seeking support of disgruntled MPAs and is holding secret meetings with them.

Asad Qaisar is too resentful over not giving office of speaker to his brother in KP and he is active in provincial level politics and is holding meetings with different party leaders. The workers and ideological leaders are annoyed over names of the candidates for Senate election. They have expressed reservation over name of Zulfi Bokhari, Hamid Khan, Sanam Javed and other candidates saying those who stood with party in hard times have been ignored while awarding party tickets for Senate election.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Chairman Pakistan Flour Mills Association Advocate Nasir Agha meeting with Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan.

## CM expresses anger over making advance payment of Rs. 1 billion for development projects of health sector in Balochistan

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed anguish over making advance payment of Rs. 1 billion for development projects of health sector in the province.

He directed the concerned authorities to lodge FIR against those responsible for advance payment after fixation of the responsibility.

He also directed to the Anti-Corruption department to arrest all the responsible after conducting investigations into the mat-

ter.

The Chief Minister was chairing a review meeting of the Health department here on Tuesday.

The Member provincial assembly, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Imran Zarkoon, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development, Abdul Saboor Khan Kakar, Secretary Finance, Babar Khan, Secretary Health, Abdullah Khan and other concerned high ups.

Addressing the meet-

ing, Chief Minister directed to ensure appointment of surgeons in all district headquarters hospitals within 10 days.

In addition to this, the Chief Minister also directed to ensure uninterrupted supply of medicines in the hospital and adding he asserted he would personally review the situation.

He regretfully pointed out that there are certain complaints about purchase of medicines in the health sector, which needs to be addressed.

The Chief Minister issued standing directives

to the Chief Secretary to start implementation on the initiatives proposed for well being of the people right from today.

Referring the advance payment of Rs. 1 billion for development projects in health sector, the Chief Minister expressed dismay over the advance payment saying that the payment was made, but work was not done.

He on the occasion observed that the buildings of basic health units are used for personal sittings and gatherings in interior parts of the province.



QUETTA: IG Police Abdul Khaliq Sheikh inaugurating new Trauma Centre building at Police Line.

## Marwat claims submit evidence against Maryam Nawaz to FIA

PESHAWAR (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sher Afzal Marwat on Monday claimed that he had submitted evidence against Maryam Nawaz to Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) as he accused the latter of orchestrating an assassination plot against him.

## IGP inaugurates newly established Trauma Center in Police Line

QUETTA: The Inspector General of Police, Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh inaugurated the newly established building of Trauma Center in Police Line Quetta on Tuesday.

The new building of Trauma Center consists of 10 beds equipped with necessary facilities to provide emergency healthcare to the patients.

Additional Inspector General of Police, Jawad Ahmed Dogar, DIG Headquarter, Qamarul Hasan, DIG Quetta, Abdul Hayee Baloch, DIG Telecommunication, Ali Sher Jhokrani, AIG Police Welfare, Fahad Khosa, besides other police high ups.

Speaking on the occasion, Inspector General of

Police said that provision of speedy and quality medical facility to the patients and injured persons is important need of the hour.

Similarly, it is basic right of every human being to get health facilities, the IGP maintained.

Mr. Sheikh also said that it is just worship to serve the people and in the police service, it is first priority to serve them.

He said that our real job is to give preference to the public interest. He assured to provide and arrange necessary resources for the Trauma center established in Quetta Police Line. Earlier, Director Management Center, Dr. Paras briefed the IGP about the newly established Trauma Center of Police Line.

## Parvez Elahi suffers minor injuries, court informed

LAHORE (APP): An anti-corruption court was informed on Tuesday that former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi fell in the bathroom of the jail on March 17 and sustained minor injuries.

This statement was made in a report from the superintendent of Adiala Jail, which was filed before Anti-Corruption Court Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta, who was presiding over the Punjab Assembly illegal appointments case. Deputy Superintendent Jail Tahir submitted Chaudhry Parvez Elahi's medical report to the court. Following the report's submission, the court noted that the indictment could not be made due to an incomplete number of accused. The court adjourned further hearings until April 4 and summoned all accused for indictment on the next hearing date.

## Scrutiny concludes for nomination papers of 48 Senate seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): Scrutiny of nomination papers for 48 Senate seats, including 12 each from Punjab and Sindh, 11 from Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and two from the federal capital, was completed on Tuesday.

In the federal capital, National Assembly members will elect representatives for one general seat and one seat for technocrats, including Ulema, in the Senate.

Meanwhile, members of the four provincial as-

semblies will elect senators, including seven for general seats, two for women seats, and two for technocrats, including Ulema, from each province. Additionally, one seat for non-Muslims will be elected from both Punjab and Sindh provinces.

Polling for the Senate's vacant seats from the federal capital will take place at Parliament House on April 2, 2024.

The returning officer's deadline to file appeals against the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers is March 21, 2024.



QUETTA: Chief Executive Officer of BRSP Tahir Rasheed meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

## New political party set to emerge by June: Abbasi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has made a significant announcement regarding the formation of a new political party, set to emerge by May-June of this year.

Addressing the media outside the accountability court, Abbasi stated that consultations are underway, and preparations are in motion for the establishment of this party.

Prominent figures such as Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, Miftah Ismail, and several others are anticipated to join the ranks of this forthcoming political entity. Abbasi emphasized the need for a fresh approach in the political landscape, advocating for change and a departure from the status quo.

In addition to outlining plans for the new party, Abbasi addressed the ongoing legal challenges he faces, labeling the cases against him as baseless. Expressing dissatisfaction with the accountability process, he urged for an end to what he

perceived as the undue influence of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in hindering governance.

Moreover, Abbasi highlighted concerns over the recent electoral process, citing discrepancies and alleged rigging tactics. He called upon the Supreme Court to intervene, suggesting a scrutiny of electoral practices, particularly focusing on the authenticity of Form 45 and 47 documents. Abbasi proposed that presiding officers take oaths on the Quran to verify the integrity of these forms, underscoring the need for transparency in the electoral process.

Asserting the importance of national unity, Abbasi underscored the necessity for dialogue and cooperation among key stakeholders, including political, judicial, and military leadership. He urged for consensus-building efforts to address the challenges facing the nation, emphasizing the imperative of inclusivity and collaboration in steering the country forward.