

# Independent

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Gwadar

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level security meeting.

## PM Shahbaz says Terrorism trans-national threat, instrumentalised by enemies to stymie Pak progress, development

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday instructed to conduct a thorough joint investigation of the Besham terrorist attack on Chinese nationals working on Dassu Hydel Power Project, utilizing all resources of the state.

The prime minister offering deepest condolences to the families of the innocent victims of the attack assured that the perpetrators of this barbaric act would be brought to justice swiftly.

Chairing a high level emergency meeting in the aftermath of Besham terrorist attack on Chinese nationals, the prime minister appreciated the alacrity with which law enforcement agencies and locals responded to the attack, saving many precious lives which could have been lost. The meeting was attended by the Federal Ministers, Chief of the Army Staff, Chief Ministers, Chief Secretaries and Inspector Generals of Police of respective provinces, a PM Office press release said.

The meeting discussed in detail the heinous attack on innocent civilians working on a development project, meant to contribute to energy and water security of Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif underscored the enduring bond of brotherhood between the people of Pakistan and China and conveyed that the whole nation was saddened by the loss of Chinese lives.

He stated, "Terrorism is a trans-national threat that has been instrumentalized by the enemies of Pakistan to stymie Pakistan's progress and development. The acts targeting Pakistan-China friendship are particularly aimed at creating mistrust between the two iron brothers".

Participants of the meeting expressed resolute commitment to completely rooting out terrorism from this country.

## US warns Pakistan of sanctions risk over Iran gas pipeline project

Declared that it does not support the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project going forward

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has declared that it does not support the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project going forward and cautioned Islamabad about the risk of sanctions in doing business with Tehran.

The Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline, known as the Peace Pipeline, is a long-term project between Tehran and Islamabad, and has faced delays and funding challenges for several years.

Pakistan and Iran had signed a five-year trade plan in August 2023 and set a bilateral trade target at \$5 billion. Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik said this week that his country was seeking a US sanctions waiver for the gas pipeline from Iran.

During his daily news briefing in Washington on Tuesday, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said "We always advise everyone that doing business with Iran runs the risk of touching upon and coming in contact with our sanctions, and would advise everyone to consider that very carefully."

"We do not support this pipeline going forward," the spokesperson added, saying that Donald Lu, the State Department's top official for South and Central Asia, had said as much to a congressional panel last week.

Washington has condemned a suicide bombing that killed five Chinese nationals working on a dam project in Pakistan, saying no country should have to suffer "acts of terror."

"We condemn the attack on a convoy of PRC [People's Republic of China] engineers in Pakistan," Matthew Miller said and added

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of life and injuries sustained, and share our heartfelt condolences with those affected by the attack. The Pakistani people have suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists, and I'll note that PRC nationals in Pakistan have also been the victims of terrorist attacks, and no country should suffer the acts of terror."

## Visits Chinese Embassy 'Shangla attack criminals will be brought to justice', President assures Chinese envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday visited the Embassy of People's Republic of China and offered condolences, on behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan, over the killing of Chinese citizens in a terrorist attack in Bisham.

He strongly condemned yesterday's terrorist attack, saying that the Pakistani nation shared the grief of the Chinese people.

He said that the people of Pakistan stood in solidarity with the Chinese people in this hour of grief.

Upon his arrival, the president was received by Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong. The Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also present on the occasion, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the president said that enemies in the region couldn't accept the fact that Pakistan and China were further strengthening their bilateral ties.

He assured the Chinese ambassador that the criminals involved in the gruesome act would be apprehended and brought to justice. He further said that all necessary measures would be taken to ensure the security of the Chinese citizens working on various projects in Pakistan.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti attending a meeting through video link regarding security of the Chinese nationals chaired by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem and IGP Abdul Khaliq Sheikh are also present

## Pace of work expedited on Gwadar Safe City Project: Proposed SOPs of Interior Ministry being implemented strictly for establishing peace, says CM

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated the proposed standard operating procedures are being implemented strictly for establishing peace in the province. This is the reason that the intensity of loss remained less in the incidents of terrorism occurred in the province last week.

While on the other hand, the speed of work has been expedited on the Gwadar Safe city project.

The Chief Minister was addressing the meeting through video link regarding security of the Chinese nationals held with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad

5690 personnel of the security forces are deployed, he further informed.

The standard of security is rightly according to the SOPs proposed by the Ministry of Interior, he explained.

However, there is a need to enhance the professional capacity of the CTD for effectively dealing the menace of terrorism.

He said that war against terrorism is not of anyone but it has to be fought by all of us together.

The Chief Minister also mentioned that the SOPs of Interior Ministry would continue to be reviewed fortnightly, in light of which the decisions would be made for improving security further.

## All possible steps to be taken to root out scourge of terrorism: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday reiterated the commitment of the government that all possible steps would be taken to root out the scourge of terrorism from the soil of the motherland.

Addressing a press conference after a high level meeting on security chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, He said that Prime Minister expressed the firm resolve to eliminate terrorism and make Pakistan a peaceful state.



Tarar said that all the participants of the meeting were on the same page regarding ensuring security for all.

He said today's high level meeting was attended by Federal Ministers, Chief of Army Staff, Chief Ministers of all four provinces, Chief Secretaries, Inspector Generals of the provinces, Chief Secretaries and IGs of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Attaullah Tarar said that the meeting had the consensus that an integrated strategy should be adopted to wipe out terrorism from this country.

"A message of unity was given to the nation today that all units are on the same page with the Federation", he informed the media. All were on the same page on the integrity and national interest of Pakistan, he said adding, "We know how to defend ourselves and our old friends".

He disclosed that regarding the investigation of the incident, there was also a consultation on the establishment of Joint Investigation Team.

## SC holds full court meeting on IHC judges' letter alleging spy agencies 'interference'

Monitoring Desk ISLAMABAD: A full court meeting of the Supreme Court judges was held in the federal capital to deliberate on a letter written by the six Islamabad High Court judges about the alleged interference of spy agencies in the judiciary.

The Supreme Court judges including Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa attended the huddle that lasted for over two hours in the federal capital.

The development took place after the bar associations and legal experts called for a probe into the letter. The sources said that the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan met the CJP and discussed the matter.

After the meeting, AGP, while talking to journalists, said that the matter is serious and it should be probed.

Bar associations of Sindh, Lahore, Islamabad and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well as senior lawyers condemned the alleged interference, urging the top judge to look into the matter.

## Govt. announces to enforce Education emergency in Balochistan

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has announced to enforce education policy in the province.

According to an official notification issued here, all district education officers, headmasters and senior teachers would remain present at their duties places all over the province.

Under the education emergency, no one would leave the duty station without the prior intimation. Moreover, the EDO of every district would pay visit to three schools every day and would present the comprehensive report on the situation, the notification mentioned.

## CM grieved over martyrdom of Levies officer in Pishin

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of an officer of Levies force in Pishin.

In an official statement issued here on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said that the Levies Risaldar embraced martyrdom while performing duty. He paid homage to the martyr Risaldar and prayed for early recovery of those injured in the terrorism incident.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari meeting with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Mr Jiang Zaidong, to offer his condolences over the killing of Chinese citizens in Bisham, at the Chinese Embassy.

## Acting Governor visits DHQ Hospital Chaman: Negligence & carelessness not to be tolerated in healthcare sector, asserts Achakzai

QUETTA: The acting Governor Balochistan and Speaker Provincial Assembly, (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai visited the District Headquarter Hospital Chaman on Wednesday.

The Deputy Commissioner Chaman, Captain (Retd) Raja Athar Abbas and other high ups were also present. The District Health Officer Chaman, Dr. Aimal Mandokhail and Medical Superintendent of the Hospital, Dr. Abdul Rasheed Nasar briefed the visiting acting Governor about the overall functioning and services of the hospital.

During the briefing, it was informed that hardships are being faced in the operation theatre due to the on-going longtime power load shedding. It was also informed that some 120 posts are lying vacant after upgradation of the DHQ Hospital, which is causing shortage of staff there. He was informed that the new posts have been given to the Abdul Rehmanzai district Killa Abdullah. Similarly, the medicines have also been distributed among the two districts.

While speaking on the occasion, acting Governor said that negligence and carelessness would not be tolerated in duties.

He on the occasion expressed anger over allotment of the quarters allocated for the out of district districts to the local staff. He also issued directives to advertise the vacant posts of night watchmen to meet their shortage in the hospital.

Meanwhile, the acting Governor visited the mother child health center established in the old female hospital. Speaking to the media persons, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai said that it is priority of the government to provide basic health and other facilities to the people.

He said that he has directed to the concerned high ups that there should be no hurdle in provision of better health facilities to the masses.



CHAMAN: Acting Governor Balochistan & Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai visiting new DHQ Hospital

## No attempt to undermine China-Pakistan cooperation will succeed: Jian

BEIJING (APP): China has categorically stated that no attempt to undermine China-Pakistan cooperation will succeed.

During regular news briefing in Beijing, in response to a question about a terrorist attack causing casualties of five Chinese citizens in Pakistan, spokesperson foreign ministry Lin Jian said China opposes all forms of terrorism, firmly supports Pakistan in fighting terrorism.

He said China will work with Pakistan with even stronger commitment to do everything possible to protect the safety and security of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in Pakistan.

## 20 candidates withdraw nomination papers from Senate elections

Independent Report QUETTA: In all 20 candidates have withdrawn their nomination papers from the Senate elections in Balochistan.

According to the data shared by the spokesman of Provincial Election Commissioner, eight candidates withdrew their papers from general seats of Senate from the province.

Similarly, seven candidates withdrew papers from the seats allocated for technocrats in the Senate from Balochistan while five candidates announced to withdraw their candidatures from the seats allocated for women in the senate.

After withdrawal of the candidatures, in all 13 candidates are in the competition run for 11 seats of Senate from the province.

Now at the outset, eight candidates are in the competition run for seven general seats of Senate while three candidates are in run for two seats of technocrats.

For women, two candidates are contesting elections for the even number of seats allocated for the same category.

With this, Rahat Jamali of PML-N and Husna Bibi of PPP are expected to be declared successful unopposed. The final list of candidates would be issued today.

The election on 11 seats of Senate is scheduled to be held on April 2, 2024.



ISLAMABAD: NCRG Chairperson collaborates with Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan to elevate child rights agenda and boost Pakistan's Global Image.



## CM stresses for modern house infrastructure in urban peripheries

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur Wednesday said that housing infrastructure development in accordance with the contemporary requirements especially at the urban periphery is much needed.

He was addressing an important meeting regarding housing sector development held here at Chief Minister's House, with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair.

Important matters related to public and private-sectors new housing schemes came under discussion.

Provincial Minister Arshad Aiyub and Fazal Hakeem, Tehsil Chairman Mathra Inaam Ullah Khan, Administrative Secretaries of concerned department, Commissioner Peshawar, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

He said that his government, alongside taking other priority initiatives, was also committed for infrastructure and urban development, promoting investment and ease of doing business in the province. "Incumbent provincial government will not only encourage private-sector investment in the province but will also

extend its all-out support to investors interested in investment here". He remarked and directed the quarters concerned to take pragmatic steps for attracting and facilitating private-sector investment in the province.

Necessary amendments in the relevant legal framework be proposed for simplifying the entire process of investment so that maximum private investment could be attracted towards province, he directed.

He said that all these efforts would bring about positive change in the lifestyle of people by promoting conducive environment.



GILGIT: Secretary Home Gilgit-Baltistan Ali Asghar and Inspector General of Police Gilgit-Baltistan Afzal Mehmood Butt briefs members of the Women's Caucus of Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly regarding Falak Noor case.

## Minister for eliminating corruption, ensuring merit in govt offices

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru on Wednesday categorically said that the establishment of a just system based on justice and elimination of corruption is our priority.

"Solving people's problems is most important for us, so the officers should go to the field to solve people's problems".

He was addressing a meeting of officers of all provincial and federal departments in the conference room of Deputy Commissioner Mardan along with the elected members of the provincial assembly from Mardan district. Besides Deputy Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Fayaz Khan Sherpao, provincial assembly members Abdul Salam Afridi, Iftikhar Ali Mashwani, Tufail Anjum, Amir Farzand Khan, Tariq Mehmood Ariani, Zarshad Khan and ADC Samiur Rehman attended the meeting.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of KP cabinet on March 28

PESHAWAR (APP): The second meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet would be held on March 28 at 8:30 p.m. at the Chief Minister house, said a notification of the Establishment and Administration department.

The meeting would be chaired by the CM Ali Amin Gandapur while the cabinet members including 15 ministers, five advisors and three special assistants along with all the administrative secretaries have been requested to attend the meeting.

## ATC extends interim bail of PTI founder in 3 cases till March 28

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Wednesday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder in three cases related to attacks on Jinnah House, Askari Tower, and the torching of Shadman Police station until March 28.

The court directed jail authorities to ensure the attendance of PTI founder through a video link on the next hearing.

## Meeting to discuss reforms in Health Dept soon: Qasim Shah

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah held a meeting with a delegation from UNICEF at his office here on Wednesday.

The delegation, led by the Chief of UNICEF Peshawar Office, Radoslaw Rzehak was comprising of Dr. Inamullah, Health Specialist, Aien Khan Afridi, Nutrition Specialist, and Dr. Kamran Qureshi, Immunisation Officer.

During the meeting, the provincial minister expressed the need to form a team of health donors to ensure that reforms in the Health Department adhere to international standards.

He also mentioned that a meeting with donors and implementing partners with the Health Department would be convened soon to discuss future reforms in health and ongoing changes within the department.

He emphasized that the doors of his office were always open for donors and partners.

The delegation briefed the minister about ongoing projects in the province under UNICEF's cooperation.

They briefed him about the support provided to the Health Department so far.

It was informed that UNICEF is currently running two major health and nutrition programs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



LAHORE: Members of civil society are protesting against Israel's aggression on Palestine.

## PHC directs KP Assembly speakers to administer oath to members on reserved seats

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Wednesday directed Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly to administer oath to the members on reserved seats and allow them to sign the roll of members in terms of articles, 65, 255 of the constitution.

In short decision, written by Justice S.M. Attique Shah, the speaker was also directed to allow and facilitate the members in casting their votes in the upcoming

## JKLF strongly condemns attack in Bisham

MIRPUR (APP): The US-based acting Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF-Yasin Malik) Raja Muzaffar on Wednesday vehemently denounced the recent suicide attack in Bisham that resulted in the tragic deaths of at least six individuals, including five Chinese workers.

In a press statement issued from Dallas, Muzaffar expressed profound shock and sorrow, extending solidarity to both China and Pakistan in the wake of the appalling acts of terrorism and violence.

"It is deeply concerning and condemnable that Chinese and Pakistani individuals in Pakistan have been targeted by acts of terrorism. The people of Jammu and Kashmir State stand in solidarity with the victims and their families," emphasized Muzaffar, underscoring the urgent need for collective condemnation and unity against such attacks.

## 18<sup>th</sup> IATF meeting held at ANF Headquarters

RAWALPINDI (APP): 18<sup>th</sup> Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) meeting on the increasing trend of drugs in educational institutions and anti-narcotics measures was held here at Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Headquarters.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Major General, Abdul Moeed, Director General of ANF, in which senior officers of federal and provincial law enforcement agencies, intelligence setup and related government departments participated.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the supply of drugs in educational institutions and the measures taken by the management of the institutions to combat it.

A comprehensive briefing was given on the agenda by the representatives of the agencies and the departments concerned, in which the root causes of the problem and the gaps in the implementation of the policy were highlighted, while at the same time, the ways forward were also discussed. ANF presented a comprehensive plan for drug-free educational institutions which was discussed in the meeting. All the stakeholders agreed that concerted efforts should be made and a collective campaign should be launched to deal with the issue.

## LG&CD dept, SNG agree to prepare new models of solid waste management in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD) Department and the British agency Sub-National Governance (SNG) have agreed to employ SNG program in preparing new models of solid waste management in Punjab. In this regard, the annual working of the ongoing projects under collaboration of local government and sub-national governance was reviewed in the meeting chaired by Special Secretary LG&CD Asia Gul here on Wednesday.

Matt Clancy, Annual Review Lead from British High Commission Islamabad, Governance Advisor Naveed Aziz, Economist Tufail Khan and Program Officer Amala Najeb also participated.

During the meeting, it was decided to increase cooperation in more fields based on the annual performance. The team lead of British High Commission presented the agenda regarding the annual performance of SNG.

Special Secretary Asia Gul pledged that revenue generation plans will be prepared for other local governments on the pattern of Rahim Yar Khan. She emphasized that there is a need to take substantial measures regarding the self-reliance of local governments.

The parties also agreed to seek technical assistance on local government collection rights rules, budget and other regulations.

Special Secretary directed that two members from the SNG should be included in the Technical Working Group. She expressed satisfaction that the financial management system has been successfully implemented in local governments with the technical support of SNG.

## International News

## 18 Gazans die trying to collect airdropped aid

**Monitoring Desk**  
GAZA STRIP: Twelve people drowned and at least six were killed in stampedes trying to recover aid airdropped into Gaza, local authorities said on Tuesday.

The deaths occurred in the north of the besieged territory on Monday, with people rushing to collect packages dropped from planes along Gaza's Mediterranean coast.

The UN humanitarian office called on Tuesday for Israel to revoke a ban on food deliveries to northern Gaza from the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA, saying people there were facing a "cruel death by famine".

Israel had earlier said it would stop working with

UNRWA in Gaza, accusing the aid agency of perpetuating conflict. The agency said Israel told it that it would no longer approve its food convoys to north Gaza. Four such requests were denied since March 21, it said.

"The decision must be revoked," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) spokesperson Jens Laerke told a UN briefing in Geneva. "You cannot claim to adhere to these international provisions of law when you block UNRWA food convoys."

A UN-backed report this month said famine was imminent and likely to occur by May in northern Gaza. James Elder, spokesperson for the UN children's



Palestinians gather on a beach as they collect aid dropped by an airplane, amid the ongoing Israeli bombardment of the northern Gaza Strip.

## Russia blames Ukraine, US for Moscow attack

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: The director of Russia's most powerful security agency said on Tuesday that he believed Ukraine, along with the United States and Britain, were involved in the attack on a concert hall just outside Moscow that killed at least 139 people.

Ukraine, which has repeatedly denied any link with Friday's attack, dismissed the Russian accusations as lies. Britain said they were "utter nonsense".

"We believe that the action was prepared by both the Islamist radicals themselves and was facilitated by Western special services," Alexander Bortnikov, director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), said on television.

"The special services of Ukraine are directly related to this," Bortnikov said, adding Kyiv had helped prepare radicals at an unidentified location in the Middle East.

When asked by Russian reporters if Ukraine and its allies, the United States and Britain, were involved in the attack on the concert hall, Bortnikov said: "We think that's the case. In any case, we are now talking about the texture that we have. This is general information."

Bortnikov, 72, who has served as head of the FSB since 2008, said Russia had yet to identify those who specifically ordered the deadliest attack inside Russia for two decades, but said that retaliatory measures would be taken. He offered no specific evidence for the claims, which hardliners in Moscow could use to justify an escalation of the war in Ukraine and to explain how Russian security services failed to prevent the attack.



Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena and China's Premier Li Qiang during bilateral talks in Beijing.

## Sri Lanka PM says China to develop strategic infrastructure

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: Sri Lanka's prime minister said on Wednesday that China has pledged to develop the island nation's strategic deep sea port and the capital's airport after talks with his counterpart in Beijing.

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said China — the island's biggest bilateral creditor — would "assist" Sri Lanka's restructuring of external debt, a key condition to maintaining a \$2.9 billion IMF bailout. Beijing's position on debt restructuring has not been made public, but Sri Lankan officials have said China was reluctant to take a haircut on its loans but could extend the tenure and adjust interest rates.

Sri Lanka in 2022 ran out of foreign exchange to finance essential imports and declared a sovereign default on its \$46 billion foreign debt.

## In Beijing, Dutch PM raises cyberespionage with China's Xi

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said he had discussed an incident of cyberespionage the Netherlands has blamed on the Chinese state during talks with President Xi Jinping on Wednesday.

Chinese state-backed cyber spies gained access to a Dutch military network last year, the intelligence agency MIVD said last month, calling it part of a trend of Chinese political espionage against the Netherlands and its allies.

It was the first time the Dutch publicly attributed cyberespionage to China, as national security tensions grow between the two countries. They are also in a confrontation over restrictions of exports of high-tech semiconductor equipment made by Dutch giant ASML to China.

Beijing routinely denies allegations of cyberespionage and says it opposes all forms of cyberattack.

US and British officials on Monday filed charges, imposed sanctions and accused Beijing.

## Ukraine's president replaces a top security official

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has replaced one of the country's top security officials in a reshuffle that comes as the war has dragged into a third year.

Zelenskyy dismissed Oleksii Danilov, who served as secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, thanking him for his service in a video address late Tuesday.

## Indonesia's losing candidates urge court to disqualify president-elect

**Monitoring Desk**  
JAKARTA: Indonesia's losing presidential candidates laid out their court challenge on Wednesday to last month's election, accusing the state of interference and urging a poll re-run and disqualification of the winner, Prabowo Subianto.

Former governors Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo said the resounding victory of Defence Minister Prabowo was helped by pressure on regional officials from a partisan administration and President Joko Widodo, with social aid used as a tool to ensure just one outcome. Anies said the election showed the world's third-largest democracy was at risk of sliding back towards its authoritarian past, and warned it could set a bad precedent.

"This practice will be perceived as normal, a habit," he told the Constitutional Court. The outgoing administration of Jokowi, as the president is widely known, has rejected accusations of election interference. Prabowo received nearly 60% of the votes, helped by the tacit backing of hugely popular former rival Jokowi.

He promised to maintain his predecessor's agenda of refurbishing infrastructure, adding jobs and developing downstream industries to better exploit Indonesia's vast mineral resources. Anies received a quarter of the vote and the third-placed Ganjar Pranowo took 16%. Challenges to election outcomes are typical in Indonesia and the court is expected to hand down its decision on April 22. Anies' team urged the court to disqualify Prabowo from the ballot, as a beneficiary of unfair practices, asking it to order Jokowi to keep neutral in any re-run of the election.

## Over 63,000 people dead or missing on migration routes

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: At least 63,285 people have perished or disappeared on migration routes around the world between 2014 and 2023, with most deaths caused by drowning, the UN migration agency said on Tuesday. A report published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on its Missing Migrants Project showed that the majority of deaths and disappearances — 28,854 — occurred in the Mediteranean, followed by Africa and Asia. Nearly 60 per cent of deaths documented were linked to drowning, and more than one third of those identified were from countries in conflict, including Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria and Ethiopia. IOM's data showed that the deadliest year for migrants in the last decade was 2023, when it recorded 8,541 deaths in part due to a sharp increase of fatalities in the Mediterranean.

## 7 Lebanese and an Israeli killed in an exchange of fire along the Lebanon-Israel border

**Monitoring Desk**  
HEBBARIYE: An Israeli airstrike on a paramedics center linked to a Lebanese Sunni Muslim group in south Lebanon killed seven of its members early Wednesday and triggered a rocket attack from Lebanon that killed one person in northern Israel, officials said. The strike on the village of Hebbariye came after a day of airstrikes and rocket attacks between Israel's military and Lebanon's Hezbollah group.

## SC restrains FIA from arrests of journalists

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court on Wednesday restrained the FIA from arrests of journalists till the next hearing of the case. "Is it the violation of the law?", Chief Justice of Pakistan asked. "This notice has been under section 160 of the Criminal Procedure Code, it is a notice prior to registration of the FIR," CJP said. "This notice can be served to me tomorrow, why you presume that they will register the FIR. At a time, an officer after comes under heavy pressure from above, issues notice but not registers an FIR, or arrest the person. In this notice they could also summon someone as a witness," CJP said. "When you show us something illegal than we can declare it void, we will not declare a legal act as null and void," chief justice said. "It is necessary to provide complete details of the case with the notice," Barrister Salahuddin argued. "I will be informed of the reason first, if I am being summoned to the police station," he said. "You are saying the FIR has been compulsory before being summoned. The officer may call you for verification of facts before registration of the FIR," chief justice said. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan said that registration of the FIR comes first and summon after it. "Do you want notice under section 157, instead of section 160," he asked. "The notice can be served after registration of the FIR," Barrister Salahuddin said.



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador H.E. Dr. Mehmet Paçacı called on Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain.

## IMF demands trace system to curb tax evasion in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has urged the current government to implement an automatic track and trace system, emphasizing the need to seal units not included in the system. Highlighting concerns over rampant tax evasion, the IMF pointed out the lack of effective measures in key sectors such as cigarettes, sugar, fertilizer, and cement. Notably, the FBR has struggled to implement the track and trace system outside of the fertilizer sector over the past two years. The IMF stressed the urgency of implementing track and trace mechanisms in all four sectors to prevent tax evasion and broaden the tax base before initiating any new programs. According to media reports, sources within the Ministry of Finance revealed that the IMF has expressed dissatisfaction with the track and trace system managed by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). The IMF has demanded the full application of the FBR's track and trace system across all sectors. Specifically, the IMF has insisted on the installation of an automatic track

## Secretary Health suspends 2 lady medical officers, nurses on absence from duty

QUETTA: The Secretary Health Department paid surprise visit to the Mufti Mehmood Hospital Kuchlak on Wednesday. It was found that additional pharmacists have been posted in the Mufti Mehmood Hospital, thus it was decided to transfer them in hospitals of other districts. The Secretary Health suspended all the absentee lady medical officers and staff nurses. It was found that additional pharmacists have been posted in the Mufti Mehmood Hospital, thus it was decided to transfer them in hospitals of other districts.



QUETTA: Balochistan National Party (BNP) Leaders, Sajid Tarin Advocate, Ahmed Nawaz Baloch, Musa Baloch and others addressing a press conference, at Quetta press club.

## Step afoot to provide facilities to consumers of QESCO: CEO Shafqat

QUETTA (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), Engineer Shafqat Ali on Wednesday said that the QESCO was taking practical steps to provide maximum facilities to its consumers in Balochistan. Talking to APP here Wednesday, he said that action was being taken against electricity thieves and electricity was being cut off for defaulters saying that QESCO's employees were not only fulfilling their professional responsibilities by providing uninterrupted electricity to the fasting people in the blessed month of Ramadan so that people were also getting help in doing worship in a good way. He said that in the light of the instructions of the Government of Pakistan and the Ministry of Energy Power Division, the transmission of electricity was reviewed from the monitoring cells established in the head office and all circles during the hours of Sehri and Ifitari time. He also appreciated QESCO teams for trying to provide the best facilities to the customers. The CEO Engineer Shafqat Ali said that support has also been provided to users to get new connections saying that interests of consumers first, along with additional measures to minimize losses and ensure consumer protection. He said that in all cases power supply and has enabled prompt redressal of grievances despite the teams of the QESCO were conducting indiscriminate operations against defaulters and electricity thieves across the province. About 4263 written requests have been sent to various police stations for legal action against electricity thieves in respective areas of Balochistan including Pashin, Lorelai, Sibi, Khuzdar and Makran.



QUETTA: A representative delegation of doctors organizations meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti.

## PM reaffirms Pakistan's firm support to global efforts for peace, stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reiterated Pakistan's firm support to global efforts for peace and stability without compromising on the security of its people, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Addressing an Iftar dinner hosted in honour of the members of the diplomatic corps at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the prime minister said "as a peace loving nation, Pakistan desires peace with all and enmity with none". He reaffirmed that his government would follow this message of the founding fathers of the country. The prime minister further said that constitution of Pakistan guaranteed equal rights to all citizens without any distinction. To translate it into reality, different policies had been enacted and every community in Pakistan had the complete freedom to profess their faith and practice their religion, he added. The prime minister also spelled out the priorities of the government and said that after conclusion of peaceful general elections, progress and prosperity of the people of Pakistan were at heart of the government's agenda. They had a development oriented agenda to turn around the economic trajectory, he said, adding the government would strive to bring reforms, forge global partnership for shared development and attract foreign investment. He said that country's foreign robust policy continued to support global efforts for peace and stability. The prime minister further reiterated Pakistan's firm support to Palestinians in their just and inalienable right to self determination and stressed the need for making sincere efforts to immediately implement a recently United Nations Security Council's adopted resolution for a ceasefire. He said that Pakistan reaffirmed its support to global efforts for immediate ceasefire. About the holy month of Ramadan, he said that this month signified more than fasting and gave a message of sacrifice, discipline and warm hospitality, respect for all and embodied a spirit of compassion. He said besides, the month gave a powerful message of harmony, peace and tolerance, adding these qualities were required most in a world grappled with diverse challenges and divides.

## Zero tolerance policy on absence of doctors, medical staff: Poor people to be provided relief by improving health services in Balochistan, says Sarfraz Bugti

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has assured that the poor people would be provided relief by improving health services in the province. In this regard, positive suggestions of the doctors and stakeholders would be welcomed. He was speaking to the delegation of Pakistan Medical Association and Young Doctors Association who called on him here on Wednesday. During the course of meeting, the problems being faced by the doctors in health sector and suggestions about provision of better healthcare facilities were discussed. There was consensus on adopting zero tolerance policy on absence of doctors and medical staff in the hospitals and other health establishments. Moreover, different aspects of public-private partnership were also discussed for improving health service in the hospitals. It was decided to outsource the services for improving cleanliness situation in the hospitals. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister said that steps would be taken for making the healthcare system functional together with consultation. He said that action would be taken against the absentee doctors and those having dual jobs. While on the other hand, the dutiful doctors would be encouraged, he said adding that district officers and medical superintendents would be posted on merit. He asserted that the duration of posting of the doctors and officers would be protected so that they may perform their duties accordingly.



QUETTA: MNA Nawabzada Jamal Khan Raisani enquiring about health of a patient during his visit to Urology department of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahayan Medical Complex.

## SC issues written order regarding hearing on army courts' case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday issued a written order about hearing on review appeals against termination of civilians' trial in army courts with regard to the riots of May 9. It said that the attorney general of Pakistan has been directed to present the details of 103 accused arrested in May 9, incidents' case. It said that a suggestion is raised that the decisions to the extent of the people who proved innocent should be announced. The court said that the matter pertaining to the fundamental rights of arrested accused was before it as delay would affect their rights. The court also instructed the attorney general and respondents to assist it that how a private petitioner and provinces could become party in this case. It said that the respondents have also prayed for live streaming of this case and sought permission for the families of accused to arrive court.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Health Abdullah Khan presiding over online meeting to review performance of Medical Superintendents of hospitals of different districts.

ISLAHQA Dar, Jordanian FM discuss Gaza situation; call for unimpeded aid supply. Israeli brutalities, Foreign Minister Dar wrote on his X timeline. The two leaders also called for unimpeded provision of aid into Gaza. "I look forward to working closely with Jordanian foreign minister in transforming our bilateral relations with Jordan into multi-tiered partnership. I S L A M A B A D (APP): Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Wednesday received a telephone call from Ayman Safadi, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Jordan. In the conversation, they discussed the situation in Gaza and condemned the Israeli brutalities. Foreign Minister Dar wrote on his X timeline. The two leaders also called for unimpeded provision of aid into Gaza. "I look forward to working closely with Jordanian foreign minister in transforming our bilateral relations with Jordan into multi-tiered partnership. I S L A M A B A D (APP): Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri on Wednesday strongly condemned the killing of 6 innocent people including Chinese citizens in Besham area of Shangla. In her statement issued here, she said that the incident was a conspiracy to weaken Pakistan-China friendship. Expressing grief and anger over the incident, she said that the recent terrorist incidents in the country were a systematic conspiracy to destabilize the country, which would not be allowed to succeed under any circumstances. We are an equal participant in the grief of the Chinese brothers, she said adding that the entire nation paid tribute to the brave security forces for foiling the cowardly terrorist attacks on Gwadar and Turbat. She said that Besham's suicide attack was also the hand of the same cowardly enemies who were targeting innocent and innocent people with such cowardly acts. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said Pakistan and China are brother countries and the entire nation is mourning the death of Chinese citizens. We as a nation strongly condemn the Bisham incident and those responsible for the incident and their facilitators will be sent to hell soon, she said. "Quetta Metropolitan Corporation collects rent from its as many as 900 shops and 63 leased properties located in the prime locations of the provincial capital on a monthly basis for just between Rs 25 and Rs 30." Muhammad Hamza Shafqat, Administrator Quetta said. Talking to APP, he said that old legislation coupled with incompetence and corruption has exacerbated the financial crisis of the

## Steering Committee on 5Es Framework holds maiden meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday chaired the first meeting of the Steering Committee on the 5Es framework for effective implementation of the multi-pronged strategy to turnaround Pakistan and put it on a sustained growth trajectory. The Committee decided to hold a One-Day "consultative workshop" after Eid-ul-Fitr in which officials from all the ministries and relevant stakeholders would be invited for deliberations to implement the framework, a news release said. Among others, the meeting was attended by senior officials of federal and provincial ministries and divisions. The 5Es framework is centred on five key pillars including Exports, E-Pakistan, Environment and Climate Change, Energy and Infrastructure, Equity and Empowerment. The National Economic Council (NEC) approved the framework last year in June, following which the Planning Ministry expedited its implementation, the formation of a Steering Committee. "Engagement with all ministries is a part of the exercise which has been started on the directions of Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal," it added. In the one-day workshop, all the stakeholders and experts from various fields including academia and industry will be invited and their proposals to be considered before finalizing the action plan to implement the 5Es framework. Chairing the meeting, the minister directed all the ministries to come up with solid proposals with their respective Es in the workshop. "The plans should be holistic with inputs and outputs so that its implementation can be ensured.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal chairs the first Steering Committee meeting to implement 5Es development framework.

## Non provision of copies of forms case: EC is bound to provide forms as per law: IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Amer Farooq took up for hearing petitions filed by Shoaib Shaheen and Suleman Akram Raja Wednesday. Junior counsels of Shoaib Shaheen and Suleman Akram Raja appeared in the court. EC authorities also appeared in the court and told the court that the EC has issued directives to the respective ROs and provincial election commissioners. Upon it the court while expressing sorrow remarked if contempt of court petitions have come on such small matter then it is matter of regret.

## NAB organizes seminar on "role of students in eradication of corruption"

GWADAR: NAB Sub Office Gwadar organized a seminar at University of Gwadar in connection with anti-corruption awareness campaign on the topic "Role of Students in Eradication of Corruption". A large number of university professors, students attended the event. Vice Chancellor of the University Mr. Razaq Sabir, Incharge NAB's Sub Office Gwadar Dr. Muhammad Rashad and Mr. Irshad Bulaidi Director ORIC University of Gwadar addressed the students on the topic. Vice Chancellor Mr. Razaq Sabir in his opening remarks welcomed the NAB's team and highlighted the purpose of seminar and importance of the topic for the students. Dr. Muhammad Rashad in his lecture, stressed the students to play their role against corruption. He said that corruption is an evil which affects every aspect of the society including investment, quality, merit, social and ethical behavior and systems. He further highlighted importance of youth/students in eradication of this evil. Students being future leadership can play an important role in controlling corruption by using technology, whistleblowing and forming social groups.



GWADAR: Director NAB Dr. Muhammad Arshad addressing a seminar at University of Gwadar organized NAB Sub-office.

## Missing rent collection mechanism causing bln of rupees' losses annually to QMC

QUETTA (APP): The Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) has been losing billions of rupees a year due to improper legislation and a lack of a mechanism for collecting rent for government-leased shops and properties situated in prime locations of the Quetta. "Quetta Metropolitan Corporation collects rent from its as many as 900 shops and 63 leased properties located in the prime locations of the provincial capital on a monthly basis for just between Rs 25 and Rs 30." Muhammad Hamza Shafqat, Administrator Quetta said. Talking to APP, he said that old legislation coupled with incompetence and corruption has exacerbated the financial crisis of the Quetta metropolitan Corporation. With its 900 stores and 63 buildings, the Corporation may bring in Rs 300 million a month in revenue. Conversely, he expressed regret that only a small amount, measured in thousands, is gathered. Due to their inability to simplify and bring amendment in the revenue generation method, QMC is now liable for Rs 1.05 billion. He was afraid that the amount would double the following year if it wasn't paid to the contractors and other parties. Expressing his regret over the apathy of the occupants of the government-leased properties, he said there are 20 shops and leased properties that did not pay a single penny during last seven years. "I'll keep battling against this mafia, and in this regard, I've briefed the court on the damage done to the national kitty. He promised that once the law is passed and appropriate changes are made, the QMC will begin to earn billions of rupees in revenue from its own properties. The case will be brought before the provincial cabinet for consideration. Hamza Shafqat who was assigned additional charge of administrator besides his own duties as Commissioner Quetta by the CM Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, said "he will live up to the expectations of the chief executive by streamlining the metropolitan corporation.