

# Independent

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## Conditions of fair trial not fulfilled in ZA Bhutto's trial: SC

SC opinion on Bhutto's trial sets a new history and tradition: PM; Bilawal terms SC opinion on Presidential reference on ZAB case as historic

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday observed that the conditions of fair trial and due process was not met in trial of PPP's founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in murder case of Muhammad Ahmed Khan Kasuri. Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa pronounced the majority opinion here.

The CJP said that judges were to decide cases impartially.

There should be self-accountability within the judiciary as the judiciary cannot progress without admitting its past errors.

In its five pages written order, the top court gave opinion on questions raised in the presidential reference.

It stated, "The proceedings of the trial of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto by the Lahore High Court (LHC

and of the appeal by the SC do not meet the requirements of the fundamental right to a fair trial and due process enshrined in Articles 4 and 9 of the Constitution. "The Constitution and the law do not provide a mechanism to set aside the judgment whereby Bhutto was convicted and sentenced; the said judgment attained finality after the dismissal of the review petition by this Court," it said.

It said, "In its advisory jurisdiction under Article 186 of the Constitution, this Court cannot reappraise the evidence and undo the decision of the case. However, in our detailed reasons, we shall identify the major constitutional and legal lapses that had occurred with respect to fair trial and due process."

The court said, "The

reference filed by the President of Pakistan has provided us an opportunity to reflect upon the proceedings of the trial, conviction and death sentence of Bhutto, under the regime of Dictator General Zia Ul Haq.

The reference was filed during the government of the political party founded by Bhutto but the successive governments of other major political parties carried forward this inquiry and did not opt to withdraw the reference.

This collective interest reflects the widespread desire of the people of Pakistan to seek the opinion of this Court on whether Bhutto was afforded a fair trial and due process for his trial and due process for the murder of Mr. Muhammad Ahmed Khan Kasuri."

It said, "In the course of performing our core duty to administer justice 'in ac-

cordance with the Constitution and the law', we (judges) are bound to 'do right to all manner of people, according to law, without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. We must, therefore, be willing to confront our past missteps and fallibilities with humility, in the spirit of self-accountability, and as a testament to our commitment to ensure that justice shall be served with unwavering integrity and fidelity to the law. We cannot correct ourselves and progress in the right direction until we acknowledge our past mistakes, the maintained."

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday congratulating the leadership and workers of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), said that by admitting the mistake in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's trial, the Supreme Court's opinion on the

presidential reference had set a new history and tradition. He congratulated Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, President-designate Asif Ali Zardari, PPP leadership and workers for the Supreme Court's observation that former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto did not get a fair trial.

"It is not possible to correct the past mistake but by admitting the serious mistake, a new history and a new tradition have been set," the prime minister remarked in a statement.

He said that rectification of an injustice of a court by the court was a positive development.

"The unanimous opinion of the Supreme Court in the Bhutto reference will help understand the history at the national level through the right perspective.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir NI (M) calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## PM distributes huge compensation package among recent rains victims

PESHAWAR (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Wednesday distributed a huge compensation financial package among victims of the recent torrential rains and flooding of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He on behalf of the Federal Government distributed Rs two million cheque among heirs of each deceased and Rs. 500,000 among each injured of the recent torrential rains and floods in different districts of the province including merged tribal districts.

The prime minister handed over the compensation cheques during a function held here at Governor House. It was the first visit of the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after assuming the office of the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Besides others,

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali, Members National Assembly, Khwaja Muhammad Asif, Engr Amir Muqam, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Attaullah Tarar, PML-N Leader Ishaq Dar, former Governor KP, Engr Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, senators, members provincial assemblies, Chairman NDMA Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik IGP KP Akhtar Hayat Gandapur and relatives of the rains victims were present on the occasion.

A total of 40 people including 27 children died and 62 injured during recent torrential rains and floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The prime minister directed the authorities concerned and relevant departments to complete estimates of all destroyed and partially damaged houses within five days and com-

plete the process of disbursement of compensation payment by

March 11. He directed the NDMA and other relevant departments to use helicopters facility for transportation of officials to ensure speedy compilation of estimates of all the destroyed and partially damaged houses in far flung districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa so that the process of compensation package could be completed within said period.

The prime minister said that delay in this regard would be unacceptable and officials failed to achieve their targets would be held accountable.

Shehbaz Sharif announced that Rs 700,000 would be provided for repair of each destroyed house and Rs 300,000 for each partially damaged house.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Safaraz Ahmed Bugti expressing his views during introductory meeting of Provincial Secretaries of departments

## Govt. jobs not permanent solution to issue of unemployment: "I am ready to take every kind of political pressure for improving governance", asserts Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that mere government jobs are not sustainable solution to the issue of unemployment and, adding announced to create alternative means of livelihood in different private sector. He asserted that government job is not hereditary distribution, and as such there is a need to correct the concept in this regard.

He went on to say that

he is ready to take every kind of political pressure for improving governance in the province.

The Chief Minister was chairing a review meeting of the Finance and Planning & Development departments here on Wednesday. The Additional Chief Secretary Planning & Development, Abdul Saboor Kakar, Secretary Finance, Babar Khan and Secretary Planning Lal Jan Jaffar briefed the Chief Minister about their respective departments.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister directed to reduce the volume of non-development expenditures besides improving and making the service delivery system effective.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti also directed to prepare annual development programme remaining in the financial resources.

Moreover, it is also necessary to make effective implementation on the accountability of all the concerned and making them answerable, he maintained.



TAXILA: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), visited Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT) as chief guest at the rollout ceremony of HAIDER tank (Pilot Project).

## HIT unveils new Tank HAIDER, ISPR

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday visited Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT) as chief guest at the rollout ceremony of HAIDER tank (Pilot Project).

The ceremony was attended by Ambassador of the Peoples Republic of China, key officials of Chinese state company NORINCO, high officials of Government of Pakistan & Pakistan Army, and various military and civilian officials of HIT, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

During the ceremony, HIT unveiled its new Tank HAIDER, which has been indigenously manufactured in collaboration with NORINCO China and various industries of Pakistan. HAIDER embodies cutting-edge technology and impressive capability in the domain of tank warfare having remarkable firepower, protection and manoeuvre characteristics.

The PML-N commands on 123 seats in the lower house, in which 75 won in the February 8 elections and nine independents who later joined the party.

## Ruling coalition secure two-third majority in NA

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and its allies have secured a two-third majority in the National Assembly (NA), following the allocation of reserved seats which were claimed by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).

The coalition government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, which includes the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Mutahida Quomi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), Pakistan Muslim League-Zia (PML-Z) and Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), comprises 229 members in the lower house.

To gain two-third majority in the 336-seat of national assembly, a government needs the support of 224 lawmakers thereby strengthening the ruling coalition's control over governance and its capability to enact legislative agendas effectively.

The PML-N commands on 123 seats in the lower house, in which 75 won in the February 8 elections and nine independents who later joined the party.

After the allocation of 23 reserved seats (17 for women, 4 for minorities), the total reached at 107.

## Pakistan desires to expand trade, economic cooperation with friendly countries: Alvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday said that Pakistan desired to expand its trade and economic relations with the friendly countries.

The president expressed these views during separate meetings with Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Portugal Dr Muhammad Khalid Ejaz and Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Myanmar Imran Haider, who called on him at the Aiwan e Sadr.

Talking to ambassador-designate to Portugal, the president urged him to work for further strengthening of

bilateral trade ties with his host country, adding that Pakistan was ensuring conducive environment for the economic and trade activities. The foreign investors should avail of such business-friendly environment in Pakistan, President Secretariat Press Wing, in a press release, quoted the president as saying.

President Alvi also underscored the need of enhancing political, cultural and people to people contacts between Pakistan and Portugal, besides strengthening of exchanges at the political level.



PESHAWAR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding recent torrential rains and heavy snowfall and the ongoing rescue and relief activities for the affected.

## Says PTI not anti-military Imran endorses army's top brass' statement on May 9 probe

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): Incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan endorsed a recent statement issued by the Pakistan Army's top brass in connection with the May 9 violent attacks and said his party was not against the military.

The Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) — with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir in the chair — had a day earlier committed that planners, instigators, abettors, perpetrators, and desecrators of martyrs' monuments and attackers of military installations on May 9 would certainly be brought to justice. The May 9 attacks refer to the violent protests that broke out following the arrest of the incarcerated PTI founder in a corruption case last year.

During an informal in-

teraction with journalists at the Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, the former prime minister said: "I endorse the declaration of the CCC. Suspects involved in May 9 incidents should be punished severely." Stressing the need for a thorough interrogation into the violent attacks, Khan said that a commission should be formed on the May 9 incidents. In the past, the PTI founder had been blaming the "agencies' men" for arson and shooting in some areas during the May 9 violent protests.

In a tweet from his official handle in May last year, the ex-PM said his party has "ample amount of evidence" to prove that agencies' men carried out arson and shootings during the protests to blame it on PTI. But he told journalists today: "Neither we are anti-army nor want a clash with forces."



LAHORE: Amir JUI Maulana Fazlur Rehman addressing a ceremony with lawyers.

## PM, Army Chief discuss overall security situation

ISLAMABAD (Online): Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Wednesday.

He felicitated Shehbaz Sharif and extended good wishes for him on assuming office of the Prime Minister.

During the meeting, views were also exchanged on professional matters of the Pakistan Army and security affairs.

## PM completes consultation process with Nawaz on federal cabinet

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has completed consultations with PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif in connection with federal cabinet.

The federal cabinet will take oath after presidential election. There is strong possibility that head of private bank would get the post of finance minister.

According to sources PM Shehbaz Sharif will select his economic team on his own. Some new faces will also be included in the cabinet.

Sources said two ministries have been offered to MQM initially. Faisal Sabzwari and Mustafa Kamal will be included in the cabinet. The final decision will be made by coordination committee today.

MQM has demanded four ministries.

## 10 candidates in run for three seats of Senate from Balochistan

**Independent Report**

QUETTA: In all 10 candidates are in competition run for three general seats of Senate from Balochistan as the scrutiny of their nomination papers completed here the other day.

According to the list of candidates shared by the Provincial Election Commission's office, nomination papers of candidates including Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo and Agha Shakeel Durrani of Pakistan Peoples Party were approved.

The elections on three general seats of Senate from Balochistan are scheduled to be held on March 14, 2024.

The final list of the candidates would be issued on March 9.

Similarly, the nomination papers of Kohda Babar and Mobin Khilji were also approved.

The papers of Mir Dostain Domki of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Abdul Shakoor of JUI, Tariq Mesouri Bugti, Mir Khan, Syed Mehmood Shah and Hairbiyar Domki were also approved.

The elections on three general seats of Senate from Balochistan are scheduled to be held on March 14, 2024.

The final list of the candidates would be issued on March 9.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Myanmar, Imran Haider, calls on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## JUI announces nationwide movement against electoral rigging after Eid

ISLAMABAD (INP): Jamaat Ulama Islam and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf have announced separate initiatives to combat election rigging in Pakistan.

JUI-F's head Maulana Fazlur Rehman disclosed plans for a nationwide movement against electoral malpractices, scheduled to commence after Eid-ul-Fitr. The movement, starting from Sindh, will traverse through provinces, culminating in Islamabad, with Fazlur Rehman leading the charge.

In parallel, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf declared intentions to form a grand alliance against rigging. Asad

Qaiser, a PTI leader, emphasized their commitment to contesting alleged fraudulent mandates, asserting their support for Mahmood Khan Achakzai in the presidential election. This move is seen as a gesture towards Balochistan, aiming to address the region's challenges.

Barrister Gohar, a prominent figure within PTI, reiterated the party's dedication to peaceful political struggle within constitutional bounds. He condemned what he referred to as the "5th generation rigging," emphasizing the imperative to safeguard democracy and parliamentary integrity.



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Poor performance**

The nation is glad to bid adieu to the caretakers. The day could not have come sooner. Interim governments are supposed to have a limited mandate tailored for the limited time they are given in office. They are expected to keep their head down, keep the country running day-to-day, and provide an enabling environment for the smooth transfer of power within the 90-day deadline set in the Constitution.

As a rule, caretaker governments should be entirely unremarkable and completely forgettable; instead, these last interim governments will be remembered for the controversial legacy they leave behind. They not only overstayed their lawful term, they also wore out their welcome due to several key appointees' unwillingness to keep within their lane. And, by the end of it all, the caretakers somehow managed to leave the country in an even worse shape than it had been when they had taken over.

The period between August 2023 and March 2024 will be remembered for the intensified oppression of already marginalised communities, the uprooting and expulsion of Afghan refugees, the repression of a certain political party, the curtailment and evisceration of democratic norms, possibly the most controversial general election held in recent history, and the reversal of hard-fought digital freedoms. As the country slid deeper and deeper into the abyss, the interim government either stood by and did nothing or made excuses for the various forces responsible for trampling upon the Constitution and abusing the law.

Had the caretakers focused on their task and sought to deliver conscientiously, according to the terms under which they were entrusted with the responsibility, the country may by now have been on the path to healing. For this, there is no forgiveness for the caretakers' failures. The country will continue paying the price for their complacency for a very long time.

Things perhaps may have turned out differently had the country been handed over to leaders with fewer personal ambitions. Alas, some of the caretakers seemed to consider their appointment an opportunity to demonstrate their 'utility'. The prime minister repeatedly gaslighted the victims of state excesses and also demonstrated a knack for doublespeak, especially when confronted with the failings of his government. The IT minister would have nary a clue about the internet restrictions that were enforced willy-nilly under his watch.

The journalist appointed information minister had great difficulty getting along with a free press. There was also the interior minister, who controversially resigned just a month and a half before the elections to contest a seat. To be fair, a few of the appointees did quietly manage to accomplish something positive. Unfortunately, their contributions will not amount to much when this period is reviewed in history. Thankfully, we can now move on.

**Berlin's blind spot**

Mahir Ali

About 10 days ago, a joint Palestinian-Israeli creative endeavour titled No Other Land, chronicling the struggle for survival in Masafer Yatta — comprising a bunch of Palestinian hamlets in the West Bank — won the best documentary award as well as an audience award at the 74th Berlin International Film Festival, or Berlinale.

Two of the co-directors, Yuval Abraham and Basel Adra, made brief speeches. Adra noted there was little cause for celebration while his compatriots in Gaza were being "slaughtered and massacred", and urged Germany to "stop sending weapons to Israel". Abraham pointed out that while the two of them stood as equals on the Berlinale stage, in a couple of days they would be back in a land where his Palestinian colleague faced institutionalised discrimination. He called for an end to "this apartheid, this inequality".

Both speeches were applauded by the audience, which included Germany's culture minister, Claudia Roth. Following a backlash, mainly from fellow politicians, her office 'clarified' that she had meant to applaud only the speech of the Israeli half of the duo, and Roth posted on social media that the "shockingly one-sided speeches" were "characterised by a deep hatred of Israel".

On his way home, Abraham received more than 100 death threats, which prompted him to delay his journey to Jerusalem. In a post on X, he decried the Germans' "appalling misuse" of a term that "empties the word antisemitism of meaning and thus endangers Jews all over the world", while acknowledging that his Palestinian colleague in Masafer

Yatta was "in far greater danger than I am".

There were other Berlinale controversies, but they mostly revolved around the same theme. US filmmaker Ben Russell, who won an award for a documentary on an unrelated topic, wore a keffiyeh as he accepted his award, and used his remarks to slam the genocide and declare that he stood "for a ceasefire in solidarity with all our comrades". Other award recipients sported 'Ceasefire NOW' messages on their backs.

Why should any of this even be an issue in a purported European liberal democracy? The continent is broadly united in its support for Israel, but there are significant exceptions to an unquestioning embrace of Zionist brutality — notably Ireland, given its own experience of colonial occupation, but also Spain, and to a small extent even Belgium and France. Germany, on the other hand, is the second most prolific supplier of weaponry after the US, and was one of the first states to criminalise almost every form of solidarity with the Palestinian quest for self-determination. It goes back to German guilt over World War II in general and the Holocaust in particular. There were limits to West Germany's de-Nazification, but it sought to cover that up by fulsomely backing the Jewish state that emerged in 1948, partly as a direct consequence of the unpalatable Nazi Judeocide. The trend established by West Germany's first chancellor, Konrad Adenauer has lately evolved into a stance across the political establishment, cultural organisations and the media whereby even the mildest criticism of Israel qualifies as antisemitism.

The targets include prominent anti-Zionist Jews, although Muslims

in Germany bear the brunt of accusations — even though some 90 per cent of antisemitic crimes are attributed to the far right. The Alternative for Germany has faced calls for a ban after it was associated with a gathering that drew up a plan for a mass deportation of immigrants, but even Chancellor Olaf Scholz is not entirely averse to a similar idea.

There are concerns that Germany, on its present trajectory, could find itself with the same tendencies of nearly a century ago, but it seems that the fatherland's elite is more focused on serving as a protector for the deformed entity spawned by its dehumanisation of Jews — the apogee of European antisemitism across the preceding decades that sparked the Zionist impulse in the first place.

Exceptionally perceptive Jewish intellectuals in Europe and America, including Hannah Arendt and Albert Einstein, recognised the moral deficiencies of the Israeli state early on. Their warnings went unheeded. That partly explains the rarely wavering Western devotion to its Middle Eastern colonial outpost, which can get away with mass murder while eliciting barely a murmur from its sponsors, benefactors and collaborators.

AS and Europe wake up to the horrors being perpetrated in their name, the dominant fascist elements of Zionism may be doomed in the longer term — as Joe Biden will probably find out in November.

That doesn't help the Gazans sentenced to death or starvation by the descendants of the victims of Nazism. Nor will German complicity in yet another genocide be readily forgotten or easily forgiven. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Gwadar calamity**

Dr Noman Ahmed

Weather experts have warned that a new rain system will strike Balochistan in the next few days. This will increase the extent of damage already caused by the recent bout of torrential rains. Thousands of people in Gwadar and the adjacent areas found themselves without shelter as the intense rainfall rendered their modest homes uninhabitable. Lanes, access roads, major arteries and highways were inundated. People could be seen draining the water from their homes and shops. Many lost their already meagre resources. Mass depression prevailed across neighbourhoods.

While various government agencies have sprung into action, it will take a long time and much effort before lives can be rebuilt. One can question how Gwadar is living up to claims of being at the heart of a multimodal development corridor that can turn around Balochistan's — in fact, the entire country's — fortunes. A sleepy town of less than 350,000 people, it is hard to imagine how large-scale regional development can take place to make dreams of national prosperity, on the back of CPEC, a reality.

The existing settlements are not prepared to take the impact of torrential downpours that could become frequent as climate patterns change. High-scale precipitation demands a drainage system that ensures the rapid draining of rainwater. Unfortunately, while Gwadar suffers from the shortage of potable water, it does not have the capacity to store rainwater for extended periods.

The concerned authorities are busy with the Gwadar Smart City Plan meant to give direction to development.

Such a plan will only benefit the people if it conserves and protects existing settlements, introduces critical infrastructure to enhance the quality of life, and up-scales livelihoods. The usual practice of identifying large swathes of land for real estate and its clandestine distribution to favoured stakeholders will not bring the desired relief for Gwadar's residents. If the proposed development process does not factor in the lives of the ordinary and lift them out of poverty, then such development may have little value.

The people of Gwadar also complain about being removed from self-governance. Whether they are development choices or routine administrative matters, the entire hierarchy of the provincial government, federal agencies and military establishment is involved. Decisions about development locations and land allocation and the choice between establishing enterprises or retaining traditional boat-making and fishing are made without consulting the local people, their elders or representatives, leading to protests and agitation.

As new governments begin to take charge at the centre and in Balochistan, a different approach to win back the people of Gwadar and the extended area can be considered. A broad-based steering committee should be constituted comprising members of the provincial and national assemblies from the area, community elders and administration staff to chalk out a relief, rehabilitation and redevelopment strategy. Existing plans and projects can be revised to accommodate the aspect of disaster preparedness. Executing the plans must be done in collaboration

with community elders to revive a sense of local inclusion in the management of local affairs.

Relief and rehabilitation works can best proceed under conditions of peace in the larger coastal area. For this, various stakeholders can come together to restore the trust of the people. A few tough decisions are required. The incoming regi-me must announce an amnesty for those they see as creating trouble. The top leaders of all the political forces, within and outside the assemblies, may be invited to dialogue sessions by the provincial government.

The objectives of the dialogue must be on striking a working relationship between the government, political parties and tribal elders; developing a roadmap to stop acts of violence through confidence-building measures; and the preparation of an agenda of negotiation with the centre. This is vital because there are many matters over which no provincial government possesses jurisdiction and authority. The attempt may prove futile if the establishment does not show an open approach.

The process of release of political detainees and locating missing individuals can be initiated by the establishment to convince the other side of its sincerity. Besides, dissenting voices in Gwadar and the extended coastal region must not be shrugged off. The best way forward is to provide political space so that a feeling of participation evolves. No political group can be a security threat if its concerns are genuinely accommodated in the normal political process. Fear and danger only raise their head when such groups are denied a space where they can prove their political worth. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

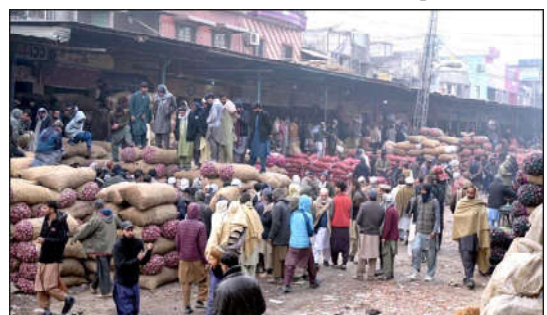
**Governor SBP inaugurates SAARCFINANCE Seminar**

**Transformative Potential of Big Data in Economic Policy**

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Mr. Jameel Ahmad delivered the inaugural speech at the SAARCFINANCE Seminar on the 'Potential Role of Big Data in Economic Policy.' The event, held in Islamabad, brought together distinguished delegates, subject matter experts, and esteemed speakers from the SAARC region to discuss the impact and implications of Big Data in shaping economic policies.

Governor SBP emphasized that the unprecedented volume of data generated by digital devices underscore the

potential of effective data utilization in contributing to sustained economic growth, societal welfare, poverty reduction, and improved living standards across the diverse SAARC region. During his speech, Mr. Ahmad shed light on the growing role of Big Data in central banking, financial inclusion, and how the SBP is incorporating Big Data analysis in policymaking. He also shared specific examples of how the central bank uses Big Data analytics for economic analysis, leveraging satellite imagery data, and harnessing the power of machine learning algorithms for fraud detection and prevention.



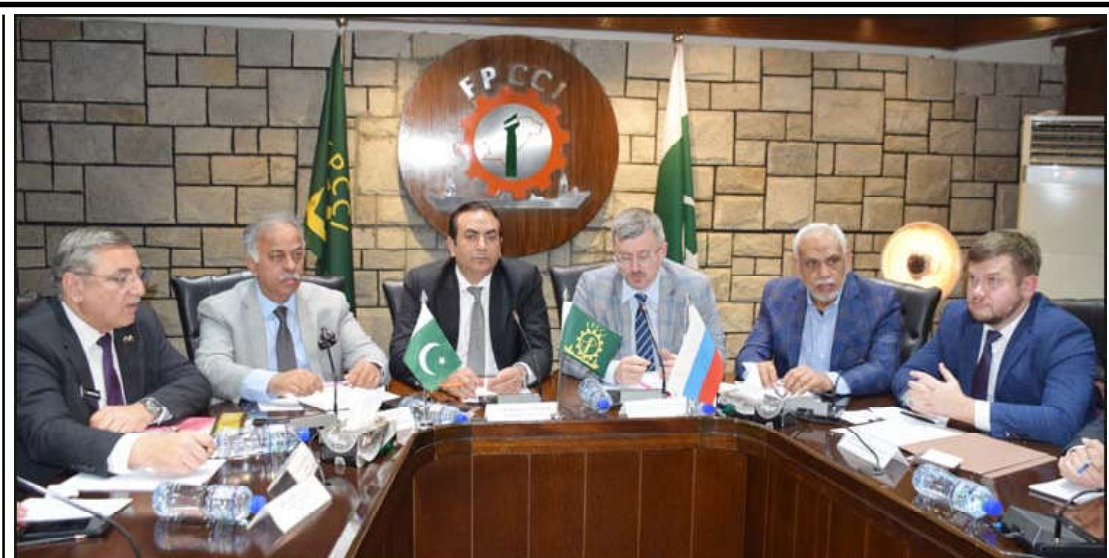
ISLAMABAD: A large number of people purchasing onion at Vegetable and Fruits Market.

**SSCI to take up issue professional tax on jewelry sector**

PESHAWAR (APP): Acting president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sanaullah Khan said SCCI will take up the issue of imposition of professional tax and Point of Sale in the jewelry sector along with other tax-related issues with FBR and relevant authorities.

The acting chief said SCCI is the only business community forum that has always played a pivotal role in taking up community issues with authorities and resolving them amicably.

Businessmen want to pay taxes but it is essential to make a sizable



ISLAMABAD: Atif Ikram Sheikh President FPCCI and H.E. Albert Khorev, Russian Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Kairm Aziz Malik Chairman and Malik Sohail Hussain Chairman Coordination FPCCI addressing Pak-Russia Business Council of FPCCI Business Community.

**Country expecting 29.77m metric tons of wheat in normal conditions**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The wheat output in the country during the current season is likely to reach over 29.77 million tons, which would further help cement the efforts of the government to achieve sustainable agriculture growth and economic development.

The local output of wheat, which is a vital source of staple food was fixed at 32.11 million metric tons during the crop season (2024-25) as against the domestic requirements of 32.94 million metric tons, said

ample water supply as reported by IRSA along with record planting areas indicated the potential for another strong harvest during the crop season 2024-25, he added.

However, the actual production outcomes will depend on factors such as growing conditions and accessibility of essential inputs, particularly fertilizers. Additionally, weather patterns in March and April crucial for the grains' development and maturation will significantly impact the final output, he said adding

**Promotion of electric bikes vital to abolish pollution, save expenses: Khawaja**

MULTAN (APP): President Anjum Tajraan Pakistan Khawaja Suleman Siddique said introduction of electric bikes in local markets was of vital importance to abolish pollution and reduce expenses on travelling.

He said this while addressing a ceremony in the local market on Wednesday. Amid soaring prices and increasing prices of petrol rates, it has become difficult for common men to afford motorcycles.

The emergence of electric bikes in the market is seen as a positive step towards both

saving costs and reducing pollution. Encouraging the public to opt for electric bikes over petrol-driven motorcycles, he stated that the need for the government to launch similar projects to promote electric bikes among traders, businessmen and other citizens.

He added that electric bikes offer a standard and affordable travel solution, relieving citizens from expensive petrol prices and also mitigating environmental pollution. On this occasion, a good number of local traders were also present.

**KPRA conducts training workshop for officials of AG of Pakistan on FABS**

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority conducted a one-day training workshop on Automated Deduction of KP Sales Tax on Services through the Financial

Additionally, a thorough question-and-answer session was conducted during the presentation, where trainers and officials of KPRA addressed the queries of the participants



Accounting and Budgeting System (FABS) for the officials of Accountant General of Pakistan on Wednesday at Serena Hotel Peshawar.

The workshop was arranged with the financial assistance of the World Bank-funded KPRMP project.

Trainers from FABS provided a detailed presentation on the workings of FABS in relation to the automatic deduction of KP Sales Tax on Services through the FABS system.

Director General KPRA Miss Fouzia Iqbal in her address thanked officials of the Accountant General of Pakistan, KPRMP, and FABS for making the workshop possible.

She shed light on the integration of KP Sales Tax on Services in the FABS system, emphasizing that it marks a significant milestone for KPRA and a memorable day.

"It is another step towards the automation of KP Sales Tax on Services.

**SECP files criminal cases against individuals involved in stock market manipulation**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has filed four criminal complaints against individuals involved in manipulating stock prices, including sponsors and brokerage house management.

The Court has admitted all four complaints filed by SECP against the accused individuals, said a press

release issued here on Wednesday.

The accused gained significant profits by manipulating the share prices of three listed companies in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

The SECP reached these conclusions after completing thorough investigations under the Securities Act of 2015.

The investigations established that these

individuals placed high-priced orders and traded with one another to artificially raise the share prices of specific stocks.

They also placed fake buy orders and then cancelled a large number of these transactions, resulting in fictitious quotations to deceive potential investors. The accused also fraudulently misused clients' accounts to place large orders.



## CM Punjab says: Ramzan package to benefit people at their doorsteps

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced the commencement of the largest-ever Ramzan Nigahban Package in Punjab, fulfilling her promises made in her maiden assembly speech. Addressing a press conference at CM's Office here on Wednesday, she said the Ramzan package, prepared in just nine days, would reach people's doorsteps and benefit them without any botheration. She said that package was aimed at providing swift relief to deserving individuals during the holy month under PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz

Sharif's guidance. "My mission is to provide relief to people at their doorsteps," she added. The chief minister said the initiative involves distributing 65,000 bags with QR codes, benefiting over 30 million people in Punjab. Beneficiaries' data from the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) was being merged for saving time. Maryam said and added that the upcoming Punjab Socio-Economic Registry Project would gather comprehensive data for future government interventions. Detailing the

Ramazan relief package items including flour, ghee, sugar, rice, and gram flour, the CM directed the district administrations and the Punjab Food Authority to ensure quality of food items. Random checks on hamper content and digitalised delivery mechanisms with the PITB-developed applications would enhance transparency, she added. Maryam Nawaz said that a digitalised record of distribution of 6.5 million hampers, with a helpline (080002345), established for public feedback and complaints, would ensure timely and fair distribution among genuinely deserving people.



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz announcing the Ramadan Package in a press conference at Chief Minister House.

## Federal Ombudsman's regional office holds open court at Tank

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Dera's Regional Office of the Federal Ombudsman on Thursday held an open court to address citizens' complaints at Tank district. Regional Head retired Chief Secretary Sang Marjan Khan Mehsood along with Senior Investigation Officer Imran Khan, and Data Control Officer Imran Mehmood addressed the forum. A large number of

citizens attended the open court with complaints against federal organizations including Tribal Electricity Supply Company (TESCO), Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) and Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL).

## E-Domicile service starts at Bajaur

PESHAWAR (APP): District administration Bajaur on Wednesday launched E-Domicile Certificate provision facility to address problems of students. The first E-Domicile was issued by District Administration Bajaur in a ceremony that was attended by Deputy Commissioner Bajaur, Anwar-ul-Haq, Deputy Commissioner General, Ali Raza and concerned officials. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner said that E-Domicile has been started at Tehsil level to facilitate students specially those who lives in remote areas and facing difficulties to get domicile adding that it would also save precious time of applicants.

## Friends of Police delegation visits PSCA

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of students from Friends of Police, comprising 150 participants from various universities, paid a study visit to the PSCA here on Wednesday. Commander DSP gave a detailed briefing on the functioning of the Authority. The delegation was shown the workings of different departments within Safe City.

## Women empowerment key to ensure progressive, inclusive society: First Lady

RAWALPINDI (APP): First Lady Begum Samina Alvi, On Wednesday while emphasizing the importance of women's role in the country's development, said that a progressive and inclusive society could not be possible without empowering women in every sector of life. Addressing an event organized in connection with International Women Day by the Behbud Association of Pakistan, Samina Alvi said it was the responsibility of everybody to ensure a conducive environment for girls and women to provide proper education and training, enabling them to live a life with dignity and respect. Appreciating the role of the association in empowering women, she said that since its inception, the Behbud Association has empowered around one million women by providing skills and training in various fields. She said women comprised half of the total population of the country, and their participation was very important to ensuring the economic development of the country. The first lady pointed out that the women's literacy rate in the country was much lower as compared to the men. She said Pakistan also needed to improve its current rating of 142 out of 147 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index.



RAWALPINDI: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi addressing an event in connection with International Women's Day, at Behbud Association of Pakistan.

## Helping deserving people brings peace of mind: Dr Amil

MARDAN (APP): The founder of the Non-Governmental Organization Saath Sabka Development Organization Mardan Dr Amil Mohmand Wednesday said that social service is the way to the survival of humanity. To serve human service without discrimination, service is greatness, it is our duty to provide the necessities of life to the poor, helpless, and destitute. He expressed these thoughts while discussing the distribution of the Ramadan ration package. He said that Saath Sabka Development Organization has provided financial assistance to thousands of beneficiaries, medical treatment, and hundreds of people to their homes since its inception. It has provided employment and God willing, this process will continue, a plan has been made to distribute the Ramadan ration package in a fair manner, for which committees have been formed to compile a list of poor and deserving people and provide them with ration.



PESHAWAR: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) National Assembly Member from NA-1 Chitral, Abdul Latif along with others addresses to media persons during press conference regarding rigging and illegal allocation of certain seats by the Election Commission, held at Peshawar press club.

## Jazz holds tree plantation drive as part of carbon sink project

PESHAWAR (APP): Jazz Pakistan's leading digital operator organized a tree plantation drive in the Hayatabad area of Peshawar as part of its nationwide carbon sink project which aims to promote environmental conservation and combat climate change. The ceremony was also attended by Additional D.G. PDA Manzoor Yousaf, Director PDA Sajid Khan, Jazz employees and school children. Speaking on the occasion, DG PDA, lauded Jazz's carbon sink project, saying, "I commend Jazz's dedication towards mitigating carbon emissions, including their remarkable carbon sink project. Captain (Retd.) Khalid Mehmood and Director General (DG) Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) were the chief guests on the

## CM felicitates Saraiki community on Culture Day

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that the Pakistan is a fragrant bouquet of cultural diversity and Saraiki culture is a beautiful flower of this bouquet. In her message on Saraiki Culture Day, the chief minister extended congratulations to the Saraiki community, saying that sweetness of Saraiki language is Pakistan's valuable asset. "Saraiki Ajarak is my favorite, it is a metaphor of love" she said.

Ibad asks PTI to withdraw protest call

PESHAWAR (APP): Leader of opposition in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Ibadullah Khan on Wednesday termed the nationwide protest call by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for coming Sunday a "drama" and asked for its immediate withdrawal. He said instead of providing relief to the people, PTI always indulged in negative politics.

## PSL matches LHC admits for hearing petition filed against usurping of basic human rights

RAWALPINDI (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) Rawalpindi bench has admitted for hearing the petition filed against usurping basic human rights in the name of security during PSL matches in Rawalpindi cricket stadium. The petition was heard by Justice Jawad Hassan of LHC Rawalpindi bench Wednesday. The court after preliminary hearing of the

petition issued notice to the respondents and sought parawise replies. The court issued these orders on the petition of senior lawyer Sajjad Akbar Abbasi. The petitioner has made interior secretary, chief secretary Punjab. Deputy commissioner Rawalpindi, City police officer Rawalpindi, chief traffic officer Rawalpindi and Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board respondents.

# International News

## China drops 'peaceful reunification' reference to Taiwan amid tensions

Monitoring Desk  
BEIJING: China will boost its defence spending by 7.2 per cent this year, fuelling a military budget that has more than doubled under President Xi Jinping's 11 years in office as Beijing hardens its stance on Taiwan, according to official reports on Tuesday. The increase mirrors the rate presented in last year's budget and again comes in well above the government's economic growth forecast for this year. China also officially adopted tougher language against Taiwan as it released the budget figures, dropping the mention of "peaceful reunification" in a gov-

ernment report delivered by Premier Li Qiang at the opening of the National People's Congress (NPC), on Tuesday. Tensions have risen sharply in recent years over Taiwan, the democratically ruled island that China claims as its own, and elsewhere across East Asia as regional military deployments rise. Li Mingjiang, a defence scholar at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore, said that despite China's struggling economy, Taiwan is a major consideration in Beijing's defence spending. "China is showing

that in the coming decade it wants to grow its military to the point where it is prepared to win a war if it has no choice but to fight one," Li said. Since Xi became president and commander-in-chief more than a decade ago, the defence budget has ballooned to 1.67 trillion yuan (\$230 billion) this year from 720 billion yuan in 2013. The percentage rise in military spending has consistently outpaced the annual domestic economic growth target during his time in office. This year the growth target for 2024 is about 5pc, similar to last year's goal, according to the government report.



BEIJING: Workers replenish Chinese President Xi Jinping's teacups during the opening session of the National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People.

## Russia, China plan nuclear power plant on moon

Monitoring Desk  
MOSCOW: Russia and China are considering putting a nuclear power plant on the moon from 2033-35, Yuri Borisov, the head of Russia's space agency Roscosmos said on Tuesday, something he said could one day allow lunar settlements to be built. Borisov, a former deputy defence minister, said that Russia and China had been jointly working on a lunar programme and that Moscow was able to contribute with its expertise on "nuclear space energy". "Today we are seriously considering a project — somewhere at the turn of 2033-2035 - to deliver and install a power unit on

the lunar surface together with our Chinese colleagues," Borisov said. Solar panels would not be able to provide enough electricity to power future lunar settlements, he said, while nuclear power could. "This is a very serious challenge...it should be done in automatic mode, without the presence of humans," he said of the possible plan. Borisov spoke also of Russian plans to build a nuclear-powered cargo spaceship. He said all the technical questions concerning the project had been solved apart from finding a solution on how to cool the nuclear reactor.

## Blast rocks security base in Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk  
FAIZABAD: A blast shook a Taliban military base near the airport in Faizabad, the capital of Afghanistan's northeastern Badakhshan province, but without causing casualties, officials said on Tuesday. The Taliban official confirmed on condition of anonymity that an explosion had occurred at the base but would not provide further details. A roadside IED exploded near the base but no one was killed or wounded, Badakhshan police spokesman Ehsanullah Kamgar told AFP. He said the authorities suspected the IED was not new but rather left over from before the Taliban takeover in 2021.

## Gaza ceasefire talks in doldrums

Monitoring Desk  
CAIRO: Hamas negotiators stayed in Cairo for a third day of ceasefire talks on Tuesday in an attempt to halt the fighting in the Gaza Strip in time for the fasting month of Ramadan, free Israeli hostages and stave off famine. A 40-day ceasefire in the conflict would allow some hostages captured by Pales-ti-nian fighters in the October attack, while aid to Gaza would be increased and families able to return to abandoned homes. "The delegation will remain in Cairo on Tuesday for more talks, they are expected to wrap up this round later today," a Hamas official told Reuters. Three security sources from host and mediator Egypt said the warring sides were sticking to demands that had held up an agreement. The Egyptians have remained in contact with the Israelis despite the absence of an Israeli delegation. Earlier, senior Hamas official Bassam Naim said the group had presented a draft ceasefire agreement, and was now waiting for a response from Israel. "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu doesn't want to reach an agreement and the ball now is in the Americans' court" to press him, Naim said. Israel has declined to comment publicly on the talks but a senior Israeli official said: "Israel is making every effort to reach an agreement. We are awaiting a response from Hamas."

A source had told Reuters earlier that Israel was staying away because Hamas had refused to furnish a list of all hostages who are still alive. Naim said this was impossible without a ceasefire as hostages were scattered across the war zone and held by separate groups.

## Gaza children may not survive famine, warns WHO chief

LONDON (Online): Children in the besieged Palestinian enclave of Gaza may not be able to survive a famine there, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday. "Children who survived bombardment but may not survive a famine," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wrote on X. He called for allowing more humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip as well as a ceasefire there. Israel has waged a deadly military offensive on the Gaza Strip since an Oct. 7, 2023 attack by the Palestinian group Hamas, which Tel Aviv says killed nearly 1,200 people. More than 30,700 Palestinians have since been killed and 72,156 others injured amid mass destruction and shortages of necessities. Israel has also imposed a crippling blockade on the Gaza Strip, leaving its population, particularly residents of northern Gaza, on the verge of starvation. The Israeli war has pushed 85% of Gaza's population into internal displacement amid acute shortages of food, clean water, and medicine, while 60% of the enclave's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, according to the UN. Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice. An interim ruling in January ordered Tel Aviv to stop genocidal acts and take measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians in Gaza.



RAFAH: Palestinian children receive cooked food rations as part of a volunteer youth initiative in the southern Gaza Strip.

## Hungary president signs Sweden's NATO membership ratification

Monitoring Desk  
BUDAPEST: Hungary's President Tamas Sulyok has signed the bill that approved Sweden's accession to the NATO military alliance, the president's office said on Tuesday. Lawmakers approved Sweden's NATO accession on Feb. 26, clearing the last hurdle before the historic step by the Nordic country, whose neutrality lasted through two world wars and the Cold War. Stockholm abandoned its non-alignment policy for greater safety within the North Atlantic Treaty Or-

ganization after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The Hungarian vote ended months of delays to complete the security policy shift and followed a visit by Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson during which the two countries signed an arms deal. Neither Kristersson nor Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom were immediately available for comment. The remaining formalities, such as depositing accession documentation in Washington, are likely to be concluded swiftly.

## US imposes sanctions on members of spyware group

Monitoring Desk  
WASHINGTON: US authorities announced sanctions on Tuesday on parties associated with Intellexa Consortium, citing their role in making and distributing commercial spyware used to target US officials, journalists and others. Commercial surveillance tools "increasingly present a security risk to the United States and our citizens," said Treasury Under Secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence Brian Nelson. In particular, the Intellexa Consortium was founded in 2019 and served as a "marketing label" for companies offering commercial spyware and surveillance tools. The tools, the Treasury Department said, are packaged as a suite under the brand-name "Predator" spyware, able to infiltrate devices without user interaction.

## Israel 'to allow' worshippers access to Al Aqsa as in 'previous years'

Monitoring Desk  
JERUSALEM: Israel will allow as many worshippers to access Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem during the first week of Ramazan as in previous years, the prime minister's office said on Tuesday. "In the first week of Ramazan, worshippers will

be allowed to enter the Temple Mount, in similar numbers to those in previous years," the statement said, using the Jewish term for the site. "Every week there will be a situation assessment in terms of security and safety and a decision will be made accordingly," it added.

## Bezos dethrones Musk to become richest man

Monitoring Desk  
WASHINGTON: Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has taken back his spot as the world's richest man, dethroning Elon Musk on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. Bezos' net worth stands at \$200 billion, according to the tracker, surpassing the Tesla chief's \$198bn. Musk, who also heads X (formerly Twitter) and SpaceX, has seen his riches fall by more than \$30b as Tesla's share price has dropped 25 per cent.



# OIC urges probe of war crimes against Palestinians; voices concern over India's rights abuses in Kashmir

GENEVA (APP): Pakistan, speaking for Islamic countries, has underscored the need for investigating Israeli war crimes against the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank to pave the way for accountability. "It is high time that violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law including war crimes committed against the Palestinian people are investigated and accountability follows," Ambassador Bilal Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN offices in Geneva, told the Human Rights Council during its general debate on Tuesday.

At the same time, the Pakistani envoy, who was speaking on behalf of the OIC countries, voiced "deep anguish" over the deteriorating human rights situation in Indian occupied Kashmir.

"We urge India to comply with the applicable UN Security Council resolutions and implement recommendations addressed to it in the two Kashmir reports by OHCHR, the UN human rights office, which need to be updated," the OIC statement said.

"The Council must pay attention to consistent observations made by

SPMHs (Special Procedure Mandate Holders) on the human rights violations, impunity and draconian laws in the occupied territory. "In the statement, Ambassador Ahmad strongly condemned all crimes committed by the Israeli Occupation Forces in Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), and called for implementing provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and reminded all states of their responsibilities in this regard.

"We reiterate our longstanding call for upholding respect for human rights and international human

itarian law in the OPT, including in East Jerusalem," he said.

"We also call for reversal of all measures aimed at institutionalizing illegal occupation, apartheid and colonial settlement enterprise in OPT." The OIC also called on the Council to work towards securing justice and accountability for the Rohingya people, including through their safe, dignified, and voluntary return to their homes in Myanmar. The OIC, he said, reiterated its full solidarity with Bangladesh and supports calls for assistance to the country in efforts to achieve a durable solution.



TAXILA: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), visited Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT) as chief guest at the rollout ceremony of HAIDER tank (Pilot Project).



PESHAWAR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif interacting with the families of the deceased and injured in the wake of recent torrential rains and heavy snowfall.

## Secretary Health visits Turbat Teaching Hospital, Makran Medical College

QUETTA: The Secretary Health Department, Abdullah Khan visited the Turbat Teaching Hospital, Makran Medical College and District Health Office, Turbat on Wednesday.

The Secretary Health was briefed by the Medical Superintendent of Teaching Hospital, Principal Makran Medical College and District Health Officer Turbat, Dr. Ababgar Baloch about their respective institutions.

He formally inaugurated the CT scan, MRI scan oxygen plant, solar system and burn unit in the Teaching Hospital.

Abdullah Khan inspected the pediatrics, Gynae departments, dialysis unit, casualty department. The Secretary Health appreciated performance of the staff of all institutions and said that better facilities are being provided to the people.

## Army, other depts. continue rescue, relief operation in flood-hit areas of Gwadar

GWADAR (INP): Pakistan Army in coordination with other concerned departments continues rescue and relief operations in flood-hit areas of Gwadar and other areas of Balochistan affected of rain.

The aid provided by the Army to the public includes 3281 aid packages of 50 tons of ration and medicines.

So far, 25 tons of ration

## Saudi delegation visits at SFIC for investments in various sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high level delegation of Al Ajlan Holding Group of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia visited Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) here today.

The group was headed by His Excellency Mohammed Bin Abdulaziz Alajlan, Deputy Chairman, along with members representing various sectors, operating under the ambit of Al Ajlan Holding Group, said a press release.

The delegation was warmly received by officials of SIFC and comprehensive briefs were given covering potential and investment opportunities in different sectors.

The delegation showed great interest in exploring investment opportunities in Pakistan under the umbrella of SIFC. The visit underscores longstanding brotherly relations between Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, which are transforming into multi-domain cooperation through participation of public as well as private sector.

## Process of answerability to be made more effective: CM directs all secretaries to prepare comprehensive plan for improving in governance of Balochistan

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed all administrative secretaries of provincial government departments here on Wednesday.

Addressing the secretaries, Chief Minister said that we have to work for betterment of the province and its common men.

He on the occasion pledged that we would take measures for prevention of corruption from the lower to higher level.

He directed the secretaries to prepare comprehensive recommendations for increasing the resources of province.

In addition to this, viable strategy should be prepared remaining in the province's own resources, he directed further.

He asserted that we would give protection to the due tenure of appointment on any of the position. Moreover, the process of answerability would be made effective by making the anti-corruption department effective, he vowed.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman administering oath to 18-member new Provincial Cabinet. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is also present.

## Shehbaz emphasizes robust planning to tackle natural calamities

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has emphasized robust planning and institutional structure to tackle natural calamities.

He was talking to the affectees of rains and floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during his visit to Peshawar today.

The Prime Minister said Pakistan is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

He said Pakistan has faced disastrous floods during 2022 and recently the torrential rains in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa led to death of about forty people. The Prime Minister appreciated the role of Provincial Disaster Management Authority, the chief secretary, district administrations and all those who contributed in the effort to rescue and rehabilitate the rain affected people.

He said the compensation amount has already been distributed among the injured and heirs of the deceased.

## ECP seeks additional PML-N lists for NA women's seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) sought more lists of women from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to allocate nine additional National Assembly reserve seats after their initial list was exhausted.

The PML-N's priority list for the National Assembly (NA) in Punjab has been depleted, prompting the ECP to ask for nomination papers from nine more women affiliated with the PML-N.

These nomination papers will be accepted based on the new priority list provided by the PML-N, following the schedule.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has released a schedule for granting extra seats to women, specifically to parliamentary parties such as PML-N, after refusing to allocate certain seats to the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC). According to schedule, the issuance of the public notice is set for Thursday, with PML-N's nominated candidates to submit their nomination papers to the Joint Election Commissioner of Punjab by March 9. The preliminary list of candidates is slated for release on March 10, followed by the completion of the scrutiny of nomination papers by March 12.

## Development of province, welfare of common men priority: Sarfraz Bugti

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that development of province and wellbeing of the common men is included in the priorities.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the Member Provincial Assembly, Nawabzada Tariq Magsi who called on him here on Wednesday.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti once again expressed the resolve to take all political parties including the coalition partners along in the province.

He said that he is working to bring improvement in governance, and adding he hoped that there would be marked improvement in governance in time to come.

He said that the people of province also witness improvement in the governance.

## 18-member Punjab cabinet sworn in

LAHORE (APP): An 18-member Punjab cabinet was sworn in during a solemn ceremony at the Governor's House, here on Wednesday.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman administered the oath to the newly-appointed provincial ministers after Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhter Zaman read out the order of appointment of ministers.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz attended the ceremony besides Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan and former speaker Rana Muhammad Iqbal, Senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leadership including Khawaja Saad Rafique was also present.

Names of the newly-appointed provincial ministers, along with their constituencies, from where they were elected to the Punjab Assembly, are as under: Mian Muftab Shuja-ur-Rehman (MPA PP-148), Marriyum Aurangzeb (MPA W-300), Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani (MPA PP-293), Syed Muhammad Ashiq Hussain Kirmani (MPA PP-186), Muhammad Kazim Pirzada (MPA PP-245), Rana Sikander Hayat (MPA PP-183), Khawaja Imran Nazir (MPA PP-150), Khawaja Salman Rafiq (MPA PP-153), Zeeshan Rafique (MPA PP-51), Bilal Akbar Khan (MPA PP-58), Sohaib Ahmed Malik (MPA PP-71), Azma Zahid Bokhari (MPA W-301), Ramesh Singh Arora (MPA NM-366), Khalil Tahir (MPA NM-367) Faisal Ayub Khokhar (MPA PP-168), Shafiq Hussain (MPA PP-311), and Sohaib Shaikat Butt (MPA PP-151).

Their portfolios are likely to be notified by Wednesday evening.

The ceremony was also attended by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwer, senior civil servants, parliamentarians, lawyers, journalists, party workers and members of civil society.



Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi presenting a shield to Provincial Ombudsman Balochistan Nazar Muhammad Baloch. Director Ombudsman Saeed Ahmed Shahwani is also present.

## 15-member KP cabinet takes oath of office

PESHAWAR: Fifteen Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ministers who have been inducted into the provincial cabinet took oath in a prestigious ceremony held at the Governor's House on Wednesday. The induction of the ministers into the provincial cabinet was notified by the KP government's administration department following a summary of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, approved by KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

The members include Arshad Ayub Khan, Shakeel Ahmad, Fazal Hakim Khan, Muhammad Adnan Qadri, Aqib Ullah Khan, Muhammad Sajjad, Meena Khan, and Fazal Shakoor.

Nazir Ahmad Abbasi, Pakhtoon Yar Khan, Aftab Alam Khan Afridi, Khaleeq Ur Rehman, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, Faisal Khan Tarakai, and Muhammad Zahir Shah are also part of the cabinet. Subsequently, the newly-elected KP CM Gandapur also sent a summary to the governor to recommend appointments of his advisers, which was also approved by the governor.

Following the CM's advice, five advisers have been appointed, including Syed Fakhar Jehan, Muzamil Aslam, Muhammad Ali Saif, Mashal Azam, and Zahid Chanzab.

Yesterday, Gandapur received a nod of approval from incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan after a meeting with him in Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi.

After finalising the cabinet members, the chief minister did not disclose their names, as he was under pressure by certain factions within the party to accommodate their nominees. Interestingly, a majority of those considered and approved as cabinet members by the PTI founder were unaware of their selection. "Some of the cabinet members and their portfolios have been approved but I can't mention them," a PTI leader claimed. Pleading anonymity, he added that every PTI MPA in the provincial assembly expected to be included in the cabinet, which he said, was not possible. After being nominated for the KP chief ministership, Gandapur signalled inducting new faces, up to more than 50%, into the next provincial cabinet, giving them a chance to represent the citizens in the assembly.



QUETTA: Leader of Pakistan Peoples Party, ex-Chief Minister Balochistan Abdul Quddus Bizenjo and Mir Abdul Wahab Bizenjo meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

## Commissioner inaugurates Business Expo at University College of DMJ

QUETTA (APP): Commissioner Naseerabad Division Tariq Qamar Baloch inaugurated the Business Expo Male and Female at University College of Dera Murad Jamali (DMJ) on Wednesday. In the opening ceremony, Divisional Monitoring Colleges Syed Hussain Ali Shah, University Director Dr. Wajid Farhad Baloch, other students including faculty, administration and large number of people were present.

Commissioner Naseerabad Division Tariq Qamar Baloch inspected all the business expo stalls installed individually and learned about the items placed in the stalls from the students.

While appreciating the performance of all the installations and students in the business expo, Tariq Qamar Baloch said that this process was a welcome initiative, saying that young generation would learn all the principles of business along with their education.

These children are the guarantors of our future and it has become imperative to

## Presidential candidates urged to appoint only MPs as polling agents

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has instructed the candidates participating in presidential election to appoint only parliamentarians as their polling agents. An ECP spokesman said in a statement that Presidential candidates must appoint only parliamentarians as polling agents. Furthermore, for the 2024 Presidential Election, candidates are required to ensure that their polling agents are members of the national or provincial assemblies.

## IGP exhorts officers to spend more time in field ensuring steps for public safety

QUETTA: The Inspector General of Police Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh has exhorted the officers to spend their more time in field and ensure timely measures for the public safety and service.

He said that positive image of police is conditional with better performance. The IGP was addressing the ceremony of pinning badges on the shoulders of the officers who were promoted on the post of DSP and Inspectors here at the central police office on Wednesday.

He said that departmental promotion and increase in rank actually means increase in the responsibilities.

The IGP stressed that it is responsibility of the officers to get better performance from the subordinate staff. Therefore, the field officers should make the public service delivery process for the citizens easier using the available resources.

He also stressed the need to provide maximum facilities to the citizens along with controlling crime.

It may be mentioned here that those promoted are included Ghulam Sarwar, Dad Shah, Rashid Khan and other officers.

The IGP, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, Additional IGP Jawad Ahmed Dogar and DIG Headquarters Qamarul Hasan pinned the badges on shoulders of the police officers.



QUETTA: Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh addressing promoted Police officers.