

# Independent

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Ph: 2841470/2841473 Vol: XIX No. 58, Ramzan 08, 1445 AH Tuesday March 19, 2024, Pages 04, Price Rs.15

## Visits residence of martyrs' family, pays tribute PM vows to completely eradicate menace of terrorism

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Monday visited the residence of Captain Ahmed Badr Shaheed who embraced martyrdom while gallantly fighting the terrorists in district North Waziristan of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The prime minister while expressing his sympathies with the bereaved family said that he was very impressed by their patience and determination. He said the whole nation was proud of the sacrifice, Captain Ahmed had rendered for the cause of the country.

Interacting with the local elders on the occasion, Premier Shehbaz Sharif said these martyrs were the pride of the nation and the entire nation was indebted to their sacrifices.

He reaffirmed the national resolve to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country and said the sacrifices of our martyrs will not go in vain.

The prime minister especially acknowledged with pride, the courage and patience of Shaheed

Captain Ahmed's parents.

He announced to establish a school in the area which will be named after the Shaheed Captain as per the desire of his father.

Earlier, the prime minister also visited the residence of Lt. Colonel Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed in Rawalpindi and offered his heartfelt condolence to the family.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant eternal peace to the martyrs and patience to the bereaved families to bear the loss with courage. He said the brave jawans and officers of Pakistan Army had sacrificed their lives to safeguard their motherland.

PM Shehbaz further said that the entire nation including himself pay tributes to them. "The families of martyrs are a matter of pride for the entire nation", he remarked.

The prime minister said the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with its armed forces till complete eradication of the menace of terrorism.



RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offers condolences to the family of Lt. Colonel Syed Kashif Ali Shaheed at their residence in Chaklala.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, Donald Blome, calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## President for enhanced trade, investment ties with US

Pakistan's prosperity, security top priority of US: Ambassador Blome

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has underlined the need to enhance trade and investment relations with the United States of America, besides exploring collaborative opportunities in diverse sectors. He said that American enterprises should be encouraged to invest in the Pakistan Stock Exchange as well as bring innovative business ideas to the country's economy. The president made these remarks while talking to Ambassador of the USA to Pakistan Donald Blome who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the president said that Pakistan had enjoyed a long-standing and broad-based relationship with the USA spanning

over seven decades, which needed to be further strengthened.

He said that top priority of Pakistan was to put its economy on the right track and overcome economic and security challenges. He highlighted that climate change was a global issue, and Pakistan was among the countries most vulnerable to its adverse impacts. He said that Pakistan wanted to improve its agricultural sector by adopting modern irrigation techniques to conserve water and reduce reliance on flood irrigation. Ambassador Donald Blome said that Pakistan and the USA could enhance bilateral collaboration in the fields of trade & investment, climate change, renewable energy, agriculture and security.



KARACHI: The Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi offering Fateha at the mausoleum of father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah during his first visit to the city.

## China to continue to be main driver of global economic development: Ambassador

BEIJING (APP): While commenting on China's economic growth target of 5% proposed for this year, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi said that this makes it clear that China will continue to be the main driver of global economic development, main trading partner of most countries in the world, and an important source of stability, peace and prosperity.

China's growth will drive the growth of the rest of the world. For example, the miracle of China's electric vehicles has promoted the development of renew-

able energy and had a great impact on the rest of the world, he said in an interview with Beijing Daily.

Hashmi, who assumed as Pakistan's ambassador in China in November last year, was invited to listen to China's Two Sessions for the first time. He said that the Two Sessions are an important embodiment of China's democratic practice and attract attention at home and abroad.

In Hashmi's view, there are many highlights of this year's Two Sessions. First of all, of course, China's economy.

## PTI to launch protest movement across country

PESHAWAR (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has decided to launch a countrywide protest movement.

PTI leader Sher Afzal Marwat, talking to the media outside the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House, said three important decisions were taken by the core committee meeting.

The core committee has decided to launch a strong protest movement in the center and the provinces.

Marwat said the first meeting would be held in Islamabad on March 30.

"My statement was played wrongly on TV. We have no differences," he said, adding that the members of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would appear in the court during the hearing of the cases of the PTI founder.

## PM felicitates President Putin on his re-election

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday congratulated President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on his re-election.

On his X account the prime minister further posted that he looked forward to working with him (President Putin) to further strengthen Pakistan-Russian relations.

## Elder brother of former DG ISI Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed arrested

RAWALPINDI (Online): Najaf Hameed, elder brother of former DG ISI Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed has been arrested on corruption charges. Anti corruption arrested Najaf Hameed from Rawalpindi court.

Najaf Hameed was wanted by anti corruption in a case. Najaf Hameed had got bail before arrest. The court rejected the bail before arrest and later Najaf Hameed escaped from the court. However police chased him and arrested him again.

## Pakistan carries out operation inside Afghanistan to target terrorist sanctuaries

Target of operation was Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group militants; Pakistan has repeatedly conveyed serious concerns to Afghan govt; Islamabad urges Afghan govt on effective action against terrorists.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Monday carried out intelligence-based anti-terrorist operations in the border regions inside Afghanistan.

In a statement, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said the target of today's operation was the terrorists belonging to Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group, which along with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), is responsible for multiple terrorist attacks inside Pakistan, resulting in deaths of hundreds of civilians and law enforcement officials. The latest attack took place on 16 March 2024 at a security post in Mir Ali in North Waziristan and claimed the lives of seven Pakistani soldiers.

Over the past two years, she said Pakistan has repeatedly conveyed its serious concerns to the Interim Afghan Government over the presence of terror outfits including TTP inside Afghanistan. These terrorists pose a grave threat to Pakistan's security and have consistently used Afghan territory to launch terror attacks inside Pakistani territory.

Pakistan accords prime importance to the

sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. It has, therefore, always prioritized dialogue and cooperation to confront the terrorist threat, she added.

Pakistan had repeatedly urged the Afghan authorities to take concrete and effective action to ensure that the Afghan soil is not used as a staging ground for terrorism against Pakistan.

Pakistan has also called on them to deny safe havens to TTP and to hand over its leadership to Pakistan.

The Spokesperson

said Pakistan has great respect for the people of Afghanistan. However, certain elements among those in power in Afghanistan are actively patronising TTP and using them as a proxy against Pakistan.

"Such an approach against a brotherly country, which stood with the people of Afghanistan through thick and thin, manifests shortsightedness. It ignores the support extended by Pakistan to the people of Afghanistan over the last several decades."

She said, "We urge these elements in power to

rethink the policy of siding with Khwarij terrorists shedding the blood of innocent Pakistanis and to make a clear choice to stand with the people of Pakistan."

"Terrorist groups like TTP are a collective threat to regional peace and security. We fully realize the challenge Afghan authorities face in combating the threat posed by TTP. Pakistan would therefore continue to work towards finding joint solutions in countering terrorism and to prevent any terrorist organization from sabotaging bilateral relations with Afghanistan," she added.

## Jam Kamal concerned about slow pace of work on construction of Bela-Jhao-Awaran road

Independent Report  
QUETTA: The Federal Minister for Commerce and Trade, Jam Kamal Khan has expressed deep concern over the slow pace of work on the construction of Bela-Jhao-Awaran road.

In this regard, Jam Kamal contacted the Chairman, National Highway Authority (NHA), Arshad Majeed Mehmood and discussed with him the matter about expediting work on the road.

While diverting the attention of Chairman NHA towards the important project, the Federal Minister for Commerce and Trade pointed out that the people are facing hardships due to the dilapidated condition of road.

Jam Kamal directed the NHA chairman to expedite pace of work on the construction of road in view of the public issues.

On this, Chairman NHA assured to expedite pace of work on the road project. He said that the concerned high ups are being issued necessary directives in this regard so as to complete the project at the earliest and public miseries may be alleviated.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar presiding over 4th meeting of Senate of Bolan University of Medical & Health Science

## Governor stresses need to do a lot to provide strong base to first medical university of Balochistan

Independent Report  
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stressed the need to do a lot to provide strong base to the first ever medical university of the province. The Governor was presiding over the meeting of senate of Bolan University of Medical and Health Sciences here on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that issues are not resolved by overlooking the same, rather these increases and aggravate further with passage of time.

He stressed that at the

moment we have to construct the new building of Medical University immediately after acquiring the possession of its land.

This would pave the way for running the academic and administrative affairs better by launching different health disciplines.

The Governor said that heavy responsibilities rest with the Vice Chancellor of Bolan Medical University and his whole team for making modern and scientific health management system in the province.

He said that one thing is very clear that if we didn't

create new means of income at the level of universities then our higher educational institutions could face new threats. Those who were present in the meeting were included: Judge of High Court, Mr Justice Abdullah Baloch, Vice Chancellor of Bolan Medical University, Professor Dr Shabbir Lehri, Director General Higher Education Commission, Dr Zahoor Bazzi, Principal Secretary to Governor, Muhammad Hashim Ghilzai, Additional Secretary Finance and other members of the senate of Medical university.

## X already banned when new govt took over: Information Minister Tarar

Monitoring Desk  
ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Monday acknowledged that social media platform X was already banned when the new government took over the reins from the caretaker setup, saying there was no official notification for the clampdown.

Access to X has been disrupted in many areas of Pakistan since February 17, when former Rawalpindi commissioner Liaquat Chattha accused the chief election commissioner and chief justice of Pakistan of being involved in rigging the February 8 general elections.

Similar disruptions were also observed during the general elections.

The information minister had himself pushed back last week against the disruption and claimed X was still working, calling on those questioning otherwise to present a notification for the ban.

However, in an interview today with media platform World Echo News, Tarar contrasted his own statement, saying: "Twitter was already banned when we came into government. There is no official notification for it but obviously, everyone can see that its signal and frequency are not working as normal and it is being used through virtual private networks. This is correct."

The information minister suggested that there should be a charter on "dos and don'ts of the red lines that should not be crossed", adding that political parties should discuss issues such as misogynistic abuse of women, cursing and mockery of martyrs, etc

## SC orders re-election in PB-50

ISLAMABAD (INP): Supreme Court (SC) on Monday ordered to hold re-election in PB-50 Qalaabduallah, Balochistan. As per details, the top court heard the plea filed by Zamrik Khan, challenging the ECP order.

At the outset of the hearing, Supreme Court annulled the Election Commission of Pakistan's recount order in PB-50 Balochistan. The top court also directed the ECP to ensure transparent election as per the constitution of Pakistan.

## Terrorist Commander Sehra among eight others killed in N Waziristan

RAWALPINDI (APP): The security forces have killed a high value target identified as terrorist commander Sehra alias Janan among the eight other terrorists during an Intelligence Based Operation (IBO) conducted on the night of March 17 and 18th in North Waziristan District.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, after an intense fire exchange, eight terrorists including Terrorist commander Sehra alias

Janan were killed during the operation. The terrorist commander was involved in orchestrating the terrorist attack on Security Forces' Post in Mir Ali on March 16 and was highly wanted by the law enforcement agencies. "Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area as the Security Forces of Pakistan remain determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country," the ISPR said.



QUETTA: Provincial Election Commissioner Farid Ahmed Afridi checking documents papers of candidates submitted for Senate seats at election office

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### One crucial year of extraordinary achievements

Undoubtedly it was an extraordinary year of extraordinary achievements made by an extraordinary person. He is no other but the Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir who completed one year as the COAS recently. General Syed Asim Munir had taken command as COAS on November 29, 2022 at the times when Pakistan was really facing numbers of challenges, economic crisis, poor law and order condition and also the political instability. When we talk about the achievements during a period of just one year as Army Chief there are some of the most important goals and success which Pakistan achieve due to the efforts of General Asim Munir. During this year, under his leadership, the Pakistani armed forces and affiliated institutions tirelessly worked to make the country successful on every front. When General Asim Munir assumed command, the country was politically and economically vulnerable. There were fears that it might default in few days, leading to upheaval in the military. Things got to a point where rumors began to circulate about Pakistan's nuclear assets falling into the wrong hands. All in all, the entire country was gripped by a strong grip of panic and uncertainty. It was during those days that General Asim Munir stepped to the front with a determined resolve. The tenacity with which he steered the military towards pulling the country out of these challenges should be appreciated. He initiated steps to improve the economic and military aspects of Pakistan all the while focusing on a vision that aimed at the betterment of the nation.

Taking command during a crucial time, he recognized the necessity of the IMF program for the country. General Asim Munir engaged with strategic allies like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, ensuring them of credible progress during their diplomatic visits and managed to secure a \$3 billion deposit. This Saudi and Emirati injection of confidence, in turn, paved the way for Pakistan to enter the IMF program. Following this, a special Investment Council was established, based on General Asim Munir's vision, aiming to provide protection for investments within the country. As per the vision, this could only be achieved if all obstacles hindering economic stability were removed and steps taken to control inflation. General Asim Munir's personal efforts within the business community instilled confidence in the nation's progress. The Investment Council's long-term program for foreign investment includes the significant involvement of the COAS. Saudi Arabia acknowledged the success of General Asim Munir's efforts, pledging a \$25 billion fund solely for Pakistan. The UAE is also working on a \$20 to \$22 billion investment program. Meanwhile, chatter on the street celebrated that China's investment in Pakistan is evident. After General Asim Munir took charge, he revived projects under the CPEC. Some questioned the inclusion of the Army Chief in the Investment Council, but it should be remembered that going beyond its traditional role, the Pakistani military has played a crucial hand in bringing foreign investment, especially in projects requiring security clearance.

The military's support is vital for investment, and General Asim Munir's inclusion in this forum has provided credibility. Pakistan's deep-rooted relations with these countries and past experiences demonstrate that the military has played a significant role in enhancing ties when civilian leadership fell short.

## Honoring Leadership: The worldwide response to Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's victory

By Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

In a heartening display of international camaraderie, foreign dignitaries from across the globe have extended warm congratulations to Pakistan's newly elected Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. Sadiq's victory has not only resonated within the political corridors of Pakistan but has also garnered attention and felicitations from leaders worldwide.

The diplomatic community has lauded Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's ascendancy to the esteemed position of Speaker, recognizing his rich experience and unwavering commitment to democratic principles. From capitals in Europe to Asia and beyond, messages of support and goodwill have poured in, underlining the significance of Pakistan's democratic process on the global stage. The outpouring of congratulatory messages underscores the profound significance of Pakistan's



democratic institutions and the pivotal role they play on the global stage.

Among the distinguished well-wishers are prominent figures such as the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, the Speaker of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as representatives from United States, Iran, Iraq, the World Bank, Turkey, UAE, Syria, Yemen, Morocco, and numerous other countries.

In a statement, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National

People's Congress of China expressed confidence in the continued strengthening of bilateral relations between China and Pakistan under Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's leadership. The Speaker of the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan conveyed her heartfelt congratulations, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and mutual understanding in fostering regional stability and prosperity.

Speaking on behalf of the United States, US Ambassador commended Pakistan's democratic journey and expressed confidence in Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's ability to lead the

National Assembly with integrity and dedication. The European Union emphasized the importance of strengthening parliamentary institutions for sustainable democratic governance and pledged continued cooperation with Pakistan under Sadiq's leadership.

Türkiye, a steadfast ally of Pakistan, reaffirmed its unwavering support for the strengthening of bilateral ties and cooperation in various fields. The United Arab Emirates, a key economic partner in the region, expressed optimism for enhanced collaboration under Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's stewardship, emphasizing the importance of strategic partnerships in driving progress and prosperity.

From the Middle East to North Africa, messages of felicitations have dispensed in, highlighting the esteemed reputation and leadership qualities of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. Representatives from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Morocco extended their

sincere wishes for a successful tenure, echoing sentiments of solidarity and cooperation in addressing shared challenges and advancing common interests.

The World Bank, an institution committed to global development and poverty alleviation, commended Pakistan's commitment to democratic principles and the peaceful transition of power. The congratulatory message underscored the importance of strong parliamentary leadership in advancing sustainable development goals and ensuring inclusive governance.

The felicitations extended beyond political boundaries, with international organizations such as the United Nations, International Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Secretariat acknowledging Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on his election.

These organizations reiterated their support for Pakistan's democratic journey and pledged assistance in addressing common chal-

enges, including socio-economic development and human rights.

As Pakistan embarks on a new chapter under the leadership of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, these messages of goodwill from esteemed international counterparts serve as a testament to the country's growing stature on the global stage. They reinforce the significance of upholding democratic values, fostering diplomatic relations, and working collectively towards a more peaceful and prosperous world.

In response to the overwhelming support, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed his gratitude to all well-wishers, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to promoting peace, stability, and cooperation on the international front. He reiterated his dedication to serving the people of Pakistan with integrity, diligence, and a steadfast commitment to the principles of democracy.

The writer is Researcher at National Assembly of Pakistan

## Doddering doyens

Shahzad Sharjeel

This could be a global election year, as some 60 countries are set to go to polls. Pakistan has crossed the line; India and the US will follow later. The US president is an octogenarian, and his challenger is 77. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is 73. Leaving aside the seat warmers, the real contenders for power in Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan, are both septuagenarians.

Pakistan and India are different from the US because it has a two-term limit on holding the presidency, and no matter who wins this year, it will be his last stint in the Oval Office. One reason why Imran Khan could not wait to become prime minister back in 2018, regardless of the price, was that he would be in his seventies before the next scheduled polls. That

must have appeared a long haul to a 66-year-old novice, his '22 years of struggle' notwithstanding. Imagine his earnestness to lead 200 million-plus Pakistanis, lest they be made to wait till 2029, when the next general elections are due. He will be 76 then. All the treadmill and burpees in the world would not make him a credible choice for the 15- to 20-year reign that he said is required to turn Pakistan around.

Imran is not alone in this predicament. Nawaz is 74. This explains his fervour to oust the PTI government with the establishment's support through a vote of no-confidence in April 2022. He and his party knew full well what havoc the interregnum would wreak on their political capital. The economic reforms that were continuously sacrificed at the altar of populism will now have to be undertaken

behind the fig leaf of an IMF programme. The establishment, too, had no choice but to 'see to it' that a beaten-into-submission, non-PTI coalition wins the 2024 elections, as any deviation from the Fund programme would mean that the loan lifeline, now imperative even for paying defence salaries, is withdrawn.

Once lured away from his defiant voteko izzat do (honour the ballot) stance, and in light of the establishment's hard-line stance towards Afghanistan, Iran and India, as indicated by the army chief's address to students in Islamabad, the elder Sharif had no option but to step aside to make way for his younger sibling's ride to the Prime Minister's Office.

PM Shehbaz Sharif is known more for his energy and hands-on administration than being a visionary ready to challenge the security paradigm. His assigned role has always been that of a go-between for the House of Sharif and Army House. He can be counted upon to undertake the bare minimum structural reforms to keep international lenders from turning off the taps. However, even some reforms and the stability they afford would be better than what the PTI did to itself and the country. The PTI had promised a team of economic wizards in the run-up to the 2018 polls. They never materialised and led to its leader's desperate stance 'I will commit suicide before going to the IMF'.

Mr Modi, who seems all set to win another stint in office this year, is spearheading an election campaign that his party men are not loath to term as a bid for the 2029 polls; he will be 78 at the end of his third consecutive stay at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg, the official residence of the prime min-

ister in Delhi. The Modi-led BJP is said to have a rule of retiring its leaders at 75; however, its latest move to award the party ticket to Hema Malini, 75, to contest a Lok Sabha seat from Mathura, can signal the beginning of an era where popularity trumps all other considerations. At least the 'extension' here is for staying in the fray, and not in office.

Nawaz Sharif, the proponent of regional integration and normalising Pak-istan-India relations, will be 79 if he has to wait till he can take another stab at policymaking in 2029. At the end of that term, he will be 84. In other words, all aspirations to take Pakistan in a new direction are personality-driven. The forces insisting on keeping us bogged down in the morass of a security state mindset have institutional backing behind them.

Asif Zardari has secured the highest constitutional office for a record second time for a civilian; at 68, he is the youngest president till he is 73. All these projections matter little as health and lifespan are the two great unknowns. However, office and power are greater predictors of longevity than lifestyle choices and genes.

Imran Khan is the only political prisoner who has so far not developed a list of ailments requiring hospitalisation and treatment abroad. It must be mentioned, however, that he is also the only one to have worn a cast over gunshot wounds for months. The die may have been cast for the people; for the real and pretend rulers, there are options galore at home and abroad. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Jam Kamal engages with sugar mills, ethanol manufacturers to overcome challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan here on Monday convened significant meetings with representatives of the Sugar Mills Association and Ethanol Manufacturer Association separately to address pressing concerns affecting their industries.

The meetings, held in the Ministry of Commerce, aimed to foster dialogue and find feasible

solutions to the challenges faced by these sectors.

The associations appreciated the act of calling stakeholders before making any major decisions.

During the discussions, Minister Jam Kamal assured the industrialists of his commitment to advocate for their interests and address their concerns to support the local industry while simultaneously

enhancing export volume to increase foreign reserves.

The Sugar Mills Association voiced apprehensions regarding the anticipated increase in tariffs for Molasses exports. Members of the association highlighted the importance of encouraging Molasses exports to bolster foreign reserves.

They underscored the need for infrastructure improvements to enhance

terminal capacity, facilitating greater access to international markets.

Conversely, representatives of the Ethanol Manufacturer Association emphasized the necessity of long-term policy measures to sustain the domestic ethanol industry.

They advocated against allowing excessive Molasses exports, citing the adverse impact on local production.



FAISALABAD: USAID Mission Director Veeraya Kate Somvongsiri and Director Office of Democracy, Rights and Governance Shally Prasad are visiting wheat field at University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).

### Profiteers and hoarders should be dealt with iron hands: Bilal Yasin

LAHORE: An important meeting was held at the Livestock Complex under the chairmanship of Food Minister Punjab Bilal Yasin in which the price and quality of chicken meat was reviewed. Food Minister Punjab expressed concern over the recent rise in prices of chicken meat. He urged the representatives of the Poultry Association to bring down the prices substantially to ensure relief for the people during

the holy month. The representatives of the Poultry Association assured the meeting that necessary steps will be taken to reduce the rate of chicken.

According to the details, representatives of Pakistan Poultry Association, Poultry Traders Association and Farms Association attended the meeting along with the Secretary Livestock, Commissioner Lahore and Deputy Commissioner Lahore.

### Rupee gains 11 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Monday strengthened by 11 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.63 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.74. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs278.7 and Rs281.3, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 19 paise to close at Rs303.51 against the last day's closing of Rs303.32, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

### SBP keeps policy rate at 22 per cent with emphasis on continued fiscal consolidation

Independent Report

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), on Monday, cautiously decided to keep policy rate at 22 per cent on pretext of elevated inflation expectations that required continuity of the current monetary stance to bring inflation down.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) also emphasized on timely realization of planned external inflows along with continued targeted fiscal consolidation for ensuring overall macroeconomic and price

stability, said a statement issued after the MPC meeting here at SBP.

The MPC noted that that inflation declined noticeably from second half of fiscal year 2023-24, in line with earlier expectations, however, despite the sharp deceleration in February, the level of inflation remained high and its outlook was susceptible to risks amidst elevated inflation expectations.

The committee decided to keep the policy rate unchanged noting that inflation expectations

warranted a cautious approach and required continuity of the current monetary stance to bring inflation down to the target range of 5-7 percent by September 2025.

The MPC noted that headline inflation registered a broad-based and considerable year on year decline from 28.3 percent in January to 23.1 percent in February, food inflation continued to trend down and core inflation also decelerated to 18.1 percent in February from 20.5 percent in January.

### Slash spending-ramp up income way forward to boost economy: Qaiser

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said on Monday that the government was keen to reduce the expenditure and increase the means of income by introducing the favorable environment for businesses and industries.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that the Punjab government provided relief to the people during the holy month of Ramadan. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was optimistic to improve the economy through the growth of business and industries, he added.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships namely, Wan Hai-316, Maersk Chicago, Meratus Jayakarta, Hafnia Shanghai, Bateleur and Elephanta, carrying Container, Gas oil, LPG and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, FOTCO Terminal, Southern Gas Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively on Sunday.

### KATI for prioritizing industrial zones in development budget

KARACHI (APP): President Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), Johar Qandhari, Monday, felicitated newly elected Sindh cabinet and emphasized need of prioritizing industrial zones while making allocation of development budget.

The KATI President, in a statement issued here, expressed hope that incumbent cabinet will address challenges faced by the industrial sector and take decisive action for ensuring a safe and secure environment

for both local and international investors and restore investor confidence.

Underlining KATI's history of collaborative efforts with the government, Qandhari reaffirmed the association's commitment to support development of industrial zones across the country. He cited noticeable improvements in the infrastructure of the Korangi industrial area, attributing these advancements to the effective utilization of funds allocated to business organizations.

### Business community hails Aurangzeb's appointment at FM: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that the business community hails the appointment of Muhammad Aurangzeb as Finance Minister.

In a statement issued here on Monday, he said that as Muhammad Aurangzeb has no political

baggage; therefore, it was hoped that he will make economic decisions on merit and not allow politics to guide the economy.

Mian Zahid Hussain further stated that the respected and experienced finance minister can resolve problems confronting the economy if allowed to work independently.

He said Muhammad Aurangzeb was a professional and non-political person ready to deliver as expected.

**Punjab Governor says:**

# We have to increase number of trees to eliminate effects of environmental pollution

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman along with his wife started the current spring tree planting campaign in Punjab by planting saplings at the Governor House Lahore today.

Governor Punjab said that in the spring, a tree planting campaign will be conducted across the province.

He said that people from all walks of life should actively participate in this campaign. Governor Punjab said that from the life and Aha Hadees of the Prophet, we get numerous examples about the importance of trees. Governor Punjab further said that according to experts, each tree provides enough oxygen in a day which is equal to meeting the oxygen requirement of

forty people. Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that we have to increase the number of trees and green areas in cities to eliminate the effects of environmental pollution.

He said that I also ask the people of the province and especially the children to do your part in this campaign and do your part to make the country greener by planting more trees and focus on their growth along with planting to achieve the objectives of the plantation drive.



**GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan addressing during the 18th sitting of 18th Assembly session of Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly under the chair of Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Nazir Ahmad Advocate.**

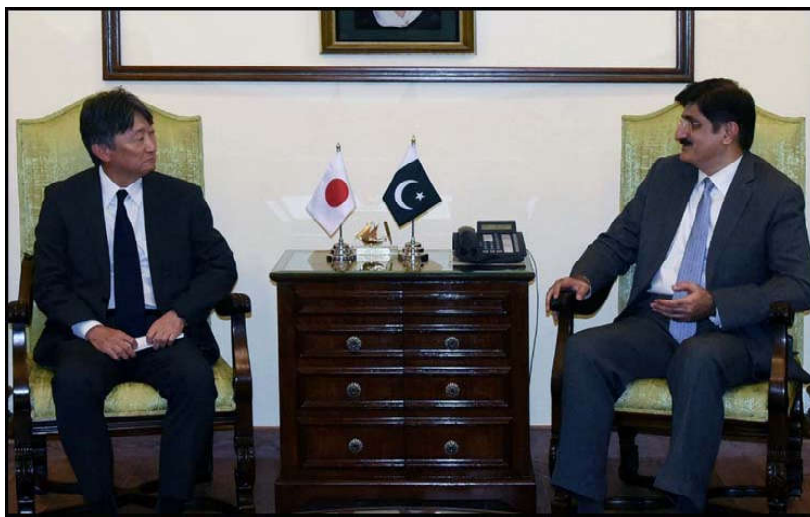
## CM condoles loss of six lives in roof collapse incident

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur on Monday condoled the tragic incident in which six members of a single family lost their lives due to the roof collapse of a house in the Raghzai area of South Waziristan.

In a condolence statement, he expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious human lives and extended heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the affected family.

He prayed for the departed souls and for patience for the bereaved, as well as for the speedy recovery of the injured.

The Chief Minister directed the relevant district administration to provide immediate relief to the affected family and timely medical assistance to the injured.



**KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Consul General of Japan, Hattori Masaru during meeting held at CM House.**

## KP Health Minister chairs review meeting of Sehat Card Plus

**Independent Report**  
**PESHAWAR:** KP Minister for Health, Qasim Ali Shah chaired a review meeting of the Sehat Card Plus programme here on Monday. Besides, the Chief Executive Sehat Card Plus Dr. Riaz Tanoli, DG Health Dr. Shaukat Ali, Director Sehat Card Dr. Ijaz and Fiaz Noor representative State Life Insurance Corporation, others officials also attended the meeting.

After the briefing, Health Minister Syed Qasim

Ali Shah informed that from 1<sup>st</sup> Ramadan to March 16<sup>th</sup>, the treatment of over 8,000 individuals across various hospitals nationwide has commenced under the Sehat Card Plus Programme, with expenditures exceeding Rs. 172 million. Soon State Life Insurance staff will be available 24/7 at health card counters at hospitals.

He revealed that since the reforms in July 2023, expenditures in both public and private hospitals under the Sehat card, have been proportionate.

## Youth allegedly abducted from Mathelo By pass

**By Tanveer Ahmed**  
**MIRPUR MATHELO:** According to details, 22-year-old Hasan Ashfaq son of Ashfaq Arain of Kausar Colony, who left his brother at Ice Factory bus stand of Mirpur Mathelo city, was allegedly kidnapped by bandits. His motorcycle was dumped on the National Highway near FFC.

After the incident, hundreds of people reached the Mirpur Mathelo police station, demanding the police to recover the young man. On behalf of the citizens, Ashfaq, Gul Hasan Soomro, Ejaz Channa and others said that the young Hasan Ashfaq Arain should be recovered.

## Minister commits to implement health System improvement roadmap

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has pledged to achieve a hundred per cent implementation of the health system improvement road map outlined by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Chairing a crucial meeting of the Department of Specialized Health Care and Medical Education on Monday, he emphasized the commitment of the health department towards enhancing healthcare services across the province.

He said that under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a new era of

prioritizing public health has commenced, with a focus on serving the people effectively.

The minister said that Secretary Health Punjab Ali Jan Khan and his dedicated team were tirelessly working towards the betterment of the health system.

He asked the health management to provide superior medical facilities to the patients visiting government hospitals.

The minister directed to improve waste management systems in government hospitals and ordered the timely completion of ongoing developmental projects aimed at improving healthcare infrastructure.



**LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur-Rehman along with his wife sapling a tree to inaugurate plantation campaign.**

## Best facilities await Vaisaiki Mela visitors

**LAHORE (APP):** Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee Chairman & Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora on Monday strongly condemned the recent attack on the Mir Ali check-post and said that such cowardly acts cannot dampen the spirit of the nation. At a press conference at the Evacuee Trust Property Board office along with ten other committee members, Arora expressed determination to provide better facilities to Sikh pilgrims, and affirmed plans to operationalize three Gurdwaras. He added that the

Sikh Marriage Act had been passed in 2018 and now it would be implemented soon after the approval of the provincial cabinet.

He said that the Pakistan Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee had been notified and the ten-member committee would be responsible for all its affairs and a secretariat would be established soon. Ramesh Singh emphasized that land of Gurdwaras would be reclaimed from squatters and special trains would be run to ensure best transportation arrangements for Sikh pilgrims while Gurdwaras would provide the facility of accommodation.

## Karachi: Senate nomination papers scrutiny begins

**KARACHI (INP):** The scrutiny of nomination papers for Senate election begins today (Monday) and will complete on March 19. Overall, 35 candidates including from the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), MQM-P and other parties as well as independents have filed nomination papers for 12 Senate seats of Sindh. Returning Officer Sharifullah conducting scrutiny of the nomination papers of the candidates.

MQM-P's Rauf Siddiqui and independent candidate Faisal Vawda

reached the RO office for scrutiny of their nomination papers. Twenty-one candidates have submitted nomination papers for general seats in upper house, six candidates file papers for women's two reserved seats, while five candidates have been fielded for technocrats two seats and three candidates filed papers for the minorities reserved seat. According to the election schedule appeals can be filed upto March 21 against approval or rejection of nomination papers.

## Pakistan army martyrs honored; unity urged against terrorism

**TOBA TEK SING (APP):** Pakistan People Party (PPP) Pirmahal tehsil president Musharraf Ghous paid rich tribute to Pakistan army martyrs and calls for national unity against terrorism.

Speaking to the (APP), Musharraf Ghous, hailed the fallen soldiers of the Pakistan Army as national heroes for their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism.

Ghous expressed deep condemnation for the recent terrorist incident in North Waziristan, stressing that no amount of condemnation

could suffice. He remained optimistic, asserting that the sacrifices of the martyrs would ultimately lead to the eradication of terrorism from Pakistani soil. Addressing recent statements by an Indian Army general regarding Pakistan's economic strength posing a threat to India, Ghous called for national unity against anti-national elements.

He emphasized the need for all political factions to set aside their differences and come together for the country's development.

## Seven held for gambling

**KARACHI (APP):** Keamari District Police in two separate operations have arrested seven suspects involved in gambling activity and recovered the money from their possession besides registering cases for further investigations.

According to the SSP Keamari, the suspects were identified as Saaim, Noor Muhammad, Muhammad Kashif, Muhammad Nauman, Shaukat, Muhammad Farhan, and Muhammad Sarwar.

The material used for gambling and money were also recovered from the suspects' possession.

# International News

## Vladimir Putin wins Russia election in landslide with no serious competition

**Monitoring Desk**  
**MOSCOW:** President Vladimir Putin won a record post-Soviet landslide in Russia's election on Sunday, cementing his already tight grip on power in a victory he said showed Moscow had been right to stand up to the West and send its troops into Ukraine.

Putin, a former KGB lieutenant colonel who first rose to power in 1999, made it clear that the result should send a message to the West that its leaders will have to reckon with an emboldened Russia, whether in war or peace, for many more years to come.

The outcome means Putin, 71, is set to embark

on a new six-year term that will see him overtake Josef Stalin and become Russia's longest-serving leader for more than 200 years if he completes it.

Putin won 87.8 per cent of the vote, the highest-ever result in Russia's post-Soviet history, according to an exit poll by pollster the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM).

The Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VCIOM) put Putin on 87pc. The first official results indicated the polls were accurate.

The United States, Germany, the United Kingdom and other nations have said the vote was neither

free nor fair due to the imprisonment of political opponents and censorship.

Communist candidate Nikolai Kharitonov finished second with just under 4pc, newcomer Vladislav Davankov third, and ultra-nationalist Leonid Slutsky fourth, partial results suggested.

Putin told supporters in a victory speech in Moscow that he would prioritise resolving tasks associated with what he called Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine and would strengthen the Russian military.

"We have many tasks ahead. But when we are

consolidated — no matter who wants to intimidate us, suppress us — nobody has ever succeeded in history, they have not succeeded now, and they will not succeed ever in the future," said Putin.

Supporters chanted "Putin, Putin, Putin" when he appeared on stage and "Russia, Russia, Russia" after he had delivered his acceptance speech.

Inspired by opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who died in an Arctic prison last month, thousands of opponents protested at noon against Putin at polling stations inside Russia and abroad.



**CAIRO: Austria's Chancellor Karl Nehammer, Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Cyprus' President Nikos Christodoulides, Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, and Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni posing for a photograph during their summit.**



**Palestinians gather to receive aid outside an UNRWA warehouse as Gaza residents face crisis levels of hunger, in Gaza City.**

## Israeli strikes on Gaza push death toll to 31,645

**Monitoring Desk**  
**GAZA STRIP:** At least 61 Palestinians were killed in overnight Israeli bombardment taking the death toll up to 31,645 people, the health ministry in Gaza said on Sunday, as Israel was preparing to send negotiators to new truce talks in Qatar.

Israel's security cabinet and the smaller war cabinet were to meet to "decide on the mandate of the delegation in charge of the negotiations before its departure for Doha", the Israeli prime minister's office said.

Its statement did not

specify when the delegation would leave for the latest round of talks which comes after Hamas submitted a new proposal for a pause in fighting and release of prisoners. More than five months of war and an Israeli siege have led to dire humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip, where the United Nations has repeatedly warned of looming famine for the coastal territory's 2.4 million people. As the flow of aid trucks into Gaza has slowed, a second ship was due to depart from Cyprus along a new maritime corridor to bring food and relief goods, Cypriot officials said.

## EU and Cairo sign €7.4bn deal focussed on energy, migration

**Monitoring Desk**  
**CAIRO:** The European Union and Egypt on Sunday signed a 7.4-billion-euro financial package to support the indebted north African country, boost energy sales to Europe and stem irregular migrant flows.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was joined in Cairo by the leaders of Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece and Italy for the signing ceremony with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

The strategic partnership deal includes billions in credit over coming years and stepping up gas and other energy flows to help Europe "move further away from Russian gas", said a senior European Commission official.

Von der Leyen said that "today we elevate the relationship between the EU and Egypt to a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership and we agree on a package ranging from trade and investment to low carbon energy, managing migration, and education, culture and youth".

The agreement includes five billion euros in loans over four years, 1.8 billion euros in investment and hundreds of millions for bilateral projects including on migration, said the European official.

Egypt, mired in a painful economic crisis, borders war-battered Libya and the centres of two ongoing conflicts — the Israeli aggression in Gaza Strip and Sudan's war between the regular army forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

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## Iran signs deals to boost oil production

**Monitoring Desk**  
**TEHRAN:** Iran on Sunday sealed contracts worth billions of dollars with domestic companies to boost its oil production in the face of Western sanctions.

In a ceremony broadcast on state TV, the oil ministry and Iranian businesses signed deals worth \$13 billion to increase daily oil production in six major fields. Shana, the official news agency for the oil industry, labelled the deals as Iran's biggest oil contracts in the past decade and said they aimed to add 350,000 barrels per day to the

country's daily production.

In October, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji promised the country's oil production would reach 3.6 million barrels per day by the end of the Persian year on March 19. In the new year under the Persian calendar, "production will reach four million barrels per day", he added. Iran's oil sector suffered a blow in 2018 when Western sanctions were re-imposed, forcing foreign companies to leave the country, after the United States withdrew from a landmark deal designed to curb Tehran's nuclear programme.

## World Court to hear Nicaragua-Germany dispute over Israel aid in April

**Monitoring Desk**  
**THE HAGUE:** The International Court of Justice has said it would hold hearings on April 8 and 9 in Nicaragua's case against Germany for giving military aid to Israel and defunding the UN Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA). Nicaragua asked the ICJ, also known as the World Court, earlier this month to issue emergency measures requiring Berlin to stop military aid to Israel and reverse its decision to stop funding UNRWA.

## Blinken arrives in S. Korea to attend democracy summit

**Monitoring Desk**  
**SEOUL:** US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived on Sunday in South Korea on the first stop of a brief Asia tour also including the Philippines, as Washington moves to reinforce ties with two key regional allies.

Blinken landed on Sunday afternoon ahead of

the third Summit for Democracy on Monday, an initiative of US President Joe Biden, which Seoul is hosting this week.

The summit, which runs from March 18-20 will bring together government officials, NGOs and civil society members. Seoul is one of Washington's key regional allies.

## Russia's ruling party 'hit by cyberattack' during polls

**Monitoring Desk**  
**MOSCOW:** Russia's governing party United Russia said on Saturday that it was facing a widespread denial of service attack — a form of cyberattack that snarls internet use — against its online presence, and had suspended non-essential services to repel the attack. Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is running in Russia's presidential election as an independent candidate with United Russia's support,

## Indian mob attacks foreign students over namaz

**Monitoring Desk**  
**NEW DELHI:** Students from different countries were assaulted on Gujarat University campus on Saturday evening, allegedly by a group that did not want them to offer namaz at the hostel. The Wire said on Sunday. It said some injured students have been admitted to SVP Hospital in Ahmedabad.

"Around 300 foreign students from Africa, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and other countries study here at the Gujarat University," Ahmedabad Police Commissioner G.S. Malik said, according to The Hindu.

"In Block A, around 75 foreign students, who live there, were offering prayers at their hostel yesterday around 10:30pm."

"Some 20-25 people entered the hostel premises and objected to the international students offering namaz there, asking them to do so in a mosque. They argued over the issue, assaulted them and hurled stones."

# PM expresses desire to bolster Pak-UAE economic ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) to Pakistan, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday and discussed matters of mutual interest.

The Ambassador congratulated the Prime Minister on his re-election and conveyed best wishes of U.A.E. President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and hoped that the strong fraternal ties between the two countries would be strengthened further in the years ahead.

The Prime Minister thanked the U.A.E. leadership for their warm messages of greetings and conveyed his best wishes for President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Recalling the historic ties between Pakistan and the U.A.E., the Prime Minister said Pakistan attached great importance to its brotherly relations with U.A.E.

The two countries had always supported each

other and there was a strong desire on both sides to elevate the relationship to a higher level, the PM added.

The Prime Minister further said that Pakistan wanted to translate the tremendous political goodwill into a stronger economic partnership.

Noting the exciting transformation of the U.A.E. into a hub for commerce, tourism, and investment, the Prime Minister said Pakistan wanted to partner with the U.A.E. He highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as an

efficient mechanism to attract foreign investment into priority sectors including agriculture, minerals & mining, I.T., renewable energy and industry.

On the multilateral side, the Prime Minister congratulated the U.A.E. for successfully hosting COP 28 meeting on climate change last year as well as its efforts to bring peace in Gaza while serving as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. He also appreciated the U.A.E. for hosting nearly 1.8 million Pakistanis who were a bridge between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates Amb. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, in the Provincial Capital.



QUETTA: Members of Joint Action Committee University of Balochistan are holding protest demonstration against non-payment of their salaries.

## Shaukat Yousafzai ordered to pay Rs150m to Asfandyar Wali in defamation case

PESHAWAR (INP): The district and sessions judge on Monday ordered PTI leader and former provincial minister Shaukat Yousafzai to pay Rs 150 million to Chief of Awami National Party (ANP) Asfandyar Wali Khan in defamation lawsuit.

As per details, the district and sessions judge issued the five-page written verdict stating that Shaukat Yousafzai did not appear before the court despite summons notices.

In 2019, Chief of Awami National Party (ANP) Asfandyar Wali Khan served a defamation notice to the then KP Information Minister

Shaukat Yousafzai for 'libelous statements' without the support of any reasonable proof or justification.

The notice was issued through late senior lawyer Abdul Latif Afridi asking the then provincial minister to tender a public apology and get it published with the same prominence as the 'defamatory remarks', otherwise, Asfandyar will proceed to prosecute him in a criminal court of law. The notice is issued under section 8 of the Defamation Ordinance 2002 asking the minister to retract statement within 14 days failing which as per his right under the law will initiate a defamation suit of worth Rs 100 million.

## FM vows to make joint endeavours for further deepening Pak-China ties

ISLAMABAD (Online): Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has said Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Co-operative Partnership is indispensable for the progress and prosperity of the two countries and an anchor of regional peace and stability.

He was talking to Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong who called on him in Islamabad Monday.

The Foreign Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to making joint endeavours for further

deepening bilateral relations and to advance phase-II of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as envisaged by the leadership of two countries.

Ambassador Jiang underscored the special importance China accords to Pakistan and its firm support for Pakistan's socio-economic development, industrial and agriculture co-operation.

He also agreed with the Foreign Minister for high-quality development of phase-II of CPEC.



QUETTA: Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI-F) Provincial Chief, Maulana Abdul Wasay (talking to media persons after submitting his nomination papers for Senate, at Election Commission Office.

## Six shopkeepers held on violation of price control in Chaman

QUETTA (APP): Assistant Commissioner Sadar Habib Ahmad Bangalzai arrested six shopkeepers, including butchers, other and a tailor on violation of official price control list in Chaman area.

On this occasion, Assistant Commissioner Habib Ahmad Bangalzai said that he would not leave the citizens of Chaman at the mercy of high street vendors and profiteers.

He said that he would take possible measures to control the prices in the city.

The AC said that wholesalers and profiteers were trying to take advantage of the problems of citizens and this was not acceptable to us.

He said that the district administration Chaman has strict instruc-

tions and orders to strictly check the markets and shops in the city and take all possible measures to control prices.

He said that the district administration has been empowered to take strict action against the peddlers and profiteers.

He also urged the citizens to register the complaints of high selling and profiteering to the district administration saying that the prices in the city could be controlled only with the cooperation of the citizens.

AC Chaman Habib Ahmad Bangalzai said that operations would continue in Chaman city and its surroundings to prevent inflation and hoarding and in the month of Ramadan, you would get information about the prices of food items on a daily basis.

## Ramadan sasta bazaar set up by district administration in Quetta city

QUETTA: The sasta bazaar was set up by the Quetta district administration here at Joint road on Monday.

The Deputy Commissioner Quetta, Lt. Saad bin Asad inaugurated the sasta bazaar.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner said that establishment of sasta bazaar is reflective of the public friendly policies of the present government.

He said that the poor and marginalised segments of the society would get the edibles and other commodities at cheaper rates.

He said that the edibles would be sold at the official prices in the sasta bazaar. The strict monitoring of the bazar would also be made, adding he announced.

## AC visits PHC for provision of health facilities to people in Nasirabad

QUETTA (APP): On the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Naseerabad Batool Asadi, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Chhithar Muhammad Ismail Mengal paid a surprise visit to the Primary Health Center Abdul Hameed Khan Khosa area of Nasirabad on Monday.

Assistant Commissioner Chhithar reviewed the staff attendance, supply of medicines, OPD and cleanliness of the center.

He said that health and education were directly related to the poor people, therefore, no negligence would be tolerated.

He strictly directed to ensure attendance of medical staff and doctors in primary health centers and timely treatment of patients. He said that it was their constitutional and legal right to provide basic medical facilities to the people of Tehsil Chhithar and any kind of betrayal would not be tolerated.

## Man shot dead in Sibi

SIBI (INP): Unidentified armed men gunned down one person here on Monday and escaped the scene, police said.

According to details, the incident took place in Kale Dar Muhammad area, City police station in Sibi where unknown armed men opened firing at a man.

As a result of firing, a man identified as Dilawar s/o Sanwal Khan was killed on the spot and attackers sped the scene.

## Pakistan set to host an event focusing on women's plight under foreign occupation

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The Pakistan Mission to the U.N. will be hosting an event on Monday afternoon that is aimed at spotlighting the plight of women and girls in situations of foreign occupation.

The side event, which is part of the ongoing 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68), is set to take place at UN Headquarters in New York.

It will include a panel discussion on the subject "Women Under Foreign Occupation" to be attended by members of the UN diplomatic community, women rights organizations, academia, and rights activists.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Commander Karachi (COMKAR), Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

## Preparations underway to scale up gas tariff in Punjab, KP

LAHORE (Online): Preparations are underway to scale up gas tariff in Punjab and KP after Sindh and Balochistan.

Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) has filed application with OGRA seeking 147 percent further increase in the price of gas.

The company while making plea for increasing the price of gas Rs 2646.18 per MMBTU has requested to fix new average price of gas Rs 4466.89.

Sui Northern has estimated revenue shortfall of Rs 180.18 crore.

OGRA will hear Sui Northern application on

March 25.

According to OGRA, hearing in Peshawar will be held on March 27 in Peshawar.

In the case of approval by OGRA in increase in gas tariff the enhanced tariff will stand implemented from July 01.

Sui Southern gas company has sent application to OGRA for increasing gas tariff from July 01, 2024. This prospective enhancement can shift financial burden of Rs 79.63 billion to the consumers.

Sui Southern has requested for enhancing gas tariff Rs 324.03 per MMBTU.



QUETTA: Baloch Human Rights Activist, Mama Qadeer along with relatives of Khudadad Siraj addressing a press conference, at Quetta press club.

## Senate elections on 11 seats of Balochistan: Two appellate tribunals established for appeals against decisions on nomination papers of candidates

INDEPENDENT REPORT QUETTA: Two appellate tribunals have been established for hearing of the appeals against decisions on the acceptance or rejection of the nomination papers of candidates contesting Senate elections from Balochistan.

According to an official notification of the Election Commission of Pakistan, the appellate tribunals comprises judges of

Balochistan High Court.

As per the notification, the tribunals comprises Mr. Justice Muhammad Ejaz Swati and Mr. Justice Nazir Ahmed Langove.

It may be mentioned here that 38 candidates had filed nomination papers for 11 seats of Senate from Balochistan.

The scrutiny of 19 candidates have been completed on Monday.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding strengthening of B-TEVTA.

## AJK President urges strengthening of freedom movement

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, speaking at an Iftar party in his native village Khari Sharif near Mirpur city, emphasized the importance of strengthening the ongoing freedom movement against India on Monday. He stated that every Kashmiri has a national responsibility to contribute to the liberation struggle's success. Acknowledging the support he received from the people, Chaudhry highlighted his efforts to make Azad Jammu Kashmir a true base camp for the freedom movement. He mentioned his international visits where he raised awareness about the deteriorating po-

litical and human rights situation in Occupied Kashmir. Chaudhry referenced recent high-profile engagements, including a news conference with American Congresswoman Ilhan Omar and a visit by the British High Commissioner to Mirpur, as part of his campaign to garner international support for the Kashmiri cause. Expressing gratitude to the people of Khari, Chaudhry promised to prioritize solving issues in the Khari Sharif constituency, including making it a Tehsil.

He mentioned ongoing development projects, including road construction, and announced a grant of three and a half crore rupees for education.

## Shoab Nausherwani slams terrorists attack at security forces in North Waziristan

INDEPENDENT REPORT QUETTA: The Member Provincial Assembly and former Minister for Home, Mir Shoab Nausherwani has strongly condemned the terrorists attack at security forces in North Waziristan.

In a condemnation statement issued here on Monday, Shoab Nausherwani paid homage to the Marty army officers and jawans.

He said that the morale of security forces and masses would not be down through such cowardly

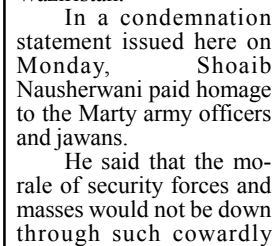
acts.

He said that every Pakistani is grieved over the martyrdom of Army Officers and jawans and share grief with their families.

He also paid rich tributes to the brave officers and jawans who embraced martyrdom in the incident of terrorism.

He said that such sacrifices strengthen the resolve of our brave soldiers further.

He said that the people of Balochistan are standing by their security forces.



QUETTA: Former MPA Mir Faiq Khan Janjali meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

## MQM-P divides over Sindh Governor appointment, Faisal Vawda's senate ticket

KARACHI (INP): There were serious differences in the Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) erupted and the party has been split over the change of the Governor Sindh and Faisal Vawda's senate ticket on Monday.

The MQM-P's Rabita Committee was unaware of who proposed the name of Khushbukhat Shujaat for the governorship to replace Kamran Tessori. Well placed sources in the party said the majority of the MQM-P's Rabita Committee was in favor of retaining Kamran

Tessori as Sindh Governor.

The sources said the majority of the committee members also opposed giving senate ticket to Faisal Vawda. The sources disclosed that the committee was informed that on the instructions of Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, MQM-P assembly members signed Faisal Vawda's nomination papers. It is worth mentioning that soon after developing the situation over the issue of the new Sindh Governor, sitting Governor Kamran Tessori left for Islamabad to consult his close friends.

## Visits Shaheed BB Hospital Abdullah expresses anguish over absentee medical staff, poor cleanliness

INDEPENDENT REPORT QUETTA: The Secretary Health Department, Abdullah Khan has expressed anguish over the absence of medical staff and poor cleanliness situation in the Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Hospital Quetta.

The Secretary Health was on surprise visit to the Hospital situated in Gulistan Town.

During the course of visit, the doctors, pharmacists and other medical staff was found absent from their duties.

While only five lady doctors, one pharmacist and three nurses were present on their duties. Speaking on the occa-

sion, Secretary asserted that the responsibility of absentee medical staff rests with the Medical Superintendent of the hospital.

He also expressed displeasure over the non-existence of biometric system in the Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Hospital.

He said that the non-presence of the medical staff and poor cleanliness shows weak administration of the Medical Superintendent.

He announced to take strict action against the absentee medical staff under BEDA Act.

He also announced to transfer all absentee medical staff to their home districts.