

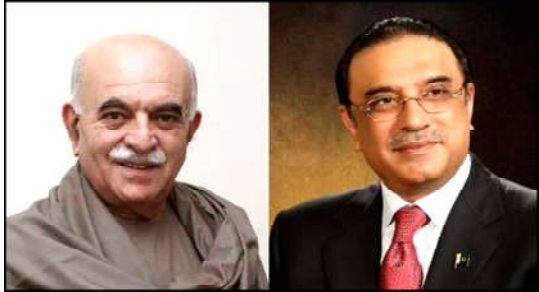
# Independent

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## Zardari, Achakzai vying for presidential election today

Mehmood Achakzai asks ECP to delay presidential election as the electoral college for the presidential poll is incomplete



### Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Asif Ali Zardari, the joint candidate of PPP and the PML-N, and Sunni Ittehad Council's candidate Mahmood Khan Achakzai are vying for the office of President.

The President is elected by an electoral college comprising members of the Senate, National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies.

Voting is held through a secret ballot. A joint session of the parliament will be held at the

parliament house in Islamabad tomorrow in which the members of National Assembly and the Senate will exercise their right to vote.

Similarly, the provincial assemblies will hold their sessions tomorrow for the election. Polling will begin at 10:00 am and continue till 4:00 pm.

INP adds: Mehmood Khan Achakzai—the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) backed presidential candidate—on Friday asked the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to postpone

the election as the electoral college is "incomplete".

In a letter to the chief election commissioner on Friday, Achakzai said that electoral college for a presidential election was "still incomplete".

"As yet no one was elected on those reserved seats and without nominations and proper election on these seats, if the presidential election is conducted as per the schedule that would be denial of their votes, which otherwise is against the fundamental rights, law and constitution," stated the letter. "Under the above circumstances, it is submitted that the proposed election to the office of the President of Pakistan is clearly impossible, therefore the same may kindly be postponed or delayed till completion of electoral college accordingly in the best interest of justice, fair play and equity."



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

## Govt. committed to steer country out of economic crisis: PM Shehbaz

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reiterated the government's resolve to steer the country out of the challenge of economic crisis by bringing structural reforms in the economic sector to provide maximum facilities to the people of the country.

He said that the government was fully committed to increase tax to GDP ratio, tap the huge potential of natural and agriculture resources, stop smuggling, power theft, and losses of the State Owned Entities.

Addressing a cheque distribution ceremony among the affected people by torrential rains and snowfall in the area, the prime minister called for setting aside all the differences in the larger national

interest to work as a nation to ensure that the country was developing at a faster pace.

Currently, he said the country's tax collection target for the current fiscal year was 1.2 trillion which was not up to the true potential due to tax evasion by certain sections. He said tax evasion was one of the biggest challenge that would be resolved to increase the country's resources. "If we have no resources, how we will build the infrastructure of health, education and other important sectors," he maintained.

He said even the salaries of the federal employees were being paid with the borrowed money. Therefore, he said this was the right time to take tough and

important decisions to resolve all the key challenges, the country was facing.

As regards the losses of SOEs, the prime minister informed that the SOEs were incurring losses of hundreds of billions rupees as the loss of only Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was around Rs 825 billion. Similarly, he said the country lost Rs 500 billion every year to power theft.

Talking about the losses and damages occurred due to recent rains, snowfalls and land sliding in AJ&K, the prime minister expressed his grief and sorrow over the loss of eight precious lives and prayed for the grant of eternal peace to the departed soul and early recovery of those injured in the incidents.

## Success of Balochistan is success of Pakistan, says Army Chief

### Independent Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir, NI (M) visited Awaran district of Balochistan. During the visit, COAS was briefed on the security situation and efforts being undertaken by Pakistan Army in the socio-economic development and agriculture potential of the province.

COAS interacted with the local elders, farmers and families of Shuhada and assured them of the Army's unstinting support for their security and welfare, while paying rich tribute to the sacrifices rendered by the Shuhada.

While interacting with the notables and farmers of Awaran, COAS emphasized the importance of agriculture and Army's commitment to the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI). COAS said that farmers will be provided with all kinds of agricultural facilities, including the provision of easy agricultural loans, seeds, fertilisers, solar tube wells and guidance by agriculture experts, so that they can cultivate their lands and become partners in the progress and development of Pakistan.

Later on, COAS inaugurated Cadet College Awaran and interacted with faculty members and students. The Army Chief appreciated the establishment of yet another Cadet College in Balochistan for the people of the area. He reiterated his commitment that Pakistan Army will continue development and relief activities in Balochistan in collaboration with the concerned civil departments.

COAS remarked "Success of Balochistan is success of Pakistan. People of Pakistan are proud of the brave people of Balochistan who have stood tall against all odds."



AWARAN: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir giving a cheque to a relative of Shuhada during the visit at Awaran district

## NA passes resolution appreciating women's contributions to society

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly celebrated International Women's Day by acknowledging the remarkable contributions of Pakistani women, especially highlighting the legacy of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, in a majority vote resolution while members of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) were in opposition to the resolution.

Ms. Sehar Kamran, moved the resolution in the Lower House of Parliament, while Ms. Sharmila Faruqi, and Shaza Fatima Khwaja, also submitted similar resolutions.

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq put the resolution, which garnered majority support despite objections

from members of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed disappointment that the opposition chose to oppose the resolution without considering its contents, emphasizing the importance of transcending politics for such significant matters. He also observed that the opposition had not submitted its own resolution and instead resorted to block a tribute to the legendary daughters of the nation.

He advised the opposition to realise importance of the matter and instead of opposing for the sake of opposition, should add its voice for the promotion, protection and well-being of the women of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi being presented with the farewell Guard of Honour, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## In apparent rebuff to PTI IMF says its scope is limited to economic issues

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says its scope is restricted to economic issues and it cannot interfere in any country's internal and political affairs.

IMF spokesperson Esther Perez confirmed that the fund received on Feb 20 a letter from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) which demanded linking the release of the next tranche with political stability in Pakistan and responded that it (IMF) was concerned about economic matters.

She said the Fund was an international organisation and its mandate was restricted to economic issues only. "IMF does not com-

ment on local and political issues and encourages fair and peaceful resolution of disputes," she reiterated.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), in the letter, asked the IMF to factor in the country's political stability in any further bailout talks.

The PTI sent a letter to the IMF detailing its position. Earlier, the IMF declined to comment on the country's political situation after the PTI founder's aides said they would urge the lender to call for an independent audit of Pakistan's disputed Feb 8 elections before engaging in further talks with Islamabad.

## President Alvi presented farewell guard of honour

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday was given a farewell guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Army.

The guard of honour ceremony was held at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Dr Arif Alvi will relinquish the charge of his office on March 9 (Saturday) after election of a new president.

Meanwhile, the election of the 14th president of Pakistan will be held today (March 9).

## 4 terrorists killed in NW IBO

### Independent Report

RAWALPINDI: On 8 March 2024, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in North Waziristan District, on reported presence of terrorists.

During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and the terrorists, as a result of which four terrorists were sent to hell.

Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area. Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area.

## PML-N to vote for Zardari in presidential election: Maryam

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that 'unlike' outgoing president, Asif Ali Zardari would follow the constitution in 'letter and spirit' after taking office as President. According to details, Maryam Nawaz and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari co-chaired a joint parliamentary parties meeting of the PPP and PML-N in which a mechanism was devised for the presidential election in the Punjab Assembly.



Speaking on the occasion, the PPP chairman said that he came to meet the Punjab Assembly members to seek support for Asif Ali Zardari in the presidential election. He said that Pakistan is currently going through a crisis and all political parties have to play their role to take the country out of crises.

"Asif Ali Zardari treats all political parties with the same affection he shows to his party. Insha'Allah, Asif Ali Zardari would take care of the members of the National Assembly, Senate, and provincial assemblies in four provinces," Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said.

The PPP chairman said that a political party used to do 'politics of division', urging the need to eradicate the same. "The young generation has to be taken forward in such a way that they can bury the politics of hatred and division," he added.

## PM thanks China, Turkiye, UAE leaders for their congratulatory messages

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed gratitude to the leadership of China, Turkiye and the United Arab Emirates for their congratulatory messages on his assumption of office. Responding to Chinese President Xi Jinping's message of felicitation on X, the prime minister said that he looked forward to working closely with him to further elevate the already historic bilateral relationship to unprecedented levels of fraternity and cooperation.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also expressed gratitude to the UAE leadership including Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed for their wishes and prayers.

He also thanked Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President, Deputy PM and Chairman of the Presidential Court for his letter of greetings.

## Alvi gifts books to National Library of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday presented his books as a gift to the National Library of Pakistan, stressing the need to develop a culture of book reading.

He presented the books to the representatives of the National Library of Pakistan and National Heritage and Cultural Heritage Division, a President House press release issued here said.

On the occasion, he said during his five years' tenure, he had been encouraging the youth to read books.

"Libraries play an important role in increasing people's access to knowledge," he said adding the students should make full use of the facilities of the libraries in the country.

## Ex-judge Naqvi completes consultation process to challenge SJC opinion

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former judge of Supreme Court (SC) Mazahar Akbar Naqvi has completed consultation process with legal and constitutional experts to challenge Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) opinion.

The SJC decision is likely to be challenged in SC next week.

Justice (Retd) Mazahar Akbar Naqvi has said with reference to challenging the opinion that this was one sided proceedings

and I had refused to become part of it.

The law does not allow to continue inquiry following the resignation of judge. President has accepted the resignation which has been notified in government gazette.

He further said several members of SJC demanded for initiating premature proceedings against me before registering complaints against me. How can SJC change the resignation into dismissal from service.



ISLAMABAD: Women activists scuffle with police personnel during Aurat March, a demonstration rally, to mark the International Women's Day, in the Federal Capital.



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf in a group photo along with Tri-Services Officers during the closing session of exercise SEASPART 2024, in Karachi.

## Pak Navy's Maritime Exercise Seaspark-2024 concludes

### Independent Report

KARACHI: The concluding session of Pakistan Navy's Major Maritime Exercise SEASPART-2024 held at Karachi. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the session as Chief Guest. The exercise was conducted in North Arabian Sea to validate operational plans designed under realities of ever-evolving geo-strategic environment. Relevant elements of PAF and Pak Army also participated in the exercise to practice tri services synergy during war.

Addressing the closing session, Chief of the Naval Staff highlighted that the

exercise helped in synergizing Naval Operations with Land and Air Operations. He stressed that the on-going strategic competition among major countries are being increasingly confronted with difficult foreign policy choices to safeguard national interests. Evolving character of war under Grey Hybrid scenarios coupled with internal security challenges also complicate the threat matrix. All these threats and challenges necessitate a constant review of our operational plans through major exercises.

Earlier, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations)

presented overview of the exercise and conduct of the exercise was discussed threadbare to draw pertinent lessons. Towards the end, recommendations were presented to revise war plans and strategies under the evolving maritime environment in the region.

Exercise SEASPART-2024 was aimed to assess combat readiness and operational preparedness of Pakistan Navy to meet the entire spectrum of National Security Challenges in the Maritime Domain. The exercise was conducted on a two force format with Blue Force being the own and Orange Force being the enemy forces.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Result tampering

The botched conduct of the Feb 8 election continues to haunt the Election Commission of Pakistan. After failing to meet the legal deadline of Feb 22 to publish all Form 45s, the Commission finally released the documents on Tuesday, in the process triggering another storm of complaints regarding blatant and, in some instances, rather crude manipulation of electoral results. The Form 45, which is a tally of all votes cast at a polling station for each of the contesting candidates, is the formal documentation of the first and most important step in the post-poll vote-counting exercise. A copy of it is supposed to be issued to the nominee of each candidate who witnesses the count of ballots. Since the result of an election is built on the consolidation of individual Form 45s issued by presiding officers from each polling station, the integrity of these forms is what ultimately legitimizes the poll exercise.

In the case of the recent general election, many candidates had complained that the Form 45s they received from the presiding officers in their respective constituencies were showing very different results than those announced by the ECP after unlawful and as yet unexplained delays.

There were several rival candidates and even entire parties endorsing the PTI's claim of victory on various seats based on the Form 45s collected by them, even though official results had declared some other candidate as the winner. Since the ECP's copies of its Form 45s had not been shared till earlier this week, it was impossible to determine where exactly the official count and the Form 45s issued to candidates had deviated. The documents now released seem so full of inconsistencies and errors that they have bolstered the persistent allegations of widespread tampering with results and strengthened independent observers' demands for a transparent audit of election results.

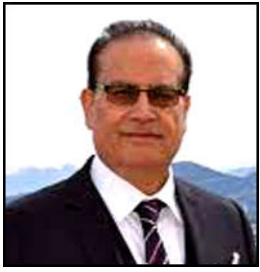
Where, on the one hand, the ECP insisted on rigid interpretations of election rules and laws to deny the PTI its bat and the Sunni Ittehad Council its share of reserved seats, it cannot expect the nation to look the other way when it comes to its own violations of legal deadlines and failure to explain the glaring anomalies in its announced results. This duplicity cannot be condoned. Given how crudely vote counts have been overwritten in some of the Form 45s shared by the ECP, the Commission must explain why it considered it appropriate to announce winners and allocate seats based on seemingly tampered documents without conducting some kind of cross-checking first.

It must also organise an immediate, independent audit of the election results that have been contested, which all important stakeholders should be invited to witness. It will prove extremely difficult for the nation to move forward unless these disputes are resolved.

## Upgraded CPEC, President Xi and Shahbaz Sharif

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC, CEO ATV



As anticipated, Chinese President Xi Jinping, known for his deep and affectionate sentiments towards Pakistan, was the first head of state to extend congratulations to Mr. Shahbaz Sharif upon assuming the office of Prime Minister.

This gesture reflects President Xi's special regard for Pakistan, highlighting his reputation as one of the most benevolent leaders globally, particularly towards Pakistan.

As the leader of China, one of the fastest-growing nations worldwide, President Xi's support will give added confidence to the newly elected Prime Minister, who is soon to face significant economic, financial, and political challenges. The brief yet impactful message not only conveyed congratulations but also emphasized a revitalized vision for the future of Pakistan-China cooperation which was delineated into five distinct areas, underlining a roadmap for their continued collaboration.

Firstly, emphasis was placed on nurturing and preserving the longstanding friendship between the two nations. Secondly, emphasized exchanges and cooperation across a wide spectrum of fields. The third to advance and upgrade the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The fourth to deepen cooperation and foster resilience. Fifth to ensure tangible benefits for the populace of both nations.

While all five elements hold significance, the joint development of an upgraded version of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) emerged

as particularly pivotal, with far-reaching implications.

This revamped iteration of CPEC, built upon a reassessment of its initial framework (CPEC-1) transcends its previous focus on infrastructure, energy, and communication projects. Instead, it embraces a multifaceted approach centered on fostering economic prosperity, industrial development, ICT, livelihood projects, mining and mineral exploration and development, agriculture, political, economic, education, science and technology, cultural, and people-to-people relations. It also covers food security and research, media exchanges, space cooperation, urban sustainable development, climate change, vaccine development, transportation, energy.

In essence, the upgraded CPEC delineates five distinct corridors, each tailored to address key priorities and aspirations.

A Growth Corridor, aimed at driving economic expansion by focusing on infrastructure development projects that directly stimulate economic activity. Such as expanding existing industrial zones and creating new special economic zones to attract foreign investment. It includes improving transportation networks to facilitate trade domestically, regionally and globally, diversify Pakistan's export basket and expand its industrial base and connect Gwadar with the landlocked countries, thus opening new vistas to the west and beyond.

The Livelihood-Enhancing Corridor aims to bridge socio-economic disparities by empowering individuals and communities by harnessing the potential of the country's youthful population and capitalize on the growing social consciousness to transition towards a knowledge-driven society. Central to this vision is the

development of human and social capital alongside institutional reforms that prioritizes sustained, inclusive growth, emphasizing indigenous solutions and involving all segments of society. Creating an enabling environment for the private sector to drive economic growth and enhance national competitiveness. It focuses on enhancing living standards through investments in education, healthcare, social services, and poverty alleviation initiatives besides uplifting rural communities aimed at improving the overall quality of life for all Pakistani citizens.

The Innovation Corridor will foster technological advancement through the establishment of research and development centers, fostering collaboration between universities and industries, and investing in digital infrastructure aimed at ushering the country into a new knowledge revolution by introducing disruptive technologies such as micro-electronics, computers, telecommunications, human-made materials, robotics, and biotechnology. By catalyzing significant increases in productivity and giving rise to entirely new economic sectors, the corridor serves as a platform for innovation and entrepreneurship. It aims to position Pakistan as a hub for technological excellence, driving economic growth and enhancing competitiveness globally. Through strategic investments and partnerships, the Innovation Corridor seeks to propel Pakistan forward as a leader in technological innovation and advancement.

The Green Corridor in Pakistan is committed to promoting environmental sustainability by prioritizing investments in renewable energy sources, clean technologies, and sustainable waste management. Emphasizing the importance of moderniza-

tion, food security, and agricultural and environmental protection. This vision advocates for energy conservation, commercialization of renewable energy, and the adoption of advanced biofuels and synthetic fuels. It also calls for the implementation of alternative propulsion methods and energy-efficient urban infrastructure. Through these initiatives, the Green Corridor aims to mitigate environmental degradation, enhance energy security, and build resilient communities, ensuring a more sustainable and prosperous future for Pakistan.

The Open Corridor aims to ensure inclusivity and accessibility, extending the benefits of CPEC-1 and II to a wider range of people and regions in Pakistan. This initiative envisions empowering local communities, providing skills training, facilitating access to financing for small businesses, and offering clear information about opportunities. While achieving this ambitious vision requires careful planning and collaboration among stakeholders, it holds immense potential to uplift all of Pakistan through equitable development.

Since its announcement five months ago, the upgraded China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has transitioned from the drawing board to practical implementation. The Chinese Ambassador recently unveiled promising developments regarding CPEC, announcing the successful launch of the Growth Corridor, Livelihood-Enhancing Corridor, Innovation Corridor, and Green Corridor, alongside the Open Corridor.

Concrete plans are underway in collaboration with Xinjiang province to revolutionize Pakistan's agricultural sector, aiming to modernize and boost productivity. This initiative involves introducing high-quality seeds, lever-

aging cutting-edge technology and implementing comprehensive training programs to cultivate skilled human resources. Additionally, infrastructure is being developed for storage, preservation, value addition, marketing, and exports of staple crops, cotton, vegetables, and fruits. Development cooperatives in selected agricultural hubs will ensure maximum benefits to farmers regardless of land holdings.

Moreover, several Chinese companies are poised to invest in green energy projects, including photovoltaic and other renewable energy initiatives with low carbon emissions.

They are committed to environmentally friendly and high-tech projects. Many Chinese companies are pledging to establish manufacturing facilities.

The completion of Rashakai SEZ Phase-I was also announced by the ambassador, marking a new stage of high-quality development for CPEC. These advancements inject new momentum into fostering an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future.

Sizable progress has been made to convert the Khunjerab Pass into an all-weather border by upgrading customs and logistics services to facilitate seamless trade and movement of people. Secondly, efforts have been directed towards making the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) fully operational, enhancing connectivity and accessibility to the region. Additionally, operationalizing the Pak-China Friendship Hospital and accelerating the expansion of the desalination plant and other key projects have been expedited to improve healthcare facilities and address water scarcity challenges.

Thirdly, multiple

memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and agreements have been inked between China and Pakistan, covering commerce, communication, and transport sectors, notably including the Main Line-1 (ML-1) rail project, whose cost has been reduced from \$9 billion to \$6.7 billion. Spanning 1,733 kilometers, ML-1 will link Peshawar to Karachi, significantly enhancing Pakistan's transportation infrastructure. Additionally, an MoU between The United Energy Group of China and Pakistan Refinery Ltd for a \$1.5 billion investment aims to boost the refinery's production capacity, significantly increasing the country's petrol and high-speed diesel production.

Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, a dynamic leader known for his proactive approach, will undoubtedly take President Xi's letter seriously. The letter, while extending congratulations, underscores an unwavering commitment and resolve to project both CPEC-1 and the Upgraded CPEC-2 forward with accelerated momentum to yield tangible results. It emphasizes the imperative of giving undivided attention to both phases of CPEC and calls for building the capacity of government and private institutions to handle the influx of massive investment. President Xi's directive underscores the urgency of developing managerial skills to navigate highly precise and high-value projects, enhancing transparency and expediency in processing proposals and projects, and creating highly efficient and effective enabling conditions to ensure the timely completion of corridors and projects within the agreed-upon timeframe and with the intended output and outcome.

## Commerce News

### Dar urges political parties for Charter of Economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Leader of the House in the Senate, Senator Ishaq Dar on Friday urged all political parties to get united and sign a Charter of Economy to get the country out of financial trap.

In his farewell speech, the Senator said that time has come to work together for the betterment of Pakistan. Ishaq Dar thanked his party leadership for honoring him with the role in the Senate of Pakistan since 2002.

He said that during his tenure, he witnessed many ups and downs and the Senate played an important role in the parliamentary history of Pakistan and will always be remembered in golden words.

He said difference of

opinion is the beauty of democracy but opposition for the sake of opposition is a disaster for the country.

He said Senate is a symbol of the federation therefore the sanctity of this House must be maintained at all costs and the protest should be within the limits.

He stressed all political parties for the Charter of Reconciliation and Charter of Economy to get the country out of financial trap. "We should avoid personal vengeance against each other and take the country forward collectively", said the Senator adding that all political parties should work together to get Pakistan's name included in G-20 countries.

He said Pakistan is an atomic power, therefore

the enemies of Pakistan have interest in weakening the country and all political parties remain busy fighting with each other. He said that all political parties should make sacrifices for Pakistan. Senator Mian Raza Rabbani in his farewell speech, said that it was not appropriate to talk about the country whose financial sovereignty was mortgaged with international financial institutions. He said it is also inappropriate to comment on hybrid system over the parliament and internal politics of the country. He also urged all political parties to have a grand national dialogue to get the country part of international financial institution and hybrid political system.

### Turkiye CG visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Consul General of Turkiye Durmus Bastug and Commercial Attache Nurettin Demir visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Friday to discuss ways and means to boost the bilateral trade and investment relations.

SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik and Vice President Amer Majeed Sheikh warmly welcomed the distinguished guests.

During a meeting, President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik said Pakistan and Turkiye committed to enhancing bilateral cooperation in various sectors as focused by various Government-to-Government meetings in the past few years.

He said: "We are thankful that Turkiye is also an important investment partner as number of Turkish firms are working in Pakistan in the domains of energy, finance, and infrastructure projects. We believe that both Turkiye and Pakistan must harness each other strengths and expertise to drive mutual progress and prosperity."



RAWALPINDI: Group photo of People's Trader Cell President Tariq Waheed Butt and Secretary General Naveed Kanwal on the occasion of congratulating the newly elected President Malik Shaukat Hayat Kekezai and the newly elected Secretary General Adnan Ahmed of Central Anjuman Tajran Gwalmandi.

### Envoy urges Pakistani investors to invest in Ethiopia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, on Friday urged the Pakistani business community to invest in Ethiopia that offered comparative advantage in form of important geographical location, cheap and clean energy and skilled human resources.

Addressing a Business Forum on Ethiopia-Pakistan Bilateral Trade at Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Lahore, the ambassador said his country was hosting the Invest Ethiopia Conference from April 28-30 in Addis Ababa to

showcase extraordinary investment opportunities in Ethiopia, said a press release issued here.

Accorded to Ambassador Jemal Beker, it was a high time for the business community of Pakistan to explore the lucrative market of Ethiopia which was a gateway to the African continent of more than 1.4 billion people.

He said Ethiopia was a signatory to the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement which meant that whatever produced in Ethiopia could easily be traded to the entire Africa.

The ambassador highlighted the economic reforms carried out by the reformist Government of Ethiopia to build a home grown economy to achieve a robust and sustainable economic growth by creating an enabling environment for business community and foreign investors. He said under its economic reforms, Ethiopia had laid a major focus on its five economic sectors including agriculture and agro-processing, manufacturing, mining, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and tourism.

### PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 190 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Friday, gaining 190.67 points, a positive change of 0.29 percent, closing at 65,603.09 points against 65,793.76 points the previous trading day. A total of 481,704,055 shares valuing Rs16,992 billion were traded during the day as compared to 354,153,110 shares valuing Rs14,435 billion the last day. Some 355 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 206 of them recorded gains and

119 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 30 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 59,083,977 shares at Rs 4.83 per share, Cnergycio Pakistan with 51,468,215 shares with 4.89 per share and Kohinoor Spinning with 45,948,000 shares at Rs 5.52 per share. Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 160.00 per share price, closing at Rs 8,050.00, whereas the runner-up was Pakistan Services Limited with a Rs 29.99 rise in its per share.

### SBP announces holiday on first Ramadan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has announced that all its public dealing offices will remain closed on 1<sup>st</sup> Ramadan-ul-Mubarak. According to the SBP Statement issued here on Friday, the day will be observed as bank holiday for the purpose of Zakat deduction. All banks, Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and Microfinance banks (MFBs) will remain closed for public dealing. However, all employees of the Bank, DFIs and MFBs will attend their office on bank holiday as normal working day.

### Pays tribute to Pakistani women SBP Director stresses for women's digital financial inclusion key to progress

ISLAMABAD: Director at the State Bank of Pakistan Abid Qamar Friday paid tribute to Pakistani women for pivotal role in nation building and urged for women's digital financial inclusion as economic empowerment is key to Pakistan's development.

Talking to PTV news channel, while paying tribute to Women on International Women day he stressed that the women's financial inclusion is crucial to promoting gender equality and empowering women in all aspects of their lives.

"No nation can rise to the height of glory unless their women are side

side with them", he said, adding, recognizing their important role, SBP has taken a number of steps towards financial inclusion of women.

He added that this initiative envisions greater engagement of women in the financial sector through increased employment in financial institutions as well as enhanced access to financial services.

"SBP considers it imperative to support the career progression of the women employees and encourage them to aim for leadership position with the hope that in the coming years women in leadership position should become the norm, not the exception".



ISLAMABAD: People are busy buying vegetables in Friday Weekly Bazaar.

### PARC signs agreement to enhance livestock, dairy production

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and Holstein Research Management Dairies Private Limited, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), for enhancing livestock and dairy production in the country.

Under this partnership, both organizations have pledged to provide technical support for capacity building and to conduct training programs in Theriogenology, animal breeding and genetic research and development.

In this regard, the

PARC also organized an international seminar focusing on genetic and economic impact of Norwegian red dairy cattle.

The seminar provided a platform for experts and stakeholders to explore the potential of Norwegian red cattle in enhancing genetic and domestic breed improvement in the dairy industry. PARC's institutions, the National Institute for Genomics and Advanced Biotechnology (NIGAB) and the Animal Sciences Institute (ASI).



ISLAMABAD: Women visiting stalls at 10th National Women at Work commemorating International Women's Day organised by Lok Virsa with the collaboration of Devcom-Pakistan and dtn.

### SCCI president inaugurates Bank Alfalah on Ring Road

PESHAWAR (APP): President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Fud Ishaq on Friday inaugurated a new branch of Bank Alfalah on Ring Road, Hayatabad here on Friday. During the inauguration ceremony, the SCCI executive members Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Hafaf Ali Khan, Secretary General Sajjad Aziz, members of the business community, along with the Bank Al-Falah Regional Head Jamil Ahmad Sauval, Area Manager

Muhammad Adil, Branch Manager Taniya Khan, Regional Coordinator Asadur Rehman and others were present.

Talking on the occasion, the SCCI chief praised the Bank Alfalah for its services and facilitation to the business community. He said the Bank Alfalah's business-friendly policies have become fruitful for the traders and asked other commercial banks to adopt such pro-business policies to facilitate the community.

## CM restores Health Card facility in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, announced on Friday that free medical treatment for all residents of the province through Health Cards will be restored from the first day of Ramadan.

Addressing the media after a cabinet meeting, he emphasized that ensuring peace and security in the province remained the top priority for his government. During the holy month of Ramadan, he disclosed that a cash amount of Rs. 10,000 would be disbursed among approximately 850,000

deserving individuals, with data collected from the Ehsas Program. An additional amount of Rs. 10,000 will be provided to an additional 150,000 people from all provincial constituencies, he said.

To assist poor people, he mentioned the functional establishment of "Langar Khanay" and announced that the provincial government would organize "Sheri" and "Iftari" meals at hospitals to facilitate the attendants of patients.

Ali Amin Gandapur further stated that youth would be provided skills training for job creation,

along with financial assistance in the form of grants and interest-free loans to establish their businesses. He said that there would be no compromise on the development of the province and demanded the federal government to release arrears of Net Hydel Profit.

He welcomed Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif's visit to rain-affected areas and his announcement of compensation for affected families after the recent rains. He added that the provincial government had already released funds to the rain-affected areas.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Balighur Rahman is taking oath of office from Chief Justice of Lahore High Court Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan while Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is also present in the Governor House.

## Asif Zardari will be elected President with thumping majority: Afridi

PESHAWAR (APP): Secretary Information PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Amjad Khan Afridi has said that all democratic political parties would vote for Asif Ali Zardari to elect him for the second term with thumping majority.

In a statement issued here on Friday, the PPP KP chapter's spokesman took exception to the demand of Mahmood Khan Achakzai for the postponement of presidential poll, saying it is surprising that the winner of a single parliamentary seat is making such demand.

He said that no one would be allowed to hatch conspiracy against democracy and destabilize the country. He added that Achakzai is sleeping rabbit sleep and could become the President of Pakistan.

The PPP leader said that Asif Ali Zardari could be elected as President of Pakistan without allotting reserved seats to Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), while after sensing defeat Mahmood Khan Achakzai is bent upon adopting cheap tactics. He further accused Achakzai of making futile attempts.

## SFA takes measures to ensure supply of adulteration-free food items during Ramadan: DG SFA

KARACHI (APP): Director General Sindh Food Authority (SFA) Agha Fakhar Hussain on Friday briefed a meeting that the Authority is making every possible effort to ensure supply of adulteration-free food items during Ramadan ul Mubarak.

The DG SFA attended the meeting held at Commissioner House here, said a statement.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Karachi, Police, Price Control Committee and senior officers of relevant departments.

## ZAB declared martyr, national hero in PA resolution

LAHORE (APP): Former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has been posthumously declared a martyr and national hero by a resolution passed with overwhelming support in the Punjab Assembly.

The resolution was presented on Friday in the Assembly by Ali Haider Gillani, the parliamentary leader of the Pakistan People's Party.

## Four more kidnapped from Shikarpur

By Adeel Ahmed  
SHIKARPUR: Four more persons were kidnapped from Shikarpur District in a day from the jurisdictions of Naparkot Police Station and New Faujdari Police Station here on Friday.

According to initial reports that some group of armed men kidnapped the five persons traveling on datson vehicle from village KB Allah Bux Soomro Rahimabad Link road near Khanpur who were returning back after attending the religious meeting there in the jurisdiction of Naparkot Police Station.

## Justice Malik takes oath as new LHC CJ

LAHORE (APP): Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan on Friday took oath as the 52nd chief justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) in a ceremony held at the Governor's House here.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman administered the oath to Justice Khan.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz attended the ceremony. LHC senior puisne judge Justice Shujaat Ali Khan and other judges, Punjab

Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan, provincial ministers, federal and provincial law officers, corps commander of Lahore, inspector general of police Punjab, judicial officers and relatives of the chief justice were also present. Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Zaman read out the notification of the appointment of the chief justice.

After taking the oath, the chief justice arrived at the LHC where he was warmly welcomed.

## Protest continue for recovery of hostages

**Independent Report**  
MIRPUR MATHELO: Protested in front of SSP Ghotki's office in Mirpur Mathelo for the fifth day on behalf of political and social organizations, journalists, and hostages' relatives and citizens for the recovery of the hostages who were abducted by bandits from Ghotki district.

Demonstration, sit-in, sloganeering for the recovery of hostages, police administration completely failed to recover the hostages.

## Not a single day but every day is women day: Maryam Nawaz

LAHORE (Online): Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Maryam Nawaz has said not a one day is women day but every day is women day.

"Women are our heroes. A woman has to wage much struggle to get recognition. I myself worked hard to assert myself in party and everywhere. I am grateful to opponents to help me reach this slot. I faced harassment. I was kept in jails. She said this while addressing a function on the eve of women international day.

She underlined that getting underage girls employed and then subjecting them to violence is source of grave concern for us. There is need to get implement laws against forced labor sternly.

She urged that parents should take their children into confidence so that they could tell them whenever they are subjected to harassment outside. Girls should be made powerful.

She announced to evolve zero tolerance policy against harassment



LAHORE: MPAs elected on minority special seats taking oath during Punjab Assembly Session.

## PDMA, UNFPA launch GBViE framework to curb gender violence

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) commemorated International Women's Day and inaugurated Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE) framework.

Director General PDMA, Muhammad Qaisar Khan appreciated the collaboration of UNFPA and emphasized the importance of prioritizing gender equality in disaster response efforts.

He stated, "On the day, we recognize the urgent need to address the critical issues of gender-based violence, particularly in emergency

situations." "The GBViE framework is a crucial step forward in our collective efforts to ensure the safety, dignity, and rights of all individuals, especially women and girls, in emergency settings. By integrating gender considerations into our disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, we can better protect and support the most vulnerable members of our communities", he said.

Secretary Relief Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Inayat Ullah Wasim said that International Women's Day serves as a reminder of the invaluable contributions of women make to the society.



HYDERABAD: Large number of women participating in a rally in connection of International Women's Day at Thandi Sarak.

## IG Police pays tributes to all women of society

LAHORE (APP): Police, women are showing excellent skills and performance alongside men. He said that women serving in Punjab Police are our pride and valuable asset, lady police officers and official play an outstanding role in law and order, crime control and community policing.

The IG Punjab said that providing equal opportunities and favorable environment to women is indispensable for sustainable economic and social development. Punjab police is ensuring prompt registration of FIRs and arrest of culprits in case of crimes against women.

Dr. Usman Anwar said that Women Safety App, Helpline 15.

Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has paid rich tributes to all the women of the society.

On exclusive message of International Women's Day, Dr. Usman Anwar said that Punjab Police salutes all brave mothers, sisters, daughters of nation especially of martyrs and ghazis. He said that on International Women's Day, Punjab Police reiterates its determination to fight against gender based crimes, sexual harassment and violence against women. The IG Punjab said that today's woman is more conscious, courageous and empowered than ever before and in all departments of Punjab

## International News

### North Korea's Kim guides artillery firing drill, KCNA says

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guided an artillery firing drill by the Korean People's Army, the country's military force, on Thursday, state media KCNA reported on Friday.

The drill involved units that are in firing range of "the enemy's capital," the state media said, referring to Seoul, the South Korean capital and added it "fulfilled important military missions for war deterrence." Thursday's artillery drill was aimed at increasing combat readiness posture and actual war capability, KCNA said.

Kim urged to push forward with preparations so the artillery sub-units could "take the initiative with merciless and rapid strikes at the moment of their entry into an actual war."

"He stressed the need

to train all the artillerymen of the whole army into experts in artillery engagement ... and set forth important tasks for rounding off the artillery war preparations," the report said, referring to the leader of the reclusive state. The move comes as the South Korean and US militaries kicked off their spring drills known as the Freedom Shield exercises on Monday with twice the number of troops joining compared to last year.

Seoul's defence minister, Shin Won-sik, visited the Capital Defense Command on Thursday and ordered a firm response if North Korea made provocations aimed at the capital.

The move comes as the South Korean and US militaries kicked off their spring drills known as the Freedom Shield exercises on Monday with twice the

number of troops joining compared to last year.

Earlier this week, the North Korean state media said Kim inspected field training of troops at a major military operations base in the western region of the country.

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The Korean People's Army conducts an artillery firing drill, KCNA news agency reported, in North Korea in this picture released by the Korean Central News Agency.

### Hamas team leaves Cairo after stalemate in Gaza truce talks

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Hamas said its delegation had left Cairo on Thursday amid ongoing negotiations on a ceasefire accord in Gaza that mediators hope to achieve before Ramadan early next week.

After four days of talks mediated by Qatar and Egypt to secure a 40-day ceasefire ahead of the fast month there is still no sign of progress on key sticking points, with both sides blaming the other.

"Hamas's delegation left Cairo this morning for consultation with the leadership of the movement, with negotiations and efforts continuing to stop the aggression, return the displaced and bring in relief aid

to our people," a Hamas statement said.

Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri said Israel had been "thwarting" efforts to conclude a ceasefire deal. He said that Israel was rejecting Hamas's demands to end its offensive in the enclave, withdraw its forces, and ensure freedom of entry for aid and the return of displaced people.

Health officials in Gaza said the number of people confirmed killed in Israel's offensive had now passed 30,800. It reported 83 deaths in the past 24 hours and witnesses said the Israeli bombardments continued in Khan Younis, the southern city of Rafah, and areas in central Gaza.

### China says more Indian troops at Himalayan border won't ease tensions

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: China believes that India's move to add more troops at their disputed border is "not conducive to easing tensions", a foreign ministry spokesman said on Friday.

India has freed up a contingent of 10,000 soldiers, previously deployed at its western border, to strengthen its disputed border with China, according to several media reports. The two countries have previously agreed to maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels, and recently held a constructive meeting on resolving border issues in the west-eastern region.

### Biden orders US military to establish port in Gaza

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden will tell Congress on Thursday that he has ordered the US military to set up a port in Gaza to get more humanitarian aid into the beleaguered territory by sea, senior US officials said. The major announcement will not involve any US boots on the ground in the Palestinian enclave, as military personnel will stay offshore while other allies are involved, officials said.

"Tonight the president will announce in his State of the Union address that he has directed the US military to undertake an emergency mission to establish a port in Gaza," a senior administration official told reporters.

"This port, the main feature of which is a temporary pier, will provide the capacity for hundreds of ad-

ditional truckloads of assistance each day," the official said on condition of anonymity. US officials said the "significant capability will take a number of weeks to plan and execute," and would involve a maritime corridor bringing aid by sea from the Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

US officials were careful to stress that American troops would not be on the ground in Gaza, which has been under relentless Israeli bombardment since the Oct. 7 attack.

A second official said it was "foreseen to be an operation that won't require boots on the ground." "The US military has unique capabilities. And they can do things from just offshore that are extraordinary and so that is the concept of operations that the president has been briefed on," the official said.

### 287 children are missing in Nigeria's forests

**Monitoring Desk**  
ABUJA: Security forces swept through large forests in Nigeria's northwest region on Friday in search of nearly 300 children who were abducted from their school a day earlier in the latest mass kidnap, which analysts and activists blamed on the failure of intelligence and slow security response.

The abduction of the 287 children in Kaduna state, near the West African nation's capital, is one of the largest school kidnaps in the decade since the issue was highlighted by the kidnapping of schoolgirls in Borno state's Chibok village. Analysts and activists say the security lapses that allowed that mass abduction remain. The victims of the latest attack — among them at least 100 children aged 12 or under — were surrounded and marched into a forest just as they were starting the school day, said locals in Kuriga town, located 55 miles (89 kilometers) from the city of Kaduna. One man was shot

dead as he tried to save the students, school authorities said.

As Kaduna Gov. Uba Sani and security officials met with aggrieved villagers on Thursday, they pleaded with the governor to ensure the release of the students and secure their villages.

"Please stay and help us, please don't leave us," one woman cried as the governor's convoy sped off.

The school — located with no fencing close to nearby forests that often serve as enclaves for armed gangs — was "surrounded from all angles" by the motorcycle-riding gunmen who arrived at the school just after 8 a.m., said Joshua Madami, a youth leader in the area.

Security forces did not arrive at the scene until several hours later, locals said, prompting concerns from families and analysts that the gunmen might have gone deep into the forest with the children.



Ottawa Police Service officers surround a home after four children and two adults were found dead inside a neighbouring house in the Ottawa suburb of Barrhaven, Ontario, Canada.

### US, Turkey kick off comprehensive talks to explore improving troubled ties

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The US and Turkey are set to kick off comprehensive talks on Thursday to discuss if the NATO allies can move beyond deep rooted disagreements over issues such as Syria and Ankara's close ties with Russia.

Senior US and Turkish officials are set to meet at the State Department for several rounds of talks

focusing on topics spanning Syria, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, defense cooperation, energy, counterterrorism and the Israel-Hamas war.

The conversations, dubbed the Strategic Mechanism, will set the stage for a meeting on Friday between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan.

### Sweden joins Nato in shadow of Ukraine war

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Sweden on Thursday became the 32nd member of Nato in the shadow of the war in Ukraine, ending two centuries of official non-alignment and capping two years of torturous diplomacy.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson was visiting Washington, where Secretary of State Antony Blinken was to ceremonially receive the ratification documents after the hard-fought battle to secure the green lights needed from all Nato members.

"This is a historic day. Sweden will now take its rightful place at Nato's table, with an equal say in shaping Nato policies and decisions," Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in a statement.

"After over 200 years of non-alignment Sweden now enjoys the protection granted under Article 5, the ultimate guarantee of allies' freedom and security," he said.

### Ukraine's Zelenskyy in Turkey where Erdogan is expected to press for negotiations to end Russia war

**Monitoring Desk**  
ISTANBUL: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was in Istanbul on Friday for talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan whose NATO-member country has sought to balance its close relations with both Kyiv and Moscow and repeatedly offered to act as a peace-broker between them.

During the talks in Istanbul, Erdogan was expected to press for negotiations to end Russia's war in Ukraine, now in its third year, a Turkish government official said. Talks would also focus on a possible new measure that would guarantee navigational safety of commercial vessels in the Black Sea, the official said.

### UK PM Sunak's mother-in-law appointed to Indian parliament

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: The mother-in-law of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was on Friday appointed to serve in India's parliament, capping a career working for the philanthropic arm of her billionaire husband's tech firm. Sudha Murthy, 73, is the former chair of the Infosys Foundation.

## Govt fully committed to provide educational facilities, vocational training to women: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday said the government was fully committed to empower youth, particularly women by providing them better facilities of education, vocational training, and the latest technology tools so that they could help propel Pakistan on the road to economic progress.

He was speaking at a ceremony to give away "Khatun-e-Pakistan Awards" on the occasion of the International Women Day.

He congratulated the award winners and lauded them for making the name of Pakistan prominent among nations with their efforts and significant contributions.

He said the government was making its utmost efforts to facilitate the female population of the country and protect their rights.

International Women's Day was observed around the world to acknowledge the important role of women in society and Pakistan was not far behind others in providing rights

and facilities to women, he added.

He said Pakistan needed to make more policy interventions and provide more resources and opportunities to women.

"We have to provide more opportunities and resources for education and training of women."

He noted that women all around the world were contributing to the progress and welfare of society, adding there was a need to give women equal opportunities and a better environment at the workplaces so that they could easily contribute to economic progress and development.

He expressed the hope that the provincial governments would take forward the policies for women that were introduced and implemented in the past.

He pledged to make all resources available for women so that they could equip themselves with the latest technology tools.

"Women can help make Pakistan a great nation by utilising all available resources," he remarked.

PM Shehbaz recalled

that their previous government passed the law for the inheritance of women, launched Zewar e Taleem programme to retain girl students in schools by giving them scholarships, adding the programme was a great success story and helped in spreading education.

Similarly, Punjab Education Endowment Fund distributed Rs 20 billion among brilliant students who achieved distinction in their education, he said.

He said now the government would establish the Pakistan Education Endowment Fund to support students who excel in their studies but have limited resources to continue further.

His previous government in Punjab also trained youth through vocational programmes in different areas with the cooperation of United Kingdom's Department for International Development, he recalled.

"We have to take forward these programmes so that the nation can move ahead and achieve prosperity."



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributing Khatoon-e-Pakistan Awards among the high achievers women in their respective fields on the eve of International Women Day.

## Outlined by India, seeking more permanent seats Pakistan rejects as 'flawed' UNSC reform proposal

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has firmly rejected a UN Security Council reform model proposed by the aspirants for permanent seats (India, Brazil, Germany and Japan), saying any expansion in the permanent category will compound the 15-member body paralysis, and prevent the majority of small and medium-sized states from serving on it.

The plan, presented on Thursday by India on behalf of the so-called Group of Four nations, proposes the Council's membership from 15 to 25-26, adding six permanent and four or five non-permanent members, while hinting at "flexibility" on the veto issue.

"As a member of the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) Group, it is evident that our position has consistently opposed the issue of the creation of new permanent members," Ambassador Munir Akram, per-

manent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the long-running Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) aimed at restructuring the Security Council to make it most effective, representative and accountable. On its part, the UfC group has proposed a new category of members—not permanent members—with longer duration in terms and a possibility to get re-elected.

Emphasizing that the two basic vectors for reform were expansion and equitable representation, Ambassador Akram said the G-4 model would direct the effort in the "opposite direction", noting it would expand 6 new permanent seats—making the proportion of the members who are permanent versus those who are non-permanent even greater.

The Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council reform, which began in February 2009

have remained stalled. Despite a general agreement on enlarging the UNSC, as part of the UN reform process, member states have remained divided over details.

The UNSC currently has five permanent members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—and 10 non-permanent members elected for a two-year term.

"Today," the Pakistani envoy pointed out, "the permanent members are 1 to 2—5 permanent members to 10 non-permanent members"—whereas in the G-4 model, in a 26-member council, the equation would be 1 to 1—11 permanent members to 14 or 13 non-permanent members," reducing the proportionality between the two membership categories by half and lessen the chances of representation for the rest of the 182 countries who will not be permanent members on the Security Council.

## Japan awards MEXT research scholarships to Pakistani students

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Government of Japan has awarded prestigious MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan) Research Scholarships for Masters/Doctorate degrees to eleven Pakistani students for academic year 2024-25 aiming to provide them with an opportunity to pursue advanced studies and research in various disciplines at the prominent universities of Japan.

MEXT research scholarship is the flagship scholarship program of the Government of Japan, operating world over including Pakistan.

The scholarship is

fully funded by the Japanese government for a Master's or PhD degree, said a news release issued here on Friday. The Embassy of Japan organized a pre-departure orientation for the scholarship grantees. At the orientation, on top of the briefing on the scholarship program, Pakistani alumnus of the Japanese universities shared their knowledge and experience of studying and living in Japan with the new scholarship grantees.

They gave some useful pieces of information and advice to the young students who are on their way to various universities in Japan for higher studies.

## PRCS celebrates Int'l Women's Day

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) organized a grand ceremony at the National Headquarters to commemorate International Women's Day on Friday, celebrating under the theme "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress". The event aimed to honor the remarkable achievements of women and address the challenges they face, particularly in Pakistan.



The ceremony witnessed a diverse gathering of women from various backgrounds including civil society, legal profession, education sector, humanitarian organizations, diplomatic corps, PRCS staff, Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Partners, and volunteers.

Chairman of PRCS, in his address, expressed immense pride and gratitude towards the extraordinary women who have played pivotal roles in shaping Pakistan with their resilience, determination, and unwavering commitment to progress. He highlighted the significant contributions of Pakistani Women Leaders such as Fatima Jinnah, Nusrat Bhutto Sahiba, and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, underscoring their struggle and efforts.

## Senator Mushahid demands release of Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD (Online): Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed has said in Senate that Imran Khan be released and all the prisoners be granted general amnesty.

He said this in his farewell address in Senate Friday.

He held that the political forces should forge good relationship with judiciary, establishment and powers that be.

He called for immediate release of all political forces.

He went on to say the respect of upper house has enhanced due to issuance of production order of Senator Ejaz Chaudhry by deputy chairman Senate.

He underlined if talks can be held with TTP and disgruntled Baloch then why these cannot be with political parties.

## Security of Pak Secretariat, Minister Enclave tightened

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Police (ICP) is constantly engaged to ensure effective security arrangements at the Pakistan Secretariat and Minister Enclave to avoid any untoward situation.

On the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Police is always engaged in ensuring the peace and order situation in the federal capital, said the spokesman of Islamabad Police here Friday.

He said that the Islamabad Capital Police was ensuring effective security arrangements at the

Pak Secretariat and Minister Enclave, located in the high security zone.

The senior police officers directed the officers and officials to ensure the security of important government offices, and superior courts, located in the high-security zone, he said and added, they further directed them to perform their duties with utmost dedication to uphold peace and security, with no room for negligence or complacency during duty hours.

The Islamabad Police, he said is taking all possible measures to protect the life and property of the citizens.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with a delegation of students from the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), who won the Best Small Delegation Award for Pakistan at the Harvard National Model United Nations USA, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Captain (R) Muhammad Asif says Government determined to revolutionize livestock sector through breed enhancement

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) organized a ground breaking international seminar focusing on the Genetic and Economic Impact of Norwegian Red

breeds and underscored the importance of breed improvement.

In his address, Federal Secretary for MNFS&R, Captain (R) Muhammad Asif, highlighted the diversity of domestic livestock breeds and underscored the importance of breed im-



Dairy Cattle.

The seminar provided a platform for experts and stakeholders to explore the potential of Norwegian Red Cattle in enhancing genetic and domestic breed improvement in the dairy industry of Pakistan. Following the seminar, Holstein Research Management (HRM) Dairies (Pvt) Ltd. Pakistan and Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at boosting collaboration to enhance the livestock sector of Paki-

provement and the genetic advancement of domestic cattle breeds. He emphasized the government's unwavering commitment to revolutionize the livestock sector through genetic breed improvement, recognizing it as a crucial component in ensuring national food & nutritional security. Ms. Noor Khan, the Norwegian Ambassador to Pakistan, emphasized the considerable potential for knowledge exchange between Pakistan and Norway in the livestock sector.

## International Women's Day celebrated

ISLAMABAD (Online): International Women's Day was celebrated across the world including Pakistan on Friday to recognize the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women.

The theme of this year's day, "invest in women," to accelerate progress.

A number of functions and events were organized in connection with the day.

## CDA takes action against illegal constructions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA), on Tuesday, took vigorous actions to eliminate illegal constructions in the federal capital.

In this regard, the Building Control Section, along with the Enforcement Directorate, with the assistance of the district administration and Islamabad Police, took strict action against the violation of building by-laws in Islamabad Zone 5 and sealed several buildings.

## Journalists Panel sweeps National Press Club elections

ISLAMABAD: Journalists Panel once again swept into power by clinching all the executive seats of National Press Club in elections 2024-25, held on Thursday.

According to the results announced by the election committee, the presidential candidate of the Journalist Panel, Azhar Jatoi, secured victory by obtaining 1038 votes & Shakeel Qarar received 478 votes, Farooq Faisal Khan got 390 votes, and Sagheer Chaudhry obtained 171 votes.



For the position of the secretary, Nayyer Ali pulled off win by securing 988 votes & Dr. Sadia Kamal ended second position with 555 votes, while Dr Furqan Rao finished third, securing 473 votes. Sardar Hafeez managed to secure 50 votes. Meanwhile, Waqar Abbasi won the position of Finance Secretary by acquiring 914 votes. For the three positions of Vice Presidents, Ithisham ul Haq received 1043 votes, Syed Zafar Hussain Hashmi obtained 858 votes and Shah Mohammed got 792 votes.

For the Vice President position for women, Sahar Aslam got triumph by getting 1023 votes. Her closest competitor Shabana Saba Bajeeer got 333 votes. For the three seats of Joint Secretary, Awan Shirazi attained victory by receiving 943 votes, Javaid Baghat secured 933 votes and Syed Talat Farooq got 913 votes.

For the one seat of Joint Secretary for women Sehrish Qureshi got the victory with 1084 votes. Her closest versus Farhat Fatima received 340 votes. Total, 2,134 votes were cast in the National Press Club elections 2024-25. The announcement of the winners of the governing body of the Press Club will be made on Saturday. As many as 114 candidates participated in the elections.

## Successful raid by PTA thwarts illegal SIM issuance in Lahore

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Zonal Office in Lahore, in close collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Circle, conducted a successful raid against franchisee of a mobile phone company located in Chung, Lahore.

This franchisee was found to be involved in the illegal issuance of SIMs said a news release.

During the raid, 1058 active SIMs were found within SIM stock. The FIA team confiscated these active SIMs along with 12 BVS devices as evidence.

One person was also apprehended on the premises by the FIA team. An FIR in this regard has been registered and FIA is currently investigating the matter.

PTA had filed complaint with FIA earlier, based on information regarding illegal issuance of SIMs by the sale channel.

The raid underscores PTA's dedication to eradicate the menace of illegal issuance of SIMs.

## ISSI marks International Women's Day with Roundtable on "Women's Inclusion in Policy Discourse of Pakistan"

ISLAMABAD: Marking the International Women's Day (IWD), the Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a roundtable discussion titled, "Women's Inclusion in Policy Discourse of Pakistan." The keynote speaker at the roundtable discussion was Ms. Fauzia Viqueer, Federal Ombudsman for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace. Other discussants included: former Ambassador Seema Iqbal Baloch; Dr. Salma Malik, Associate Professor, QAU; Major Wajihah Arshad, Assistant Director, Information Operations Division, ISPR; Ms. Atiya Amir, Deputy Controller Program, Radio Pakistan; Ms. Shanza Faiz, Assistant Director, Foreign Minister's Office; and Dr. Fareeha Arumghan, Head-Center of Evidence Action Research, SDPI.

In her introductory remarks, Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director CSP, aligned the



discussion with IWD 2024 theme, envisioning a gender-equal world free from bias. She emphasized that the conversation will shed light on the pivotal role of women in shaping and participating in policy discourse across key domains such as the economy, foreign policy, diplomacy, energy, and the media within the specific context of Pakistan.

In his remarks on the occasion, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized the pivotal role of women in shaping policies for Pakistan's socio-economic development and fostering an inclusive deci-

sion-making process. He said that beyond equality, addressing unique challenges faced by women unlocks the nation's full potential. Women, with their diverse perspectives, enrich policy discourse, offering essential insights to address multifaceted challenges. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood also highlighted role of historical figures such as Fatima Jinnah, Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan and Shaista Ikramullah as well as contemporary leaders, underscoring Pakistan's commitment to human rights and gender equality across various sectors.

### MILITARY ENGINEER SERVICES

#### NOTICE OF TENDER FOR PREQUALIFICATION

1. The office of CMES (DP) PAC Kamra invites applications for prequalification of the contractors for the following works in light of PPR rules 13 (1) of 2004.

Sr.	Name of Work	Amount/ scope of work shown on tender documents
a.	Rehab of Officer's Accn (10 x W/Room & 12 x Kitchen) at Diff Bungalows at ARF Colony	
b.	Rehab of Bungalow No FD-65,66 & 67 at AMF Colony	
c.	Rehab of JCO's Qtrs (Block No 151, 153 & 155) at D/AMRF	
d.	Rehab of Airmen Qtrs (5/479 to 5/490) at ARF Colony	
e.	Uplifting of Safety Wall and Provn of Kerb Stone between Qtrs and Park Area at D/AMRF	
f.	Const of Radar Facility at Ratti Jinnah Hill at D/AARF	
g.	Rehab of JCO's Block No. 189 (Qtrs No.01 to 06) at AMF Colony	

3. The contractors are required to submit their applications for issuance of tender documents alongwith their complete credential as shown at (serial-9) up to 19 Mar 2024. The applications shall be scrutinized and the tender documents will only be issued to the firms who have sufficient experience in the relevant field and satisfy other special conditions required for the job and area. Tenders will be issued to the scrutinized contractors on 19 Mar 2024. The Tenders must be received in the accepting officer by 1130 Hours on 26 Mar 2024 and will be opened on the same date at 1200 Hours or date shown on tender documents.

Note: Contractor shall provide certificate that they are not involved in any type of litigation with Govt Department in the Court of Law and that no special report of Directorate of inspection and Evaluations (E-in-C's Branch, GHQ) is outstanding against them.

4. All Contractors will certify in writing that they are registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) and will submit a copy of their registration. Contractors not registered with PEC are ineligible to apply.

5. Contractor born on approved list of MES in Category 'A', 'B', 'C' & 'D' also having experience of this type should only apply.

6. Copies of the conditions of contract, schedules and all other documents connected with the work (signed for the purpose of identification) shall be open for inspection of the contractors, at the office CMES (DP) PAC Kamra during office hours. Tenders shall be deemed to have full knowledge of all such information whether they have inspected these or otherwise.

7. Contractor who desire may be present at the time of opening of tenders.

8. The accepting officer reserves the right to accept or reject the tender, Rejected tenders will be dealt with as per Para 33 (i) of PPR rules.

Sl No.	Name of Work Executed During Last 2 Years and in Hand	MES/Agency e.g. PWD/ P.R CDA etc	Amount of Work	Time Allowed in Months	Time Actual Completion	%age Progress of Work in Hand	Departmental Performance Report on Each Work the Divisional Engineer/XEN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8