

# Independent

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

Target of today's 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 ter-

rorist 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.



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.

## PM expresses desire to bolster Pak-UAE economic ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): 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.



KARACHI: Sindh Prisons Minister, Ali Hassan Zardari interacts with prisoners during his surprise visit at Malir Jail to review the facilities in the jail, in Karachi.

## Transfer, postings of provincial secretaries ordered

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Government on Monday ordered transfer and postings of the provincial secretaries with immediate effect and until further orders.

According to notification issued by the Chief Secretary Sindh, Commissioner Hyderabad Syed Khalid Hyder Shah was transferred and posted as Additional Chief Secretary Local Government, Housing and Town Planning Government Sindh vice Manzoor Ali Shaikh transferred.

Zareef Iqbal Khro, Chief Engineer Civil (BS-20) was posted Secretary Irrigation against an existing vacancy.

Zahid Ali Abbasi, an officer of PAS (BS-21) presently posted as Senior Member Board of Revenue Sindh was transferred and posted as Secretary School Education and Literacy Dept Sindh vice Dr Shireen Mustafa Narejo transferred.

Rafique Ahmed Burrito, an officer of PAS (BS-21) was posted as Secretary Agriculture Supply and Prices Dept vice Ajaz Ali Shah transferred.

Farhat Ali Junejo, an officer of PSP (BS-21) was posted as Chairman Enquiries, Anti Corruption Establishment Sindh vice Zulfiqar Ali Shah transferred. Baqaullah Umar, an officer of Ex. PCS (BS 21) was posted as Senior Member Board of Revenue Sindh.

## 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.

Later Anti Corruption staff took him to Chakwal under their custody.

## Umar Ayub says No dialogue with Govt sans release of PTI leaders

ISLAMABAD (INP): PTI leader Umar Ayub said that as long as PTI leaders were not released, there will be no dialogue with the government.

He claimed that Shehbaz-led government has no knowledge of the economy therefore there was no use to discuss economic challenges with him.

He said Shehbaz led government destroyed the economy in the past and this time they will do the same. Meanwhile, the anti-terrorism court in Lahore granted interim bail to Umar Ayub Khan in five cases till April 20. The court ordered Umar Ayub to submit a bond of fifty thousand. Babar Awan Advocate appeared on behalf of Umar Ayub.

## Six killed in roof collapse at South Waziristan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): At least six people of a family were killed and others injured when the roof of a house collapsed in Barmal Tehsil of South Waziristan, Lower.

According to reports quoting rescue sources, the incident occurred in the Raghzai area of Barmal Tehsil, when members of the family present in the room after Iftar.



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

## CM seeks Turkish help for setting up Sufi university, discusses CPEC with Chinese diplomat

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that his government is working to boost industrial and agriculture sector by inviting foreign investment here to achieve the objectives.

The government will offer different incentives to foreign investors, he said while talking to the Consul General of China Yang Yundong.

Japan HATTORI Masaru, Turkey Cemal Sangu, and Russia Andrey Fedorov who called on him separately here at the CM House.

The consul generals congratulated him on his election as Sindh CM for the third time and wished him all success. Apart from discussing matters of mutual interest, they discussed investment and exchange of trade delegation to promote business, and commerce

activity in this region.

The CM Sindh and Consul General of China Yang Yundong, held talks on CPEC projects, the Karachi Circular Railway, and agriculture sector. Syed Murad Ali Shah said that some lines of the BRT bus system have started functioning while two are under construction. "The KCR would be the feeder of the BRT lines and with its construction, the transport issue would be resolved in this city," he said.

The Consul General said that KCR was a priority project of the CPEC and it would be approved shortly.

Murad Shah said that during the last tenure of President Asif Ali Zardari, various projects of agriculture were discussed and MoUs were signed to achieve the progress. Now,

the time has come to implement the agriculture projects under which scientific methods would be adopted to improve the yields of the crops.

The CM and CG Japan HATTORI Masaru discussed investment in different sectors including electronics and automobiles. During discussion, it was decided that a meeting between Sindh Investment Department and Consulate's top officers would be organised to select the sectors for investment.

The CG Turkey Cemal Sangu while meeting with CM said that they wanted to expand their education system in the rural areas.

Currently, the Turkish schools are operating in Karachi, Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas.



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

## Federal Interior Minister visits Quaid's mausoleum

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Syed Moin Raza Naqvi on Monday visited the mausoleum of father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah and paid rich tributes to him.

The Minister laid a wreath and offered fataha at the mausoleum.

He also prayed for the development and prosperity of the country. Later, he inked his impressions in the visitors' book.

## Sindh Minister for Interior visits Central Police Office in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Interior, Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar, visited the Central Police Office in Karachi. On this occasion, IG Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, Additional IG Khadim Hussain Rind, and other senior police officers welcomed the Home Minister.

Upon his arrival, the police presented a guard of honor and the Minister laid flowers at the memorial for the martyrs in the CPO, offered prayers, and prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the police martyrs.

During the visit, the IG Sindh briefed the Provincial Minister on the law and order situation in the province and police measures related to it. SSPs from all districts of the province were also present in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the Home Minister said that the law and order situation in the upper areas of Sindh and Karachi is not satisfactory. Efforts to combat dacoits need to be intensified. It is imperative to rid the areas of Kashmir, Ghotki, and Shikarpur districts of dacoits. He addressed the officers, stating that those SSPs who fail to perform their duties will be replaced. Moreover, the transfer posting of SHO's will be conducted by SSPs of all districts, including Karachi.



KARACHI: Consul General of Thailand, Narut Soontarodon in a group photo with the guests during an Iftar-Dinner in honor of top travel agents at a local hotel hosted by Thai Airways.

## 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.

## Commander Karachi calls on CM Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Commander Karachi (COMKAR) Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem called on the Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah at Chief Minister House here on Monday.

In the call-on, they discussed the professional capabilities and skills.



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.

## We will have to part ways with the past if we want to set right future: Khawaja

ISLAMABAD (Online): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said if we want to set right future then we will have to part ways with the past. He said this in a statement issued here Monday.

He held if you want that rules and regulations are annulled which were used for expulsion of Nawaz Sharif then the court should ask from Gen Bajwa, Saqib Nisar, Asif Khosa, Gen Faiz Imran Khan and all those who played role in this conspiracy as to why a running economy was devastated.

An elected prime minister was relieved and sentenced by enacting dramas. Why the country was handed over to looters.

He underlined some one should accept mistake. What decision has been given by judiciary in Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto reference it has made an appreciable effort to set right history, he added. Justice is too right of Nawaz Sharif he said. Writing letter to IMF is tantamount to commit anti state act, he remarked. Including martyrs in differences over election is highly cheap act, he said adding a political party launched campaign against the martyrs on social media.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Excise and Taxation, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses to media persons during press conference held in Karachi.

## 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 favour 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.

### 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.



Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, addresses the audience during a formal event.

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 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 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-

lenges, including socioeconomic 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*

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**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

### Doddering doyens

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 fervor 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'.

## 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 from 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.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, chairs significant meetings with representatives from the Sugar Mills Association and Ethanol Manufacturer Association to address pressing concerns affecting their industries.



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

**Independent Report**  
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 per cent by September 2025.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.**

## 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.

## 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 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.

## 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.

## 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 minister 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 Univer-

sity," 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."

## President Zardari says: Pak-UAE ties in various sectors need to be bolstered

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed the need of further bolster bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in different sectors including trade, economy, aviation, renewable energy, climate change and human resource development for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries.

These views were expressed by him while talking to the Ambassador of UAE to Pakistan, Mr Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Monday.

President Asif Zardari urged the need to increase collaboration in the aviation industry to facilitate the Pakistani diaspora in the UAE, including the initiation of commercial flights of Airbus A380s.

He said that Emirati businesses should be encouraged to invest in the Pakistan Stock Exchange to infuse innovative ideas and more capital in the Pakistani economy.

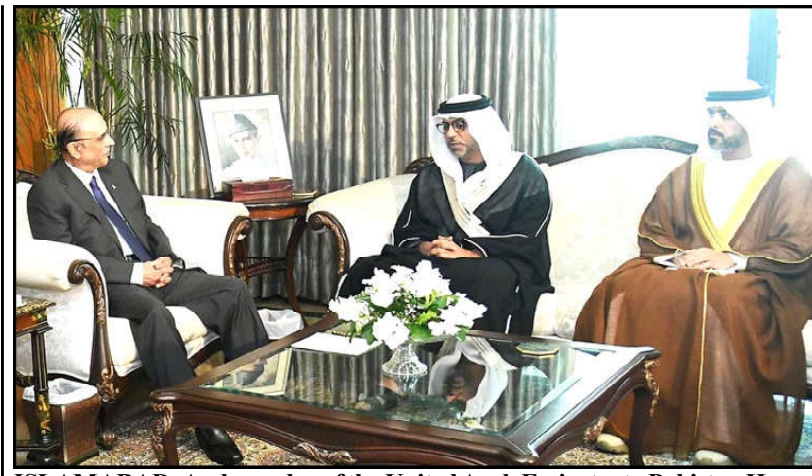
Talking about Sindh, the President apprised that Pakistan had started investing in mangrove forests and was trading carbon credits in the international market.

He suggested that Pakistan and the UAE should mutually benefit from this opportunity. He said that projects had been undertaken for the lining of canals to overcome seepage and boost agricultural production. President Zardari maintained that Pakistan and the UAE needed to collaborate in the agricultural sector by sharing new technologies as food security was a growing concern for the region due to climate

change.

Speaking on the occasion, the UAE Ambassador highlighted that his country was committed to Pakistan's development and would continue to stand with Pakistan. He urged the need to transform the existing bilateral relationship into a strategic partnership between Pakistan and the UAE.

Ambassador Al-Zaabi called for focusing on economic diplomacy, adding that big companies from the UAE were keen to invest in aviation, agriculture, renewable energy (solar), education and healthcare in Pakistan. He informed that the UAE had recently hosted COP-28 and pledged \$100 million for the "loss & damage" fund to help vulnerable countries deal with the adverse effects of climate change.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## 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. Officials said that speakers will share their

perspectives and insights on the suffering of women braving the rigours of foreign occupation, armed conflicts and the usurpation of fundamental rights.

Throughout history, women have borne significant burdens during the periods of settler-colonialism and the movements for self-determination and liberation from foreign control, a concept paper pointed out, noting that even in modern times, women and girls remain particularly vulnerable to the oppressive tactics often associated with foreign occupation and intervention in the struggles for freedom.

"In the realm of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda, empirical

data underscores that the most severe forms of violence and violations against women and girls occur within contexts of foreign occupation," it said.

The panel discussion will provide an opportunity to not only highlight the hardships and sufferings of women facing the situations of foreign occupation but also stress the need for a more robust and uniform implementation of international humanitarian and human rights law such as an additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention, the United Nations Security Council resolutions and Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

## 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 has rendered for the cause of the country.

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.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Turkish Consul General, Cemal Sangu during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

## TDAP facilitates fruitful visit of Chinese delegation to Pakistan

KARACHI (APP): The Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) is proud to announce the successful facilitation of the visit by a distinguished Chinese delegation to Pakistan from March 15<sup>th</sup> to March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Led by Pang Chi, Chairman, and Ms. Hu Yu, Legal Representative of Hunan Yuzhen Food Co. Ltd, China, the delegation's visit aims to explore avenues for enhancing bilateral trade relations between Pakistan and China.

During their stay, the delegation engaged in constructive meetings and discussions with key stakeholders in Pakistan's agricultural sector. TDAP played a pivotal role in organizing these meetings, ensuring that the delegation had the opportunity to interact with leading exporters and industry players.

The highlight of the visit included productive sessions with prominent entities such as The Fauji Meat Limited and members of The Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan. These meetings provided valuable insights into the

quality and variety of meat and rice products available in Pakistan, aligning perfectly with the delegation's interests in importing these commodities.

Furthermore, the delegation expressed keen interest in exploring investment opportunities and forming joint ventures (JVs) with Pakistani companies. TDAP facilitated these discussions, fostering an environment conducive to collaboration and mutual benefit.

Pang Chi, Chairman of the delegation, commended the efforts of TDAP in orchestrating a seamless and productive visit.

He emphasized the importance of such initiatives in strengthening trade ties between the two nations and expressed optimism about the prospects of bilateral cooperation.

Ms. Hu Yu, Legal Representative of Hunan Yuzhen Food Co. Ltd, lauded the hospitality extended by Pakistani counterparts and expressed confidence in the potential for fruitful partnerships in the fields of agriculture and trade.



BEIJING: Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Khalil Hashmi and Vice Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, Sun Weidong cutting the cake in celebration of Pakistan National Day reception organised by Pakistan Embassy.

## Rangers arrest three suspects for fraud, extortion

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and police conducted a joint operation in Karachi's Orangi Town. Three suspects involved in fraud, abduction for ransom, and extortion have been apprehended. The arrested individuals are identified as Kamal alias Kami, Shiraz Khan alias Shizi alias Boss, and Rao Irfan.

According to the spokesperson of Sindh Rangers, upon apprehension, fake documents including two fake South Defense Department cards and extortion notes were recovered from the suspects.

The suspects had been portraying themselves

as Rangers and police personnel on social media, using various videos in uniform for nefarious purposes.

During initial interrogation, the suspects confessed to abducting numerous citizens from various areas of Karachi, including Orangi Town, Steel Town, and Sultanabad, transferring them to rented accommodations, and releasing them after ransom payment. Raids are underway to apprehend their accomplices.

The arrested suspects, along with confiscated items, have been handed over to the police for further legal proceedings.



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

## 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 com-

mitment 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 cooperation.

## Commissioner Hyderabad transferred to local govt Deptt

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Chief Secretary Syed Asif Haider Shah has been transferred Commissioner Hyderabad division Syed Khalid Hyder Shah, giving his charge to Additional Commissioner Hyderabad Ahsan Ali Qureshi.

According to two separate notifications issued on Monday, Shah has been posted as Additional Secretary Local Government.

## Interprovincial drug trafficking gang members busted by SIU

KARACHI (APP): In an operation conducted by the Special Investigation Unit (SIU)/Crome Investigation Agency (CIA) of Karachi Police, two individuals allegedly members of an interprovincial drug trafficking gang were apprehended.

The operation was prompted by intelligence suggesting that the suspects were stationed under a bridge near Qalandria Chowk, Shahra-e-Noor Jahan.

The arrested individuals, identified as Khalid and Aamir, were found in possession of approximately 4 kilograms and 215 grams of hashish.

## AJK President urges strengthening of freedom movement

MIRPUR (APP): Azad and 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 political 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 and health initiatives, approved by AJK Minister Chaudhry Arshad Hussain.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Russian Consul General, Andrey Fedorov during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

## Wholesalers threw govt. price lists in the trash

By Aijaz Mughal

UMERKOT: Wholesalers threw government price lists in the trash, food items continued to be sold at arbitrary prices, the administration failed to control inflation and provide relief to the citizens.

According to the details, during the month of Ramadan, the urban administration respects the implementation of the Ramadan Ordinance and the control of inflation, the claims of providing relief to the citizens have been phased out. Fruits, vegetables, meat and others foodstuffs are being sold at arbitrary prices many times higher than the government fixed prices, while due to the criminal negligence of the administration,

respect for the Ramadan Ordinance is also being scattered.

Hotels, sweets and other food shops are open in the city, from whom the police officers receive Eid. The team consisting of President Press Club Kunri Aijaz Mughal, Vice President Mian Faisal, Parshotam Das Malhi and Love Kumar Sharma visited the city and reviewed the prices of food items. Other vegetables and fruits including onions. On the other hand, the series of visits to markets and bazaars and frivolous and ineffective actions by the local administration is also continuing, but they are failing to control inflation and provide relief to the citizens.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Tharparkar are holding protest demonstration against killing of Abdul Rehman and demanding justice for him, at Hyderabad press club.

## 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 renewable 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.



KARACHI: Faithful Muslims are breaking the fast (Iftar) under the supervision of charitable organization during the Holy month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, in Karachi.

## KU, PBSA signs MoU to promote awareness about bio-safety, risk management in society

KARACHI (APP): The University of Karachi and the Pakistan Biological Safety Association inked a memorandum of understanding to promote awareness regarding bio-safety, bio-security, and risk management in the labs of the KU, on the campus, and in society.

The KU VC Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi and the President PBSA Professor Dr Saeed Khan inked the MoU documents at the VC Secretariat on Monday. The KU and the PBSA agreed to encourage academic, scientific, and biological research and collaboration to train biological scientists and researchers.

As per the MoU, the PBSA will provide techni-

cal support to the KU and they will jointly conduct regional bio-safety and bio-security trainings in the province. The PBSA has offered to facilitate KU faculty members to receive training on the International Federation for Bio-safety Association certification exam. On this occasion, the KU Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi mentioned that academic collaboration is essential to move forward and stressed that such initiatives would help match the developed nations.

He said that people gradually understand the benefits of safety measures at work and hoped that with the training the staff.

## Three accused of kidnapping for ransom, collecting extortion money held

KARACHI (INP): Three culprits involved in kidnapping for ransom and collecting extortion money from citizens were held during joint operation in the metropolitan on Monday.

According to details, Pakistan Rangers Sindh and police conducted joint operation against the wanted criminals in Orangi Town of Karachi. During operation, three accused of kidnapping for ransom and extortionism including Kamil alias Kami alias OK,