

# Independent

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KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a Cabinet meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

## COAS calls on Mohammad Bin Salman Saudi Crown Prince expresses desire to further strengthen bilateral ties with Pakistan

RAWALPINDI (Online): Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman has expressed desire to further strengthen bilateral relations with Pakistan.

He was talking to Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir who called on him during

his official visit to the Kingdom.

Mohammad Bin Salman said the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will always stand by with Pakistan in future as well.

He highlighted KSA and Pakistan have historic brotherly and strong relations and both countries have always stood up for each other.

During the visit, the Army Chief also met with Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Chief of General Staff Saudi Armed Forces General Fayyadh Bin Hamed Al Ruwaili, Saudi Assistant Minister of Defense Engineer Talal Abdullah Al Otaibi and other senior military leadership.



RIYADH: Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir exchanging views with Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, The Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during meeting held in Riyadh.

## Cross-border terrorism will no longer be acceptable: PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD (INP/APP): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday stated that Pakistan will not tolerate any more cross-border terror attacks on its soil.

Chairing the federal cabinet meeting in Islamabad today, PM Shehbaz Sharif said security of the geographical frontiers of Pakistan is a redline.

Pakistan desires to have cordial relations with the neighboring fraternal countries to promote trade and economic relations. However, it is not acceptable that the land of the neighboring country is used for terrorism in Pakistan, he added. Shehbaz Sharif proposed the formulation of a joint strategy with the sincerity of purpose to defeat the scourge of terrorism.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Major General (Retd) Hafeez ur Rehman called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

## Pakistan, IMF reach staff-level agreement on 2nd & final review

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have reached a staff level agreement on the second and final review under Stand by arrangement.

This came during meetings between Pakistani authorities and the IMF team led by Nathan Porter in Islamabad.

Pakistan will receive 1.1 billion dollars after approval from the IMF's Executive Board.

In his statement following talks, Nathan Porter said Pakistan's economic and financial position has improved in the months since the first review, with growth and confidence continuing to recover on the back of prudent policy management and the resumption of inflows from multilateral and bilateral partners.

Nathan Porter recognized the new government's commitment to continue the policy efforts that started under the current SBA to entrench economic and financial stability for the remainder of this year.

## President approves dismissal of Justice Mazhar Ali Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Dismissal of former Supreme Court judge Mazhar Ali Naqvi was approved by President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday.

The approval was given by the president after the Supreme Justice Council (SJC) found Justice Naqvi guilty of misconduct.

After withdrawal of the previous notification by the Ministry of Law accepting Naqvi's resignation as a judge, a new notification terminating his services was issued.

## Ali Hassan Zardari not to avail privileges as Minister

KARACHI (APP): Provincial Minister for Prisons Ali Hassan Zardari on Wednesday announced that he will not to avail privileges admissible under rules during his tenure as Minister.

In a letter addressed to Sindh Chief Secretary, Zardari stated that country was facing economic challenges due to which he will forego his privileges and fuel expenses he is entitled as Minister. He also voluntarily surrendered privilege of vehicle, fuel card and TA facility as entitled him as minister. As per policy, minister was entitled 2700 CC vehicle with 600 litre petrol per month.

## Awais Shah vows to provide basic facilities to people

SUKKUR (APP): Speaker Sindh Assembly, Syed Awais Qadir Shah reached his constituency Saleh Putt on Wednesday where people warmly received him. Syed Awais arrived in his constituency for the first time after assuming office, where he was garlanded with flowers and paraded around the constituency. Speaking the occasion, he said the elected government under the supervision of Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah was making all-out efforts to provide basic facilities to the people.

## President Zardari for expanding scope of Pak-Japan cooperation

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday called for expanding the scope of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Japan across a wide spectrum of areas, especially trade, investment,

economy, culture and people-to-people contacts.

The president, talking to the Ambassador of Japan Mitsuhiro Wada, who called on him, said that Pakistan was a huge market and Japanese businesses should benefit from the economic opportunities by investing in diverse sectors.

He said that both countries had been enjoying long-standing relations, which needed to be further cemented for the mutual benefit of the two sides.

He highlighted that

Japan had been a key development partner of Pakistan that had been supporting Pakistan's socio-economic development in different sectors under the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

He further said that Pakistan had a huge population and could send the trained workforce and professionals to help Japan fulfill its requirement for human resources.

The president said that Japanese automobile companies, based in Pakistan, should enhance production to export their products from Pakistan.

The Japanese banks should also be encouraged to restart their operations in Pakistan, he said and reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to overcome its current socio-economic challenges.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Mitsuhiro Wada calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Solar panels to be provided to 0.5mln households: Minister

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister of Energy, Development and Planning Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has said that solar panels will be provided to 0.5mln households in the province according to the vision of PPP

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

In a statement on Wednesday, Nasir Shah said that according to the manifesto of the PPP

chairman, the project of providing 300 units of free electricity to the public through solarization has also been started.

He said that the institutions have been directed to speed up the steps to fulfill the chairman's promise as soon as possible and to provide free electricity to the people and to provide solar panels to 0.5mln households.

## Sindh Govt makes another reshuffle in bureaucracy

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Government has made another reshuffle in bureaucracy and transferred provincial secretaries and Senior Superintendents of Police of different districts of Sindh with immediate effect.

According to separate notifications issued by Chief Secretary and the Inspector General Police, Shakeel Ahmed Mangnejo, an officer of PAS (BS-21) presently posted as Chairman Plan-

ning and Development Board was transferred and posted as Chairman Chief Minister's Inspection, Enquiries and Implementation Team department against an existing vacancy.

Secretary Forest and Wildlife Dept Najam Ahmed Shah was transferred and posted as Chairman Planning and Development Board, Planning and Development Dept Sindh vice Shakeel Mangnejo transferred.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb calls on by Dr. Mehmet Pacaci, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye.

## Sindh cabinet approves Rs 521m for Peoples bus service, decides to launch Kissan card

KARACHI (APP): Sindh cabinet on Wednesday approved Rs 521 million for fuel indexation of Intra-district Bus Service and Rs.5.027 million grant JS Academy for the Deaf and decided to launch Kissan Card to support peasants.

Chairman Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has given clear instructions for the issuance of Kissan cards and preparing a plan to carry out development initiatives in every district. "I want to constitute a committee to

implement the Election Manifesto of the party so that all the 10 points as announced by the chairman can be implemented in true letter and spirit," he said.

The cabinet meeting was held at CM House and was chaired by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah. All provincial ministers including Sharjeel Memon, Dr Azra Pechuho, Nasir Shah, Sardar Shah, Zulfiqar Shah, Jam Khan Shoro, Ali Hassan Zardari, Ziaul Hassan Lanjar, advisors Babl Khan Bhayo, Ahsan

mazari, Najmi Alam - Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Principal Secretary CM Agha Wasif, Chairman P&D Shakil Manejo, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi and other concerned officers.

Senior Minister for Information Sharjeel Memon briefing the cabinet said that the project to supply, operate and maintenance for the Sindh Intra-District People's Bus Service was awarded to National Radio Transit Authority (NRDC) in October 2021 for a term of 12 years - up to Oct 2033.

The NRTC supplied 250 buses of them 230 are operational and an additional 40 buses have also been added to the fleet, apart from bringing the remaining 30 buses of the initial lot of 250.

Sharjeel told the cabinet that the project was a G2G initiative between the Sindh government and NRTC. He added that it was the first ever Intra City Public Transport Project operating in Mixed Traffic, particularly in Karachi and other cities of the province such as Larkana, Hyderabad and Sukkur.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

## President, PM applauds security forces for foiling attack on Gwadar complex, kill 8 terrorists

Attackers killed while trying to gain entry into GPA complex, two soldiers embrace martyrdom

GWADAR (INP): The security forces on Wednesday repulsed an attack by militants on a complex outside the strategic port of Gwadar, killing all eight of them, officials said.

China has invested heavily in the mineral-rich southwestern province of Balochistan, including developing Gwadar, despite a decades-long separatist insurgency.

Armed with guns and bombs, the militants stormed the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) complex just outside the port that houses offices of government departments, intelligence agencies and paramilitary forces, said Saeed Ahmed Umrani, a government commissioner.

The militants detonated a number of bombs before launching a shooting attack and trying to storm the complex, he said.

In a post on social media platform X, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti said eight militants were "neutralised by security forces", adding: "The message is loud & clear. Whoever chooses to use violence will see no mercy from the state."

The military said in a statement issued later in

the evening that a group of eight terrorists attempted to enter Port Authority Colony in Gwadar, which was successfully thwarted by the security forces personnel.

"Own troops employed for security responded immediately and effectively engaged the terrorists, and in ensuring fire exchange, all eight terrorists were sent to hell," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

A large quantity of arms, ammunition and explosives was also recovered from the killed terrorists.



GWADAR: View of site after unidentified gunmen opened fire at Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) Complex in Gwadar.

## Donald Lu dismisses allegations of involvement in Imran Khan's removal

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu has categorically denied allegations suggesting the United States played any role in the removal of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan from the position of Prime Minister.

Lu's statement came during a hearing conducted by the US Congress Committee regarding the 2024 general elections in Pakistan, where he provided testimony on the matter.

Asserting respect for Pakistan's sovereignty, he emphasized that the allegations of US involvement in Imran Khan's removal were baseless.

Addressing concerns surrounding the safety of an American citizen, the Assistant Secretary of State underscored the seriousness with which the United States approaches threats against

its citizens. He clarified that any charges related to the cipher were unfounded and based on waivers.

Reflecting on Pakistan's history and the challenges it has faced, Lu highlighted the nation's resilience, particularly in the context of the Afghan war's impact. He noted the significant participation of women and youth in the recent elections, despite instances of election rigging, violence, and threats.

Expressing concern over reported election abuses and violent incidents, the Assistant Secretary of State condemned attacks on media workers and restrictions imposed on internet and telecommunication during the electoral process. He reiterated the United States' commitment to upholding human rights standards and underscored the need for fair and transparent elections in Pakistan.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Austerity theatre

The government's recent unveiling of 'austerity' measures, ostensibly aimed at reducing expenses, appears to be more about show than actual substance.

While restricting cabinet members to three international trips per year and delineating travel class guidelines for various officials might seem like prudent steps, they barely scratch the surface of the belt-tightening needed to navigate Pakistan through its financial quagmire.

The decisions by the president and interior minister to forgo their salaries, though commendable on the surface, pale in comparison to the extravagance that continues to plague government spending.

Allowing MNAs and senior bureaucrats the luxury of business class travel — which in practical terms for a return ticket to many European destinations means spending approximately a million rupees — is a slap in the face of the concept of fiscal restraint.

The disparity in salary ratios between various employees in the UK and Pakistan serves as a shameful mirror for reflection.

Russian accounts frequently neglect to mention that Josef Stalin panicked when Adolf Hitler betrayed the Nazi-Soviet pact, having ignored reports of an imminent German invasion from his spies.

The austerity narrative pushed by the government — indeed like all other governments before it — collapses under the weight of these contradictions.

The critique here is not merely about the scale of the measures but their sincerity. Real austerity involves hard choices and genuine sacrifice, not selective tokenism.

Symbolic gestures won't do anymore. There is a need for a fundamental reassessment of priorities and spending, with a laser focus on eliminating waste and directing resources towards sustainable economic recovery.

Russian roulette

Mahir Ali

A thumping majority for Vladimir Putin in his fifth bid for the Russian presidency was a foregone conclusion, even though its size surprised even seasoned analysts.

The electoral exercise that began last Friday and concluded on Sunday was not billed as a wartime affair, given that the aggression against Ukraine has officially been designated as a special military operation.

Russia's recent history is that the federation's least undemocratic election occurred during the last months of the Soviet era, in March 1991. Boris Yeltsin won it with more than 58pc of the popular vote, despite the antipathy of the Gorbachev government.

Putin's Stalin-esque paranoia has been evident since his earliest days at the helm. Many perceived opponents — from recalcitrant oligarchs and disenchanting intelligence agents to journalists and politicians — died in mysterious circumstances, as did politi-

cal rival Alexei Navalny in a Siberian prison colony recently.

I find it hard to share Western and Russian liberals' enthusiasm for Navalny as an antidote to the poison Putin has injected into the lifeblood of Russia, notwithstanding his worthy anti-corruption crusade.

Of course, an imprisoned Navalny would not have been permitted to contest, so his elimination can perhaps only be explained by visceral hatred, or as a means of limiting the challenge to any of Putin's successors.

Stalinism could not even begin to be exercised until the dictator's demise in March 1953, after 30 years in power, and it is widely assumed that Putin's exit from the Kremlin will also involve a coffin.

Besides, let's not forget that popular support for Putin is only reinforced by Western Russophobia that cancels Chekhov and Tchaikovsky, and queries Russian cultural and sports figures about their views on the Ukraine war.

We will never know how long a reformed Soviet Union, composed of sovereign states that finally enjoyed the autonomy from Moscow that Vladimir Lenin had argued for 70 years earlier, might have lasted.

He also deployed the army against parliament, and incarcerated politicians included his vice president, Aleksandr Rutsokoi (a former war prisoner in Pakistan during the Afghan conflict).

The 1996 election went to a second round, and Yeltsin beat the fairly dismal Com-munist Party candidate, Gen-nady Zyu-ga-nov, with the aid of authorised foreign interference — primarily from America. The services of the nefarious intelligence agency, the FSB, may also have been invoked.

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The Bhutto wound

Muhammad Ali Siddiqi

The Supreme Court's March 6 judgement gives valid legal reasons why the trial that led to the verdict ordering Z.A. Bhutto's execution in 1979 did not meet the requirements of the "fundamental right to a fair trial and due process..."

Decades earlier, Dorab Patel, one of Pakistan's most illustrious legal minds, called Bhutto's hanging "a judicial murder". However, for the people of Pakistan, especially those belonging to the generation that lived through the traumatic 1970s, Bhutto's murder was the aim of the general — and his flunkies — who seized power through a coup on a date that is part of our national memory: July 5, 1977.

Gen Ziaul Haq seized power in the wake of a countrywide movement launched by a nine-party alliance called the Pakistan National Alliance against the alleged rigging of the general election — something de rigueur in Pakistan if you lose the polls.

Zia promised to the people of Pakistan he would "inshallah" hold elections within 90 days and went on to rule until his death 11 years later.

Initially he showed some sincerity, kept in detention an equal number of leaders from both Bhutto's PPP and the PNA, and then released them. He had assumed that the PNA's nationwide agitation and its ability to bring the country to a halt had proved Bhutto had lost his popularity, and a fresh election would give the PNA a sweeping victory.

After his release, Bhutto made a brilliant tactical move and decided to travel to Karachi by train. Huge crowds greeted him at railway stations, making Zia and his PNA supporters

realise Bhutto still had his charisma. I was there at Karachi's Cantonment Station to judge whether the reports about the former prime minister getting huge receptions were true. I perched myself on the steps of a railway bridge and waited, wondering if this was the right perch. And lo and behold, Bhutto's carriage stopped right in front of me.

Something told me it was the last time I was looking at him. The next day was perhaps the first of Ramazan, and just to prove that my feelings were wrong I went to his residence, 70 Clifton. There were security people outside, besides many VIPs who wanted to see him, but Bhutto was in conference with the top PPP leadership and no one was allowed in.

What happened at the crucial conference became known much later. Bhutto was clear in his mind and guessed how his enemies would react. He pleaded for an election boycott. The majority opposed him, saying the PNA would be delighted and would claim Bhutto was running away from elections.

When the clamour for election continued, Bhutto said one thing repeatedly in Urdu: "Elections hongay? Elections hongay? (Will elections be held? Will elections be held?)"

He had read his opponents' minds correctly, and knew they wanted his blood, because the tycoons whose industrial empires

he had nationalised had bankrolled the PNA movement.

Zia and his PNA allies were panicky and wanted the polls ditched. Much later, when Bhutto was dead and the PNA unity had broken up, the former allies went public with how PNA leaders kowtowed to Zia for calling off the elections — a drama Zia was enjoying, pretending to be indecisive about calling off the elections but keen to develop a consensus. Finally, he relented to the joy of his PNA allies, and said he would call off the polls. One leader, according to a PNA veteran, prostrated himself, when the military dictator said he would oblige them.

I was there at Karachi's Nishtar Park, where PPP leader Maulana Kausar Niazi made a brilliant speech full of humour and sarcasm. Then he confirmed what until then was a rumour. "This is the last public meeting and elections are going to be postponed." An ongoing election campaign was called off!

Bhutto was arrested, and Zia had the audacity to declare what has become a shibboleth repeated ad nauseam and as a holy grail — "pehlay ehtesab, phir intikhab" (accountability first, election later). Ehtesab is the criminal legacy Zia left for subsequent governments, military and civilian, to brazenly persecute the opposition.

Bhutto was buried without his family being shown his face the last time. On Aug 17, 1988, Zia's plane, C-130, Pakistan One, crashed a few miles from the Bahawalpur airfield nose first in the mud close to the Sutlej river.

Bhutto's widow, Begum Nusrat Bhutto, said in Urdu something that can be condensed thus: "God, I have seen -- Courtesy Dawn"

Commerce News

PM for including global experts in economic reforms consultation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday decided to include global experts and all stakeholders in the consultation process aimed at improving the economic health and financial stability of the country.

During the meeting, the prime minister said that strengthening of economy was among the top priority of his government.

The prime minister said that the government would provide all facilities to the export industries and increase global market outreach of the country's exports.

He further said that they would increase the tax

reforms, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister said that strengthening of economy was among the top priority of his government.

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He further said that they would increase the tax

net instead increasing taxes, besides supporting small, medium and large industries in the country.

He also asked for submission of reports over economic reforms in different sectors in phases, besides directing to give vital significant to value addition exports in the country's export policy.

He vowed to bring country's exports into international value addition chain.

The expertise of the international experts with

regard to increasing of capability in export sector should be utilized, he observed.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers including Ahsan Iqbal, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Dr Musadik Malik, Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Governor State Bank of Pakistan Jameel Ahmed, Jehanzaib Khan, Chairman FBR Malil Amjad Zubair Tiwana, Dr Ejaz Nabi.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Economic Revival and Reforms.

PEC announces 'Seed Funding Scheme for Engineering Startups'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) Innovation and Entrepreneurship Committee (ICE) has invited engineering startups to submission of business proposals under its 'Seed Funding Scheme for Engineering Startups'.

The business proposals addressing key challenges and opportunities in the engineering sector with a focus on sustainable technology development in Agri-tech and Smart-tech are sought from the engineers.

About the thematic areas for this scheme, the official of PEC said that the themes for the proposals are Agri-tech and Smart-Tech. Agri-tech is crucial to enhance productivity, efficiency, and sustainability in the sector of agriculture such as food security, environmental sustainability, and increasing demand for agricultural products, integration of technology in agriculture continues to evolve, offering new opportunities for innovation and improvement in farming practices.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool urges provinces to harmonize food business rules

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has called upon the provincial governments to harmonize rules related to food businesses.

In separate letters addressed to each chief ministers of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan, Dr. Siddiqui highlighted the need for uniformity to ensure food safety and quality nationwide.

regulations and enforcement mechanisms among provinces and federal agencies have resulted in inconsistencies, inefficiencies and potential gaps in ensuring the safety and quality of food products available to consumers nationwide and for import and export purposes. He emphasized the role of the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) as the national standards body and advocated for streamlining standards to prevent

duplication of efforts between PSQCA and provincial authorities. He said PSQCA is the sole national standards body to establish standards for all food and non-food products, services and processes. "After the 18th amendment, provinces started establishing their own standards which are against the international best practices", the letter said. The minister noted that manufacturers were suffering because of the duplication of these activities by PSQCA and provincial food authorities.



ISLAMABAD: EU Ambassador Riina Kionka calls on Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, and congratulates him for assuming the portfolio of Ministry of Commerce.

Chicken, eggs prices reach at Rs 420 per kg, Rs 280 per dozen

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of poultry chicken reached Rs 420 per kg and the price of poultry eggs reached Rs 280 per dozen in the open market in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

The meat of the poultry chicken has reached Rs 700 to 710 per kg in the open market, according to the survey conducted by APP here on Wednesday. The price of poultry chickens and eggs has been going above Rs 420 to 280 per kg and dozen for the past last months, which is getting away from the purchasing power of consumers day by day. The prices of

Rupee gains 23 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday strengthened by 23 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.40 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.63. 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 Rs281.45, respectively. The price of the Euro remained unchanged to close at Rs302.35, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen came down by 02 paise and closed at Rs1.83, whereas an increase of 02 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound.

Wilmar unit to make further investment in Pak-listed Unity Foods

Independent Report KARACHI: Wilmar Pakistan Holdings Pte. Ltd. ("WPH"), a wholly owned direct subsidiary of Wilmar International Limited), Unity Wilmar Agro (Private) Limited ("UWA"), a 52% subsidiary of WPH and certain shareholders of Unity Foods Limited ("UFL") have, through Arif Habib Limited (in its capacity as the manager to the public offer), made a public announcement to the Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited of their intention to acquire up to 277,070,908 shares of UFL in the public offer, at the price that complies with the pricing

formula and other applicable Pakistan laws and regulations including the Securities Act 2015 and Listed Companies (Substantial Acquisition of Voting Shares and Takeovers) Regulations 2017 ("PAI"). UFL, a public company listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited, is principally involved in the manufacturing and processing of edible oils, industrial fats, flour and various feed ingredients for Pakistan's poultry and livestock sectors. Wilmar International Limited ("WIL"), an

esteemed Fortune 500 company, reaffirms its commitment to Pakistan's economy through its investment in Unity Foods Limited (UFL), demonstrating confidence in the resilience and potential of Pakistan's economic landscape. This collaboration not only strengthens bilateral business ties but also underscores Unity Foods Limited's pivotal role in attracting foreign investment, fostering economic growth, and facilitating development in Pakistan. Wilmar International Limited is the ultimate acquirer or the

ultimate controlling shareholder of Wilmar Pakistan Holdings Pte. Ltd. WIL also ultimately controls Unity Wilmar Agro (Private) Limited ("UWA"), with an effective shareholding of 52% in UWA. WIL, founded in 1991 and headquartered in Singapore, is today Asia's leading agribusiness group. WIL is ranked amongst the largest listed companies by market capitalization on the Singapore Exchange. The business activities of WIL and its group companies ("Wilmar Group") include oil palm cultivation, oilseed crushing, edible oils refining, flour and rice milling, sugar milling and refining,

manufacturing of consumer products, ready-to-eat meals, central kitchen products, specialty fats, oleochemicals, biodiesel and fertilizers as well as food park operations. Wilmar Group has over 1,000 manufacturing plants and an extensive distribution network covering China, India, Indonesia and some 50 other countries and regions. Through scale, integration and the logistical advantages of its business model, Wilmar Group can extract margins at every step of the value chain, thereby reaping operational synergies and cost efficiencies.

## Minister directs completion of centralized database software in 25 districts

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Excise, Mian Khaleeq-ur-Rehman has directed to complete centralized database software in 25 districts of the province. He was chairing a meeting regarding Motor Vehicle Software Database and Software Up gradation here on Wednesday. The minister said that transparent system of taxation was being introduced in the province while digitization has been

brought in excise an taxation system for facilitation of people. He also directed steps to resolve technical problems in Motor Vehicle Software Database and its implementation all over the province. He directed to complete database in 25 districts of the province and added that integrated system would soon be developed for online verification of property and motorcar taxation. Excise minister said that citizen service.



**GILGIT: Minister Agriculture Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Anwar speaks during the 3rd sitting of 18th Session of Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly under the chair of Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Nazir Ahmad Advocate.**

## Ramazan Ration bags LHC rejects plea seeking immediate removal of Nawaz Sharif picture

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has rejected the plea seeking immediate removal of Nawaz Sharif picture from Ramazan ration bags. Justice Shahid Karim of LHC took up the petition for hearing Wednesday. Counsel Salma Riaz gave arguments on behalf of the petitioner. The court rejected the plea for removing Nawaz Sharif picture from ration bags related to Ramazan package forthwith. The court while issuing notice to Punjab government sought reply.



**LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Trade and Industry presiding over a meeting of Punjab Small Industries Corporation.**

## KP gov't committed to underprivileged children's uplift: CM

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur has said that the government is committed to uplifting the lives of underprivileged children. He expressed these views during his visit to the state children institution- ZamungKor campus here. Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister said it was the government's responsibility to ensure the well-being and development of children, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds. As part of efforts, he said that the government would fulfill its responsibilities by providing the children of ZamungKor with the best education, food and other necessary facilities. An Ifar Dinner was also arranged for children and staff of the campus where the chief minister interacted and distributed cash prizes among the children. He also visited various sections of the ZamungKor and lauded staff's services and their profound commitment to ensuring a brighter future for the children of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He also assured his all out support of his government for fulfilling requirements and needs of the children. Assistant Director of the campus, Rafiullah Khan expressed gratitude for the Chief Minister's visit and pledged to continue working closely with the government to meet the essential needs of the children.

## Chief Minister orders revision of stray dog policy

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, taking notice of the inhumane killing of stray dogs, has directed concerned authorities to review the current policy on their extermination. He instructed the Municipal and Livestock Departments to develop an alternative policy. A communication from the Chief Minister's Secretariat to the relevant departments highlights the ineffectiveness and cruelty of the current approach. The directive emphasizes the need for collaboration among departments to devise and implement a humane alternative promptly. The new policy will focus on TNVR principles (Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, and Return).

## Ministers, former NA Speaker inspect health projects in Swabi

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah, Minister for Irrigation Aaqibullah, and former Speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaiser on Wednesday visited Swabi to inspect ongoing health infrastructure projects. Accompanied by Special Secretary Health Habibullah, Chief Planning Officer Qaiser Alam, DG Health Dr. Shaukat Ali, Director Public Health Dr. Arshad Roghani, and other officials, the ministers visited the under-construction building of Women and Children Hospital in Swabi. During the briefing, Director General Health Services Dr. Shaukat Ali informed that the project would incur a cost of 3.8 billion rupees, with 236 million rupees allocated for the current financial year. The hospital, comprising 260 beds, is being constructed on a 46 kanal land allocated for it. 55% of the construction work has been completed and with funds available, the hospital is expected to be fully operational by June 2025. Additionally, Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah, Irrigation Minister Aaqibullah, and former Speaker of the National Assembly also visited the District Headquarters Hospital in Swabi. They were welcomed by MS Noor Alam, who briefed them about the ongoing construction of a new hospital building to replace the dilapidated one.

## ANF recovers 30 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover 30 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that 1.2 kg hashish was recovered from a parcel booked for Lahore in TCS office Rawalpindi. 1,943 intoxicated tablets were recovered from a parcel sent from Thailand at a courier office in Rawalpindi. 85 Ice-filled capsules were recovered from a passenger going to Doha at Peshawar Airport. 13 kg heroin, 9 kg hashish, and 980 grams Ice were recovered from the possession of two accused arrested from Makran Coastal Highway Hub.

## Punjab Police sign MoU for higher technical education of children of martyrs, employees

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Inspector General Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has taken another good measure for the higher technical education of children of martyrs and employees of Punjab Police. An MoU was signed between the Punjab Police and a private college (Shamim Ramzan College of Health Sciences). Under which the children of police employees will get better opportunities for higher education. According to the details, IG Punjab and CEO College Shahid Rasool signed the MoU at the ceremony held at the Central Police Office here on Wednesday. Under the MOU, children of police martyrs will be given specialized degrees/courses in pharmacy technician, dispenser, medical lab technology, operation theater technology and radiology & imaging technology absolutely free, whereas children of in-service employees are given 50% discount in all course fees. Police employees will avail these educational scholarships in five colleges located in Vehari, Okara, Jhang, Arifwala and Shorkot. The IG Punjab thanked the private college for its support in skills-based degree programs and courses. He said that with this initiative, the children of police employees will be able to get respectable employment by obtaining degrees.



**MUZAFFARABAD: Women from far-flung rural areas queue up outside the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) office to receive money in the warm, sunny month of Ramadan, waiting for their turn.**

## Commissioner Mardan for ensuring safety to people lives, property

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Intelligence Coordination meeting at his office. Additional Commissioner Naem Akhtar, Regional Police Officer Najibur Rahman Bagwi, Deputy Commissioner Swabi Dr. Tariqullah, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Saeedullah Jan, ADCs Shah Zaib and Gohar Ali, officers of security agencies, ANF and other concerned officials attended the meeting. He was addressing the Divisional

# International News

## Ukraine's survival in danger, warns Pentagon chief

**Monitoring Desk**  
RAMSTEIN BASE: US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin on Tuesday warned that Ukraine's survival was in danger and sought to convince allies that the United States was committed to Kyiv, even as Washington has essentially run out of money to continue arming Ukrainian forces. Republican House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson has so far refused to call a vote on a bill that would provide \$60 billion more for Ukraine and the White House has been scrambling to find ways to send assistance to Kyiv, which has been battling Russian forces for more than two years. Austin is leading the monthly meeting known as

the Ukraine defence contact group (UDCG), held at Ramstein Air Base in Germany, of about 50 allies that have been militarily supporting Ukraine. "Ukraine's survival is in danger," Austin said in a press conference after the meeting. "Our allies and partners continue to step up, the United States must also," he added. Austin, who is traveling for the first time this year since prostate cancer treatment, did not say how Washington would support Ukraine without additional funding. Officials say the lack of funding available is already having an impact on the ground in Ukraine and Ukrainian forces are having to manage scarce resources. "I think our allies are



**Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres looks on during a meeting of the United Nations Security Council at U.N. headquarters on the maintenance of International Peace and Security Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in New York City, US.**

## UN chief invokes film, warns of nuclear disaster

**Monitoring Desk**  
UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres invoked Oscar-winning film Oppenheimer on Monday as he warned that the world faced the highest risk of nuclear war in decades. At a Security Council session called by Japan, Guterres said that the biopic about the morally conflicted father of the atomic bomb "brought the harsh reality of nuclear doomsday to vivid life for millions around the world." "Humanity cannot survive a sequel to Oppenheimer," Guterres said. "We meet at a time when geopolitical tensions and mistrust have escalated the risk of nuclear warfare to its highest point in decades," he said. Russian President Vladimir Putin has made thinly veiled threats to use nuclear weapons as he



**Palestinians gather to receive free food, even as Gaza residents face alarming levels of hunger during the month of Ramazan.**

## Moldovan president launches campaign to promote EU referendum

**Monitoring Desk**  
CHISINAU: President Maia Sandu launched a campaign to promote an upcoming referendum on Moldova's push to join the European Union on Monday, calling on civil leaders to rally support for the country's accession to the 27-member bloc. Moldova, a former Soviet republic of 2.6 million led by a pro-European government, applied for EU membership in 2022 and received a draft framework for accession negotiations in March, along with neighbouring Ukraine. The country's relations with Russia have become strained since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which Chisinau has staunchly condemned. Sandu announced plans in December to hold a referendum later this year on whether to join the EU.

## Putin to visit China in May for talks with Xi

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: Russian President Vladimir Putin will travel to China in May for talks with Xi Jinping, in what could be the Kremlin chief's first overseas trip of his new presidential term, according to five sources familiar with the matter. Western governments on Monday condemned Putin's re-election as unfair and undemocratic. But China, India and North Korea congratulated the veteran leader on extending his rule by a further six years, highlighting geopolitical fault lines that have widened since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. "Putin will visit China," one of the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Reuters. The details were independently confirmed by four other sources, who also spoke on condition of anonymity. Another of the sources said Putin's trip to China would probably take place in the second half of May. Two of the sources said the Putin visit would come before Xi's planned trip to Europe. The Kremlin, when asked about the Reuters report, said information on Putin's visits would be released closer to the date.

## Clans step in to protect Gaza aid

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Armed and masked men from an array of clans and factions have started providing security to aid convoys in Gaza, Palestinian officials and sources in the Hamas group say. Video footage obtained by Reuters showed a convoy of trucks entering Gaza City with foreign aid overnight, watched by several men armed with AK-47 assault rifles and others wielding sticks. With Israeli forces sworn to eliminating Hamas since its deadly Oct 7 raid on Israel.

## Armenia's PM says he must return disputed areas to Azerbaijan or face war

**Monitoring Desk**  
TBILISI: Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that Armenia may face a war with Azerbaijan if it does not compromise with Baku on returning some strategic Azerbaijani territories that Armenia has controlled since the early 1990s. Pashinyan was speaking during a Monday meeting with residents of border areas in northern Armenia's Tavush region, close to a string of deserted Azerbaijani villages that Yerevan has controlled since the opening phases of the countries' three-decade-long conflict in the early 1990s. TASS quoted Pashinyan as saying in a video of the meeting circulated by his government: "Now we can leave here, let's go and tell [Azerbaijan] that no, we are not going to do anything. This means that at the end of the week a war will begin." Pashinyan has repeatedly signalled in recent weeks that he is willing to return the villages to Azerbaijan.

## Israeli strikes target 'Hezbollah inside Syria'

**Monitoring Desk**  
AMMAN: Israel launched missiles at several military targets outside the Syrian capital Damascus on Tuesday, Syria's defence ministry said, in what regional intelligence and Syrian sources said were stepped up strikes on fortifications of Hezbollah. Syrian air defences intercepted Israeli "missiles and shot down some of them", the ministry said in a statement, adding they caused only material damage.

## Amini's death in custody 'unlawful': UN mission

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: A fact-finding mission mandated by the United Nations said on Monday the death of Mahsa Amini in the custody of Iran's morality police was unlawful and caused by violence and that Iranian women still suffer systematic discrimination. The death of 22-year-old Amini, a Kurdish Iranian woman, in September 2022 while in custody for allegedly flouting

## Blinken lauds 'extraordinary' expansion of defence ties with Philippines

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken hailed on Tuesday a recent strengthening of defence ties with the Philippines as "extraordinary", saying they would only grow further, though Washington's expanding alliances were not aimed at China. Speaking during a visit to the Philippines, Blinken said China's actions in the South China Sea had triggered a wider international reaction, and the United States was engaged in intense diplomacy to reaffirm international law. "We have a shared concern about (China's) actions that threaten our common vision for a free open Indo-Pacific, including in the South China Sea and in the Philippines exclusive economic zone (EEZ)," Blinken told a press conference alongside his Philippine counterpart. Ties between the Philippines and China have soured amid repeated spats over disputed features in the Philippine's exclusive economic zone, and Manila has accused China's coastguard of a policy of aggression. Beijing, which claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea, has maintained Philippine vessels are intruding in its territory. China's foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian on Tuesday said the United States had no right to interfere in disputes between Manila and Beijing and China would take the necessary actions to defend its territory. "Military cooperation between the United States and the Philippines should not harm China's sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea, let alone be used to prop up the Philippines' illegal position."

## Pakistan needs 'Economic Long March' to achieve development, prosperity: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has said that the country needed an 'Economic Long March' to move on a consistent path of development and prosperity.

Participating in a private television programme, he urged opposition parties to play a positive role in Parliament so that the country could move forward to achieve the goal of economic stability effectively.

He criticized a political party for making failed attempts to dent the country's talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), terming it 'Economic Terrorism.'

Ahsan Iqbal was of the view that the financial

matters of the country could not be sustained on loans permanently and stressed the need to increase production capacity, suggesting imposing an export emergency in the country.

Last year, the Ministry of Planning set up a 5-Es framework consisting of Export, Energy, Equity, E-Pakistan and Environment, under which a comprehensive plan had been prepared for the implementation of the framework and suggestions from all the ministries in this regard to be sought.

Replying to a question, the federal minister said all chambers of commerce would have to play their due role so that more efficiency could be achieved in agriculture, information technology and other sectors

with value addition of the products.

Citing the examples of developing countries like Korea and Japan, Ahsan Iqbal said these countries had progressed by increasing their production capacity. He vowed to lead the country towards development during the next five years under the dynamic leadership of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

To another question, the minister said he could not even think of rolling back the 18th Constitutional Amendment due to the sensitivity of its nature; however, some matters including the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) could be discussed with the provinces.



ISLAMABAD: The US Ambassador Donald Blome calls on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan to discuss and explore avenues for enhancing bilateral trade and investment between the two countries.

## PSX marks listing of BankIslami Pakistan's Ehad Sukuk II with a Gong ceremony



**Independent Report**  
KARACHI: Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) held a gong ceremony at the Exchange to mark the listing of BankIslami Pakistan Limited's Islamic financial instrument of Ehad Sukuk II, a fully paid up, rated, perpetual, unsecured, subordinated, non-cumulative and contingent convertible Mudaraba Sukuk. The is-

size was of PKR 1,000 million, out of which Sukuks of PKR 850 million (85% of issue size) were issued to the pre-IPO investors and Sukuks of PKR 150 million (15% of issue size) were offered to the general public by way of Initial Public Offering. The issue price or par value of each Sukuk is PKR 5,000, with an expected profit rate

of 1 month KIBOR + 2.5% per annum to be paid out monthly. The instrument has a perpetual tenor. The purpose of the Issue was to raise capital towards the issuer's Additional Tier I for Capital Adequacy Ratio as per guidelines set by the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Bankers to the issue (for the retail portion) were Meezan Bank Limited, United Bank Limited, and BankIslami Pakistan Limited. Designated Market Maker is JS Global Capital Limited and the Issue Agent is Pak Brunei Investment Company. The public subscription for the instrument took place on February 20 - 21, 2024. The public subscription for the Sukuk was highly successful with the Sukuk being oversubscribed by 56.23%.

## Both masses, govt have to pay for more increase in energy cost: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that more increase in electricity, gas, and oil prices would be cruel and both masses and government would have to pay for it.

Talking to business

community here on Wednesday, he said that continued price spikes can lead to a political crisis, which will be dangerous for the economy, stabilizing steadily.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that instead of increasing the burden on the people, the direct tax system should be improved, and tax should also be collected from non-tax-paying sectors.



HYDERABAD: Members of Pasban Democratic Party are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Hyderabad press club.

## IRD Pakistan shares groundbreaking results of endTB clinical trial

HYDERABAD (APP): To mark World TB Day, IRD Pakistan shared the groundbreaking results of the endTB Clinical Trial, conducted with the support of the Government of Sindh. Led by a consortium of partners, including IRD, Medicines Sans Frontiers, and Partners in Health, Pakistan was part of a multi-center study that enrolled 754 participants with multidrug or rifampicin-resistant tuberculosis (MDR/RR-TB) from seven countries.

The trial aimed to evaluate five new, all-oral, 9-month regimens compared to the current stan-

dard of care MDR/RR-TB treatment.

Led by IRD in collaboration with Communicable Disease Control (CDC) Sindh from 2019 to 2023, Pakistan demonstrated unprecedented resilience despite challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the catastrophic floods of 2022, maintaining full participation without any individuals discontinuing their treatment.

The trial found that three new drug regimens had similar efficacy and safety to standard treatment while reducing the treatment duration by up to two-thirds.

## ASP Sukkur visits at Police Station

SUKKUR (APP): ASP city, Muhammad Usman Khan on Wednesday surprised visit to the police Station "C" Section here. During the visit, the ASP thoroughly examined the station's records and assessed the available facilities for visitors. He instructed police officials to enhance the amenities provided to individuals visiting the station.

Usman emphasized the importance of serving the community with sincerity and urged all staff members to diligently address the concerns of the public, particularly those in need.

## Three street criminals held in joint operation, arms, bike recovered

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Karachi Police arrested three street criminals, recovered arms, a bike and 12 cell phones during a joint operation here on Wednesday. A spokesman of Sindh Rangers said that a joint operation was launched against the wanted criminals on technical basis.

## SFA seals Max Bachat Mart for violating SOPs

HYDERABAD (APP): On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad, district administration and Sindh Food Authority in a joint action on Wednesday sealed Max Bachat Mart till further order and imposed a fine Rs. 500,000. According to details, Deputy Director Sindh Food Authority Fida Hussain Khoso, Assistant Commissioner Qasimabad and Mukhtiar Kar Qasimabad Farhan Jatoi have sealed Max Bachat Mart town.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner H.E. Jane Marriott called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## PM for early conclusion of Pak-UK Enhanced Strategic Partnership agreement

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed the desire to elevate the Pakistan-UK relationship to the next level, emphasizing the importance of early conclusion of the Enhanced Strategic Partnership (ESP) agreement.

The prime minister, in a meeting with British High Commissioner Jane Marriott, who called on him, highlighted the government's priorities, in particular the importance of navigating through the economic challenges facing the country, a PM Office press release said.

In this regard, he underscored the need to enhance bilateral cooperation

in trade and investment, climate, and people-to-people contacts as well as developing convergences on regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

Prime Minister Shehbaz thanked British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Foreign Secretary Lord David Cameron for their messages of felicitation on his re-election and said that he looked forward to working closely with the UK leadership to further strengthen bilateral relations.

He said Pakistan and the UK had longstanding, historic relations and shared immense political goodwill while cooperating closely over a wide range of areas.

## Shaza, PTA chairman discuss 5G spectrum auction

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Chairman of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Maj General @ Hafeez Ur Rehman on Wednesday discussed matters concerning the 5G spectrum auction, connectivity, and the Telecom Industry.

The minister during a meeting said, that providing affordable and high-quality telecom and internet services to the masses remains a top priority for the government.

She reiterated the government's commitment to promoting digitization in the country and resolving related issues.

Shaza highlighted that the Ministry of Information Technology is steadfast in its determination to collaborate with the telecom sector.

She assured that the government is dedicated to addressing the concerns of the telecom industry.

The minister said, "We will empower the youth by integrating them into the digital ecosystem and offering dignified employment opportunities."



At least 12 miners were killed and eight rescued after an explosion in a coal mine in Zardalo.

## SSP Umerkot says Establishment of law and order and eradication of drugs is the first priority

**By Aijaz mughal**  
UMERKOT: SSP Umerkot Asif Raza Baloch says that the establishment of law and order and eradication of drugs is the first priority, no matter how influential the criminal elements are, they are not above the law. During the

was also held on the overall situation of the area.

SSP Asif Raza Baloch Kamzeed said that the police is the protector of the life and property of the people, so negligence will not be tolerated.

He said that there are



meeting with the delegation consisting of Mian Muhammad Faisal, Mohsen Iqbal Ansari, Parshotam Das Mahli and Love Kumar Sharma under the leadership of Kunri Press Club President Aijaz Mughal, On this occasion, the President of Press Club Kunri, Aljaz Mughal, welcomed the newly appointed SSP Umerkot Asif Raza Baloch by presenting a bouquet of flowers and welcomed him and during the meeting, a detailed discussion

punishments and penal laws for the officers and personnel who show negligence in the police rules, but the officers and personnel who show the best performance are also awarded with prizes. If the political interference ends, the police department will show great efficiency. They want the young generation to focus on studies instead of useless work and play their full role in the development of the country and nation.



HYDERABAD: People are busy in Eid shopping ahead of Eid-ul-Fitar during the Holy Month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, at Cloth Market in Hyderabad.

## CM Sindh approves Rs 5.5bn Smart Safe City project

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah approved the signing of an agreement of Rs 5.5 billion between the Sindh Police Department and NRTC to launch the first phase of the Smart Safe City project in the red zone.

The approval of the agreement was made in a meeting held at CM House and was attended by Home Minister Zia Lanjar, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, IG Police Riffat Mukhtar, MD NRTC Brigadier Asim Ishaque, DG Sindh Safe Cities Authority Asif Aijaz Shaikh and others.

OFC network would connect 18 police stations. The cameras would relate to the Command & Control Centre of CPO and then a permanent C&CC would be developed at KPO.

The smart safe city project would have the capability of facial recognition and a number plate recognition system. Under the system monitoring of hospitals for criminals/suspects, multiple camera tracking against suspects and response, database management of criminals and integration with National, Criminal, and other databases.

The chief minister said that the project was much awaited and finally it was seeing the day of light and hoped that the project would achieve its purpose. "I want you NRTC to complete the first phase in the one and half years," he said.

The NRTC had given him two years to complete the first phase.

The CM was told that the Smart Safe City project 1300 CCTV cameras would be installed at 300 sites in Red Zone & Airport Corridor with FR and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) capability within eight hours solar back.

To a question, CM was told that the 193 km



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Southern Command Air Vice Marshal Khalid Mahmood during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

## Supreme Court accepts bail pleas of five suspects in May 9 violence case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday accepted the bail applications of five suspects in a May 9 violence case.

The suspects had been taken into custody for attacking Hamza Camp in Rawalpindi and damaging it.

A three-member bench of the apex court, headed by Justice Jamal Mandokhel, granted bails to Saifullah, Awaiz Ayyaz, Kamran, Waqas and Nasrullah in lieu of surety bonds of Rs50,000 each.

During the hearing, the court admonished the police and the prosecution for faulty investigation. Justice Mandokhel asked whether being a worker of a party or taking out a rally was a crime. "The state of affairs we are witnessing today is the consequence of banning students' unions and political parties," the judge said, adding, "Can we declare a former prime minister 'traitor' merely on the basis of a statement given by a head constable?"

## DC Chairs Meeting to plan typhoid vaccination campaign

HYDERABAD (APP): In order to review the arrangements regarding the typhoid vaccination campaign a meeting was held at Shehbaz hall, shahbaz building Hyderabad under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Tariq Ahmad Qureshi.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad said that for the prevention of typhoid fever and other infectious diseases, all measures will be taken in collaboration with the health department so that the new generation can be protected from epidemic diseases.

He announced that the

typhoid vaccination campaign will commence from May 13 and will continue till May 25. During this campaign in Hyderabad, vaccination will be administered to 1,096,658 children aged 9 months to 15 years through 914 teams and to ensure the success of the campaign, 96 EPI centers have been established. Additionally, 200 supervisors and 54 focal persons will fulfill their duties during the campaign.

He strictly directed the officials of the education department to submit the data of school children so that typhoid vaccination can be ensured accordingly.



LARKANA: A large number of people breaking fast (Ifitar) in the holy month of Ramadan ul Mubarak at a local Masjid.

## Polio campaign to stats from 25 March: ADC Larkana

LARKANA (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner One Larkana Asif Raza Chandio has given strict instructions to the officials of the health department to make the Polio eradication campaign in Larkana district from March 25 to March 31 a success and reached anywhere at breastfeeding child.

He expressed these views while chaired over the meeting of the District Polio Eradication Committee in the Durbar Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's office. The previous Polio campaign was reviewed in the meeting. Officials of the health department gave a

briefing to the additional deputy commissioner of Larkana about the preparations made in connection with the Polio campaign.

He directed the officials to ensure the vaccination of children under 5 years of age. He said that Polio teams should be appointed at the Union Council level and committees should be formed to monitor them and ensure the security of the polio teams.

He said that the target set for polio vaccination should be completed in any case. He said that Polio is a dangerous disease, for which a campaign has been going on for many years.