

# Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 06. No. 65 Ramazan 17, 1445 AH Thursday March 28, 2024 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

## PM Shahbaz says

### Terrorism trans-national threat, instrumentalised by enemies to stymie Pak progress, development

**Chairs a high level emergency meeting; Orders to conduct joint investigation of Besham terrorist attack; Army vows to take all-out measures for safety of Chinese citizens in Pakistan; COAS reiterates the resolve of armed forces to eliminate the scourge of terrorism afflicting the country**

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday instructed to conduct a thorough joint investigation of the Besham terrorist attack on Chinese nationals working on Dassu Hydel Power Project, utilizing all resources of the state.

The prime minister offering deepest condolences to the families of the innocent victims of the attack assured that the perpetrators of this barbaric act would be brought to justice swiftly.

Chairing a high level emergency meeting in the aftermath of Besham terrorist attack on Chinese nationals, the prime minister appreciated the alacrity with which law enforcement

agencies and locals responded to the attack, saving many precious lives which could have been lost.

The meeting was attended by the Federal Ministers, Chief of the Army Staff, Chief Ministers, Chief Secretaries and Inspector Generals of Police of respective provinces, a PM Office press release said.

The meeting discussed in detail the heinous attack on innocent civilians working on a development project, meant to contribute to energy and water security of Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif underscored the enduring bond of brotherhood between the people of Pakistan and China and conveyed that the whole

nation was saddened by the loss of Chinese lives.

He stated, "Terrorism is a trans-national threat that has been instrumentalized by the enemies of Pakistan to stymie Pakistan's progress and development. The acts targeting Pakistan-China friendship are particularly aimed at creating mistrust between the two iron brothers".

Participants of the meeting expressed resolute commitment to completely routing out terrorism from this country.

The participants expressed serious concerns over sanctuaries available to terrorists across the borders and emphasized upon the need for a regional approach for countering terrorism.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level security meeting.

### Visits Chinese Embassy 'Shangla attack criminals will be brought to justice', President assures Chinese envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday visited the Embassy of People's Republic of China and offered condolences, on behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan, over the killing of Chinese citizens in a terrorist attack in Bisham.

He strongly condemned yesterday's terrorist attack, saying that the Pakistani nation shared the grief of the Chinese people. He said that the people of Pakistan stood in solidarity with the Chinese people in this hour of grief.

Upon his arrival, the president was received by Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, the Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also present on the occasion, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the president said that enemies in the region couldn't accept the fact that Pakistan and China were further strengthening their bilateral ties.

He assured the Chinese ambassador that the criminals involved in the gruesome act would be apprehended and brought to justice. He further said that all necessary measures would be taken to ensure the security of the Chinese citizens working on various projects in Pakistan. The Chinese ambassador thanked the president for personally visiting the embassy to offer condolences.

### No attempt to undermine China-Pakistan cooperation will succeed: Jian

BEIJING (APP): China has categorically stated that no attempt to undermine China-Pakistan cooperation will succeed.

During regular news briefing in Beijing, in response to a question about a terrorist attack causing casualties of five Chinese citizens in Pakistan, spokesperson foreign ministry Lin Jian said China opposes all forms of terrorism, firmly supports Pakistan in fighting terrorism.

He said China will work with Pakistan with even stronger commitment to do everything possible to protect the safety and security of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in Pakistan.

### US warns Pakistan of sanctions risk over Iran gas pipeline project

**Declared that it does not support the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project going forward**

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has declared that it does not support the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project going forward and cautioned Islamabad about the risk of sanctions in doing business with Tehran.

The Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline, known as the Peace Pipeline, is a long-term project between Tehran and Islamabad, and has faced delays and funding challenges for several years.

Pakistan and Iran had signed a five-year trade plan in August 2023 and set a bilateral trade target at \$5 billion. Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik said this week that his country was

seeking a US sanctions waiver for the gas pipeline from Iran.

During his daily news briefing in Washington on Tuesday, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said "We always advise everyone that doing business with Iran runs the risk of touching upon and coming in contact with our sanctions, and would advise everyone to consider that very carefully."

"We do not support this pipeline going forward," the spokesperson added, saying that Donald Lu, the State Department's top official for South and Central Asia, had said as much to a congressional panel last week.

### Sharjeel Memon visits Excise & Taxation office at Civic Centre

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Excise, Taxation, Narcotics Control, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, paid a surprise visit to the Excise and Taxation Office here at Civic Center.

During the visit, Sharjeel Inam Memon reviewed the work of various sections in the Excise and Taxation office and also obtained detailed information on vehicle registration and other related issues.

The Provincial Minister received a comprehensive briefing about the operational mechanism of registration and taxation.

Sharjeel Memon emphasized the need for collective efforts to promote transparency and accountability in administrative affairs.

He stated that the Sindh government has a proactive approach to address administrative challenges and improve public service delivery.

### British High Commissioner calls on Faryal

ISLAMABAD (APP): British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott called on Central President PPP Women Wing Faryal Talpur and Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari at Bilawal House on Wednesday.

Deputy High Commissioner Sarah Mooney and Deputy Political Counselor Mark Bailey accompanied the British High Commissioner, said a press release issued here by the party secretariat. Sindh Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani, and Sindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro were also present on the occasion. The meeting focused on discussing matters of mutual interest and enhancing bilateral relations.



KARACHI: First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari and Peoples Party (PPP Women Wing) Central President, Faryal Talpur exchanges views with British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott during meeting held at Bilawal House in Karachi.

### Karachi mayor vows to take action against illegal parking

KARACHI (INP): Mayor of Karachi, Murtaza Wahab, has vowed to take action against the illegal parking in the port city.

Speaking to media, Murtaza Wahab said that the market owner cannot charge parking fees on the government road. He called out the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) saying that action will be taken against the people who are extorting money in the name of parking charges.

Earlier, authorities decided to launch a major crackdown against illegal charged parking spots in Karachi, taking hold of port city to extort money from people.

The then Additional Chief Secretary had directed the authorities to bring parking mafia and its facilitators to justice. He further directed to keep Traffic police and district administration on board during the crackdown.

"A first information report (FIR) should be registered against the people involved in establishing illegally charged parking spots," he added.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui is being briefed by the NAVTTC Regional Office Officials during his visit, in Karachi.

### Khalid Maqbool emphasizes global standards, technology in NAVTTC visit

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, paid a visit to the NAVTTC Regional office on Wednesday to assess its operations and engage with the media.

In his interaction with reporters, Dr. Siddiqui expressed gratitude to the media for their involvement in educational and developmental initiatives beyond traditional politics.

He underscored the importance of leveraging the significant youth population in the country by providing them training aligned with global standards to meet the demands of the global village.

Highlighting the crucial role of technology in the contemporary era across all sectors, Dr. Siddiqui emphasized the necessity of progressive education to tackle both ill-education and illiteracy simultaneously.

### 14 candidates from Sindh withdraw candidature for Senate polls

KARACHI (APP): Fourteen aspirants for general as well as reserved seats for Senate election from Sindh on Wednesday withdrew their candidature from Senate polls scheduled on April 2, 2024. According to spokesman of the Provincial Election Commission, candidates including Javed Ahmed Nayab, Ghanhwer Ali Asran, Mukhtiar Ahmed



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador H.E. Dr. Mehmet Paçaycı called on Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain.

### PTI gets conditional permission for Islamabad rally

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday conditionally allowed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to hold a rally in Islamabad.

As per details, Chief Justice IHC Aamer Farooq heard the PTI plea seeking permission for a rally in Islamabad. The Court directed the district administration to allow Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to hold a rally in Islamabad on March 30. The Chief Justice IHC ordered that no unusual conditions should be imposed and only standard Terms of Reference (TOR) should be followed. Earlier, the deputy commissioner of Islamabad refused to grant permission to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to hold a rally in the capital on March 30.

### Power tariff likely to be hiked by Rs 5 per unit

ISLAMABAD (Online): Preparations are underway to shift additional financial burden of billion of rupees to electricity consumers for one month amid the reports power tariff is likely to be increased by Rs 5 per unit.

Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) has filed application in NEPRA seeking hike in power tariff where by increase in tariff has been sought under fuel adjustment for the month of February.

NEPRA will hear CPPA application today on Thursday. In the event of its approval, an additional financial burden of Rs 40 billion will be shifted to the consumers.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari meeting with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Jiang Zaidong, to offer his condolences over the killing of Chinese citizens in Bisham, at the Chinese Embassy.

### SC holds full court meeting on IHC judges' letter alleging spy agencies 'interference'

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: A full court meeting of the Supreme Court judges was held in the federal capital to deliberate on a letter written by the six Islamabad High Court judges about the alleged interference of spy agencies in the judiciary.

The Supreme Court judges including Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa attended the huddle that lasted for over two hours in the federal capital.

The development took place after the bar associations and legal experts

called for a probe into the letter.

The sources said that the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan met the CJP and discussed the matter.

After the meeting, AGP, while talking to journalists, said that the matter is serious and it should be probed.

Bar associations of Sindh, Lahore, Islamabad and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well as senior lawyers condemned the alleged interference, urging the top judge to look into the matter.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal chairs the first Steering Committee meeting to implement 5Es development framework.

### Government taking measures to improve infrastructure, governance: CS Sindh

Independent Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Secretary Syed Asif Haider Shah, Wednesday, said that government was taking measures to improve infrastructure, water supply, sewerage and governance in the province. He, in a meeting with British Deputy High Commissioner Sarah Mooney, said that Sindh government was working on water supply, sewerage and restoration of road infrastructure keeping in view the growing population of Karachi.

Shah, while discussing impacts of climate change, stated that despite less than 1 percent contribution in worldwide greenhouse gas emissions Pakistan was at the top of the countries affected by climate change.

The unprecedented

2022 floods cost Pakistan \$32 billion while climate change concerns will continue to haunt the country in the future, he added.

The climate change had serious repercussions on river Indus and federal government has launched 'Living Indus' project to subsides the effects of climate change on the largest river of the country in consultation with environmental experts, all stakeholders and provincial governments, he informed and also sought technical assistance by British government to deal with implications of climate change. The CS further said that there were enormous opportunities for British investors in Sindh particularly in energy, environment and agriculture sectors.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### New terror wave

A string of deadly terrorist attacks over the past few days — with the bombing in KP's Bisham area on Tuesday being the latest atrocity — drives home the grim point that Pakistan is in the midst of a multidimensional terrorist insurgency. From the coast and interior of Balochistan to the rugged mountains of the north, violence is occurring with alarming frequency. While most of the victims thus far have been civil and military security personnel, the Bisham attack targeted Chinese nationals. According to officials, at least six people were killed in what has been termed a suicide bombing — five of them Chinese. The foreigners were en route to the Dasu power project from Islamabad when an explosives-laden car smashed into their vehicle.

Meanwhile in Turbat, Baloch separatist militants attacked the PNS Siddique naval base on Monday night. An FC trooper was martyred in the incident. Last week, security forces had thwarted a terrorist attack, also carried out by Baloch militants, on the Gwadar Port Authority Complex. At the time of writing, no group had claimed responsibility for the Bisham bombing. In the past, both Baloch militants and religiously inspired fighters have targeted Chinese interests in the country. An ISPR statement has identified "certain foreign elements" as being responsible for the latest wave of terrorism, while the Foreign Office has said "enemies of Pakistan-China friendship" are behind the violence. Certainly, both the Bisham and Gwadar attacks appear to be aimed at derailing the Pakistan-China relationship, specifically the economic aspect of it. The fact that Chinese blood has been spilt makes matters more serious. Several past incidents have also resulted in the death of Chinese nationals, such as the 2021 attack in Kohistan, which is close to Bisham, and the 2022 assault on Karachi University's Confucius Institute.

Beijing's reaction has been firm, with the Chinese embassy demanding the Pakistani state take "practical and effective measures" to protect its nationals here. China has come to this country's aid at difficult times, and invested in Pakistan when few others were willing to. Moreover, at a time when Pakistan is trying to woo foreign investors to bring their dollars here in order to breathe some life into a moribund economy, the country cannot afford terrorists attacking foreign workers. Security must immediately be beefed up for all foreigners working in the country, particularly Chinese nationals. The civilian and military leadership must work closely together to uproot the terrorist infrastructure without delay.

If malign foreign actors are involved in subterfuge, diplomatic channels need to be used to communicate to them that their facilitation of terrorist violence will be exposed before the international community. For the government, the honeymoon is over, and the time has come for decisive action against militancy.

## "Six Judges' Allegations: Yet Challenges in Substantiation..."

By Qamar Bashir

Press Secretary to the President(Rtd); Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



In a remarkable development, six judges of the Islamabad High Court have penned a letter to the Supreme Judicial Council underscoring deeply troubling allegations of blatant, aggressive, and intimidating interference by the executive branch in both lower and higher judiciary affairs. The accusations range from manipulating bench formations to exerting undue pressure on judges to sway decisions in critical cases. Moreover, there are claims of defiance against judicial directives, orders, and judgments, often enforced through coercive measures such as the use of brute force or intimidation tactics like throwing crackers at residences, abducting close relatives, and covert surveillance. Such allegations, if substantiated, raise profound questions about the sanctity of judicial independence and the rule of law.

The noteworthy aspect of this situation is the decision to make the letter public. With decades of experience in government circles, it's clear that officials, including judges, are obligated to maintain confidentiality in their official correspondence. Various regulations, such as the Efficiency and Discipline Rules for government servants and the Judicial Code of Conduct, emphasize the im-

portance of confidentiality, especially in legal proceedings. The relevant Article V of the Judicial Code of Conduct stresses that judges should avoid engaging in public controversies, particularly political ones, to uphold the integrity of their position.

Typically, matters concerning the Supreme Court are communicated to the public through its public relations department, often pertaining to administrative issues or clarifications on court actions. However, in this instance, the letter addressed to the Supreme Judicial Council on March 25, 2024, was made public the following day, March 26, 2024. This move likely aimed to achieve several objectives.

By revealing allegations of interference by intelligence agencies, the judges aimed to highlight potential threats to judicial integrity. They likely hoped that public scrutiny would compel authorities to address the issue promptly and reinforce the importance of judicial independence. However, making internal correspondence public carries risks, including undermining confidentiality and inviting political or legal repercussions. Depending on how the allegations are perceived, it could also affect public confidence. While transparency is essential for accountability, it must be balanced with protecting the judicial process's integrity and minimizing potential fallout.

Whether the letter was leaked without the consent of the Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Commission, or the six judges who wrote it, re-

mains unclear. However, the gravity of the allegations made by these judges cannot be overstated. Accusing the executive branch of blatant interference in the judiciary, including manipulation of bench formations, intimidation of judges, defiance of judicial directives, and even resorting to acts of violence and threats against judges and their families, constitutes a direct assault on the foundational principles of democracy, rule of law, and judicial independence.

If proven true, these allegations would not only undermine the credibility and integrity of the judicial system but also pose a significant threat to the fundamental principles of justice and separation of powers.

However, both the judges and Supreme Judicial Council know very well that the spying agency operatives are professional trained and proficient to leave no trace of evidence of their alleged interference and intimidations to the judges or their victims or targets. They employ sophisticated protocols including encryption, secure communication channels, anonymous communication platforms, steganography, covert operatives, and deniable operations to ensure their communications and actions remain untraceable and without evidence.

Utilizing advanced encryption methods, secure networks, and anonymous tools, they conceal their identities and activities, making it challenging for outsiders to intercept or attribute their actions. Covert operatives operate discreetly, while deniable

operations provide plausible deniability. This makes proving their involvement in suppressed and intimidation activities exceptionally difficult, necessitating thorough investigation and forensic analysis to uncover any traces of their involvement.

Therefore, handling allegations of interference and intimidation by spying agencies in the absence of concrete evidence presents a significant challenge for the Supreme Judicial Council. However, despite the difficulty in proving such allegations, the Council may still take appropriate steps to address the situation and uphold the integrity of the judiciary. They do so by employing various techniques and methods.

Evidently, in the absence of direct evidence, the Council will have to rely on witness testimonies and corroboration from multiple sources to substantiate the allegations. Witness testimonies, especially from the judges themselves and other individuals who may have been subjected to intimidation or interference, can provide valuable insights into the nature and extent of the alleged actions.

Moreover, given the gravity of the situation, it may be necessary for the Supreme Judicial Council to collaborate with other relevant institutions, such as law enforcement agencies or independent investigative bodies, to ensure a comprehensive and transparent investigation. Any attempts to obstruct or undermine the investigation must be met with swift and decisive action to uphold the rule of law and pro-

tect the judiciary from undue influence or intimidation.

The Council may enlist the help of independent experts or investigative agencies to conduct forensic analysis or investigations into any suspicious activities or incidents reported by the judges. Although direct evidence may be scarce, expert analysis of circumstantial evidence or patterns of behavior may reveal potential links to interference or intimidation tactics.

SJC may provide strong protections for whistleblowers who come forward with information about interference or intimidation. SJC can encourage individuals with knowledge of such actions to step forward and provide valuable testimony. Ensuring confidentiality and protection from retaliation can help overcome barriers to reporting.

In cases where traditional investigative methods may not yield sufficient evidence, the Council could consider establishing a public inquiry or commission with broad powers to investigate the allegations thoroughly. Such inquiries can compel testimony, gather evidence, and make recommendations based on their findings. Given the sensitive nature of the allegations and the challenges in investigating espionage-related activities, the Council may seek assistance and expertise from international organizations or experts with experience in dealing with similar issues.

Regardless of the outcome of the investi-

gation, the Council can implement measures to enhance judicial integrity and resilience against potential interference in the future. This may include strengthening security protocols, providing training on identifying and responding to intimidation tactics, and promoting a culture of transparency and accountability within the judiciary.

While proving allegations of interference and intimidation by spying agencies may indeed be challenging, the Supreme Judicial Council has a responsibility to thoroughly investigate such claims and take appropriate action to safeguard the independence and integrity of the judiciary. Even in the absence of direct evidence, the Council can still take steps to address the underlying concerns and uphold the principles of justice and the rule of law.

Ultimately, the Supreme Judicial Council's response to these allegations will be a crucial test of the judiciary's independence and its ability to uphold the rule of law in the face of external pressures. It is essential for the Council to demonstrate its commitment to justice, accountability, and the protection of judicial independence by thoroughly investigating these allegations and holding accountable those responsible for any wrongdoing. Failure to do so would not only undermine public trust in the judiciary but also jeopardize the foundations of democracy and the rule of law in Pakistan.

## Commerce News

### Awais Leghari vows to combat electricity theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmed Leghari, on Wednesday, expressed his unwavering resolve to combat electricity theft across all DISCOS.

Addressing the Chairmen and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Power Distribution Companies (Discos) via video link, he underscored the urgent need to address electricity theft.

During the event, the discussion primarily focused on combating electricity theft, which the Minister described as a form of economic terrorism severely impacting the country's economy. He urged Discos

officials to harness technology and innovation in their endeavors to eradicate power theft, aiming to minimize indiscriminate power outages, particularly affecting consumers who diligently pay their bills.

Leghari called for the removal of all obstacles hindering efforts to prevent electricity theft and warned that employees and officers involved in such illegal activities would face firm and decisive action.

He reiterated that there would be no political interference in the campaign against electricity theft, emphasizing decisions based on merit for a

transparent and impartial approach.

The Minister instructed all Discos to establish modern customer service centers nationwide and appoint competent officers to ensure the timely resolution of customer complaints.

He stressed the importance of kindness towards consumers and emphasized a policy where the "customer is always right."

He mandated the management of Distribution Companies (Discos) to maintain up-to-date financial records diligently and compile detailed information regarding the company's assets.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari addresses the CEOs and Chairmen of DISCOS via video link.

### Ahsan discusses cooperation in export-oriented production with Turkish envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal discussed matters related to bilateral interests including cooperation in the field of export-oriented industrial production with the Turkish ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Mehmet Paçacı.

The discussion took place during a visit by the Turkish envoy to the minister's office, after he congratulated Ahsan Iqbal

on assuming charge of the ministry, a news release said on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the minister shared that Pakistan and Türkiye could explore areas where both countries could benefit from each other's strengths, including joint production of export items to third countries, as well as cultural cooperation in arts and media.

He urged the idea of seeking Turkish assistance to set up an industry in

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for exporting items to Europe. Since labor costs in Pakistan were cheaper than in Türkiye, he said, such a joint venture would benefit both countries.

Pakistan and Türkiye have a long history of warm friendship, and both countries have stood by each other during disasters, such as floods and earthquakes. The minister appreciated the support extended by Türkiye.

### Minister stresses tapping growth potential of mineral-rich areas

**Independent Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Mines and Minerals Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani renewed the commitment to foster unrestricted progress within the Mines Department, aimed at benefiting the people of Punjab. Acknowledging the challenges that led to significant losses within the department, he emphasized tapping potential for growth and development in the mineral-rich tribal areas of southern Punjab. During a meeting here on Wednesday, he underscored the paramount importance of transparent and equitable processes in leasing mines to harness the abundant

benefits of underground mineral resources. He announced a shift towards a merit-based approach and promised that all leases would be publicly advertised, guaranteeing fairness and accountability. He highlighted the significance of pink salt (Himalayan salt) as a valuable national asset. Efforts to strengthen field offices and expedite recruitment processes are identified as crucial steps to streamline official operations and prevent delays, he said and expressed confidence in achieving this year's revenue generation targets.



Country Lead Digital Transformation GSMA, Saira Faisal called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja in Islamabad.

### LCCI advocates for business-friendly taxation system

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Wednesday expressed reservations over 'Tajir Dost Scheme 2024' under SRO 420 and advocated for business-friendly taxation system to pave way for economic development, besides formulating all the economic policies in consultation with the stakeholders.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar stated this in a conference on 'Economic challenges and their solutions' here at Lahore Chamber where LCCI Senior Vice President

Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt and a large number of businessmen were also present. Kashif Anwar expressed reservations over the SRO 420 under which 'Tajir Dost Scheme 2024' has been introduced, citing that the businessmen, who are outside the tax net and never filed a tax return, are asked to deposit advance tax every month under this scheme which is not viable as the shopkeepers would have to remain associated with the tax lawyers.

### Pakistan's exports to US decrease by 10% in 8 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to the United States (US) witnessed a decrease of 10.38 per cent during the first eight months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to US were recorded at US \$3,626.141 million during July-February (2023-24) against exports of US \$4,046.337 million during July-February (2022-23), SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year

basis, the exports to US came down by 10.97 per cent from \$476.804 million in February 2023, against the exports of \$424.497 million in February 2024.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to US also decreased by 6.89 per cent during February 2024 as compared to the exports of \$455.944 million in January 2024, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 10.15 per cent in the first five months, from US \$18.643 billion to US \$20.537 billion.

### Commerce Minister leads session on future planning

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, conducted an in-house presentation on Wednesday to evaluate the government's future plans within the Ministry of Commerce to attain sustainable economic growth and development.

The presentation focused on key areas of development and strategies to moving forward, besides a comprehensive review was undertaken to ensure alignment with the ministry's objectives, said a press release issued by the Ministry of commerce.

### Brazilian Envoy urges Pakistan to join BRICS to become part of global economy

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ambassador of Brazil to Pakistan, Olyntho Vieira has urged Pakistan to join international multilateral forum BRICS for becoming part of the global economy. He said, "Pakistan is a big market in terms of its population which can play an important role in BRICS and promote trade with these countries."

Brazilian Ambassador was speaking during a call on meeting with President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and Secretary General UBG, FPCCI Zafar Bakhtawari. Olyntho Vieira said

that the BRICs have an important role in the future global economy and with it,

South-South cooperation will also grow and international multilateralism will be strengthened.

He said that Pakistan was the largest market in terms of population in the Islamic world, which was important because of its geo-Strategic location and there was a need to strengthen the trade relations between Brazil and Pakistan.

The Envoy said that Pakistan and Brazil have vast trade and cooperation opportunities in technology and fruits.

### China has over 850 million 5G users

ISLAMABAD (APP): Data from the China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) shows that, as of the end of February China's largest wireless carriers, have a total of 1.746 billion mobile phone users, of which 851 million use 5G, China Media Group reported.

The cumulative traffic of China's mobile internet reached 48.76 billion gigabytes in the last 12 months, which translates to a 16.6 percent year on year increase.

The communication industry was stable in the first two months of this year, and the total volume of telecommunications of business maintained double-digit growth.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Minerals Sardar Sher Gorchani presides over the meeting of the department.

## CM stresses for modern house infrastructure in urban peripheries

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur Wednesday said that housing infrastructure development in accordance with the contemporary requirements especially at the urban periphery is much needed.

He was addressing an important meeting regarding housing sector development held here at Chief Minister's House, with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair.

Important matters related to public and private-sectors new housing schemes came under discussion.

Provincial Minister Arshad Aiyub and Fazal Hakeem, Tehsil Chairman Mathra Inaam Ullah Khan, Administrative Secretaries of concerned department, Commissioner Peshawar, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

He said that his government, alongside taking other priority initiatives, was also committed for infrastructure and urban development, promoting investment and ease of doing business in the province. "Incumbent provincial government will not only encourage private-sector investment in the province but will also

extend its all-out support to investors interested in investment here". He remarked and directed the quarters concerned to take pragmatic steps for attracting and facilitating private-sector investment in the province.

Necessary amendments in the relevant legal framework be proposed for simplifying the entire process of investment so that maximum private investment could be attracted towards province, he directed.

He said that all these efforts would bring about positive change in the lifestyle of people by promoting conducive environment.



**GILGIT:** Secretary Home Gilgit-Baltistan Ali Asghar and Inspector General of Police Gilgit-Baltistan Afzal Mehmood Butt briefs members of the Women's Caucus of Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly regarding Falak Noor case.

## Minister for eliminating corruption, ensuring merit in govt offices

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru on Wednesday categorically said that the establishment of a just system based on justice and elimination of corruption is our priority.

"Solving people's problems is most important for us, so the officers should go to the field to solve people's problems".

He was addressing a meeting of officers of all provincial and federal

departments in the conference room of Deputy Commissioner Mardan along with the elected members of the provincial assembly from Mardan district. Besides Deputy Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Fayaz Khan Sherpao, provincial assembly members Abdul Salam Afridi, Iftikhar Ali Mashwani, Tufail Anjum, Amir Farzand Khan, Tariq Mehmood Ariani, Zarshad Khan and ADC Samiur Rehman attended the meeting.

## 2nd meeting of KP cabinet on March 28

PESHAWAR (APP): The second meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet would be held on March 28 at 8:30 p.m. at the Chief Minister house, said a notification of the Establishment and Administration department.

The meeting would be chaired by the CM Ali Amin Gandapur while the cabinet members including 15 ministers, five advisors and three special assistants along with all the administrative secretaries have been requested to attend the meeting.

## ATC extends interim bail of PTI founder in 3 cases till March 28

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Wednesday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder in three cases related to attacks on Jinnah House, Askari Tower, and the torching of Shadman Police station until March 28.

The court directed jail authorities to ensure the attendance of PTI founder through a video link on the next hearing.

## Meeting to discuss reforms in Health Dept soon: Qasim Shah

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah held a meeting with a delegation from UNICEF at his office here on Wednesday.

The delegation, led by the Chief of UNICEF Peshawar Office, Radoslaw Rzechak was comprising of Dr. Inamullah, Health Specialist, Aien Khan Afridi, Nutrition Specialist, and Dr. Kamran Qureshi, Immunisation Officer.

During the meeting, the provincial minister expressed the need to form a team of health donors to ensure that reforms in the Health Department adhere to international standards.

He also mentioned that a meeting with

donors and implementing partners with the Health Department would be convened soon to discuss future reforms in health and ongoing changes within the department. He emphasized that the doors of his office were always open for donors and partners.

The delegation briefed the minister about ongoing projects in the province under UNICEF's cooperation.

They briefed him about the support provided to the Health Department so far.

It was informed that UNICEF is currently running two major health and nutrition programs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



**LAHORE:** Members of civil society are protesting against Israel's aggression on Palestine.

## JKLF strongly condemns attack in Bisham

**MIRPUR (APP):** The US-based acting Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF-Yasin Malik) Raja Muzaffar on Wednesday vehemently denounced the recent suicide attack in Bisham that resulted in the tragic deaths of at least six individuals, including five Chinese workers.

In a press statement issued from Dallas, Muzaffar expressed profound shock and sorrow, extending solidarity to both China and Pakistan in the wake of the appalling acts of terrorism and violence.

"It is deeply concerning and condemnable that Chinese and Pakistani individuals in Pakistan have been targeted by acts of terrorism. The people of Jammu and Kashmir State stand in solidarity with the victims and their families," emphasized Muzaffar, underscoring the urgent need for collective condemnation and unity against such attacks.

## 18th IATF meeting held at ANF Headquarters

**RAWALPINDI (APP):** 18th Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) meeting on the increasing trend of drugs in educational institutions and anti-narcotics measures was held here at Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Headquarters.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Major General, Abdul Moeed, Director General of ANF, in which senior officers of federal and provincial law enforcement agencies, intelligence setup and related government departments participated.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the supply of drugs in educational institutions and the measures taken by the management of the

institutions to combat it.

A comprehensive briefing was given on the agenda by the representatives of the agencies and the departments concerned, in which the root causes of the problem and the gaps in the implementation of the policy were highlighted, while at the same time, the ways forward were also discussed. ANF presented a comprehensive plan for drug-free educational institutions which was discussed in the meeting. All the stakeholders agreed that concerted efforts should be made and a collective campaign should be launched to deal with the issue.

## PHC directs KP Assembly speakers to administer oath to members on reserved seats

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Wednesday directed Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly to administer oath to the members on reserved seats and allow them to sign the roll of members in terms of articles, 65, 255 of the constitution.

In short decision, written by Justice S.M Attique Shah, the speaker was also directed to allow and facilitate the members in casting their votes in the upcoming

senate election scheduled for April 02, 2024. Earlier, the PHC reserved its decision on the petitions of oath taking of the members elected on reserved seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly.

A two-member bench comprising Justice S.M. Attique Shah and Justice Shakeel Ahmed heard the petitions of the elected members of People's Party, PML-N and JUIF on reserved seats.

## LG&CD dept, SNG agree to prepare new models of solid waste management in Punjab

**LAHORE (APP):** Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD) Department and the British agency Sub-National Governance (SNG) have agreed to employ SNG program in preparing new models of solid waste management in Punjab. In this regard, the annual working of the ongoing projects under collaboration of local government and sub-national governance was reviewed in the meeting chaired by Special Secretary LG&CD Asia Gul here on Wednesday.

Matt Clancy, Annual Review Lead from British High Commission Islamabad, Governance Advisor Naveed Aziz, Economist Tufail Khan and Program Officer Amala Najeb also participated.

During the meeting, it was decided to increase cooperation in more fields based on the annual performance. The team

lead of British High Commission presented the agenda regarding the annual performance of SNG.

Special Secretary Asia Gul pledged that revenue generation plans will be prepared for other local governments on the pattern of Rahim Yar Khan. She emphasized that there is a need to take substantial measures regarding the self-reliance of local governments.

The parties also agreed to seek technical assistance on local government collection rights rules, budget and other regulations.

Special Secretary directed that two members from the SNG should be included in the Technical Working Group. She expressed satisfaction that the financial management system has been successfully implemented in local governments with the technical support of SNG.

# International News

## 18 Gazans die trying to collect airdropped aid

**Monitoring Desk**  
GAZA STRIP: Twelve people drowned and at least six were killed in stampedes trying to recover aid airdropped into Gaza, local authorities said on Tuesday.

The deaths occurred in the north of the besieged territory on Monday, with people rushing to collect packages dropped from planes along Gaza's Mediterranean coast.

The UN humanitarian office called on Tuesday for Israel to revoke a ban on food deliveries to northern Gaza from the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA, saying people there were facing a "cruel death by famine".

Israel had earlier said it would stop working with

UNRWA in Gaza, accusing the aid agency of perpetuating conflict. The agency said Israel told it that it would no longer approve its food convoys to north Gaza. Four such requests were denied since March 21, it said.

"The decision must be revoked," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) spokesperson Jens Laerke told a UN briefing in Geneva. "You cannot claim to adhere to these international provisions of law when you block UNRWA food convoys."

A UN-backed report this month said famine was imminent and likely to occur by May in northern Gaza. James Elder, spokesperson for the UN children's

agency Unicef in Gaza, described seeing "paper thin" children in a hospital in northern Gaza and incubators full of underweight babies from malnourished mothers.

"Tens of thousands of people crowd the streets," he told the same briefing, describing his latest visit to the north on Monday. "They make that universal signal of hand to mouth desperately asking and seeking for food."

Life-saving aid is being obstructed. Lives are being lost. I saw children whose malnutrition state was so severe, skeletal," he said. Other aid agencies also deliver food parcels to northern Gaza, although UNRWA is the biggest provider.



**Palestinians gather on a beach as they collect aid dropped by an airplane, amid the ongoing Israeli bombardment of the northern Gaza Strip.**

## Russia blames Ukraine, US for Moscow attack

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: The director of Russia's most powerful security agency said on Tuesday that he believed Ukraine, along with the United States and Britain, were involved in the attack on a concert hall just outside Moscow that killed at least 139 people.

Ukraine, which has repeatedly denied any link with Friday's attack, dismissed the Russian accusations as lies. Britain said they were "utter nonsense".

"We believe that the action was prepared by both the Islamist radicals themselves and was facilitated by Western special services," Alexander Bortnikov, director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), said on television.

"The special services of Ukraine are directly related to this," Bortnikov said, adding Kyiv had

helped prepare radicals at an unidentified location in the Middle East.

When asked by Russian reporters if Ukraine and its allies, the United States and Britain, were involved in the attack on the concert hall, Bortnikov said: "We think that's the case. In any case, we are now talking about the texture that we have. This is general information."

Bortnikov, 72, who has served as head of the FSB since 2008, said Russia had yet to identify those who specifically ordered the deadliest attack inside Russia for two decades, but said that retaliatory measures would be taken. He offered no specific evidence for the claims, which hardliners in Moscow could use to justify an escalation of the war in Ukraine and to explain how Russian security services failed to prevent the attack.



**Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena and China's Premier Li Qiang during bilateral talks in Beijing.**

## Sri Lanka PM says China to develop strategic infrastructure

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: Sri Lanka's prime minister said on Wednesday that China has pledged to develop the island nation's strategic deep sea port and the capital's airport after talks with his counterpart in Beijing.

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said China — the island's biggest bilateral creditor — would "assist" Sri Lanka's restructuring of external debt, a key condition to maintaining a \$2.9 billion IMF bailout. Beijing's position on debt restructuring has not been made public, but Sri Lankan officials have said China was reluctant to take a haircut on its loans but could extend the tenure and adjust interest rates.

Sri Lanka in 2022 ran out of foreign exchange to finance essential imports and declared a sovereign default on its \$46 billion foreign debt.

## In Beijing, Dutch PM raises cyberespionage with China's Xi

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said he had discussed an incident of cyberespionage the Netherlands has blamed on the Chinese state during talks with President Xi Jinping on Wednesday.

Chinese state-backed cyber spies gained access to a Dutch military network last year, the intelligence agency MIVD said last month, calling it part of a trend of Chinese political espionage against the Netherlands and its allies.

It was the first time

the Dutch publicly attributed cyberespionage to China, as national security tensions grow between the two countries. They are also in a confrontation over restrictions of exports of high-tech semiconductor equipment made by Dutch giant ASML to China.

Beijing routinely denies allegations of cyberespionage and says it opposes all forms of cyberattack.

US and British officials on Monday filed charges, imposed sanctions and accused Beijing.

## Ukraine's president replaces a top security official

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has replaced one of the country's top security officials in a reshuffle that comes as the war has dragged into a third year.

Zelenskyy dismissed Oleksii Danilov, who served as secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, thanking him for his service in a video address late Tuesday.

## Indonesia's losing candidates urge court to disqualify president-elect

**Monitoring Desk**  
JAKARTA: Indonesia's losing presidential candidates laid out their court challenge on Wednesday to last month's election, accusing the state of interference and urging a poll re-run and disqualification of the winner, Prabowo Subianto.

Former governors Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo said the resounding victory of Defence Minister Prabowo was helped by pressure on regional officials from a partisan administration and President Joko Widodo, with social aid used as a tool to ensure just one outcome. Anies said the election showed the world's third-largest democracy was at risk of sliding back towards its authoritarian past, and warned it could set a bad precedent.

"This practice will be perceived as normal, a habit," he told the Consti-

tutional Court. The outgoing administration of Jokowi, as the president is widely known, has rejected accusations of election interference. Prabowo received nearly 60% of the votes, helped by the tacit backing of hugely popular former rival Jokowi.

He promised to maintain his predecessor's agenda of refurbishing infrastructure, adding jobs and developing downstream industries to better exploit Indonesia's vast mineral resources. Anies received a quarter of the vote and the third-placed Ganjar Pranowo took 16%. Challenges to election outcomes are typical in Indonesia and the court is expected to hand down its decision on April 22. Anies' team urged the court to disqualify Prabowo from the ballot, as a beneficiary of unfair practices, asking it to order Jokowi to keep neutral in any re-run of the election.

## Israel asks US to reschedule scrapped meeting on Rafah offensive plans

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Israel has asked to reschedule a meeting with US officials to discuss its military plans in Gaza's southern city of Rafah, a US official said on Wednesday, days after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu abruptly scrapped the planned talks.

Netanyahu called off a planned visit to Washington by a senior Israeli delegation after the US allowed passage of a Gaza ceasefire resolution at the United Nations on Mon-

day, in a move that appeared to reflect growing US frustration with the Israeli premier. US officials said the Biden administration was perplexed by the Israeli cancellation and considered it an overreaction to the Security Council resolution, insisting there had been no change in policy.

On Wednesday, a US official said Netanyahu's office "has said they'd like to reschedule the meeting dedicated to Rafah. We are now working with them to set a convenient date."

## Over 63,000 people dead or missing on migration routes

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: At least 63,285 people have perished or disappeared on migration routes around the world between 2014 and 2023, with most deaths caused by drowning, the UN migration agency said on Tuesday. A report published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on its Missing Migrants Project showed that the majority of deaths and disappearances — 28,854 — occurred in the

Mediterranean, followed by Africa and Asia. Nearly 60 per cent of deaths documented were linked to drowning, and more than one third of those identified were from countries in conflict, including Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria and Ethiopia. IOM's data showed that the deadliest year for migrants in the last decade was 2023, when it recorded 8,541 deaths in part due to a sharp increase of fatalities in the Mediterranean.

## 7 Lebanese and an Israeli killed in an exchange of fire along the Lebanon-Israel border

**Monitoring Desk**  
HEBBARIYE: An Israeli airstrike on a paramedics center linked to a Lebanese Sunni Muslim group in south Lebanon killed seven of its members early Wednesday and triggered a rocket attack from Lebanon that killed one person in northern Israel, officials said. The strike on the village of Hebbariye came after a day of airstrikes and rocket attacks between Israel's military and Lebanon's Hezbollah group.

# PM reaffirms Pakistan's firm support to global efforts for peace, stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reiterated Pakistan's firm support to global efforts for peace and stability without compromising on the security of its people, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Addressing an Iftar dinner hosted in honour of the members of the diplomatic corps at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the prime minister said "as a peace loving nation, Pakistan desires peace with all and enmity with none".

He reaffirmed that his government would follow this message of the founding fathers of the country.

The prime minister further said that constitution of Pakistan guaranteed equal rights to all citizens without any distinction.

To translate it into reality, different policies had been enacted and every community in Pakistan had the complete freedom to profess their faith and prac-

tice their religion, he added.

The prime minister also spelled out the priorities of the government and said that after conclusion of peaceful general elections, progress and prosperity of the people of Pakistan were at heart of the government's agenda.

They had a development oriented agenda to turn around the economic trajectory, he said, adding the government would strive to bring reforms, forge global partnership for shared development and attract foreign investment.

He said that country's foreign robust policy continued to support global efforts for peace and stability. The prime minister further reiterated Pakistan's firm support to Palestinians in their just and inalienable right to self determination and stressed the need for making sincere efforts to immediately implement a recently United Nations Security Council's adopted resolution for a ceasefire.

He said that Pakistan

reaffirmed its support to global efforts for immediate ceasefire.

About the holy month of Ramadan, he said that this month signified more than fasting and gave a message of sacrifice, discipline and warm hospitality, respect for all and embodied a spirit of compassion. He said besides, the month gave a powerful message of harmony, peace and tolerance, adding these qualities were required most in a world grappled with diverse challenges and divides.

The prime minister said that they should make endeavours to spread the shared message of peace and equality and work collectively for 'an equitable and peaceful world order'.

Earlier, speaking on the occasion, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said that the month of Ramadan was of special religious and social significance as it provided time for reflection, compassion and unity, showing unity among diverse cultures.



ISLAMABAD: NCRC Chairperson collaborates with Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan to elevate child rights agenda and boost Pakistan's Global Image.

## Steering Committee on 5Es Framework holds maiden meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday chaired the first meeting of the Steering Committee on the 5Es framework for effective implementation of the multi-pronged strategy to turnaround Pakistan and put it on a sustained growth trajectory.

The Committee decided to hold a One-Day "consultative workshop" after Eid-ul-Fitr in which officials from all the ministries and relevant stakeholders would be invited for deliberations to implement the framework, a news release said.

Among others, the meeting was attended by

senior officials of federal and provincial ministries and divisions.

The 5Es framework is centred on five key pillars including Exports, E-Pakistan, Environment and Climate Change, Energy and Infrastructure, Equity and Empowerment.

The National Economic Council (NEC) approved the framework last year in June, following which the Planning Ministry expedited its implementation, the formation of a Steering Committee.

"Engagement with all ministries is a part of the exercise which has been started on the directions of Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal," it added.

## Fundamental changes required to improve border situation: Khawaja Asif

ISLAMABAD (INP): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif says fundamental changes are required to improve the border situation with Afghanistan.

Khawaja tweeted that the Afghan soil was being used for terrorism in Pakistan.

"Pak-Afghan border has a unique position in the world and it is different from other borders of the countries," said the defence minister. As Afghanistan government has failed to cooperate to stop terrorism in Pakistan, the country must keep all options open, he suggested, adding despite efforts, the Afghan government was not taking up the issue.

## DC directs to expedite work of under construction water filtration plant scheme

HYDERABAD (APP): The Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Tariq Qureshi on Wednesday inspected the construction work of the water filtration plant scheme at Unit No. 4 Latifabad, following the directive of Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Asif Haider Shah. He also examined the water suction pumps installed on the flow of river Indus, from where water is being supplied to the residents of taluka Latifabad.

The DC directed the WASA engineers to expedite the work of the scheme to provide relief to the people of Latifabad. Relevant officers were also present during his visit.

## Shafqat Shah urges to remember deprived segments of society on Eid

SUKKUR (APP): Prominent Politician, Advocate Syed Shafqat Ali Shah on Wednesday urged that the affluent class to remember their poor relatives and neighbors on the auspicious day of Eid and help them generously.

Talking to APP, he asked the people and opposition to shun their differences and forgive each other's mistakes during the holy month of Ramadan.

Shafqat Ali Shah said Holy month of Ramadan and Eid ul Fitr is an Islamic ritual which gives a message of affection, tolerance and harmony for the whole humanity.

It gives us an opportunity to earn sympathy and blessings and bring collective joys for the Muslims. It is a day upon which our motherland Pakistan was created, thus multiplying the joys of august event, added.

He said the needy, hapless and poor should be squarely helped, so that they could share the joys of the Eid celebrations.

## Two robbers held, 3 injured in separate firing incidents

KARACHI (INP): Two robbers were injured and held after separate encounters while three people including a cop were injured in separate firing incidents in different localities of the metropolis on Wednesday.

A cop was injured in firing of unidentified armed men in Altaf Nagar Zebo Goth area of Organi Town, Karachi. A notorious robber identified as Yasir was held after police encounter in Pirabad area besides recovery of arms and two snatched cell phones from his possession. In Site Area, one robber was injured and held after fire exchange while his two accomplices managed to escape. Two people were injured in firing of unidentified gunmen in Gulzar Hiji Scheme 33, Sikandar Goth.

# All possible steps to be taken to root out scourge of terrorism: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar on Wednesday reiterated the commitment of the government that all possible steps would be taken to root out the scourge of terrorism from the soil of the motherland.

Addressing a press conference after a high level meeting on security chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He said that Prime Minister expressed the firm resolve to eliminate terrorism and make Pakistan a peaceful state.

Tarar said that all the participants of the meeting were on the same page regarding ensuring security for all.

He said today's high level meeting was attended by Federal Ministers, Chief of Army Staff, Chief Ministers of all four provinces, Chief Secretaries, Inspector Generals of the provinces, Chief Secretaries and IGs of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Attallah Tarar said that the meeting had the

consensus that an integrated strategy should be adopted to wipe out terrorism from this country.

"A message of unity was given to the nation today that all units are on the same page with the Federation", he informed the media.

All were on the same page on the integrity and national interest of Pakistan, he said

adding, "We know how to defend ourselves and our old friends".

He disclosed that regarding the investigation of the incident, there was also a consultation on the establishment of Joint Investigation Team.

The minister said that morale of all participants was high in the meeting and they had a unity of thought on tackling the issue. He recalled that in 2018, the Pakistan Muslim League-N had left a peaceful Pakistan free from terrorism.

He said yesterday's incident in Bisham resulted in loss of six precious lives including Chinese citizens.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attallah Tarar addressing a press conference.

# IMF demands trace system to curb tax evasion in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has urged the current government to implement an automatic track and trace system, emphasizing the need to seal units not included in the system.

According to media reports, sources within the Ministry of Finance revealed that the IMF has expressed dissatisfaction with the track and trace system managed by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). The IMF has demanded the full application of the FBR's track and trace system across all sectors.

Specifically, the IMF has insisted on the installation of an automatic track and trace system in the manufacturing sector, with a stern directive to seal units not integrated into the system.

Highlighting concerns over rampant tax evasion, the IMF pointed out the lack of effective measures in key sectors such as cigarettes, sugar, fertilizer, and cement. Notably, the FBR has struggled to implement the track and trace system outside of the fertilizer sector over the past two years.

The IMF stressed the urgency of implementing track and trace mechanisms in all four sectors to prevent tax evasion and broaden the tax base before initiating any new programs.

It is noteworthy that a staff-level agreement has been reached between Pakistan and the IMF. During a recent visit to Islamabad, the IMF mission conducted meetings with Pakistani officials to review the financial stability criteria set for the loan. However, the \$1.1 billion standby agreement between Pakistan and the IMF was rejected by the IMF Executive Board. Pending approval, the \$3 billion standby arrangement will expire upon Pakistan's receipt of the \$1.1 billion tranche.

Despite challenges, the IMF has lauded Pakistan's economic initiatives, noting improvements in economic and financial conditions in recent months.

The statement commended the country's growth and confidence, attributing them to sound policy management.



KARACHI: Karachi Police Chief, Khadim Hussain Rind awarding CC First Certificate and Cash Reward to Naat Khawan Polcie Constable Qaiser Zaman during meeting held at his office in Karachi.

# Festival of Holi Celebrates in SALU

SUKKUR (APP): A vibrant celebration of Holi took place at the Students Societies Center of the Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU), Khairpur, in a collaborative effort between the Minority and Interfaith Harmony Society and the Hindu Minority Council on Wednesday. The event commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran followed by the National Anthem, symbolizing the unity and diversity of the occasion.

Director of the Anti-Corruption Monitoring Wing Sukkur, Mir Nadir Ali Abro while speaking as chief guest emphasized the rich heritage of Sufism in Sindh, praising it as a land of peace, tolerance and religious harmony. He stressed the imperative of strengthening religious tolerance in the country. Prof Dr Ghulam Mustafa Mashori, representing the Vice Chancellor

and Syed Mohammad Ali Shah, who lauded the efforts of the university administration and the Students Societies Center in fostering unity, cohesion, and interfaith harmony.

Prof Dr Chandan Lal expressed his belief in humanity, citing Islam's promotion of human values, tolerance, and brotherhood. Prof Dr Taj Mohammad Lashari, former Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, highlighted the constitutional protection provided to minorities as per constitution of 1973. Prof Dr Mukesh Kumar underscored the symbolism of Holi as a day of colors, diversity, and love, representing progress. Mukhi Gurmukhdas commended the collaborative efforts of the Students Societies Center and the Hindu Council, emphasizing Sindh's historical legacy of tolerance.



Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Dr. Mehmet Pacaci, paid a courtesy call on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar in Islamabad.

# Ishaq Dar, Jordanian FM discuss Gaza situation; call for unimpeded aid supply

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Wednesday received a telephone call from Ayman Safadi, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Jordan.

In the conversation, they discussed the situation in Gaza and condemned the Israeli brutalities. Foreign

Minister Dar wrote on his X timeline. The two leaders also called for unimpeded provision of aid into Gaza. "I look forward to working closely with Jordanian foreign minister in transforming our bilateral relations with Jordan into multi-tiered partnership," he remarked.

# Advisor to Ombudsman for continuing USC subsidy to deserving families after Ramazan

KARACHI (APP): Advisor to Federal Ombudsman Secretariat Regional Office Karachi, Syed Zakir Hussain on Wednesday paid a visit to an outlet of the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) to review the availability of essential items on subsidized rates to the public and the status of service delivery.

Syed Zakir Hussain along with a team from the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat inspected different sections of the Utility Store, checked quality and prices of available items of daily use, and also inquired about the process of sale of subsidized commodities to consumers. Speaking at the occasion, he informed that the visits of Utility Stores were conducted on direc-

tives of the Federal ombudsman to review the facilities being provided by the government for providing relief to low-income families. He expressed satisfaction with the stock position and availability and prices of essential items of daily use in the store as well as arrangements made to facilitate the consumers.

Syed Zakir Hussain termed the facilitation to beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) and persons with monthly income of less than Rs 60,000 (PMT-60) as encouraging and said that Utility Stores Corporation (USC) was providing subsidies on 19 different essential commodities to the deserving families in the holy month of Ramzan.



LARKANA: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Larkana, Mir Rohal Khan Khoso is listening to the problems of citizens during the Open court program held in Dokri Tehsil near Larkana.

# Cheques distributed to promote small and medium enterprises in agriculture and livestock

HYDERABAD (APP): The Sindh Agricultural Forestry Workers and Coordinating Organization (SAFWCO) has disbursed grant of Rs. 0.5 million to promote small and medium scale enterprises related to agriculture and livestock in rural areas, under the program GRASP with the support of European Union, ITC and PPAF. In this regard a cheque distribution ceremony was held at SAFWCO head office here Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, founder and CEO of the SAFWCO Suleman G. Abro said that people of rural areas were cut off from urban society, business and financial institutions, our program aimed to include them in the development

stream and we want them to be entrepreneurial minded, to promote agribusiness, which would not only make them prosperous but also develop the country's economy. We want more and more women, men and youth to be involved in the business of livestock and agricultural production to earn more money by increasing the quality and value of agricultural products, he added. According to a statement, member Central Executive Committee of Sindh Abadgar Board Nawaz Ahmed Nizamani and Central Information Secretary of Sindh Chamber of Agriculture Mir Abdul Karim Talpur appreciated the program and assured their support to the small agricultural traders.

# DIG for putting security high-alert on 'Youm-e-Ali'

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General Hyderabad range Tariq Razaq Dharejo has directed the concerned quarters to put security on high alert on the occasion of Youm-e-Ali (A.S) and in this regard, all SSPs were asked to take fool-proof security measures besides deploying additional personnel at mosques, Imambargahs for maintaining peace and tranquility and promote atmosphere of religious tolerance and brotherhood.

In a statement issued here Wednesday, the DIG ordered the police teams to make overall security measures and other necessary arrangements including deployment of police force at Imambargahs in time.

# Al khidmat foundation hosts Iftar dinner for Orphan children

HYDERABAD (APP): Al-khidmat foundation's subsidiary orphan care hosted an iftar dinner for registered shining stars and their mothers here at Empire Banquet hall on other day.

Chief guest Caretaker Ameer Jamaat Islami Pakistan Liaquat Baloch in his video message said that he was invited to grace the occasion as a chief guest but due to flight suspension could not reach Hyderabad. Liaquat Balouch lauded the efforts of orphan care for arranging Iftar dinner to mark International orphan day and spent an evening with orphan children.

# Court orders Pakistan Railways to pay over Rs 10 million in damages

KARACHI (Online): Local court of Karachi has ordered Pakistan Railway to pay over Rs 10 million in damages.

The court issued these orders in the case in connection with payment of damages by family members of one Javed Iqbal who died in train accident. The court issued this order under fatal incident act 1855.

It may be mentioned that a clash took place between Millat and Sirsyed express near Dharki. Over 50 persons were killed in this accident. The family members of one Javed Iqbal who died in the incident had resorted to local court of Karachi for payment of damage.

# Seven PIA flights cancelled from Karachi Airport

KARACHI (INP): Seven flights of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) were cancelled from Karachi's Jinnah International Airport on Wednesday on technical grounds.

The national carrier's Sui-bound flight was cancelled from Karachi, while two Islamabad-bound flights were also called off from Karachi while another Islamabad-headed flight was facing a delay.

Moreover, two Lahore-bound flights were cancelled from Jinnah Airport. PIA's Sukkur and Multan-bound flights were also called off citing technical grounds.

# Non provision of attested copies of forms case: EC is bound to provide forms as per law: IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): During the hearing of petitions against Election Commission (EC) on non provision of attested copies by it, the EC authorities told the court that EC has issued directives to concerned ROs and provincial election commissioners too.

Upon it the court while expressing sorrow remarked if contempt of court petitions have come on such small matter then it is matter of regret.

The Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Aamer Farooq took up for hearing petitions filed by Shoaib Shaheen and Suleman Akram Raja Wednesday.

Junior counsels of Shoaib Shaheen and Suleman Akram Raja appeared in the court.

EC authorities also appeared in the court and told the court that the EC has issued directives to the respective ROs and provincial election commissioners.

The CJ IHC remarked obtaining attested copies of the forms is basic right of petitioners. Contempt of court petitions against you are there too.

The court remarked it is matter of regret if contempt of court petitions come on such small matter.

Shoaib Shaheen said attested copies of the respective forms have been provided to him. But I have not checked them. It is our request that forms of constituencies of provincial assembly be provided to us along with national assembly.

EC authorities also appeared in the court and told the court that the EC has issued directives to the respective ROs and provincial election commissioners.

The CJ IHC remarked obtaining attested copies of the forms is basic right of petitioners. Contempt of court petitions against you are there too.

The court remarked it is matter of regret if contempt of court petitions come on such small matter.

Shoaib Shaheen said attested copies of the respective forms have been provided to him. But I have not checked them. It is our request that forms of constituencies of provincial assembly be provided to us along with national assembly.



KARACHI: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President, Haleem Adil Shaikh presenting certificate of appreciation among party workers, who release from jail during a ceremony in Karachi.

# Strongly condemn Besham attack aimed to sabotage Pak-China relations: 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 business community strongly condemns the terrorist attack in Beham area of district Shangla of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, he said that terrorist attack with claimed lives of five Chinese engineers and one Pakistani was a conspiracy to spoil relations with Pakistan's most valued friend, which will never succeed.

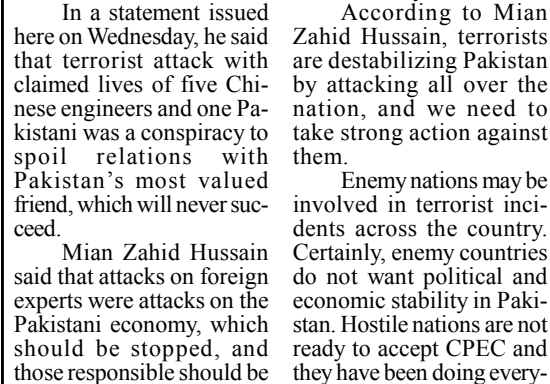
Mian Zahid Hussain said that attacks on foreign experts were attacks on the Pakistani economy, which should be stopped, and those responsible should be punished.

He said that five Chinese citizens have been killed, while many people have also been injured in the suicide attack.

In 2021, 13 people were killed in a similar incident, after which work on the local dam was stopped for several months. Again, such an attack on the Chinese working on the same dam is both condemnable and a security failure.

According to Mian Zahid Hussain, terrorists are destabilizing Pakistan by attacking all over the nation, and we need to take strong action against them.

Enemy nations may be involved in terrorist incidents across the country. Certainly, enemy countries do not want political and economic stability in Pakistan. Hostile nations are not ready to accept CPEC and they have been doing everything in this regard.



MOHENJO DARO: A tourist delegation from Italy are visiting and expressed keen interest in the historical ruins of the World Heritage Monuments of Mohenjo Daro.