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Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti sworn in as 19th Chief Minister Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP)-designated Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti was sworn in as the 19th Chief Minister of Balochistan here at the Governor House on Saturday afternoon.

No compromise to be made on restoration of peace at all: Newly elected Chief Minister urges people on mountain to come back and join mainstream

Mir Sarfraz Bugti assures House not to sit with ease till resolving real issues of province; assures vacancies not to be sold out, vows to work for improvement of educational institutions and health system; terms good governance, law & order and climate challenge major challenges

The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar administered oath to the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. The simple but impressive ceremony was attended by the Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Faisal Karim Kundi, mem

QUETTA: The newly elected Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has urged the "people on mountains" to come back and join the national mainstream. He said that we are ready to talk to the angry people and want them to become part of mainstream. He said that whatever has to be acquired by us, it is to be acquired from this House (Balochistan Assembly), not through gun. He said that dialogue is the policy of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), and we believe in it to resolve the issues. However, we would not be making any compromise on restoration of peace all. He also said that we have to correct the province, this would not be done by any other coming from outside.



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar administering oath to newly elected Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

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QUETTA: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari talking to media persons during his visit to Quetta. Newly elected Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti is also present on the occasion.

Bilawal Bhutto wants missing persons issue resolved through parliamentary committee

Criticises Achakzai for becoming PTI candidate for president

QUETTA (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has proposed forming a parliamentary committee on enforced disappearances in Balochistan to find a solution to the pressing issue of missing persons. Addressing a news conference at the Balochistan Chief Minister's Secretariat on Saturday, Bilawal exhorted all political groups to unite with the PPP on the matter of missing persons, acknowledging that no single party could address this is-

sue unilaterally. The former foreign minister said that the PPP-led Balochistan government would combat the menaces of terrorism and extremism in light of the National Action Plan (NAP), noting that terrorism had been one of the biggest problems facing the province. Bilawal said that the PPP would run this province, where Sarfraz Bugti has been elected the chief minister unopposed, in accordance with the vision of Benazir Bhutto, the slain former prime minister. The PPP leader af-

firm that Bugti-led provincial government would strive to address the challenges facing Balochistan. He said that he advised Bugti to pay his maiden visit as the CM to calamity-hit city of Gwadar and ensure uninterrupted relief efforts. Bilawal averred that the PPP would relieve the people of Balochistan through its economic charter, adding that the provincial government would function with a conciliatory approach. Continued on page 2

Numerous problems being faced need solution on urgent basis: Balochistan CM-ship not bed of roses, bed of thrones, members of Balochistan Assembly

Independent Report QUETTA: The members of Balochistan Assembly have underlined the need to re-



solve the numerous issues being faced by the province and its people. They stressed that collective efforts are needed to resolve the issues of province and work for well being of the masses. nouncement made about election of Mir Sarfraz Bugti as Chief Minister, here on Saturday. Nawab Sanaulah Zehri and other members of assembly congratulated newly elected Chief Min-

ister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. He said that he is sure that Sarfraz Bugti would take all along in the House. Expressing views at the session, MPA Saleem Khosa said that the Chief Minister-ship of Balochistan is not the bed of roses, rather its bed of thrones. He said that the education and health sectors are required to be improved on an emergent basis. Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani said that all members of assembly should work together for improvement of the province. While congratulating the newly elected Chief Minister, Zahoore Buledi said that he (Bugti) has the leadership capabilities.

Three terrorists killed, four injured in Karak IBO

RAWALPINDI (APP): The security forces on Saturday killed three terrorists amid an intense exchange of fire while four of them got injured during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted in Karak district. During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between the Army troops and the terrorists, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. Weapons, ammunition

and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against law enforcement agencies as well as innocent civilians, it said. "Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism," the ISPR said.

Baloch Culture Day celebrated

Independent Report QUETTA: The Baloch Culture Day was celebrated in Quetta on Saturday. Marking the Baloch Culture Day, a colourful cultural ceremony was arranged by the Directorate of Culture at Noori Naseer Khan Cultural Complex, Spinnery road. A large number of people belonging to different walks of life including women and children participated in the ceremony. The Baloch culture colours were witnessed on the occasion with the participants wearing the Balochi cultural dress.

Presidential Election: Zardari, Achakzai submit nomination papers

ISLAMABAD (Online): For the election of the President of the country, the government coalition has submitted the nomination papers of Asif Ali Zardari and the opposition party fielded Mahmood Achakzai as their candidate. On behalf of the People's Party, party leader Farooq H. Naik has submitted the papers of former President Asif Zardari. Papers were submitted to the presiding officer in Islamabad High Court, Chief Justice Islamabad High Court Amir Farooq received the nomination papers of Asif Zardari. Asif Zardari will be the presidential candidate on behalf of the People's

Party, while Bilawal Bhutto is the proposer of his father Asif Zardari and Farooq H. Naik is the supporter. On the other hand, the Sunni Unity Council submitted the nomination papers of Mahmood Khan Achakzai for the presidential election, which was submitted by PTI leader Latif Khosa in the Islamabad High Court. Election Commission of Pakistan has released the schedule for the presidential election. According to the schedule, nomination papers can be submitted on March 2 before 12 noon. The nomination papers can be withdrawn till 12 noon on March 5, the list of presidential candidates will be displayed on March 5.

NA speaker approves Shahbaz Sharif, Omar Ayub's nomination papers for PM election

National Assembly to elect new prime minister today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Saturday approved the nomination papers of Pakistan Muslim League-N's Shehbaz Sharif and Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) leader Omar Ayub Khan for the prime minister election. According to a press release issued by the National Assembly secretariat, the Speaker approved the nomination papers for the Prime Minister's slot after the scrutiny of the papers. The election for the Prime Minister will take place during the session of the National Assembly scheduled for Sunday at 11 am. Only two candidates

submitted their nominations for the slot. The nomination papers for MNA Main Muhammad Shahbaz were proposed by MNAs Syed Khurshed Ahmad Shah, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Tariq Bashir Cheema, Rana Tanvir Hussain, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf Zaman, Attaullah Tarar, Abdul Aleem Khan, and seconded by MNAs Romina Khurshed Alam, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Laghari, Ahsan Iqbal, Kessoo Mal Kheel Das, Anusha Rahman Khan, Hanif Abbasi, Jamal Shah Kakar. The nomination pa-

pers of Omar Ayub Khan for Prime Minister of Pakistan/Leader of the House were proposed by MNAs Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Asad Qaiser, Riaz Khan Fatyana, Umair Khan Niazi, and seconded by MNAs Mohammad Sanaulah Khan Mastikhel, Ali Khan Jadoon, Mujahid Ali, and Malik Mohammad Amir Dogar. The election for the Prime Minister would be conducted through the division of members in the House. As per the Constitution, before the voting process begins for the slot of Prime Minister, "bells" will ring. Continued on page 2

Pakistan condemns India's high handedness in seizure of commercial goods

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Saturday condemned India's high handedness in seizure of commercial goods imported by a Karachi based commercial entity. In response to the media questions regarding Indian seizure of commercial equipment destined for Pakistan, the Foreign Of-

fice spokesperson in a statement said, "These reports are reflective of Indian media's habitual misrepresentation of facts." She said, "This is a simple case of import of a commercial lathe machine by a Karachi based commercial entity which supplies parts to the automobile industry in Pakistan."



ISLAMABAD: Senator Ishaq Dar along with others Parliamentary leaders submitting the nomination papers of Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif for Prime Minister of Pakistan/Leader of the house to secretary National Assembly Tahir Hussain in the Parliament House in the Federal Capital.

Dewatering operation & rehabilitation process continues after torrential rains in Gawadar city

Independent Report QUETTA: The dewatering operation and rehabilitation process is in full swing in Gawadar city after the devastating rains. According to the reports reaching here, Gwadar Development Authority, district administration and other institutions are actively engaged jointly in the rescue, relief and rehabilitation activities in the port city for last four days. These civil and military institutions and administration are providing necessary relief to the affected people stranded in the rain water. In first phase, the rain water is being drained out from the houses. The drainage of water has been made possible through drain line of GDA in most areas of the city. Even the drainage of water is continued at present. While on the other hand, sewerage treatment plant is fully operational

which has the capacity of 400,000 gallons. The reports also suggested that the rain water is being drained out after making cut in the low lying areas of Gawadar city. However, the water tankers and pumping machines are being used to pump out the water where there is no room of making cut. As a result, the level of water has decreased in the houses and streets. Needless to mention here is that 14 water tankers, 25 pumping machines, two excavators and even number loaders are part of the dewatering operation on special directives of the Director General GDA, Dawood Khan Khilji. The GDA is committed to continue the dewatering operation along with district administration and other institutions till the end. The operation would be completed after cleaning the houses and streets in the Gawadar city.

17 persons killed, 23 injured due to prolonged rain spell in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): At least 17 persons were killed and 23 were reported injured due to the prolonged spell of rain starting continuously from Thursday evening in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said DG Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Muhammad Qaiser Khan on Saturday. 21 houses were reported completely destroyed while 17 partially, he added. He said that PDMA is working to open closed road and provide facilities to people stuck in rains and landsliding. Six tourists have been rescued in Malamjabba, said DG. He said that directives have been issued to all DCs in this regard. Apart from humans, reports about perishing of livestock has also been received from authorities of Rescue 1122 KP. The deceased include children, women and men who died because of caving in of roofs of their houses.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali administering Oath from newly elected Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Ameen Khan Gandapur at Governor House.

Ali Amin Gandapur takes oath as KP CM

PESHAWAR (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Ali Amin Gandapur on Saturday took oath as newly elected Chief Minister (CM) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Governor KP Ghulam Ali administered the oath to Ali Amin Gandapur in a ceremony held at Governor's House in Peshawar today. Yesterday, Ali Amin Gandapur was elected as Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In the 106 house, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf candidate bagged 90 votes while PML-N candidate Dr. Ibadullah Khan managed to secure 16 votes.

Earlier today, talking to a private television channel newly-elected Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Ali Amin Gandapur said that nine Lac entitled persons in province will be paid Rs 10,000 cash each in Ramadan. He said that the data will be collected from Ehas programme to keep transparency in the matter. Gandapur also promised large-scale reforms in the province. He said experts' services will be availed to curb corruption and misappropriation. "We will halt those involved in corruption and the sources of graft," chief minister said.



QUETTA: MPAs congratulating newly elected Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

## Alex Hartley opens up about her experience as female coach in PSL 9

MULTAN (Online): Former English cricketer and Multan Sultans spin bowling coach, Alex Hartley, is shattering barriers in Pakistan Super League (PSL) season nine. Initially apprehensive about cultural acceptance, Hartley found herself warmly embraced by the Multan Sultans' fraternity. "Everyone is welcoming and understanding. Ali (Tareen, the franchise owner) has broken boundaries. When he rang me and told me I need you at Multan Sultans, I just couldn't turn it down. It's a lot more than cricket," Hartley said. Upon her arrival, a team meeting led by Ali introduced her as the bowling coach, instantly making her feel at home. "As soon as I arrived, we had a team meeting. Ali sat down everyone and said this is your bowling coach, this is your fielding coach blah blah. I instantly felt at home," she further added. Despite not yet mastering Hindi or Urdu, communication hasn't been an

issue thanks to an interpreter. However, Hartley acknowledges the importance of learning a few words of the local languages. "I need to learn at least a few words of Hindi and Urdu," she said. Hartley also highlighted the dedication of Usama Mir, who diligently worked on his game to address weaknesses. "I think he (Usama) has put on a lot of hard work before the competition. He reflected on the World Cup. He came and told us straight away to look where he was leaking runs, and this was where he wanted to improve," she said. Remaining a stalwart for women's cricket, Hartley envisions broader platforms like the Women's Premier League (WPL) gaining more prominence. "It's probably one of the best tournaments in the world just behind The Hundred. It's been played only in Bengaluru and Delhi. That's a lot of games. Showing women's cricket is accessible to everyone."



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar, Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and newly elected Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti being presented salute during their visit to Governor House.

## CM Murad says no better choice than Zardari for President

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that there is no better choice for the President slot than PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari. While talking to media after submitting nomination papers, CM Sindh said Pakistan People's Party (PPP) will request all parties including MQM-Pakistan to vote for Asif Ali Zardari in the Presidential

election. He said that the party has requested MQM-P members to vote for PPP's candidates for the election of speaker and deputy Speaker election. Replying to a question regarding MQM's demand for amendment in Local Government Act, Shah said that in Sindh, Local Bodies were already powerful, MQM might have demanded local government powers for Punjab. He said that PPP will approach legal forums for its grievances regarding polls.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) named Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai as their presidential nominee for the coveted constitutional post against Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari. Asif Ali Zardari will be presidential candidate of coalition partners including the PML-N, People's Party and other allies. The Election Com-

mission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday announced the schedule for the presidential elections. According to the ECP schedule, polling for the presidential election will be held on March 9 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. The nomination papers can be submitted till 12:00 noon on March 2 (today). The Returning Officer (RO) will scrutinize the nomination papers on March 4 at 10:00 am whereas the final list of candidates for the presidential elections will be displayed on March 5:00 at 1:00 pm.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti meeting with President Balochistan National Party Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch during visit to his residence.

## PPP senator submits resolution seeking restrictions on social media platforms

ISLAMABAD (INP): A resolution has been submitted to the Senate seeking the imposition of restrictions on all social media platforms in the country. The resolution has been moved by Senator Bahramand Tangi of the Pakistan Peoples Party. In the resolution, the senator states that negative impacts are being observed on the youth of the country due to the use of social media.

The resolution details concerns that social media platforms are being used to spread misinformation about religion, culture and traditions, as well as fostering hatred among people based on language and religion. Tangi notes in the resolution that there are reservations about the misuse of social media platforms against national interests, including targeting the Pakistan army with negative

and malicious propaganda. He also observes that through these platforms, fake news or false information is spread on various issues to deceive the youth of the country. The resolution concludes by recommending the government to impose restrictions on social media platforms, such as X [Twitter], Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and YouTube, to protect the younger generation from their negative and destructive effects.

## Shahbaz Sharif..

Continued from page 1 ring for five minutes inside the Parliament House to inform every member — in case they are not present in the chamber at the moment — to gather inside. Once the process begins, the doors will be locked, and no one will be allowed to enter or leave the hall till the PM's election is concluded. Under the supervision of the Speaker, voting will be held through division. For example, if there are two candidates, the Speaker will say that 'whoever wants to vote for candidate A can go to lobby A' and 'whoever wants to vote for candidate B, can go to lobby B'. If there are three candidates then there can be a lobby C as well. At the entrance of the said lobbies, there will be a member of the Assembly Secretariat staff who will record the name of every

Member of the National Assembly in the register. The whole process will be open and people sitting in the galleries will be able to see who votes for whom. The political parties have to vote collectively and every member has to vote for the candidate that their party is voting for. Section 91(4) of the Constitution states, "The Prime Minister shall be elected by the votes of the majority of the total membership of the National Assembly: Provided that, if no member secures such a majority in the first poll, a second poll shall be held between the members who secure the two highest numbers of votes in the first poll and the member who secures a majority of votes of the members present and voting shall be declared to have been elected as Prime Minister."

## PTI begging US to grant NRO to party founder, claims Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-N senior leader Ahsan Iqbal said that PTI members are begging America to grant NRO to the jailed leader. Speaking to the media, Iqbal said that the nomination papers of PML-N's Shehbaz Sharif have been approved. "We have not raised any objection to Omar Ayub," he said. The former federal minister said that they accept the election results of February 8 but the PTI members cry the same in every election that it was rigged. He said that the same allegation was levelled in 2008. The Speaker rejected the objection of PTI.



RAWALPINDI: A view of covers on the pitch at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium as the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season nine T20 cricket match between Lahore Qalandars and Peshawar Zalmi called off due to rain and wet outfield.

## Mir Sarfraz Ahmed..

Continued from page 1 chers of provincial and national assembly as well as other prominent tribal and political personalities and elites. At end of his oath, Mir Sarfraz Bugti raised slogan of Jeeve Bhutto (Love live Bhutto). Soon after taking oath, the Governor congratulated the new Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. Meanwhile, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, other members of assembly and participants of ceremony also extended congratulations to Mir Sarfraz Bugti on becoming new Chief Minister. Earlier, Mir Sarfraz Bugti was elected as Chief Minister through voting conducted in the session of provincial assembly the same noon. In all 41 members of assembly cast their votes in favour of Mir Sarfraz Bugti during the voting process. The Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai

chaired the session for election of the Chief Minister. He made announcement regarding election of Mir Sarfraz Bugti as Chief Minister Balochistan. He said that 41 members cast votes in favour of Mir Sarfraz Bugti to be elected as Chief Minister. The Speaker also announced that four nomination papers had been submitted in favour of Mir Sarfraz Bugti for his election as Chief Minister. Different members of assembly had proposed and seconded Sarfraz Bugti as Chief Minister in the nomination papers. Meanwhile, all the four members belonging to National Party including its President Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch didn't take part in voting process. Similarly, JUL-F members of the assembly boycotted the session and didn't turn up in the House. Later, Mir Sarfraz Bugti sat on the seat of Leader of House in the assembly.

## Bilawal..

Continued from page 1 Bilawal Bhutto turned his guns towards Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai after PTI-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) nominated the latter as their presidential nominee. The SIC announced its decision today, nominating Achakzai to contest for the top constitutional post against PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, who is a joint candidate of the PML-N and other political parties part of the coalition set to form a government in the Centre. Bilawal Bhutto said that Mahmood Khan Achakzai cannot call himself a "nationalist" as he becomes PTI candidate for president's slot. However, the PPP chairman said, he would continue to hold dialogue with nationalist parties. Out of 336, the alliance has 209 seats in the National Assembly so far while the opposition parties have 104 members with the PTI-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) being the largest party in the lower house. In Punjab, PML-N is the largest political party with 194 seats while the PPP is in the majority in Sindh Assembly. Both the parties have also formed an alliance in the Balochistan Assembly. Moreover, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, the SIC has over 85 lawmakers.

## Snowfall continue at Lower, Upper Chitral, no electricity, all roads blocked

CHITRAL (APP): Snowfall is continue in Chitral and suburbs areas from the last 24-hours with no electricity and road access has been completely blocked as two to three feet has fallen in Chitral city, while two 2.5 feet of snow has been recorded on Lowari Tunnel Road. The road to Garam Chashma and all roads leading to other districts have completely been blocked due to overnight heavy snow. Till filling of this report on Saturday afternoon, the snowfall has continued without any break. The communication of Chitral to other districts has also been cut-off with roads closed for all kinds of traffic due to heavy snowfall

as a result more than 40,000 people have been stranded and disconnected from other parts of Chitral. After two days of continuous rain, snowfall in Lower and Upper Chitral districts since Thursday night, the intensity of the closure has also increased. There is no rush in the markets while the traffic on the roads is not visible. The district administration has warned the public to avoid unnecessary travel to be saved from any inconvenience or mishap due to avalanches or land-sliding. Snowfall is also continuing in the three areas of Kalash Valley, Bomburit, Barir, Rambur and Shekhanandeh.

## Javed for continued improvement in health sector

LAHORE (APP): Former Provincial Minister of Health, Professor Dr. Javid Akram, emphasized the need for further enhancements in the healthcare sector. In an address at the eighth annual conference organized by the International Radiology Society of Pakistan at a local hotel here on Saturday, while acknowledging the positive strides taken by the previous government, Dr. Akram highlighted areas for improvement during his speech. Addressing as the special

guest, Dr. Akram commended the organizers for the successful arrangement of the conference, focusing on the significant subject matter at hand. He underscored the importance of relentless efforts in combating issues that threaten humanity. Praising the leadership of former chief minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Dr. Akram noted the decisive actions were taken against those who undermined humanitarian principles across the province.

## Glimpses of Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto visits to Quetta



GWADAR: Deputy Commissioner Gwadar Aurangzaib Badini sending water pumps for taking out rain water from Gwadar.







## Malaysian Consul General says: Around 10,000 Pakistani products included in free trade agreement

HYDERABAD (APP): Pakistani and Malaysia government level agreements Pakistani students had limited academic opportunities in Malaysia. The Malaysian Consul General said that his government was offering scholarships to postgraduate and PhD students. He added that various parts of Pakistan have immense tourism potential and have ideal opportunities there. He was surprised to note that despite having rich coastline in Karachi required attention was given to it for tourism purposes. He said that he would talk to Malaysian

government for increasing import of Pakistani rice. He further said that Pakistani exporters could use Malaysian ports for trade purposes for other countries as transit facility. Earlier, HCCI President Adeel Siddiqui welcomed the guest and said that the two countries have friendly ties. He said that Hyderabad has great potential for joint ventures between Malaysia and Pakistani governments in hotel, health and education sectors. He stated Pakistani government was offering all sorts of guarantees. He added that there was big gap between Malaysian and Pakistani trade balance.



KARACHI: President of the Karachi Press Club, Saeed Sarbazi, Shoaib Ahmed, Secretary DG Horticulture Department Nadeem Hanif, DG KDA Naveed Siddiqui and others are cutting the ribbon during inauguration ceremony beautiful and colorful flowers exhibition, held at Karachi press club.

## UK-Pakistan Inward Trade Mission visits SCCI

SIKALHOT (APP): The UK-Pakistan Inward Trade Mission visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) to engage with the local business community here on Saturday.

Upon arrival, the delegates received a warm welcome from Vice President (VP) SCCI Amer Majeed Sheikh, President Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) Dr. Mariam Noman, Sialkot Business Community and WCCI Executive Committee Members.

During the meeting, Vice President SCCI M Amer Majeed Sheikh emphasised the importance of strengthening bilateral relations between the UK and Pakistan. He said the visit presented a unique opportunity to boost trade and investment between the two nations. He

conveyed his appreciation to the delegation for attending the exhibition "We-Exhibit 2024", highlighting its role in promoting and supporting women empowerment. The VP SCCI said the presence of the delegation signified a crucial step in strengthening bilateral relations and exploring new avenues of collaboration and trade. He said that the relationship between the UK and Pakistan was deep-rooted, built on shared values and a vision for a prosperous future.

President of the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce Ahmed Jamal Nasir Awan remarked that there was substantial potential for trade between Pakistan and the UK. He expressed his appreciation for the advanced technology utilised by Forward Sports.

## Gold price increases once again

LAHORE (APP): On Saturday, the gold market in Pakistan witnessed an increase of Rs3500 per tola, resulting in higher gold prices across the board. The cost of 24-karat gold reached Rs.20,300 per tola.

Gold dealers also observed a corresponding increase in the rate of 10 grams of 24-karat gold, with an increase of Rs3001, which is now trading at Rs188,872, the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA) said.

These fluctuations in gold rates are closely tied to changes in the value of the US dollar, demonstrating the intricate relationship between currency values and gold prices. This connection highlights the impact of global economic factors on local gold markets, it said.

## Rain to have salutary impact on wheat

FAISALABAD (APP): The recent spells of rains will have salutary impacts on wheat, but it may be harmful for gram crop due to increase of moisture in the air.

A spokesman for the Agriculture Department said here on Saturday that rain would be beneficial for standing crops of wheat, Barseem and fodder, etc. especially in arid areas. He said that the crops especially in arid areas had dire need of rain and the farmers' community was lucky that they had received rain spells in-time. It would not only increase per acre yield but also enhance the overall wheat output in the country.

However, the rain had also increased moisture in the air which might cause suspension of chlorophyll system of the gram plants that would result out attack of "Jhulsao" disease.



LAHORE: Women are looking handmade traditional cloths on a stall during a ceremony in connection with International Women Day, organized by All Pakistan Women Association, in the Provincial Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors are buying handmade items during Stone exhibition at a shopping in Federal Capital.

## Affordable power rates vital to attain sustainable industrial growth: Gohar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Commerce Dr Gohar Ejaz on Saturday stressed the need for ensuring affordable power rates for the local industrial sector to attain sustainable industrial growth as well as enhance the competitiveness of manufacturing sector of the country.

In a press statement, the minister underscored the significance of maintaining energy prices at 9 cents per unit for local industry, adding that it was essential for the survival of the industrial sector, which

was a source of job creation, export production, and import substitution.

The minister emphasized for prioritizing industrial growth to stimulate economic prosperity by enhancing exports and making the local manufacturing sector viable to achieve ambitious targets in global markets, including China, GCC countries, Africa, ASEAN, EU, UK and USA.

The provision of electricity at 9 cents per unit to industries aims to

provide a level playing field for local industries and enhance their competitiveness globally, he said adding that the proposal was also approved by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), reflecting the government's commitment to supporting industrial growth.

Gohar Ejaz expressed optimism that the new government would decide on the issue, enabling industries to operate more efficiently and contribute significantly to national economic prosperity.

## WTO talks end with no major win, throwing trade body into 'crisis'

ABU DHABI (APP/APP): A high-level WTO conference ended Saturday with a temporary extension of an e-commerce moratorium but no deals on agriculture and fisheries, throwing into doubt the effectiveness of the multilateral trade body.

The outcomes of the World Trade Organization's 13th ministerial conference in Abu Dhabi highlighted the sharp divisions between the body's 164 members amid geopolitical tensions and economic headwinds that are threatening global commerce.

"The WTO needed a good crisis and perhaps this will lead to a realisation that we cannot continue like this," said a senior European Union official participating in the talks.

Speaking at the closing press conference, the Emirati chair of the so-called MC13 gathering, Thani Al Zeyoudi, acknowledged the shortcomings. "Despite our best efforts, we failed to agree on some texts which are of great importance to many of our members," said Al Zeyoudi, who also serves as the UAE's foreign trade minister.

## Steps to control inflation, food items to be ensured on govt rates

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal Saturday said that steps are being taken by the district administration to control inflation and provide food items to the citizens as per the rate list.

He expressed these views in his office while chairing the District Price Review Committee to determine the rate lists under the supervision of the district administration to ensure the supply of food items to the citizens at affordable rates.



LARKANA: Traders and shopkeepers are holding protest demonstration against the high handedness of Market Police Station, held in Larkana.

## ICCI all sets to host Global Business Conference

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) is all set to host the Global Business Conference on March 4 in Dubai.

The preparations for the Business Conference have been completed. A 160-member delegation of industrialists and traders led by ICCI President Ahsan Bakhtawari has reached Dubai to participate in the conference.

Global investors from Pakistan, Dubai and Gulf countries including the

whole world will participate in the conference. Representatives of the SIFC will brief the global investors.

ICCI President Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the Conference was a great opportunity to attract foreign investment in Pakistan.

The sustainable solution to the economic problems facing Pakistan is in investment. He said that the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce was working to attract investors in various sectors.

## Nasdaq, S&P 500 surge to fresh records on AI momentum

NEW YORK (APP/APP): The Nasdaq and S&P 500 finished at fresh records Friday following another banner day for Nvidia and other chip companies on bullish sentiment about artificial intelligence.

The tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index, which on Thursday had finished at its first record since 2021, moved higher still, ending at 16,274.94, up 1.1 percent.

The broad-based S&P 500 jumped 0.8 percent to 5,137.08, also a record, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average added

0.2 percent at 39,087.38.

Dell Technologies became the latest beneficiary of the AI fever, surging more than 31 percent following an earnings report that highlighted its growing AI business.

Nvidia, whose chips are seen as perhaps the purest bet on AI, jumped four percent. Other chip companies, including Advanced Micro Devices and Micron Technology, also advanced.

CFRA Research's Sam Stovall also pointed to weaker economic data.

## Pakistan's hosiery export to China up by 45pc: Irfan

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan's hosiery export to China witnessed a substantial surge, marking a remarkable 45 percent increase in the last year.

This significant uptick underscores the strengthening trade ties between the two nations and highlights Pakistan's growing prominence in the global textile market, said Muhammad Irfan, Trade and Investment Counselor at the Consulate General of Pakistan in Guangzhou on Saturday.

He said that several factors contributed to this notable expansion in hosiery exports. Pakistan's competitive advantage lies in its robust textile industry, which is known for its quality products and cost-effectiveness.

"Overall pantyhose, tights, stockings, socks and other hosiery export from Pakistan to China in the year 2023 crossed \$14.32 million whereas in 2022 it was \$9.81 million, an increase of 45 percent. Hosiery and footwear

made of cotton, commodity code (61159500), crossed \$11.55 million in 2023 while in 2022 it was \$7.61 million, up to 51 percent," he mentioned.

"The largest Chinese delegation participated in TEXPO, one of the largest textile exhibitions in Pakistan held last year, helped increase Pakistan's export to China. This year the exhibition will also be held and I'm hoping a big increase in bilateral trade in 2024", he stated.

Muhammad Irfan further said that with the momentum gained from this surge, Pakistan is well positioned to capitalize on the evolving dynamics of international trade and further enhance its economic standing on the global stage, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. The surge in hosiery exports to China is poised to have a positive impact on Pakistan's economy. Increased export earnings will contribute to increasing foreign exchange reserves.



RAWALPINDI: A vendor is selling dates on his pushcart at Namakah Manadi area during heavy rain in the city.

## Tackling inflation to be most serious challenge for new govt: DFPA

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Disposable Food Packaging Association (DFPA), Ahsan Shahid said that tackling inflation to be most serious challenge for upcoming government as the country the country was in grip of economic crisis due to continuous hike in oil price and depreciation of local currency.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, he warned the high cost of doing business has been hurting the economic growth, as the inflation rate bounced back to 32.2% in concluding month, hurting the trade and industry the most, who faced the brunt of a staggering 520% increase in gas prices.

Quoting the Pakistan

Bureau of Statistics, Ahsan Shahid said that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) surged to 29.2% last month compared to a year ago. The increase was more than market expectations and has lessened the prospects for a cut in the interest rates, which stand at the country's highest ever level of 24%. This reading, the first announced by the PBS after the recently concluded International Monetary Fund (IMF) talks, in which the global lender also cut the inflation forecast for Pakistan to 22.8%, may strengthen the IMF's view of keeping the policy rate unchanged until core inflation starts easing out when the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meets.

## Hope new govt to ensure prudent utilization of public money: FRIA

LAHORE (INP): Senior Vice Chairman (SVC) Ferozpur Road Industrial Association Lahore (FRIA) Shahbaz Aslam said that in a bid to ensure prudent utilization of public money, the upcoming government should introduce an austerity plan that included ban on purchase of all vehicles and ban on purchase of machinery and equipment.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, he said that there shall be a complete ban on purchase of all vehicles except ambulances, buses for educational institutions, solid waste vehicles, tractors, fire fighting vehicles, motor bikes; and there shall be ban on creation of new posts under PSDP/current budget

during Financial Year 2023-24.

Shahbaz Aslam said that the government's austerity measure needed at the time when the country's budget deficit was increasing. The consolidated fiscal deficit has been recorded at 2.3 percent of GDP (Rs2407.8 billion) in first six months (July-December) of the current fiscal year FY2024 against 2.0 percent of GDP (Rs.1683.5 billion) last year.

He said that a primary surplus witnessed a continuous improvement due to contained growth in non-mark-up spending relative to markup payments. Primary surplus improved to Rs.1812.2 billion (1.7 percent of GDP) during Jul-Dec FY2024.

## Meeting reviews vast opportunities for domestic, foreign investment in BoIT

PESHAWAR (APP): A special meeting was held in the Board of Investment and Trade of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (BoIT-KP) wherein President Overseas Pakistani Community in Belgium, Moazzam Ur Rehman and the newly elected member of the Provincial Assembly and former Provincial Minister of Industry Abdul Karim were briefed regarding promotion of domestic and foreign investment in the province.

Director BoIT KP, Iqbal Sarwar briefed the participants about government priorities in attracting investment in tourism, culture and

industry. Participants of the meeting were of the opinion that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa enjoys a distinction because of its unique scenic resorts in different areas which can attract tourists from across the globe. There are so many sites in the province which if opened for international tourists will be visited by a large number of people besides attracting foreign investment, the meeting noted. Iqbal Sarwar observed that there are countless places in the province which are still not visited by tourists and if local and international investors.

Tauqeer Hyder also directed the staff to improve their performance.



