



## Senators urged strengthening of democracy in their farewell speeches

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senators in the upper house upon their retirement on March 11, stressed upon strengthening of democracy in the country for a prosperous future of Pakistan on Wednesday.

Deputy Chairman Senat Mirza Muhammad Afridi accepted the resolution from senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Leader of the House and Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem, Leader of the Opposition, who moved the resolution under Rule 263 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012, that the requirement of Rule 41 of the said Rules regarding question hour be dispensed with for remaining sittings of the current session.

Senator Professor Dr. Mahar Taj Roghani in her farewell speech appreciated the Chairman Senat Sadiq Sanjrani and Deputy Chairman Senat Mirza Afridi for smooth conduct of senate sessions.

She suggested that the oath of the senators should not be mandatory for senators because they don't justify it with their acts when coming into power.

She said that, she did her best in her tenure as senator

but still feel depressed for not contributing enough in the development of the country.

She also suggested that the bills passed by the Senate should not be sent to the National Assembly for further approval because the Senate has the status of upper house, however the bills passed by the National Assembly must come to the Senate for approval.

Senator Moulana Bux Chandio in his farewell speech said that Pakistan has to be run by politicians therefore politicians must believe in dialogue and talk to each other in country's best interest.

He said 18th amendment is an amendment for survival of Pakistan and Pakistan People Party will not tolerate any conspiracy to end this amendment.

He said politicians and political parties must learn from their mistakes and further strengthen democracy by forgetting past mistakes.

He said the democracy will be matured if it is not derailed and would be more strengthen after mistakes.

He also thanked his party leadership for nominating him for senatorship.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over joint review meeting of Finance and P&D Departments



PESHAWAR: Prime Minister Shabaz Sharif meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali

## SHRC, FES organize public hearing on human and labour rights due diligence

By Tanveer Ahmed Soomro  
MIRPUR MATHELO: The Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC), in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Pakistan, organized a public hearing on human and labour rights due diligence and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions for socio-economic development of the district on Wednesday, 6th March 2024, at the DC office, District Ghotki.

During the consultation issues of environmental degradation, inadequate minimum wages, and the contamination of drinking water by factories were underscored. To address these concerns effectively, it is crucial to ensure the active involvement of diverse stakeholders, including community members, environmental experts, and industry leaders. The public hearing, attended by key stakeholders including government officials, representatives of the labor department, education sector, labor unions, corporate social responsibility (CSR) entities, civil society organizations and social activists signifies a collaborative approach to finding effective solutions.

Mr. Iqbal Ahmed Detho, Chairperson of SHRC, presided over the session along with Mr. Agha Sher Zaman, Deputy Commissioner of Ghotki.

Mr. Abdullah, Program Advisor FES-Pakistan, emphasized the importance of business and human rights for Pakistan. He pointed out rights violations faced by the district, particularly by state actors and multinational companies. Despite being a major tax



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali administering oath to new provincial cabinet

## PM distributes huge compensation....

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The prime minister directed the authorities concerned and relevant departments to complete estimates of all destroyed and partially damaged houses within five days and complete the process of disbursement of compensation payment by March 11.

He directed the NDMA and other relevant departments to use helicopters facility for transportation of officials to ensure speedy compilation of estimates of all the destroyed and partially damaged houses in far flung districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa so that the process of compensation package could be completed within said period.

The prime minister said that delay in this regard would be unacceptable and officials failed to achieve their targets would be held accountable.

Shehbaz Sharif announced that Rs 700,000 would be provided for repair of each destroyed house and Rs 300,000 for each partially damaged house.

The financial compensation was not an alternative of a human life but a token of economic relief to their families to live with dignity in the society, he added.

He said the Holy Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had

said that time had come to make inclusive strategy to counter climate change otherwise the upcoming generation would not pardon us.

He said that there should be complete structure mechanism with NDMA and PDMA's of all provinces for speedy humanitarian assistance to people in cases of natural calamities like 2022 floods and underlined the need for effective coordination among PDMA's and NDMA's of all provinces in that regard.

The prime minister said that billions of rupees package were distributed among flood victims of 2022 besides he personally supervised relief and rescue operations in all provinces including Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during that period.

Shehbaz Sharif also met with the rains affected people and children with affection and inquired about their problems.

The prime minister and others also offered Fataha for departed souls of the victims and special prayers for speedy recovery of the injured.

Earlier, upon arrival, the prime minister was received by KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali. Later, the Governor called on the prime minister and exchanged views on overall situation including economic affairs.

## CM Maryam allocates portfolios to cabinet members

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday assigned portfolios to Punjab cabinet members who took their oath earlier in the day.

According to the details, Mariyum Aurangzeb has been named Senior Minister for Planning and Development. She would also serve as Minister of Environment and Forests.

Azma Bukhari has been given the portfolio of Information while Mujtaba Shujaat Rehman has been given Finance portfolio.

Ashiq Hussain Kirmani is given the Agriculture portfolio, Mohammad Kazem Pirzada is appointed to the Irrigation department, and Rana Iskandar Hayat is

handed the School Education department.

The other ministers are Khawaja Imran Nazir for Primary Health, Khawaja Salman Rafique for Special Healthcare, Soheb Ahmad Malik for Civil and Works, Zeeshan Rafique for Local Government, and Bilal Akbar Khan for Transportation. Bilal Yasin will be the Minister Food Department, Ramesh Singh Arora for Minority Affairs, Khalil Tahir Sindhu for Human Rights, Faisal Ayub Khokhr for Sports, Chaudhry Shafay Hussain for Commerce and Industry, Sardar Sher Ali for Mines and Minerals, and Sohail Shaukat Butt for Social Welfare.

## Minorities thrive with rights, safety in Pakistan: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Wednesday said Pakistan, a country where diversity is celebrated, continues to ensure the rights and safety of its minority communities without prejudice.

Talking to media, he said amidst recent developments, the government has reaffirmed its commitment to uphold religious freedom and protect the lives and properties of all citizens.

Ashrafi emphasized that Pakistan is dedicated to fostering an environment

where minority communities can thrive without fear or discrimination. "Our nation stands firm in its commitment to providing equal opportunities and protections for all its citizens, regardless of religious or ethnic background," he added.

He said recent reports highlight the active participation of minority communities in various sectors of society, showcasing their invaluable contributions to the nation's progress.

"From education to healthcare, and from business to public service, members of minority groups are extending their services across all spheres of life," he maintained.

Ashrafi said the government has taken proactive measures to ensure the safety and security of minority communities, with stringent laws in place to prevent any form of discrimination or violence against them. "We are vigilant in safeguarding the rights and liberties of every individual within our borders," he affirmed.

He said the commitment to inclusivity and diversity is evident in Pakistan's efforts to promote harmony and understanding among its citizens.

## CPEC poised to create more job opportunities in Pakistan: Chinese CG

KARACHI (APP): The Consul General of China in Karachi, Yang Yundong, Wednesday, said that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects have created a large number of jobs in Pakistan, providing women with platforms to showcase their abilities.

With advancement in cooperation between China and Pakistan, more employment opportunities will be created for women in coming years, he said while addressing a reception hosted by the Consulate General of China in Karachi in connection with International Women's Day.

The event was attended by former federal minister Barrister Shahida Jameel, female entrepreneurs, women from Sindh and Balochistan belonging to various fields such as

commerce, education, culture, and media as well as female overseas Chinese in Pakistan.

Referring to job creation through CPEC projects the CG informed that at the Thar Coal Mine project over a hundred women have received truck driving training and dozens of the female truck drivers were busy. They participate in the construction of the project, contributing to local development while changing their own lives, he added.

The Chinese CG said that women were excelling in their respective fields and making positive contributions to the promotion of economic and social development in Pakistan and the enhancement of mutual understanding and friendship between China and Pakistan.

## Religious affairs ministry facilitates Pakistani pilgrims for Urs in Kaliyar Sharif, India

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has extended cooperation to Pakistani pilgrims desiring to participate in the annual Urs of Hazrat Khawaja Alauddin Ali Ahmed Sabir (RA) in Kaliyar Sharif, India.

Talking to APP, Ministry's Spokesperson Muhammad Umar Butt urged interested pilgrims to submit their applications through 'Ziyarat Form' by March 20, 2024.

Along with the applications, he said it is mandatory to submit a non-refundable bank draft of Rs. 1000/- in the name of the ministry. The Urs ceremonies are scheduled to be held from September 14 to September 20, 2024, in Kaliyar Sharif, India, he added.

According to him, 200 Pakistani pilgrims will be sent to India to participate in the Urs.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with the Consul General of UAE, Bakheet Ateeq Al-Remeithi during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

## PCB Chairman Naqvi discusses security plan with Kiwi's delegation

ISLAMABAD (INP): A security delegation included New Zealand Players Association Chief Executive Officer Heath Mills and security consultant Reg Dickson met with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday. In the meeting, the arrangements and security plan of the New Zealand cricket team's visit to Pakistan were discussed.

Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi assured the Kiwi delegation of foolproof security arrangements saying New Zealand cricket team players are guests of Pakistan

and best security arrangements will be made for the Kiwi team. The delegation said that they visited Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium and security arrangements are excellent. The Kiwi delegation expressed satisfaction over the security plan.

The Kiwi delegation was informed about the security measures taken by the Pakistan Cricket Board.

PCB Chief Operating Officer Salman Naseer, Director Security Department Colonel Khalid and Director International Pakistan Cricket Board Usman Wahla were also present on the occasion.

## Conditions of fair trial not fulfilled...

Continued from page 1

Therefore, he is willing to confront our past missteps and fallibilities with humility, in the spirit of self-accountability, and as a testament to our commitment to ensure that justice shall be served with unwavering integrity and fidelity to the law. We cannot correct ourselves and progress in the right direction until we acknowledge our past mistakes, the maintained."

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday congratulating the leadership and workers of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), said that by admitting the mistake in Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's trial, the Supreme Court's opinion on the presidential reference had set a new history and tradition. He congratulated Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, President-designate Asif Ali Zardari, PPP leadership and workers for the Supreme Court's observation that former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto did not get a fair trial.

"It is not possible to correct the past mistake

but by admitting the serious mistake, a new history and a new tradition have been set," the prime minister remarked in a statement.

He said that rectification of an injustice of a court by the court was a positive development.

"The unanimous opinion of the Supreme Court in the Bhutto reference will help understand the history at the national level through the right perspective. The process of national unity and development can be accelerated only by correcting the past mistakes and doing away with the bitterness," Prime Minister Shehbaz remarked. Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday termed the Supreme Court's opinion on the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto reference as historic and expressed the hope it would help Pakistan progress on all fronts. Talking to media after the announcement of the Supreme Court opinion, he said history was set to be corrected after 44 years.

## Pakistan Army hosts skiing festival in Malam Jabba

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to promote tourism and adventure sports, the Pakistan Army has organized a vibrant skiing festival and snowboarding competitions in the picturesque region of Malam Jabba.

The event, which saw enthusiastic participation from tourists across the country, garnered praise for its impeccable organization and contribution to showcasing Pakistan's serene landscapes, a private news channel reported.

Amidst the snow-capped peaks of Malam Jabba, tourists indulged in thrilling skiing and snowboarding activities, reveling in the snowy weather and breathtaking scenery.

The festival not only provided an adrenaline rush for adventure seekers but

also served as a platform for fostering camaraderie among participants.

Expressing their gratitude towards the Pakistan Army and the provincial government for orchestrating such a successful event, tourists hailed the initiative as a testament to Pakistan's peaceful ambience and untapped potential for tourism.

The influx of visitors from various corners of the nation underscored the growing interest in exploring the natural wonders of Pakistan.

The resounding success of the skiing festival in Malam Jabba serves as a beacon of hope for the burgeoning tourism industry in Pakistan, promising exciting adventures and unforgettable experiences for travelers in the future.

## I am ready to take every kind...

Continued from page 1

He stressed the need to launch skills development programme in addition to the traditional education in educational institutions.

Moreover, there is also a need to increase professional capacity of the manpower in the government departments, adding he stressed.

The Chief Minister strongly believed that the fruits of development and government's initiatives much reach to the general public.

He said that the implementation would be ensured on the reports and recommendations of Chief Minister Inspection Team (CMIT) in order to bring improvement in the government affairs.

He also said that it is time to deliver the masses by improving the service delivery system.

He said that the public hardships can be lessened by making the service delivery system effective.

He said that the process of accountability and answerability would be made effective by removing the shortcomings in the system.

The Chief Minister said that the increasing pension bill and non development expenditures are major hurdles in implementation on the public projects linked with the basic amenities.

In future, this would emerge as rather more serious issue, for effective financial planning is unavoidable, he observed.



QUETTA: Munir Ahmed Badini presiding over 46th meeting of PPHI Balochistan Board of Directors

## Pak, Azerbaijan agree to enhance cooperation in audit institutions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Azerbaijan have reaffirmed their commitment to enhance cooperation in audit institution of the two countries, besides sharing audit experiences, cooperation in IT audit and environment audit and training of human resources.

The affirmation was expressed during a visit of the four-member delegation from the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Supreme Audit Institution Azerbaijan) to the office of Auditor General of Pakistan (Supreme Audit Institution Pakistan).

The delegation was headed by Vugar Gulmammadov, Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, according to a press release issued by the office of AGP on Wednesday.

The delegation was given a detailed presentation on the working of SAI Pakistan, performance of auditing, and SAI Pakistan's working with CIPFA (Char-

tered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and implementation of Audit Management Information System (AMIS).

The SAI Azerbaijan, on the occasion, informed about the activities of the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan and professionalization of Performance Auditing in SAI Azerbaijan.

The Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan had earlier requested for the peer review of their accounts for the year 2023, keeping in view the professional standing of department of the AGP.

AGP Muhammad Ajmal Gondal presented peer review report of the external Audit of Financial Statements of SAI Azerbaijan to the Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

On the occasion, the guest planted a sapling in the premises of the office.

Earlier, the Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts

of Azerbaijan with his delegation called on President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr. AGP Muhammad Ajmal Gondal, and senior officers of AGP also attended the meeting.

The Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of Azerbaijan briefed the president about the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Supreme Audit Institution of Azerbaijan and SAI Pakistan.

The President emphasized on the increasing co-operation between the SAI Pakistan and Azerbaijan for sharing best auditing practices to enhance transparency and financial accountability. He also appreciated the efforts of AGP with regard to peer review. The Chairman of the Chamber of Accounts of Azerbaijan, thanked the AGP for extending warm hospitality, information about the SAI Pakistan and shown keen interest to explore, learn and benefit from rich experience of SAI Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Portugal, Dr. Muhammad Khalid Ejaz, calls on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## British Council's measures for betterment of climate, environment lauded

ISLAMABAD (APP): The participants of a meeting here on Wednesday lauded British Council for taking measures for the betterment of environment and climate and hoped to start more society focused approaches.

The meeting was held between the official team of British Council, Reach out to Asia (ROTA), and Higher Education Commission with Executive body members of the cabinet of Green Youth Movement Gym Club of International Islamic University (IIU).

The meeting was chaired by Vice President, Research and Enterprise,

Prof. Dr. Ahmed Shuja Syed as well Dean Faculty of Sciences Prof. Dr. Irfan Khan, Incharge female campus Dr. Summiyya Chughtai and Focal persons of initiative Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Naseer and Dr. Sarah Amir were also present.

The executive body presented the 2 years progress report through a presentation.

Gym Captain Kainat Bangash gave a detailed presentation about the activities, thematic approaches, contributions, achievements, success stories and way forward.

She apprised that ac-

ording to HEC guidelines the club was continuing its activities and in the present year it was focusing on Agriculture and forestry, and liquid and solid waste.

She also briefed about the food waste audit, training, workshops, international collaborations and waste audit at the campus.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdulla Faraz Al-Abdulla, Executive Director, Reach Out To Asia appreciated the efforts of the club as well as elaborated that the ROTA and British Council were jointly providing support and encouragement to the projects that are of inclusive value.

## Govt resolved to promote local languages, cultures of all regions: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif extending greetings on the Saraiki Culture and Saraiki Ajrak Day being observed on Wednesday, reiterated that the incumbent government would play its role in promoting the local languages, literature, and cultures of all the regions in the country.

The prime minister, in his message, said that all the colors of the Saraiki region were beautiful while being rich in different cultures and traditions.

Calling the Saraiki dialect "very sweet" he said it was not only spoken in South Punjab rather in Balochistan and India as well.

He said the Saraiki lan-

guage and the Saraiki writers had immense contributions to literature, poetry, and music.

The prime minister said that Saraiki culture was rooted in the thousands of years old Indus Valley Civilisation.

He said that the saints like Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria, Hazrat Shah Ruknuddin Alam, Khawaja Ghulam Fareed, Salman Taunsvi, Sakhi Sarwar Shah and Shams Tabraiz also enriched the Saraiki language through their words.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the promotion of South Punjab's culture, literature, and art had always been among the government's priorities.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers lift ups vendor's setup during an anti-encroachment campaign at F-7 Markaz.

## Annual report: IFA conducted 15,964 raids; served notices to 5541 food outlets

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) has made significant strides in ensuring the safety and quality of food for the citizens of the capital in the last year.

According to annual performance report issued by IFA, with nearly 16,000 raids, over 5,500 notices issued, and numerous awareness seminars conducted, the IFA has been relentless in its pursuit of promoting healthy food practices and cracking down on substandard food establishments.

Recognizing the importance of awareness and education, the IFA organized 12 seminars aimed at enlightening citizens about the significance of consuming healthy food. These seminars served as a platform to engage with the community and disseminate crucial information regarding food safety practices.

Furthermore, the authority prioritized the training of its staff, conducting three comprehensive sessions to enhance their capabilities in enforcing food safety regulations effectively. This investment in staff development reflects the IFA's commitment to fostering a competent workforce dedicated to upholding food safety standards.

In its relentless pursuit of ensuring compliance, the IFA imposed fines on 28 shops found guilty of selling substandard food items and maintaining poor hygiene arrangements. These fines, totaling over Rs 613,000, serve as a deterrent to businesses engaging in malpractices.

Moreover, the authority resolved 286 citizen complaints, addressing concerns and grievances promptly to uphold public trust and confidence in its operations.

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## Ruling coalition secure two-third majority in national assembly: Zahid

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and its allies have secured a two-third majority in the national assembly (NA), following the allocation of reserved seats which were claimed by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).

The coalition government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, which includes the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Mutahida Quomi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), Pakistan Muslim League-Zia (PML-Z) and Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), comprises 229 members in the lower house.

To gain two-third majority in the 336-seat of national assembly, a government needs the support of 224 lawmakers, thereby strengthening the ruling coalition's control over governance and its capability to enact legislative agendas effectively.

The PML-N commands on 123 seats in the

lower house, in which 75 won in the February 8 elections and nine independents who later joined the party. After the allocation of 23 reserved seats (17 for women, 4 for minorities), the total reached at 107. Following the election commission of Pakistan (ECP) ruling on remaining reserved seats, the party clinched 15, out of 20 reserved for women and 1 out of 3 reserved for minorities, cementing its status as the largest party in the national assembly.

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) holds 73 seats including 54 general seats, 16 women and another three reserved seats for minorities. Followed by the Mutahida Quami Movement (MQM) with 22 seats, including 17 general seats and five reserved seats — four women and one minority.

Furthermore, the PML-Q has obtained five seats including three general, one independent and one seat reserved for women was also allocated to it.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Institute of Research and Reform (IRR) and Malik Foundation Ali Rehman Malik giving away trophy to winner Islamabad Women Cricket team after T20 Cricket Match of Unity Cup Championship played between Peshawar and Islamabad women team organized by IRR in collaboration with Malik Foundation at National Cricket Ground.



ISLAMABAD: Portuguese Ambassador in Islamabad, Frederico Silva visiting an exhibition by women artists from all over Pakistan to Commemorate Women's Day 2024 at PNCA, in Federal Capital.

Dr Nadeem says:

## Human development-based approach needed to fully exploit Pak-China cooperation potential

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Caretaker Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan has emphasised the need for adopting an approach based on human development to fully exploit the development potential of Pak-China cooperation in diverse fields. The caretaker federal minister was addressing a round-table discussion titled "China's Economic Development: Opportunities for Pakistan" organised by CGIN-Urdu.

Dr Nadeem Jan said the heart-to-heart connection between the peoples of Pakistan and China indicates a win-win scenario which is a positive indicator for swift development of Pakistan.

He said Pakistan can take a leaf out of China's book to adopt policies based on consistency, ac-

countability, and self-sufficiency to achieve its development goals.

However, he said, Pakistan needs to take ground realities into consideration while setting short and long-term goals. He said dependence on donors shouldn't be an option, and self-reliance and competition should be a way forward. He said Pakistan has the potential to take pharmaceutical exports to \$2 billion and China could be an attractive destination for this. Political Counsellor, Embassy of People Republic of China, Wang Shengjie, said that work on many projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is continuing in Pakistan. He said development goals can be achieved swiftly by adopting the phenomenon of "New

Quality Productive Process" in which strategies driven by innovative approach take precedence.

Wang particularly emphasised the potential of growth in Pakistan's information technology and mining sectors.

Director China Media Group Ms Du Jianing, Director China Study Centre, National University of Science and Technology (NUST) Ms. Xiang Yang, Former Chief Executive Officer Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment Dr Hassan Dawood Butt, Executive Director Pakistan Research Centre for a Community with Shared Future (PRCCSF) Khalid Taimur Akram, CEO of Asian Institute of Eco-Civilisation, Research and Development Shakeel Ahmed Ramay.

## Sustainability Expo held at AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): As part of the ongoing Golden Jubilee celebrations of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), the Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization of AIOU organized a Sustainability Expo and Poster competition.

The event featured stalls from various universities and organizations showcasing their work towards a sustainable environment.

The Expo was attended by a large number of students, families, and children from different educational institutions. The poster competition involved students from various educational institutions, and more than 100 posters were displayed.

The students who participated in the poster competition expressed that such opportunities help them to showcase their art to the public and boost their motivation. Fateha Tariq, Hajra Noor, Ajala Zahra, Miss Preet and Sidra Noor secured the first five positions in the competition respectively. Vice Chancellor of AIOU, Dr. Nasir Mahmood, was the chief guest at the prize and certificate distribution ceremony. Dr. Nasir, along with the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir, Director of the Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC).



ISLAMABAD: Students enjoy horse ride during Annual Funfair at Model College G10/4.

## Irfan Siddiqui urges PTI to stop blame game, focus on public issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui Wednesday advised Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf to stop blame game of rigging and only focus on public related issues as there is dire need for mutual unity for political and economic stability in the country.

Talking to a Private news channel, he said that the country can move forward with unity, discipline and faith and the blame game trend started by Chair-

man PTI is breaking all three ultimately weakening the country.

PML-N leadership remains steadfast in their commitment to guide Pakistan through its current economic and political challenges, with a focus on unity, effective governance, and public welfare, he added.

He stressed that for the importance of avoiding baseless allegations and confusion during this critical phase for the country.

## PSF invites applications from students to participate in IJSO 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) has invited applications from young Pakistani science students to participate in the 21st International Junior Science Olympiad (IJSO 2024).

According to an official of PSF, the IJSO is going to be held from December 02-11, this year in Bucharest, Romania.

IJSO is a science competition for students under 16 years of age on December 31st of the competition year. IJSO was established to promote interest in science related matters among school students exposing them to problem-solving, critical thinking and experimentation.

Over the years, IJSO aims to positively impact science and mathematics education at the school level.

IJSO is usually organized through the programs in the first week of December every year, in any one of the member countries.

About the eligibility, the official informed that interested students (boys and girls) under 16 years of age on December 31, 2024 may send their applications on prescribed proforma available through the weblink <https://psf.gov.pk/IJSO2024.aspx>.

The applicant must be a regular science student and passed minimum SSC-I (Class-IX).

## Comedian Amanullah remembered on death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): The fourth death anniversary of popular comedian Amanullah Khan was observed on Wednesday.

In a career spanning over 45 years, he performed in more than 2,000 plays, other than films and television shows.

Amanullah was regarded as one of the best comedians in the subcontinent. He made a record of doing 860 shows in his career and was also honoured with the Pride of Performance Award in 2018 for his work.

## FBISE launches automated public service system for students

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE), has launched a fully automated public service system to facilitate the students.

According to the details given by the federal board, this initiative offers important services to the students. The students can benefit from the facilities including Online issuance of Migration/NOC certificate, result verification, and duplicate result card.



ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority administration is digging a drain gutter to open blocked sewage lines G-7 in the Federal Capital.

## 23 outlaws held; narcotics, arms seized

Independent Report  
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police (ICP) apprehended 23 outlaws including four professional beggars from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons from their possession.

A public relations officer on Wednesday said that, responding the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Secretariat police team arrested an accused namely Hasnain and recovered stolen valuables from his possession. The Shalimar police team arrested an accused namely Khair Muhammad and re-

covered 2,267 gram heroin from his possession. The Ramna police team arrested an accused Irfan and recovered 550 gram heroin from his possession.

Likewise, the Golra police team arrested two accused Faisal Shahzad and Muhammad Zubair and recovered one 30 bore pistol and 420 gram hashish from their possession. The Sumbal police team arrested an accused namely Aftab and recovered 580 gram hashish from his possession. The Tarnol police team arrested two accused namely Shah Zaib Ilyas and Khursheed and recovered 2,360 gram hashish and 3,500 gram heroin from their possession.

Similarly, the Sangjani police team arrested two accused namely Muhammad Khan and Zain Ul Abideen and recovered two 30 bore pistols from their possession.



## CM Punjab says: Ramzan package to benefit people at their doorsteps

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced the commencement of the largest-ever Ramadan Nigahban Package in Punjab, fulfilling her promises made in her maiden assembly speech.

Addressing a press conference at CM's Office here on Wednesday, she said the Ramadan package, prepared in just nine days, would reach people's doorsteps and benefit them without any botheration. She said that package was aimed at providing swift relief to deserving individuals during the holy month under PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's guidance. "My mission is to provide relief to people at their doorsteps," she added.

The chief minister said the initiative involves distributing 65,000 bags with QR codes, benefiting over 30 million people in Punjab. Beneficiaries' data from the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) was being merged for saving time, Maryam said and added that the upcoming Punjab Socio-Economic Registry Project would gather comprehensive data for future government interventions.

Detailing the Ramadan relief package items including flour, ghee, sugar, rice, and gram flour, the CM directed the district administrations and the Punjab Food Authority to ensure quality of food items. Random checks on hamper content and digitalised delivery mechanisms with the PITB-developed applications would enhance transparency, she added.

Maryam Nawaz said that a digitalised record of distribution of 6.5 million



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz announcing the Ramadan Package in a press conference at Chief Minister House.

## Sindh CM, Saudi envoy discuss implementation of 'Route to Makkah' project

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Mr Nawaf Saeed A. Al Maliki in their meeting at CM House discussed the Route to Makkah Project and agreed to fulfil all the requirements at the earliest to implement the project.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Federal Secretary Atta ur Rehman, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary of Hajj & Umerah Mohammad M. Albejawi of Saudi Arabia and others.

The Route to Makkah project is a mechanism for shifting the immigration and customs clearance process from Saudi Arabia to airports of Pakistan aimed at relieving Hujjaj from the ordeal of immigration and customs clearance upon landing at the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The chief minister said that the project was very important and he was keen to see it implemented for the Hujjaj of Sindh at Jinnah Terminal. Ambassador Mr Nawaf Saeed Al Maliki congratulated Syed Murad Ali Shah on taking over as Sindh Chief Minister for the third time. The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia told the CM that the pilot project of 'The Route to Makkah' initiative was implemented in 2019 at Islamabad International Airport. In 2019 22,000 Hujjaj travelled through this project. In Hajj 2022 and 2023 Route to Makkah Project was again implemented through Islamabad Airport and 15,629 & 26,546 Hujjaj travelled through it.

After successful completion, the Prime Minister's Office directed for up-scaling of the said initiative to other four airports - Karachi, Lahore, Quetta and Peshawar. Efforts were made to extend the project.

## Women empowerment key to ensure progressive, inclusive society: First Lady

ISLAMABAD (APP): First Lady Begum Samina Alvi, On Wednesday while emphasizing the importance of women's role in the country's development, said that a progressive and inclusive society could not be possible without empowering women in every sector of life.

Addressing an event organized in connection with International Women Day by the Behbud Association of Pakistan, Samina Alvi said it was the responsibility of everybody to ensure a conducive environment for girls and women to provide proper education and training, enabling them to live a life with dignity and respect. Appreciating the role of the association in empowering women, she said that since its inception, the Behbud Association has empowered around one million women by providing skills and training in various fields.

She said women comprised half of the total population of the country, and their participation was very important to ensuring the economic development of the country.

The first lady pointed out that the women's literacy rate in the county was much lower as compared to the men. She said Pakistan also needed to improve its current rating of 142 out of 147 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index.

She said improving the women's literacy rate would automatically improve the overall literacy rate of the country, as educated women will never let their children become illiterate.

As regards her campaign on creating awareness about breast cancer, Samina Alvi said self-examination was very critical to ensuring early diagnosis of the disease, adding that early diagnosis of breast cancer was curable.



LAHORE: Vice-Chancellors, leaders of different religions expressing solidarity by putting their hands in their hands, on the occasion of the closing ceremony of the Vice-Chancellors' Conference on Equality, Comprehensive and Sustainable Development organized by the Punjab Higher Education Commission at a local hotel in the Provincial Capital.

## Federal Ombudsman regional office holds open court at Tank

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Dera's Regional Office of the Federal Ombudsman on Thursday held an open court to address citizens' complaints at Tank district.

Regional Head retired Chief Secretary Sang Marjan Khan Mehsud along with Senior Investigation Officer Imran Khan, and Data Control Officer Imran Mehmood addressed the forum.

A large number of citizens attended the open court with complaints against federal organizations including Tribal Electricity Supply Company (TESCO), Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) and Pakistan

## CM felicitates Saraiki community on Culture Day

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that the Pakistan is a fragrant bouquet of cultural diversity and Saraiki culture is a beautiful flower of this bouquet.

In her message on Saraiki Culture Day, the chief minister extended congratulations to the Saraiki community, saying that sweetness of Saraiki language is Pakistan's valuable asset. "Saraiki Ajarak is my favorite, it is a metaphor of love" she said.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that Saraiki land gave birth to eminent personalities of Pakistan, adding that Punjab is a guardian of Pakistan's culture and ancient traditions. Love, unity and sincerity are reflected in Saraiki culture and civilization, she added.

## Helping deserving people brings peace of mind: Dr Amil

MARDAN (APP): The founder of the Non-Governmental Organization Saath Sabka Development Organization Mardan Dr Amil Mohmand Wednesday said that social service is the way to the survival of humanity.

To serve human service without discrimination, service is greatness, it is our duty to provide the necessities of life to the poor, helpless, and destitute.

He expressed these thoughts while discussing the distribution of the Ramadan ration package. He said that Saath Sabka Development Organization has provided financial assistance to thousands of beneficiaries, medical treatment, and hundreds of people to their homes since its inception.

It has provided employment and God willing, this process will continue, a plan has been made to distribute the Ramadan ration package in a fair manner, for which committees have been formed to compile a list of poor and deserving people and provide them with ration. Dr Amil Mohmand said that doing welfare work increases dignity and self-esteem. Helping a deserving person brings peace of mind, he added.

## E-Domicile service starts at Bajaur

PESHAWAR (APP): District administration Bajaur on Wednesday launched E-Domicile Certificate provision facility to address problems of students.

The first E-Domicile was issued by District Administration Bajaur in a ceremony that was attended by Deputy Commissioner Bajaur, Anwar-ul-Haq, Deputy Commissioner General, Ali Raza and concerned officials. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner said that E-Domicile has been started at Tehsil level to facilitate students specially those who lives in remote areas and facing difficulties to get domicile adding that it would also save precious time of applicants.

## Jazz holds tree plantation drive as part of carbon sink project

PESHAWAR (APP): Jazz Pakistan's leading digital operator organized a tree plantation drive in the Hayatabad area of Peshawar as part of its nationwide carbon sink project which aims to promote environmental conservation and combat climate change.

Captain (Retd.) Khalid Mehmood and Director General (DG) Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) were the chief guests on the occasion. The ceremony was also attended by Additional D.G. PDA Manzoor Yousaf, Director PDA Sajid Khan, Jazz employees and school children. Speaking on the occasion, DG PDA, lauded Jazz's carbon sink project, saying, "I commend Jazz's dedication towards

## Illegal appointments in PA case Court fixes March 11 for indictment of Pervaiz others

LAHORE (Online): Anti Corruption Court (ACC) Lahore has fixed March 11 for indictment of former chief minister Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi and other accused in alleged illegal appointments in Punjab Assembly (PA) case.

Judge Arshid Hussain Bhutta of ACC took up the case against Pervaiz Elahi and others for hearing Wednesday.

The court summoned Pervaiz Elahi and others for indictment on March 11.

The court directed the prosecution to distribute copies of challan among all the accused persons.

The court ordered all accused to appear on next hearing.

## Friends of Police delegation visits PSCA

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of students from Friends of Police, comprising 150 participants from various universities, paid a study visit to the PSCA here on Wednesday.

Commander DSP gave a detailed briefing on the functioning of the Authority. The delegation was shown the workings of different departments within Safe City.



PESHAWAR: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) National Assembly Member from NA-1 Chitral, Abdul Latif along with others addresses to media persons during press conference regarding rigging and illegal allocation of certain seats by the Election Commission, held at Peshawar press club.

## 7 dead, 1,365 injured in Punjab road accidents

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: At least seven people were killed and 1,365 others injured in 1,312 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 592 seriously injured people were shifted to different hospitals, while 773 others with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

The data analysis showed those 743 drivers, 53 underage drivers, 187 pedestrians, and 442 passengers were among the victims of road accidents. The statistics show that 266 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 296 people, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by Faisalabad with 87 accidents and 90 victims.



KARACHI: Chairmen Town Municipal Corporation and Local body representatives are holding protest demonstration against Competitive and Livable City of Karachi administration, held outside CLICK Office in Karachi.

## Development, welfare of city being made: DC

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mian Usman Ali said that master planning, zoning and classification of the city was being made for development and welfare with the cooperation of Asian Development Bank by keeping in view the 25-year needs.

Presiding over a meeting of "Punjab Intermediate Cities Empowerment Investment Program" on Wednesday, the deputy commissioner said that long term policies were being adopted for sustainable development in the city.

He said that master planning, zoning and classification of the city was being made for development under the vision to divide in industrial, commercial and domestic zones in future.

Mian Usman Ali termed the "Punjab Intermediate Cities Empowerment Program" a milestone for city's development and progress.

## Relief to people first priority: Commissioner

FAISALABAD (APP): Commissioner Silwat Saeed has said that provision of relief to the people from inflated prices of the edible items is a first priority of the Punjab government. Chairing a meeting held to review measures taken for 'Nigheban Ramadan Package', monitoring of prices of edible items and improvement in governance, here on Wednesday, she strictly directed for launching crackdown against hoarders and profiteers.

## Delegation of Peshawar Press Club visits PIC

PESHAWAR (APP): The newly elected cabinet of the Peshawar Press Club (PPC) appreciated the state-of-the-art health facilities and medical services to cardiac patients of the Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC) during a visit to the institution on Wednesday. The visiting journalists acknowledged the PIC's excellent services and international recognition of its cardiac care besides other achievements.

The delegation was comprised of President Arshad Aziz Malik, President Tayyab Usman, General Secretary Irfan Musazai, Finance Secretary Rizwan Sheikh, and members of the governing body.

Medical Director and Chief Executive of PIC-MTI, Professor Dr. Shahkar Ahmed Shah warmly welcomed the visiting delegation and facilitated a detailed tour of various hospital facilities.

## PSL matches LHC admits for hearing petition filed against usurping of basic human rights

RAWALPINDI (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) Rawalpindi bench has admitted for hearing the petition filed against usurping basic human rights in the name of security during PSL matches in Rawalpindi cricket stadium.

The petition was heard by Justice Jawad Hassan of LHC Rawalpindi bench Wednesday.

The court after preliminary hearing of the petition issued notice to the respondents and sought parawise replies.

The court issued these orders on the petition of senior lawyer Sajjad Akbar Abbasi.

The petitioner has made interior secretary, chief secretary Punjab, Deputy commissioner Rawalpindi, City police officer Rawalpindi, chief traffic officer Rawalpindi and Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board respondents.

The petitioner took the plea that basic human rights are being ignored during holding of matches from March 2 to 10 in the name of security.



KARACHI: Inundated road by overflowing sewerage water, creating problems for residents and commuters, showing negligence of concerned authorities, located on Korangi S.M Munir road in Karachi.

## Governor SBP inaugurates SAARCFINANCE Seminar

### Transformative Potential of Big Data in Economic Policy

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Mr. Jameel Ahmad delivered the inaugural speech at the SAARCFINANCE Seminar on the 'Potential Role of Big Data in Economic Policy.' The event, held in Islamabad, brought together distinguished delegates, subject matter experts, and esteemed speakers from the SAARC region to discuss the impact and implications of Big Data in shaping economic policies.

Governor SBP emphasized that the unprecedented volume of data generated by digital devices underscores the potential of effective data utilization in contributing to sustained economic growth, societal welfare, poverty reduction, and improved living standards across the diverse SAARC region.

During his speech, Mr. Ahmad shed light on the growing role of Big Data in central banking, financial inclusion, and how the SBP is incorporating Big Data analysis in policymaking. He also shared specific examples of how the central bank uses Big Data analytics for economic analysis, leveraging satellite imagery data, and harnessing the power of machine learning algorithms for fraud detection and prevention.

Governor SBP also highlighted the legal and regulatory challenges related to privacy and confidentiality. He called for strong data protection laws and underscored the importance of addressing the current costs associated with technological infrastructure and skilled human resources.

## Jazz, Tech Valley join forces to empower young minds with 'Digital Safar' Program

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator, has partnered with Tech Valley, a Google for Education partner, to introduce the 'Digital Safar' program to schools across Pakistan to equip more than 300,000 students with foundational coding skills and essential internet safety practices, preparing them for the opportunities and challenges of the digital landscape.

Leveraging the strengths of two of Google's flagship programs - 'Google CS First' and 'Be Internet Awesome' - the 'Digital Safar' program provides an extensive curriculum encompassing coding, computational thinking, digital citizenship, and equally importantly, online safety. Utilizing interactive online modules and hands-on activities, the program ensures accessibility and engagement for students aged 8-14 years from diverse backgrounds, said a news release.

Commenting on the partnership, Syed Fakhar Ahmed, Chief Corporate & Regulatory Affairs Officer at Jazz, said, "At Jazz, we believe that access to quality digital education and online safety are fundamental rights for every child, regardless of their background or circumstances. This collaboration with Tech Valley exemplifies our commitment to empowering Pakistan's youth with the digital knowledge and skills they need to create the Digital Pakistan that we envision."

Also sharing his excitement over the collaboration, Umar Farooq, CEO of Tech Valley Pakistan, said, "We're delighted to collaborate with Pakistan's digital frontrunner Jazz in introducing the 'Digital Safar' program to schools across Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Atif Ikram Sheikh President FPCCI and H.E. Albert Khorev, Russian Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Kairm Aziz Malik Chairman and Malik Sohail Hussain Chairman Coordination FPCCI addressing Pak-Russia Business Council of FPCCI Business Community.

## Country expecting 29.77m metric tons of wheat in normal conditions

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): The wheat output in the country during the current season is likely to reach over 29.77 million tons, which would further help cement the efforts of the government to achieve sustainable agriculture production and economic development.

The local output of wheat, which is a vital source of staple food was fixed at 32.11 million metric tons during the crop season (2024-25) as against the domestic requirements of 32.94 million metric tons, said Imtiaz Ahmad Gopang Food Security Commissioner in the Ministry of National Food

Security and Research.

The local wheat consumption was estimated at 32.94 million metric tons during the year 2024-25, whereas the estimated carry-forward stock of 3.2 million metric tons will supplement the production of a new crop and be able to fulfil the requirements during the season, he told APP on Wednesday.

The wheat cultivation relies heavily on irrigation water, so the ample water supply as reported by IRSA along with record planting areas indicated the potential for another strong harvest during the crop season 2024-25, he added.

However, the actual

production outcomes will depend on factors such as growing conditions and accessibility of essential inputs, particularly fertilizers. Additionally, weather patterns in March and April crucial for the grains' development and maturation will significantly impact the final output, he said adding that the above-normal rains spell, hailstorms and storms could impact the crop position. He said that according to the Provincial Crop Reporting Services, wheat production for the Punjab Province was forecast at 22.67 million metric tons, and Sindh at 4.16 million metric tons respectively. Meanwhile,

the output for the provinces including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan was expected to reach at 1.48 million metric tons and 1.46 million metric tons respectively.

Imtiaz Ahmad said that owing to the incentives introduced by the government, wheat sowing in the country during the current season (Rabi 2023-24) increased by 7.5 per cent as compared to the corresponding period of the last year.

During the period under review, wheat sowing had been completed over 23.69 million acres as against the set targets of 22.22 million acres.



NASEERABAD: Commissioner Naseerabad Division Tariq Qamar Baloch inaugurates Business Expo at University College.

## Rupee sheds 04 paise against dollar

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Wednesday weakened by 04 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.35 against the previous day's closing of Rs 279.31.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.2 and Rs 282.1, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 32 paise to close at Rs 303.40 against the last day's closing of Rs 303.08, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen gained 01 paise to close at Rs 186, whereas an increase of 93 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate.

## PSX loses 69 points

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Wednesday lost 69.42 points, a negative change of 0.11 per cent, closing at 65,656.62 points against 65,726.04 points the previous trading day.

A total of 419,737,124 shares valuing Rs 18,296 billion were traded during the day as compared to 396,598,408 shares valuing Rs 16,591 billion the last day.

Some 354 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 163 of them recorded gains and 172 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 19 remained unchanged.

## Promotion of electric bikes vital to abolish pollution, save expenses: Khawaja

**MULTAN (APP):** President Anjum Tajaan Pakistan Khawaja Suleman Siddique said introduction of electric bikes in local markets was of vital importance to abolish pollution and reduce expenses on travelling.

He said this while addressing a ceremony in the local market on Wednesday. Amid soaring prices and increasing prices of petrol rates, it has become difficult for common men to afford motorcycles.

The emergence of electric bikes in the market is seen as a positive step towards both saving costs and reducing pollution. Encouraging the public to opt for electric bikes over petrol-driven motorcycles, he stated that the need for the government to launch similar projects to promote electric bikes among traders, businessmen and other citizens.

He added that electric bikes offer a standard and affordable travel solution, relieving citizens from expensive petrol prices and also mitigating environmental pollution. On this occasion, a good number of local traders were also present.

## KPRA conducts training workshop for officials of AG of Pakistan on FABS

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority conducted a one-day training workshop on Automated Deduction of KP Sales Tax on Services through the Financial



Accounting and Budgeting System (FABS) for the officials of Accountant General of Pakistan on Wednesday at Serena Hotel Peshawar.

The workshop was arranged with the financial assistance of the World Bank-funded KPRMP project. Trainers from FABS provided a detailed presentation on the workings of FABS in relation to the automatic deduction of KP Sales Tax on Services through the FABS system. Additionally, a thorough question-and-answer session was conducted during the presentation, where trainers and officials of KPRA addressed the queries of the participants.

Director General KPRA Miss Fouzia Iqbal in her address thanked officials of the Accountant General of Pakistan, milestone for KPRA and a memorable day. "It is another step towards the automation of KP Sales Tax on Services. This advancement will eliminate errors, as the tax will be automatically deducted and submitted to KPRA. We anticipate an increase in revenue from the AG office," she stated. She also expressed appreciation for the keen interest shown by the Accountant General of Pakistan in the integration process and assured that her team would be available to assist officials from the AG office with any issues related to the system.

Advisor KPRA on Tax Enforcement Mr. Fazal Amin Shah in his welcome note at the workshop thanked the officials of AG office for attending the training and showed his hopes for smooth coordination in the future.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people purchasing onion at Vegetable and Fruits Market.

## Services' exports earn \$4.44 bln in 7 months

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned \$4,447.97 million by exporting various services during the first seven months of the current fiscal year (2023-24), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The export of services, however, witnessed a decline of 2.42 percent when compared to the exports of \$4,558.41 million during the same period last year.

The services' imports into the country increased by 28.76 percent, going up from \$4,790.38 million last year to \$6,168.13 million during the first seven months of the current fiscal year.

Based on the figures, the services' trade deficit widened by 641.56 percent during the period under review, going up from \$231.97 million last year to \$1,720.16 million this year.

Meanwhile, on a year-over-year (YoY) basis, the services' exports from the country decreased by 1.47 percent, going from \$688.10 million in January 2023 to \$677.96 million in January 2024.

The imports went up by 53.09 percent, growing from \$649.96 million to \$995.04 million, according to PBS data. On a month-to-month (MoM) basis, service exports decreased by 7.25 percent in January 2024 when compared to exports of \$730.99 million in December 2023.

The imports on a MoM basis increased by 15.84 percent.

## DC for relief to citizens during Ramadan through reduced prices

**DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP):** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mansoor Arshad has directed the relevant officials to ensure edible items at affordable levels in order to extend relief to citizens during the holy month of Ramadan.

He expressed these views while chairing a meeting of the district's price review committee met here at his office to determine prices of essential items for Ramadan. He said that the meeting had been convened in light of directives of the provincial government to trickle down blessings of masses' welfare policies on grassroots level.

The meeting discussed establishing complaint desks at the tehsil level to address citizens' complaints regarding prices and availability of essential commodities.

He also directed the relevant officials from the food department and other relevant departments.

## SECP files criminal cases against individuals involved in stock market manipulation

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has filed four criminal complaints against individuals involved in manipulating stock prices, including sponsors and brokerage house management.

The Court has admitted all four complaints filed by SECP against the accused individuals, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

The accused gained significant profits by manipulating the share prices of three listed companies in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

The SECP reached these conclusions after completing thorough investigations under the Securities Act of 2015.

The investigations established that these

## SSCI to take up issue professional tax on jewelry sector

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR (APP): Acting president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sanaullah Khan said SSCI will take up the issue of imposition of professional tax and Point of Sale in the jewelry sector along with other tax-related issues with FBR and relevant authorities.

The acting chief said SSCI is the only business community forum that has always played a pivotal role in taking up community issues with authorities and resolving them amicably.

Businessmen want to pay taxes but it is essential to make a sizable reduction in the ratio of various taxes or bring them down to a single digit, Sanaullah

Khan said while chairing a meeting of SSCI's Jewelry Standing Committee held here at Chamber House on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by Jewelry Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Patron in Chief, Azizullah Khan Saraf, and provincial Amin Hussain Babar, the business community attached to the jewelry sector, and office bearers of the association from Nowshera, Swabi, Mardan, Takht Bhai, Swat, Kohat, Hangu and others.

Sanaullah Khan said the business community attached to the jewelry sector has faced enormous difficulties owing to the prevailing situation in the country.

Individuals placed high-priced orders and traded with one another to artificially raise the share prices of specific stocks.

They also placed fake buy orders and then cancelled a large number of these transactions, resulting in fictitious quotations to deceive potential investors. The accused also fraudulently misused clients' accounts to place large orders.



FAISALABAD: Visitors keenly visiting the flowers exhibition on the occasion of Jashn-e-Baharan at University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

## Price Magistrates given three-day deadline to improve performance

**Independent Report**  
RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak here on Wednesday gave three-day deadline to improve performance to the price magistrates of Rawalpindi division.

Chairing a meeting, the Commissioner said that strict action would be taken against the magistrates if they could not improve their performance in three days.

Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Price Magistrates of all the five districts of the division participated in the meeting.

On the special instructions of the Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, the supply of essential commodities in open markets at official rates would be ensured, he said adding the wholesalers and retailers must declare all their stocks within 24 hours otherwise the goods would be confiscated.

The Commissioner directed the administration officers that the magistrates whose inspections were less than 100 during March, should be issued show cause notices.

If the performance of the Price Magistrates could not be improved within three days, action would be taken against them, he warned.

Crackdown against the hoarders and profiteers on the special instructions of Chief Minister Punjab had been launched. Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners had given a deadline to the dealers and retailers to register all stocks within 24 hours and after the given period, the unregistered stocks would be confiscated.

## 'FCCI to help local associations for registration of DGTO'

**Independent Report**  
FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) will help local trade and industrial associations to get registration from the directorate general of trade organisations (DGTO) and convey their issues to the policy makers.

This was said by Senior Vice President Dr Sajjad Arshad while addressing a delegation of the Faisalabad Dyes and Chemical Merchants Association (FDCMA). He assured of arranging seminars for the FDCMA members by inviting professors from the universities. He said that a travel help desk established in the FCCI would also help the members

## Wakhan corridor FPCCI President invites Russia to take advantage of CPEC by developing a road network

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh President FPCCI and H.E. Albert Khorev, Russian Ambassador to Pakistan have agreed to increase bilateral trade. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to fostering stronger cooperation to increase the bilateral trade volume.

This commitment

reflects the shared interest in fortifying the enduring friendship and economic partnership between the two countries.

H.E. Albert Khorev Russian Ambassador to Pakistan and Mr. Pavel B. Burlakov, Acting Trade Representative, yesterday visited the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry Capital Office in Islamabad

and met Mr Atif Ikram Sheikh President of FPCCI, Mr. Kairm Aziz Malik Chairman and Malik Sohail Hussain Chairman Coordination FPCCI & other members. During the meeting, the matters of enhancing cooperation in diverse fields, including tourism, trade, investment, technology, and exchange of business delegations were discussed.



LAHORE: President Lahore Chamber of Commerce Kashif Anwar presenting souvenir to 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary Consul of the Embassy of Italy Augusto Palmieri during his visit to LCCL.

## China drops 'peaceful reunification' reference to Taiwan amid tensions

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: China will boost its defence spending by 7.2 per cent this year, fuelling a military budget that has more than doubled under President Xi Jinping's 11 years in office as Beijing hardens its stance on Taiwan, according to official reports on Tuesday.

The increase mirrors the rate presented in last year's budget and again comes in well above the government's economic growth forecast for this year. China also officially adopted tougher language against Taiwan as it released the budget figures, dropping the mention of "peaceful reunification" in a government report delivered by Premier Li Qiang at the opening of the National People's Congress (NPC), on Tuesday.

Tensions have risen sharply in recent years over Taiwan, the democratically ruled island that China claims as its own, and elsewhere across East Asia as regional military deployments rise.

Li Mingjiang, a defence scholar at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore, said that despite China's struggling economy, Taiwan is a major consideration in Beijing's defence spending.

"China is showing that in the coming decade it wants to grow its military to the point where it is prepared to win a war if it has no choice but to fight one," Li said. Since Xi became president and commander-in-chief more than a decade ago, the defence budget has ballooned to 1.67 trillion yuan (\$230 billion) this year from 720 billion yuan in 2013.

The percentage rise in military spending has consistently outpaced the annual domestic economic growth target during his time in office. This year the growth target for 2024 is about 5pc, similar to last year's goal, according to the government report.

The defence budget is closely watched by China's neighbours and the United States, who are wary of Beijing's strategic intentions and the development of its armed forces.

Based on data from the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), this year's budget marks the 30<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of Chinese defence spending increases.



BEIJING: Workers replenish Chinese President Xi Jinping's teacups during the opening session of the National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People.

## Russia, China plan nuclear power plant on moon

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russia and China are considering putting a nuclear power plant on the moon from 2033-35, Yuri Borisov, the head of Russia's space agency Roscosmos said on Tuesday, something he said could one day allow lunar settlements to be built.

Borisov, a former deputy defence minister, said that Russia and China had been jointly working on a lunar programme and that Moscow was able to contribute with its expertise on "nuclear space energy".

"Today we are seriously considering a project — somewhere at the turn of 2033-2035 - to deliver and install a power unit on

the lunar surface together with our Chinese colleagues," Borisov said.

Solar panels would not be able to provide enough electricity to power future lunar settlements, he said, while nuclear power could.

"This is a very serious challenge... it should be done in automatic mode, without the presence of humans," he said of the possible plan.

Borisov spoke also of Russian plans to build a nuclear-powered cargo spaceship. He said all the technical questions concerning the project had been solved apart from finding a solution on how to cool the nuclear reactor.

## Blast rocks security base in Afghanistan

**Monitoring Desk**  
FAIZABAD: A blast shook a Taliban military base near the airport in Faizabad, the capital of Afghanistan's northeastern Badakhshan province, but without causing casualties, officials said on Tuesday.

The Taliban official confirmed on condition of anonymity that an explosion had occurred at the base but would not provide further details. A roadside IED exploded near the base but no one was killed or wounded, Badakhshan police spokesman Ehsanullah Kamgar told AFP.

He said the authorities suspected the IED was not new but rather left over from before the Taliban takeover in 2021.

## Gaza ceasefire talks in doldrums

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Hamas negotiators stayed in Cairo for a third day of ceasefire talks on Tuesday in an attempt to halt the fighting in the Gaza Strip in time for the fasting month of Ramadan, free Israeli hostages and stave off famine.

A 40-day ceasefire in the conflict would allow some hostages captured by Pales-tinian fighters in the October attack, while aid to Gaza would be increased and families able to return to abandoned homes.

"The delegation will remain in Cairo on Tuesday for more talks, they are expected to wrap up this round later today," a Hamas official told Reuters.

Three security sources from host and mediator Egypt said the warring sides were sticking to demands that had held up an agreement. The Egyptians have re-mained in contact with the Israelis despite the absence of an Israeli delegation.

Earlier, senior Hamas official Bassem Naim said the group had presented a draft ceasefire agreement, and was now waiting for a response from Israel. "Prime Minister Benjamin) Netan-yahu doesn't want to reach an agreement and the ball now is in the Ameri-cans' court" to press him, Naim said. Israel has declined to comment publicly on the talks but a senior Israeli official said: "Israel is making every effort to reach an agreement. We are awaiting a response from Hamas."

A source that told Reuters earlier that Israel was staying away because Hamas had refused to furnish a list of all hostages who are still alive. Naim said this was impossible without a ceasefire as hostages were scattered across the war zone and held by separate groups.

## Gaza children may not survive famine, warns WHO chief

LONDON (Online): Children in the besieged Palestinian enclave of Gaza may not be able to survive a famine there, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday.

"Children who survived bombardment but may not survive a famine," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wrote on X.

He called for allowing more humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip as well as a cease-fire there.

Israel has waged a deadly military offensive on the Gaza Strip since an Oct. 7, 2023 attack by the Palestinian group Hamas, which Tel Aviv says killed nearly 1,200 people.

More than 30,700 Palestinians have since been killed and 72,156 others injured amid mass destruction and shortages of necessities.

Israel has also imposed a crippling blockade on the Gaza Strip, leaving its population, particularly residents of northern Gaza, on the verge of starvation.

The Israeli war has pushed 85% of Gaza's population into internal displacement amid acute shortages of food, clean water, and medicine, while 60% of the enclave's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, according to the UN.

Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice. An interim ruling in January ordered Tel Aviv to stop genocidal acts and take measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians in Gaza.



RAFAH: Palestinian children receive cooked food rations as part of a volunteer youth initiative in the southern Gaza Strip.

## Nikki Haley suspends White House bid, clearing path for a Trump-Biden rematch

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Nikki Haley ended her long-shot challenge to Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump on Wednesday, ensuring the former president will be the party's candidate in a rematch with Democratic President Joe Biden in November's election.

Haley, the former South Carolina governor and Trump's ambassador to the United Nations when he was president, made the announcement in a speech in Charleston a day after Super Tuesday, when Trump beat her soundly in 14 of 15 Republican nominating contests.

"The time has now come to suspend my campaign," Haley said. "I have no regrets."

She said it was likely Trump would be the Republican nominee but did not endorse him.

"It is now up to Donald Trump to earn the votes of those in our party and beyond it," she said. "And I hope he does that."

Drawing on her foreign policy experience at the UN, Haley said it was important to continue US global leadership. Throughout her campaign, Haley said the United States must help Ukraine defend itself against Russian aggression, a position at odds with Trump. "If we retreat further, there will be more war, not less," she said.

There was no indication Trump would moderate his message.

"He'll continue to focus on the issues that matter: immigration, economy, foreign policy," Karoline Leavitt, press secretary for the Trump campaign, said late on Tuesday.

## US imposes sanctions on members of spyware group

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: US authorities announced sanctions on Tuesday on parties associated with Intellexa Consortium, citing their role in making and distributing commercial spyware used to target US officials, journalists and others.

Commercial surveillance tools "increasingly present a security risk to the United States and our citizens," said Treasury Under Secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence Brian Nelson.

In particular, the Intellexa Consortium was founded in 2019 and served as a "marketing label" for companies offering commercial spyware and surveillance tools.

The tools, the Treasury Department said, are packaged as a suite under the brand-name "Predator" spyware, able to infiltrate devices without user interaction.

## Israel 'to allow' worshippers access to Al Aqsa as in 'previous years'

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: Israel will allow as many worshippers to access Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem during the first week of Ramadan as in previous years, the prime minister's office said on Tuesday.

"In the first week of Ramadan, worshippers will be allowed to enter the Temple Mount, in similar numbers to those in previous years," the statement said, using the Jewish term for the site.

"Every week there will be a situation assessment in terms of security and safety and a decision will be made accordingly," it added. Every year, tens of thousands of worshippers perform Ramadan prayers at the Al Aqsa mosque.

Ramazan comes this year as Israel wages a relentless military campaign in the Gaza Strip in the wake of the Hamas raid in Israel on October 7.

## Bezos dethrones Musk to become richest man

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has taken back his spot as the world's richest man, dethroning Elon Musk on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Bezos' net worth stands at \$200 billion, according to the tracker, surpassing the Tesla chief's \$198bn.

Musk, who also heads X (formerly Twitter) and SpaceX, has seen his riches fall by more than \$30b as Tesla's share price has dropped 25 per cent in recent months.

## Trump eyes 'Super Tuesday' sweep as Haley vows to fight on

**Monitoring Desk**  
FORT WORTH: Donald Trump aimed to deliver a Super Tuesday knockout blow to his lone challenger for the Republican US presidential nomination, Nikki Haley, as 15 states hold Republican contests on the biggest voting day of the primary season.

The former president, who has dominated the Republican campaign from the start despite his litany of criminal charges, has swept all but one of the contests so far, winning a sprawling Republican field of candidates down to two.

While Trump cannot win enough delegates on Tuesday to formally clinch the nomination, another dominant performance would further pressure his remaining rival. Tuesday's contests will award more than one-third of Republican delegates — and more than 70pc of the number needed to secure the nomination.

The first polls were due to close at 7pm EST (0000 GMT) in Vermont and Virginia, with voting wrapping up in Alaska at midnight EST (0500 Wednesday GMT).

A third consecutive nomination for Trump would set up a rematch with Democratic Pre-sident Joe Biden in November's election. Biden is expected to win Tuesday's Democratic contests easily, though activists op-posed to Biden's Israel policy are calling on Muslim Ameri-cans and progressives to vote "uncommitted" in Minnesota in protest. Haley, a former UN ambassador under Trump, has faced mounting questions about how long she will continue her long-shot campaign, particularly after losing her home state of South Carolina 10 days ago.

Her campaign did not schedule any public events on Super Tuesday or beyond. "As much as everybody wan-t to go and push me out, I'm not ready to get out yet," she told Fox News in an interview.

## Trump reportedly meets with Musk amid fundraising push

NEW YORK (Online): Donald Trump met with Tesla CEO Elon Musk on Sunday as the former US president seeks a major cash infusion for his reelection campaign, the New York Times has reported, citing sources.

According to a report by the outlet on Tuesday, Musk attended the gathering along with a number of wealthy Republican donors.

Trump and his team are working to find major contributors to shore up his finances for the election campaign against incumbent US leader Joe Biden, according to the NYT.

The newspaper claimed that Trump hopes to have a one-on-one meeting with Musk, although it is not clear whether the billionaire CEO of Tesla and Space X is planning to donate to the Republican frontrunner's campaign.

Musk, who also owns social media platform X (formerly Twitter), has long cast himself as politically independent, and has donated to campaigns for candidates from both the Democrats and the Republicans over the years.

The tech mogul has admitted he voted for Biden in 2020, although he has since criticized the president and clashed with his administration, the NYT stated.

The South African-born billionaire has not said if he is willing to spend any of his billions to back Trump, although Musk's social media posts suggest he is opposed to Biden winning a second term in November.

With a net worth valued by Forbes at \$200 billion, Musk could "decide to throw his weight behind Mr. Trump" and almost "single-handedly erase what is expected to be Mr. Biden and his allies' huge

## Philippines chides China for 'stirring up trouble'

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: A dramatic stand-off with Beijing in the South China Sea this week was the most serious incident yet for the Philippines, its top security officials said on Wednesday, vowing not to back down in asserting the country's sovereign rights. The Philippines has been incensed by what it calls repeated aggressive conduct by China's coastguard, accusing its ships of using water cannons and blocking and harassing a Philippine resupply mission on Tuesday for troops stationed at the disputed Second Thomas Shoal.

The Philippines' South China Sea task force said a top admiral was on board a vessel that was water cannoned by China's coastguard, shattering its windshield and wounding four navy personnel.



THE HAGUE: Protesters take part in a demonstration in support of Palestinians outside the Netherlands House of Representatives. Question time in the house was briefly interrupted three times by them.

## Hungary president signs Sweden's NATO membership ratification

**Monitoring Desk**  
BUDAPEST: Hungary's President Tamas Sulyok has signed the bill that approved Sweden's accession to the NATO military alliance, the president's office said on Tuesday. Lawmakers approved Sweden's NATO accession on Feb. 26, clearing the last hurdle before the historic step by the Nordic country, whose neutrality lasted through two world wars and the Cold War.

Stockholm abandoned its non-alignment policy for greater safety within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The Hungarian vote ended months of delays to complete the security policy shift and followed a visit by Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson during which the two countries signed an arms deal. Neither Kristersson nor Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom were immediately available for comment.

The remaining formalities, such as depositing accession documentation in Washington, are likely to be concluded swiftly.

Parliament's speaker signed off on the ratification and forwarded the legislation to the president's office for promulgation last week.

## Swedish PM travels to US as NATO accession nears

**Monitoring Desk**  
COPENHAGEN: Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom will travel to Washington on Wednesday, the government said, where they are expected to complete the process of joining NATO. Sweden will immediately become NATO's 32<sup>nd</sup> member when it deposits the formal documentation, marking an end to 200 years during which Stockholm avoided military alliances and adopted a neutral stance in times of war. A spokesperson for Kristersson declined to give any further details beyond the brief government statement.

## Polish farmers clash with police outside parliament in Warsaw

**Monitoring Desk**  
WARSAW: Protesting farmers clashed with police outside the parliament building in Warsaw on Wednesday, with police using pepper spray and accusing some participants of violence against security forces.

Thousands of farmers had gathered in the Polish capital, burning cobblestones at them, cannot be taken lightly and requires a firm and decisive response."

They added that several officers were wounded and around a dozen people were detained.

## Russian jailed for seven years for articles about Ukraine war

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: A reporter for an independent Russian news outlet was sentenced to seven years in prison on Wednesday for articles he wrote about alleged Russian war crimes in Ukraine, his publication said.

Roman Ivanov, who works for the online RusNews, was convicted of publishing "fake news" about the Russian army under wartime censorship laws passed shortly after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine two years ago.



People vote on 'Super Tuesday,' at the Central Library in Huntington Beach, California.

## Forced evictions displace over 5 lakh in India in 2023, Muslims hardest hit: Report

NEW DELHI (INP): Shedding light on forced evictions being done under the watch of Modi government, a comprehensive report has said that 2023 witnessed an alarming spike in such evictions across India, displacing over half a million individuals and mostly impacting marginalized communities particularly Muslims.

The landmark report titled "Forced Evictions in India: 2022 & 2023" was released by New Delhi-based Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN). This report, the sixth in a series of annual publications by HLRN on evictions, highlights a significant surge in the number of home demolitions in India between 2022 and 2023, particularly impacting the poor and marginalised populations. Over this period, more than 1.5 lakh houses were demolished by state authorities, resulting in the forceful eviction of over 7.4 lakh people from their homes.

According to HLRN's comprehensive report, an unprecedented 1,07,449 homes were demolished in 2023, leading to the forced eviction of at least 5,15,752 people, marking the highest recorded annual figure in the last seven years. This surge in evictions, the highest since HLRN began its documentation in 2017, spans across 23 states and four Union Territories in India. Major cities and smaller urban centers alike have witnessed large-scale demolitions. Delhi witnessed the most incidents of evictions, with approximately 2.8 lakh people evicted in 2023. Court orders played a significant role, resulting in the eviction of over 2.9 lakh persons in both years. The report highlights the acute vulnerability of marginalized groups, with Muslims, in particular, being the most affected in almost half of the documented eviction instances. Rehabilitation was lacking in most cases, and state authorities often failed to comply with due process requirements.

# OIC urges probe of war crimes against Palestinians; voices concern over India's rights abuses in Kashmir

GENEVA (APP): Pakistan, speaking for Islamic countries, has underscored the need for investigating Israeli war crimes against the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank to pave the way for accountability. "It is high time that violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law including war crimes committed against the Palestinian people are investigated and accountability follows," Ambassador Bilal Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN offices in Geneva, told the Human Rights Council during its general debate on Tuesday.

At the same time, the Pakistani envoy, who was speaking on behalf of the OIC countries, voiced "deep anguish" over the deteriorating human rights situation in Indian occupied Kashmir.

"We urge India to comply with the applicable UN Security Council resolutions and implement recommendations addressed to it in the two Kashmir reports by OHCHR, the UN human rights office, which need to be updated," the OIC statement said.

"The Council must pay attention to consistent observations made by

SPMHs (Special Procedure Mandate Holders) on the human rights violations, impunity and draconian laws in the occupied territory. "In the statement, Ambassador Ahmad strongly condemned all crimes committed by the Israeli Occupation Forces in Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), and called for implementing provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and reminded all states of their responsibilities in this regard.

"We reiterate our longstanding call for upholding respect for human rights and international humanitarian law in the OPT, including in East Jerusalem," he said.

"We also call for reversal of all measures aimed at institutionalizing illegal occupation, apartheid and colonial settlement enterprise in OPT." The OIC also called on the Council to work towards securing justice and accountability for the Rohingya people, including through their safe, dignified, and voluntary return to their homes in Myanmar. The OIC, he said, reiterated its full solidarity with Bangladesh and supports calls for assistance to the country in efforts to achieve a durable solution.



TAXILA: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), visited Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT) as chief guest at the rollout ceremony of HAIDER tank (Pilot Project).



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

## Shehbaz emphasizes robust planning to tackle natural calamities

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has emphasized robust planning and institutional structure to tackle natural calamities.

He was talking to the affecteds of rains and floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during his visit to Peshawar today.

The Prime Minister said Pakistan is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

He said Pakistan has faced disastrous floods during 2022 and recently the torrential rains in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa led to death of about forty people. The Prime Minister appreciated the role of Provincial Disaster Management Authority, the chief secretary, district administrations and all those who contributed in the effort to rescue and rehabilitate the rain affected people.

He said the compensation amount has already been distributed among the injured and heirs of the deceased.

## Process of answerability to be made more effective: CM directs all secretaries to prepare comprehensive plan for improving in governance of Balochistan

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed all secretaries of provincial government departments to prepare comprehensive plan for improvement in governance.

The Chief Minister also directed to prepare timeframe for implementation on the targets given to them (secretaries) within one month.

He was chairing a maiden meeting of all administrative secretaries of provincial government departments here on Wednesday.

Addressing the secretaries, Chief Minister said that we have to work for betterment of the province and its common men.

He on the occasion pledged that we would take measures for prevention of corruption from the lower to higher level.

He directed the secretaries to prepare comprehensive recommendations for increasing the resources of province.

In addition to this, viable strategy should be prepared remaining in the province's own resources, he directed further.

He asserted that we would give protection to the due tenure of appointment on any of the position. Moreover, the process of answerability would be made effective by making the anti-corruption department effective, he vowed.

## Army, other depts. continue rescue, relief operation in flood-hit areas of Gwadar

GWADAR (INP): Pakistan Army in coordination with other concerned departments continues rescue and relief operations in flood-hit areas of Gwadar and other areas of Balochistan affected of rain.

The aid provided by the Army to the public includes 3281 aid packages of 50 tons of ration and medicines.

So far, 25 tons of ration has been distributed to more than 1470 families.

The Army established 17 flood relief medical camps and 15 mobile medical camps in different areas to facilitate the people. More than 4783 patients including men, women and children were treated.

Awareness brochures were also distributed among local people for precautionary measures.

## Saudi delegation visits at SFIC for investments in various sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high level delegation of Al Ajan Holding Group of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia visited Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) here today.

The group was headed by His Excellency Mohammed Bin Abdulaziz Alajlan, Deputy Chairman, along with members representing various sectors, operating under the ambit of Al Ajan Holding Group, said a press release.

The delegation was warmly received by officials of SIFC and comprehensive briefs were given covering potential and investment opportunities in different sectors.

The delegation showed great interest in exploring investment opportunities in Pakistan under the umbrella of SIFC. The visit underscores longstanding brotherly relations between Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, which are transforming into multi-domain cooperation through participation of public as well as private sector.

## Development of province, welfare of common men priority: Sarfraz Bugti

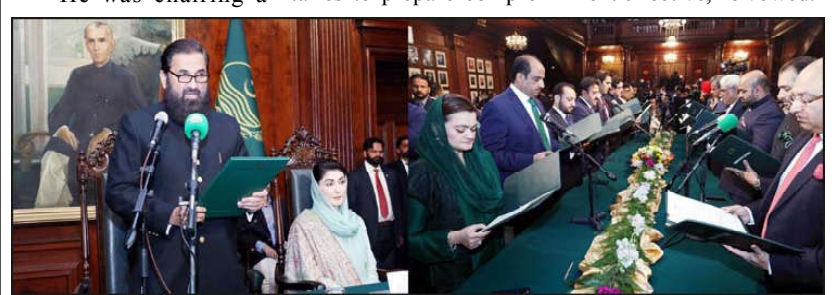
**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that development of province and wellbeing of the common men is included in the priorities.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the Member Provincial Assembly, Nawabzada Tariq Magsi who called on him here on Wednesday.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti once again expressed the resolve to take all political parties including the coalition partners along in the province.

He said that he is working to bring improvement in governance, and adding he hoped that there would be marked improvement in governance in time to come.

He said that the people of province also witness improvement in the governance.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman administering oath to 18-member new Provincial Cabinet. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is also present.

## LHC orders to remove name of Sheikh from ECL

RAWALPINDI (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) Rawalpindi bench has ordered to remove name of former interior minister Sheikh Rashid from Exit Control List (ECL).

A division bench of LHC Rawalpindi bench comprising Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan and justice Mirza Waqas Rauf has announced the judgment.

The court has directed the petitioner be not restrained from going abroad.

Sheikh Rashid along with his lawyers Sardar Abdul Razaq and Sardar Shehbaz Khan were present in the court.

## 18-member Punjab cabinet sworn in

LAHORE (APP): An 18-member Punjab cabinet was sworn in during a solemn ceremony at the Governor's House, here on Wednesday.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman administered the oath to the newly-appointed provincial ministers after Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhter Zaman read out the order of appointment of ministers.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz attended the ceremony besides Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan and former speaker Rana Muhammad Iqbal. Senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leadership including Khawaja Saad Rafique was also present.

Names of the newly-appointed provincial ministers, along with their constituencies, from where they were elected to the Punjab Assembly, are as under: Mian Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman (MPA PP-148), Mairiyum Aurangzeb (MPA W-300), Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani (MPA PP-293), Syed Muhammad Ashiq Hussain Kirmani (MPA PP-186), Muhammad Kazim Pirzada (MPA PP-245), Rana Sikander Hayat (MPA PP-183), Khawaja Imran Nazir (MPA PP-150), Khawaja Salman Rafiq (MPA PP-153), Zeeshan Rafique (MPA PP-51), Bilal Akbar Khan (MPA PP-58), Sohaib Ahmed Malik (MPA PP-71), Azma Zahid Bokhari (MPA W-301), Bilal Yasin (MPA PP-174), Ramesh Singh Arora (MPA NM-366), Khalil Tahir (MPA NM-367), Faisal Ayub Khokhar (MPA PP-168), Shafiq Hussain (MPA PP-31), and Sohail Shaukat Butt.

## Secretary Health visits Turbat Teaching Hospital, Makran Medical College

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Secretary Health Department, Abdullah Khan visited the Turbat Teaching Hospital, Makran Medical College and District Health Office, Turbat on Wednesday.

The Secretary Health was briefed by the Medical Superintendent of Teaching Hospital, Principal Makran Medical College and District Health Officer Turbat, Dr. Abaghar Baloch about their respective institutions.

He formally inaugurated the CT scan, MRI scan oxygen plant, solar system and burn unit in the Teaching Hospital.

Abdullah Khan inspected the pediatrics, Gynae departments, dialysis unit, casualty department. The Secretary Health appreciated performance of the staff of all institutions and said that better facilities are being provided to the people.



QUETTA: Leader of Pakistan Peoples Party, ex-Chief Minister Balochistan Abdul Quddus Bizenjo and Mir Abdul Wahab Bizenjo meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

## Commissioner inaugurates Business Expo at University College of DMJ

QUETTA (APP): Commissioner Naseerabad Division Tariq Qamar Baloch inaugurated the Business Expo Male and Female at University College of Dera Murad Jamali (DMJ) on Wednesday.

In the opening ceremony, Divisional Monitoring Colleges Syed Hussain Ali Shah, University Director Dr. Wajid Farhad Baloch, other students including faculty, administration and large number of people were present.

Commissioner Naseerabad Division Tariq Qamar Baloch inspected all the business expo stalls installed individually and learned about the items placed in the stalls from the students.

While appreciating the performance of all the installations and students in the business expo, Tariq Qamar Baloch said that this process was a welcome initiative, saying that young generation would learn all the principles of business along with their education.

These children are the guarantors of our future and it has become imperative to take immediate steps for their optimal development, it will be our effort to build and support them better so that they do not have to face any challenges in the future, he said.

The Commissioner said that our children have all kinds of skills but it was important that they could only be nurtured, adding that the dire need of a university was felt in Naseerabad division but now after the establishment of the university, this demand of the people here has also been fulfilled.

He said that entrepreneurship was essential to truly stabilize the economy, we all have to play our part to make it better and a new revolution could be created through marketing.

Doing business online has become very easy, instead of wasting your time on mobile, students should use it in the right direction, there is an urgent need for us to take steps keeping in view the current pace so that the journey of development can be completed as soon as possible, he said.

## Presidential candidates urged to appoint only MPs as polling agents

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has instructed the candidates participating in presidential election to appoint only parliamentarians as their polling agents. An ECP spokesman said in a statement that Presidential candidates must appoint only parliamentarians as polling agents. Furthermore, for the 2024 Presidential Election, candidates are required to ensure that their polling agents are members of the national or provincial assemblies.

## ECP seeks additional PML-N lists for NA women's seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has released a schedule for granting extra seats to women, specifically to parliamentary parties such as PML-N, after refusing to allocate certain seats to the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC). According to schedule, the issuance of the public notice is set for Thursday, with PML-N's nominated candidates to submit their nomination papers to the Joint Election Commissioner of Punjab by March 9. The preliminary list of candidates is slated for release on March 10, followed by the completion of the scrutiny of nomination papers by March 12.

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## Saraiki culture testament to diversity defining Pak: Bilawal

MULTAN (APP): The Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday extended his heartfelt greetings to the people of Saraiki on Saraiki Culture Day and to the entire nation at large. The PPP chairman, in his message, said that Waseeh is the cradle of a rich heritage, vibrant language, and resilient people.

"Saraiki people, with their warmth, hospitality, and deep-rooted cultural values, exemplify the essence of unity in diversity," he added.



Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi presenting a shield to Provincial Ombudsman Balochistan Nazar Muhammad Baloch. Director Ombudsman Saeed Ahmed Shahwani is also present.

## 15-member KP cabinet takes oath of office

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Fifteen Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ministers who have been inducted into the provincial cabinet took oath in a prestigious ceremony held at the Governor's House on Wednesday.

The induction of the ministers into the provincial cabinet was notified by the KP government's administration department following a summary of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, approved by KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

The members include Arshad Ayub Khan, Shakeel Ahmad, Fazal Hakim Khan, Muhammad Adnan Qadri, Aqib Ullah Khan, Muhammad Sajjad, Meena Khan, and Fazal Shakoor.

Nazir Ahmad Abbasi, Pakhtoon Yar Khan, Aftab Alam Khan Afridi, Khaleeq Ur Rehman, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, Faisal Khan Tarakai, and Muhammad Zahir Shah are also part of the cabinet.

Subsequently, the newly-elected KP CM Gandapur also sent a summary to the government to recommend appointments of his advisers, which was also approved by the governor.

Following the CM's advice, five advisers have been appointed, including Syed Fakhar Jehan, Muzamil Aslam, Muhammad Ali Saif, Mashal Azam, and Zahid Chanzab.

Yesterday, Gandapur received a nod of approval from incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) member Imran Khan after a meeting with him in Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi.

After finalising the cabinet members, the chief minister did not disclose their names, as he was under pressure by certain factions within the party to accommodate their nominees.

## IGP exhorts officers to spend more time in field ensuring steps for public safety

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Inspector General of Police Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh has exhorted the officers to spend their more time in field and ensure timely measures for the public safety and service.

He said that positive image of police is conditional with better performance. The IGP was addressing the ceremony of pinning badges on the shoulders of the officers who were promoted on the post of DSP and Inspectors here at the central police office on Wednesday.

He said that departmental promotion and increase in rank actually means increase in the responsibilities.

The IGP stressed that it is responsibility of the officers to get better performance from the subordinate staff. Therefore, the field officers should make the public service delivery process for the citizens easier using the available resources.

He also stressed the need to provide maximum facilities to the citizens along with controlling crime.

It may be mentioned here that those promoted are included Ghulam Sarwar, Dad Shah, Rashid Khan and other officers.

The IGP, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, Additional IGP Jawad Ahmed Dogar and DIG Headquarters Qamarul Hasan pinned the badges on shoulders of the police officers.



QUETTA: Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh addressing promoted Police officers.