

# Independent

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## Military vows action after Shangla suicide attack kills 6 including Chinese engineers

**ISPR says armed forces to hold all those involved in aiding terrorism accountable with nation's support, ironclad ally China; Certain foreign elements are complicit in aiding and abetting terrorism in Pakistan, driven by their vested interests; PM visits Chinese embassy, assures high-level probe; Anti-Pakistan elements will not succeed in harming Pak-China ties: President**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Five Chinese and one Pakistani national were killed on Tuesday in a terrorist attack near Besham in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a statement.

"The government of Pakistan strongly condemns this heinous act of terrorism," the statement said adding "We will take all necessary measures to bring the terrorists and their facilitators to justice. Such dastardly acts cannot dent the resolve of Pakistani nation to fight against the scourge of terrorism".

Today's attack was orchestrated by the enemies of Pakistan-China friendship. The government will resolutely act against all such forces and defeat them. The people and government of Pakistan stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our Chinese friends in this difficult time and extend sincere condolences to the families of the Chinese nationals killed in the attack.

Pakistan and China are close friends and iron brothers. The life and safety of Chinese nationals in Pakistan is of paramount importance.

Pakistan will continue

to work with our Chinese brothers in ensuring the safety and security of Chinese nationals, projects and institutions in Pakistan, the statement added.

The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Monday in a statement said that with the unwavering support of the resilient nation and the country's ironclad ally China, the Armed Forces would ensure that all those involved in aiding terrorism, directly or indirectly, are held accountable and find their due retribution.

"Together we will pre-

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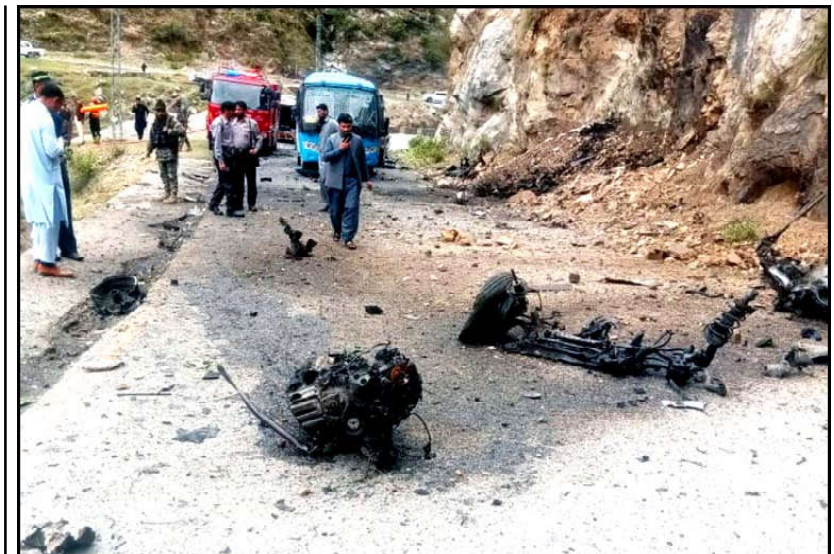
### China demands 'thorough probe'

ISLAMABAD (INP): China has demanded a "thorough investigation" after five Chinese nationals and one Pakistani were killed in an attack on a convoy in Bisham tehsil of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Shangla.

Speaking to journalists, District Inspector General (DIG) of Malakand said that a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a convoy of foreign nationals that was on its way from Islamabad to their camp in Dasu, Shangla.

"Five Chinese nationals and their Pakistani driver were killed in the attack," the police officer said.

"At around 1?pm on 26th March?local time, a Chinese company's bus carrying staff on the Dasu Hydropower Project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province was hit by terrorist attack," the Chinese Embassy and Consulates General in Pakistan said in a statement.



SHANGLA: View of site after targeted suicide bomb blast while rescue operation and investigation is underway, in Shangla.

## IMF program is vital for stability of economy: PM

**Announces significant incentives for highest tax payers**

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has said IMF program is essential for stability of the economy.

"IMF program is necessary for the stability of economy. If economy is weak then no one pays heed. If we don't carry begging bowl even then they say begging bowl in under their armpit. There is mountain of loans on Pakistan and we pay salaries out of loans and execute development work. Providing better environment to tax payers is priority of government. We will have to abide by the principles of Quaid-e-Azam to rid of loans. Doing business is not business of governments. Government has to extend help to the private

sector in collaboration with the provincial governments. Youths are our valuable asset. We will have to make them skilled. Ghazal ceasefire resolution should be implemented at every cost. Pakistan will continue to extend help to the oppressed Palestinians, he said this while addressing Tax Excellence Award ceremony here Tuesday.

He held the adoption of resolution in UN Security Council (UNSC) with reference to ceasefire in Gaza is good omen. Israel is perpetrating the worst barbarity in Gaza. Implementation of ceasefire resolution is very important.

He went on to say the tax payers are great heroes and national architects. They scaled up exports. The motive behind this cer-

emony is to give message to nation that the government and private sector have to work together for development of the country. We have to end the red tapism. The decision making process have to be accelerated.

He stressed that we will have to provide business friendly environment to address economic challenges. Federal government has to work along with the provinces. All the governments are equally responsible for the mistakes committed in the past.

All the award recipients deserve for congratulations.

Doing business is not business of government, he said adding We will have to

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits the Chinese Embassy, and met with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to offer condolence over the death of Chinese nationals in a suicide attack in District Shangla.

## CM Bugti launches cleanliness drive in Quetta

**Independent Report**

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti launched the cleanliness drive in Quetta to dispose and collect garbage through heavy machinery provided by PDMA to the Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC).

Speaking on the occasion, he said the corporation would collect waste through heavy machinery as the city produced around 1.5 million tons of garbage annually.

Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti said this waste could have been a precursor to a major disaster as there are most areas of Quetta where gar-

bage has never been collected.

He said that the Commissioner Quetta was assigned additional charge of administrator Quetta and gave him a target.

The chief minister said that modern heavy machinery has been provided to QMC to make the provincial capital a clean city. He ordered that salaries would be issued to the working employees of Metropolitan Corporation. The employees were protesting on failure to perform duties but not for salaries, he said and adding employees should

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## Four terrorists killed Militant attack on Pakistan Navy base in Turbat foiled

**Terrorists attacked naval base on night of March 25 and 26; Sepoy Noman Fareed embraced martyrdom during fight; Security forces "immediately mobilised" to support naval troops.**

RAWALPINDI (INP): A Balochistan Frontier Corps soldier was martyred while four terrorists were killed as security forces thwarted an attack on a naval base in Turbat last night, the military's media affairs wing said.

In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that terrorists attempted to attack PNS Siddique in Turbat last night. It said that the at-

tempt was foiled due to the "swift and effective response by the troops ensuring the safety and security of personnel and assets".

"Security forces in the vicinity were immediately mobilised to support the naval troops. Synergetic and effective response by the armed forces enabled killing of all four terrorists in ensuing joint clearance operation," it said.

The ISPR said that during the intense fire exchange 24-year-old Sepoy Noman Fareed of the Balochistan Frontier Corps embraced martyrdom. Makran Commissioner Saeed Ahmed Umrani had earlier told Dawn that heavy exchange of fire and explosions were reported from the vicinity of Turbat airport on Monday night.

"The armed men at-

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## President, PM discuss overall political, economic situation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari in Islamabad on Tuesday and discussed the overall political and economic situation of the country. They expressed their joint commitment to steer the country out of the challenges. They also discussed measures to provide relief to the people during Ramadan.

## Ahsan Iqbal directs expediting work on Gwadar Power Plant

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to expedite the construction work on the Gwadar Power Plant.

The minister passed these directives while chairing a meeting to review the progress of Gwadar Power Plant, which was attended by the ministry officials, Managing Director of Private Power Infrastructure Board (PIIB), the Chinese Minister-Counselor Yang Guangyuan and other relevant stakeholders, a news release said.

The PIIB is processing the 300MW coal power project at Gwadar, being

developed by M/s CIHC Pak Power Company (Pvt) Limited (CPPCL). The project is in the 'priority list' of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and holds paramount importance for the energy infrastructure and economic development of the region.

"The supply of electricity is essential in Gwadar and no delay will be accepted," said the minister while directing the stakeholders concerned to remove all the bottlenecks and start the construction work immediately.

Terming Gwadar "the gateway of CPEC", the minister said that the incumbent government had expedited

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## President summons NA session on April 1

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has summoned the session of National Assembly on the 1st of next month at four pm. It will be the second session of the 16th National Assembly.

## PM welcomes UNSC resolution for ceasefire in Gaza

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has welcomed the UN Security Council resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza.

In a statement, he urged the international community to ensure the implementation of the Security Council's resolution for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. He said the ongoing Zionist oppression against innocent Palestinians in Gaza must be stopped permanently.

Speaking to journalists at Adiala jail, Khan denied the reports that the US envoy met him in the prison. He said that he would speak to the US envoy about Lu's statement and the alleged role of the US embassy in the

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal chairing a meeting on progress of Gwadar Power Plant with Chinese company.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing a press conference, at Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in Quetta.

## Imran demands fresh inquiry after Donald Lu rebuffs 'cipher conspiracy'

**Monitoring Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan on Tuesday demanded a fresh inquiry into United States Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu's statement denying "cipher conspiracy" that US engineered his ouster from power by supporting the then opposition's no-confidence motion in April 2022.

Testifying before a Congressional panel last week, the top US diplomat said: "I wanna be very clear on this point [that] this conspiracy theory is a lie [and] it is a complete falsehood."

Speaking to journalists at Adiala jail, Khan denied the reports that the US envoy met him in the prison. He said that he would speak to the US envoy about Lu's statement and the alleged role of the US embassy in the

ciphergate if he met him.

"The original copy of cipher is with the Foreign Office, we were only given a paraphrased copy [of the document]," the former premier said while referring to the allegations that he misplaced the classified cipher document that he received as the prime minister.

The PTI founder said that a prime minister is "not the security guard" of his office; instead, there are some security protocols for the PM office.

Khan also called for a separate judicial commission to investigate into May 9 incidents and February 8 elections.

"A political party is being eliminated on the pretext of May 9 events," he added.

The former prime minister said that the president and Senate elections have no value after a "rigged" election.

## President lauds valour of security forces for foiling Turbat terror attack

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday lauded the security forces for their successful operation to foil a terrorist attack at the Naval Base in Turbat.

The president, in a statement, said that timely and effective action by the security forces to thwart the attack was appreciable.

He also lauded the valour of the soldiers who carried out the clearance operation and eliminated the terrorists.

President Zardari paid tribute to Sepoy Noman Fareed who embraced martyrdom during the operation.

## FM discusses cooperation with Turkish, Russian, Swedish envoys

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has underlined Pakistan's commitment to further deepen cooperation with Türkiye in all areas of mutual interest.

He said this while talking to Ambassador of Türkiye Dr. Mehmet Pacaci in Islamabad today who paid a courtesy call to him.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Minister also received the Russian Ambassador Albert Khorev and discussed bilateral areas of cooperation including global and regional issues of mutual concern.

Swedish Ambassador Henrik Persson called on Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad on Tuesday.

## CM pays tribute to security force for thwarting attack on Turbat Naval Airbase

**Independent Report**

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday paid tribute to the security forces for thwarting the terrorist attack on Turbat Naval Airbase.

He said that the terrorists were defeated by the timely action of the security forces saying that the forces took effective action and brought the terrorists to hell.

The CM said provincial government was determined to root out the menace of terrorism from the province and the country.

He said that the entire nation stands by its brave security forces for foiling design of nefarious anti-peace elements.

Mean while Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday strongly condemned the terrorist incident in Besham area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He also expressed his sorrow on death of Chinese residents in suicide attack and extended his condolences to the Chinese Government and Chinese people for the death of Chinese residents.

The CM said that people of Balochistan expressed deep sorrow over the incident. The elements involved in terrorist incident in Besham will not be pardoned, he said.

He also prayed for early recovery of those injured in the incident.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh visiting the Pakistan Maritime Academy.

## Four terrorists gunned down in DI Khan IBO: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (INP): Security forces gunned down four terrorists in Dera Ismail Khan (DIK) Intelligence Based Operation (IBO). In a statement released on Tuesday, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) stated that the security forces conducted the "IBO on the reported presence of terrorists".

During the conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between Pakistan security forces and the terrorists, as a result of which four terrorists were gunned down. The terrorists were identified as Mustafa, Qismatullah and Islamuddin, who were involved in an attack over security forces and civilians. Arms and ammunition were

also recovered from the custody of the killed outlaws.

"Sanitisation operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area," the ISPR stated. Localals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism. Earlier, security forces foiled a terrorist attack on Pakistan Navy's Airbase PNS Siddique in Turbat, late Monday night.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) four terrorists armed with heavy weapons and explosives attacked the Naval base in Turbat. However, timely action by navy personnel thwarted the assault, preventing any harm to the base or its personnel.

## CM Maryam, Nawaz Sharif meet PML-N MNAs, MPAs, THs from Faisalabad division

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif and PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had a meeting with PML-N MNAs, MPAs and THs from Faisalabad Division, who apprised the Chief Minister about issues and development needs of their constituencies.

Madam Chief Minister said, "More than 48 lakh Ramadan Nigahban hampers have been distributed across Punjab." She added, "A comprehensive system of solid waste management is being implemented in 36 districts of the province." She said, "A target has been given to establish PPP mode of waste management system in all 36 districts including villages in next 3 months."

The Parliamentarians congratulated Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on the successful completion of Ramadan Nigahban Package. They also thanked Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for 'Suthra Punjab' Programme and other innovative projects for the public welfare.

PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said on the occasion, "Together we will bring Pakistan back to its place." He added, "Had our government not been removed, Pakistan would have been on the heights of development." He explained, "Everyone has seen what the illegal invaders have done to this country. Not only PML-N but the state of Pakistan was also abused." He

added, "Although it will be a difficult year or two, the time of relief will surely come."

Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said, "The entire country, including politicians, administration and police have to work hard to pull Pakistan out of difficult times." He gave confidence to the bureaucracy by saying, "Your CM is with you. Work for the province and the country."

Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said, while lamenting on the non-implementation of ban on kite flying which has resulted in the tragic incident of death of a young man, "Such a sad event has not been seen or heard. I am very saddened by the death of a beautiful young man."

Madam Chief Minister said, "I have come today with Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to offer condolences and show solidarity with the bereaved family." She added "The sight of string slitting the neck was very painful. This incident cannot be ignored."

Explaining the upcoming development schemes for Faisalabad, Madam Chief Minister said, "Laws are being introduced to ensure safety of workers, and they will be implemented in true spirit." She added, "100 speedo buses are being brought in Faisalabad besides Metro Bus." The Chief Minister expressed, "Faisalabad is also included in the project for the construction of one lakh affordable housing units for the low income classes."



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti is inspecting vehicles parked in PDMA office along with PDMA Director Jahanzeb Khan, Commissioner and Administrator Hamza Shafaqat and others in Quetta.



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif presiding over a review meeting regarding Infrastructure Development Authority

### Ahsan Iqbal directs....

**Continued from page 1**  
the implementation on phase 2 of the CPEC while integrating it with five new economic corridors.

"The development of Gwadar Port City, New Gwadar International Airport and East Bay Expressway is going to transform the city of Gwadar into a maritime trade hub and a new smart port for the region. It will also lead to industrialization in Balochistan," he added.

The minister expressed confidence that all major projects under CPEC in Gwadar, including Gwadar Power Plant, distribution of 2000 Boat engines to fishermen of Gwadar, Khuzdar-Panjgur Transmission line (via Nag-Basima) which connect Makran with National

### IMF program is vital for...

**Continued from page 1**  
encourage private sector. If our economy is fortified then the voice of nation will be fortified. If economy weakens then no one pays heed to the weak. Government and private sectors are two wheels of one train to face economic challenges.

He further stated we are re-structuring FBR. They will have to end the generation of electricity out of costly oil.

The cases of recovery of Rs 2700 billion are pending. Cases are prolonged in tribunals.

He indicated that staff level agreement has been reached with IMF. We have to enter into another program with IMF. However we will have to salvage ourselves from the burden of the debt.

This is not time for clapping but it is time to look into our mistakes. For how long we will live on loans.

We saved country from going default during our 16 months government, he said.

He pointed out we are outsourcing airports. We are privatizing PIA.

He underscored Chinese companies are ready to work in Pakistan. We will take forward the second phase of CPEC. We will impart skill training to girls and boys.

Finance minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said tax payers are our national heroes who are playing pivotal role in national development.

Underscoring the need for digitalization in tax system he said digitalization will lead to enhance recoveries of taxes and bring transparency in system.

Direct tax and export sector is inevitable for national development, he remarked.

### Militant attack on Pakistan...

**Continued from page 1**  
tacked from three sides of the airport boundary, but security forces responded immediately and foiled their attempt to infiltrate the premises," he said over the phone from Turbat. It should be mentioned that PNS Siddique is among the biggest naval air stations in the country.

Locals said that over a dozen blasts were heard in Turbat town, while the firing, which began around 10pm, continued late into the night. The banned Balochistan Liberation Army claimed that its Majeed Brigade was behind the attack.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif commended security forces for foiling the terrorist attack. According to state broadcaster Radio Pakistan, the premier acknowledged that the militants were neutralised due to the timely and effective action

### Govt to hold exclusive civil awards ceremony for frontline doctors, paramedics died during COVID-19

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** The government has decided to hold an exclusive civil awards ceremony for the doctors and paramedics who had lost lives their lives during COVID-19 pandemic, an official statement said Monday.

Last year on August 14, the President of Pakistan had awarded Tamgha-i-Imtiaz posthumously to 299 doctors and paramedical staff who died while rendering services during the pandemic.

However, due to unavailability of essential data and information with the Federal Ministry of Health, their names could not be included for civil awards ceremonies held at the federal and provincial levels this March 23rd.

The statement said the health ministry had been issued directives to collect the necessary data at the earliest.

"As soon the information will be available, a separate award ceremony will be announced to be held at the federal and provincial levels accordingly," it added.

### Pak women to meet Indian counterparts in Asia Cup on July 21

**LAHORE (APP):** Pakistan Women cricket team will face off the Indian Women team in the Women's Asia Cup 2024 on July 21 in Dambulla, Sri Lanka.

According to the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), the upcoming Women's Asia Cup 2024 is scheduled to take place in Dambulla, Sri Lanka, from July 19th to July 28th, 2024. This edition of the tournament will feature eight teams, one more than the previous edition in 2022, indicating the growing interest and participation in women's cricket across Asia. The Pakistan Women will meet Nepal on the opening day on July 19 and play their last group match against UAE on July 23.

### CM Bugti launches....

**Continued from page 1**  
crucial was not resulting in high outcomes.

He said efforts are being made that candidates elect unopposed in Senate elections and all political parties in the province have been taken on board.

He directed the citizens to support the cleaning campaign launched in Quetta. Sarfraz Bugti said he will visit remote areas of Balochistan to meet the people and resolve their problems.

He said emergency has been imposed in the Health and Education Department to ensure basic facilities to the masses at their door step.

Sarfraz Bugti said the number of government teachers was more than Punjab, but the huge recruitment was not resulting in high outcomes.

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### Australia announces white ball series schedule against Pakistan

**LAHORE (INP):** Cricket Australia announced the schedule of the white ball series against Pakistan which is planned to start at the end of the current year.

The Pakistan Cricket Team is set to visit Australia for a white-ball series scheduled for the summer of 2024-25. The series will comprise six games in total - three ODIs and as many T20Is - to be played across six venues from 4 to 18 November 2024.

As per the released schedule, the three-match Dettol Men's ODI series will begin on 4 November at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Pakistan and Australia will then play in Adelaide and Perth on 8 and 10 November, respectively.

After 14 Nov, Pakistan and Australia will face one another in the three-match Dettol Men's T20I Series. Pakistan's last T20I outing on Australian soil was back in 2022, wherein the men in green appeared in the final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

Cricket Australia, announces, white ball series schedule, Pakistan

The series will start at The Gabba in Brisbane. Action will then move to the Sydney Cricket Ground; Pakistan's last T20I at the venue saw them beat New Zealand at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup semi-final. Hobart will be the last stop on the tour, where the final T20I will be played on 18 November. 4 November: MCG, Melbourne, 8 November: Adelaide Oval, Adelaide, 10 November: Perth Stadium, Perth T20I Series 14 November: The Gabba, Brisbane, 16 November: SCG, Sydney, 18 November: Bellerive Oval, Hobart, Pakistan last played an ODI series on Australian soil back in 2016, which saw the home side come out on top.

### Ayaz, Ghulam Mustafa condemn terrorists' attack on van in Shangla

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah have expressed deep sorrow and grief on the death of Chinese nationals who lost their lives in a heinous terrorists' attack in Shangla Besham. They also strongly condemned terrorists attack on Chinese nationals, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

Ayaz Sadiq has termed such attacks on Chinese nationals as attempts to bring fissure in unbreakable ties between Pakistan and China.

Syed Ghulam Mustafa also said that such terrorists activities against nationals of brethren country China is condemnable in every sense of word. He said that every Pakistani shares the grief and sadness on the death of innocent Chinese in today's terrorist attacks.

Our two countries express firm resolve to bring the perpetrators of this heinous act to justice," he added.

Meanwhile China has demanded a "thorough investigation" after five Chinese nationals and one Pakistani were killed in an attack on a convoy in Bisham tehsil of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Shangla.

Speaking to journalists, District Inspector General (DIG) of Malakand said that a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a convoy of foreign nationals that was on its way from Islamabad to their camp in Dasu, Shangla. "Five Chinese nationals and their Pakistani driver were killed in the attack," the police officer said.

"At around 17pm on 26th March?local time, a Chinese company's bus carrying staff on the Dasu Hydropower Project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province was hit by terrorist attack," the Chinese Embassy and Consulates General in Pakistan said in a statement.

### Military vows action after Shangla suicide....

**Continued from page 1**  
terror, remains perhaps the only nation directly confronting the international terrorist enterprise with absolute steadfastness and full resolve of the state.

President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday strongly condemned an attack on the Chinese nationals in Bisham and expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the casualties.

The president also conveyed his condolences to the bereaved Chinese families and the Government of China, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The president reiterated that the enemies of Pakistan would never cause damage to Pak-China friendship.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday visited the Chinese embassy here to convey condolence over the killing of five Chinese nationals in a terrorist attack in Bisham, and assured a swift and high-level probe into the incident.

The prime minister, in an interaction with the Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong sympathised with the bereaved families of the slain Chinese nationals, a PM Office press release said.

He assured the Chinese side that the government would hold a high-level and swift probe into the attack and take the culprits and facilitators to the task.

The prime minister also conveyed his condolence message to the Chinese president and premier.

"We will not let such nefarious attempts to undermine the Pak-China friendship succeed. The



**FDB**  
Fisheries Development Board

## INVITATION FOR BIDS

PSDP project titled **Cage Culture Cluster Development Project** being executed by Fisheries Development Board (FDB) M/o National Food Security & Research, Islamabad invite bid from interested suppliers under PPRA rules. The notice of below mentioned tender can be obtained from the PPRA's website or from the below mentioned contact person.

RECEIPT NO	TENDER NO	TENDER DETAILS	CLOSING DATE		OPENING DATE	
			Date	Time	Date	Time
1	184555	004-2023/24-CCD PURCHASE OF FISH FEED & SEED	16-April-2024	11:00 AM	16-April-2024	11:30 AM

2. Offers/Proposals must be submitted on company's letterhead with complete specifications of offered equipment/item. Offers quoted without a form of a bid, bid security will be rejected. Tender document can be obtained from the project office of Fisheries Development Board on payment of Rs. 1,000/- in the form of pay order /DD in favor of "Fisheries Development Board"

For all questions and queries, please contact  
**Dr. Safia Mushtaq, Project Manager**  
(Cage Culture Cluster Development Project),  
on Telephone: 051-9330560-2

## PUC applauds UN resolution on Gaza, condemns attacks on Chinese citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Tuesday welcomed the United Nations Security Council resolution on Gaza, affirming that Israel's actions have constituted genocide in Gaza, surpassing even the brutality witnessed during the Second World War.

Emphasizing the imperative of implementing the resolution, the Council underscored its significance as a pivotal victory for Islamic and just nations.

Pakistan and its

people ardently aspired for the establishment of Palestine as a secure and sovereign state, it said adding that demonstrating unwavering solidarity with their oppressed Palestinian brethren, Pakistan and its populace advocated for a fair, comprehensive, and sustainable resolution to the Palestinian conflict.

These sentiments were expressed by the Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir

Mahmood Ashrafi, along with esteemed scholars including Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Nauman Hashiri, Maulana Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Zubair Abid, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Pittafi, Maulana Abu Bakr Hameed Sabri, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi, Maulana Haq Nawaz Khalid, Maulana

Obaidullah Gormani, Allama Tahirul Hasan, Maulana Hanif Osmani, and Maulana Muhammad Asghar Khosa, among others.

Expressing grave concern over the dire situation in Palestine, where over 3,000 Palestinians, including more than 20,000 children and women, have tragically lost their lives since October 7, the religious scholars and leaders highlighted the unprecedented suffering endured by humanity in Gaza.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing the Iftar-Dinner hosted by him for children from different orphanages of the country on the occasion of Orphans Day in Islamic World, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi visits the Chinese Embassy and met with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to offer condolences over the death of Chinese nationals in a suicide attack.

## 486 dead, 510 hurt in IIOJK fire incidents in six years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Data obtained through the Right to Information (RTI) Act indicates a devastating toll of 486 fatalities and 510 injuries in fire-related incidents, many went untraced, across occupied Jammu and Kashmir over the past six years.

Activist MM Shuja's RTI query uncovered a staggering total of 26,354 fire incident calls received by the Fire and Emergency Services Department from January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2023, KMS reported.

During this period, 486 individuals lost their lives, with 510 others sus-

taining injuries in various fire accidents. Tragically, nine employees or firefighters also perished while performing their duties. The financial impact of these incidents is colossal, with assets worth Rs 20,285.48 crore involved in the reported fires.

A breakdown of the data by year illustrates a consistent trend of fire-related tragedies. In 2018, 104 fatalities and 99 injuries were reported from 5,314 fire-related calls. Similar patterns persisted in subsequent years, with 103 deaths and 105 injuries in 2019, 86 deaths and 58 injuries in 2020, 106 fatali-

ties and 62 injuries in 2021, and 68 deaths and 140 injuries in 2022.

Despite the high volume of calls in 2023, there was a slight improvement, with only 19 fatalities and 46 injuries recorded amidst 4,451 fire incident reports received by the department.

Moreover, the RTI data underscores deficiencies within the Fire and Emergency Services Department and in terms of medical facilities. Additionally, while the cause of many fires remains untraceable, the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) has highlighted the normalization of civilian property destruction.

## IGP advises public to discourage beggars during Ramadan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector general of police (IGP) for the federal capital Dr Akbar Nasir Khan Tuesday advised public to avoid showing sympathy for the professional panhandlers during the holy month of Ramadan and to instead donate to recognized charities. Talking to a private news channel, he said people need to reach out to deserving families and individuals because begging is not acceptable in society, adding, it is social media users responsibility to educate people about the importance of giving their donations to legitimate charity organizations which will then distribute them to deserving families.

He noted that Islamabad police is working tirelessly to curb the crime, especially in areas frequented by beggars during Ramadan, such as mosques, markets, residential neighborhoods, and parking lots.

Instead of giving alms, the public has been encouraged to donate to registered charities and non-profit organisations, he said.

Residents can also help the police eradicate illegal practices by reporting beggars, he added.

Most beggars exploit people's religious and charitable sentiments to make easy money, police warned.

Capital police through social media sites have also launched an anti-begging campaign to raise public awareness, he mentioned.

He said incidents of begging are not only a public nuisance, but also distort the country's image, as those involved carry out illegal activities.

## PBM, TIKA host Iftar dinner for orphans

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Baitul Mal, (PBM) in collaboration with the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), organised an Iftar dinner on Tuesday for 100 orphans from PBM Sweet Home to mark World Orphans Day.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhsin BALCI, TIKA's Country Head, praised PBM's dedication to caring for impoverished and orphaned children, and reiterated his commitment to collaborating with PBM to safeguard the rights of orphaned children.

On the occasion, Country Head TIKA and other team members also presented gifts to the orphan children.

He also utilised the opportunity to raise awareness among people about their important role in improving the lives of poor and orphaned children.

## CDA reconstitutes inspection team to ensure transparency in Islamabad Housing Schemes

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to enhance transparency and ensure the legitimacy of housing schemes in Islamabad, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has reconstituted an Inspection Committee tasked with verifying the physical aspects of these projects.

The decision was made during the meeting of the CDA Board, said a senior official on Tuesday.

The reconstitution of the committee comes as a response to the need for thorough verification of housing schemes in the capital city.

Recognizing the importance of this task, the CDA Board approved the composition of the Inspection Committee, which will be chaired by the Member Engineering of the CDA.

The five-member committee comprises officials from various departments within the CDA, including the Director of Building Control, the Cost Accountant from the Finance Department.

## HC train 100 journalists on climate journalism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Over 100 journalists from 35 media outlets and research organizations participated in a practical training from the British High Commission on climate journalism.

Journalists gained in-depth knowledge on complex climate change and nature protection issues, discussed how journalism is at the frontlines of climate change, explored how to find real climate stories on the ground and practised telling climate stories, said a news release.

They discussed challenges that can exist around climate journalism, how to centre women and girls in climate stories, and made commitments to tell climate stories in future.

## NUMS allows engaging IFI in Medical City project

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Board of Directors of the Public Private Partnership Authority (P3A) on Tuesday marked a significant stride towards advancing infrastructure development in the country, with a focus on promoting initiatives for public welfare.

The board meeting, chaired Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and Vice Chairperson of the Board Dr Jehanzeb Khan, saw deliberations and approvals on various agenda items, including the pivotal approval of the National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS)

request to engage an International Financial Institution (IFI) for the Medical City Project, a news release said.

The NUMS project, focused on establishing a Medical City in Islamabad's Sector I-17, is set to redefine healthcare standards in Pakistan.

With a 1600-bed hospital and specialized research institutes, the project aims to enhance medical education, research and patient care.

Its phased implementation over 20 years underscores a long-term commitment to advancing healthcare infrastructure

and promoting medical excellence nationally and internationally.

Dr Jehanzeb Khan emphasized the paramount importance of initiatives geared towards the public good, highlighting the role of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in fostering development that benefits society at large.

He underscored the need for P3A to provide support to implementing agencies in conceptualizing their projects, guiding them through the complexities of PPPs, and ensuring that projects were aligned with the overarching goal of public welfare.

## IHC adjourns PTI founder, Qureshi's appeals in cipher case

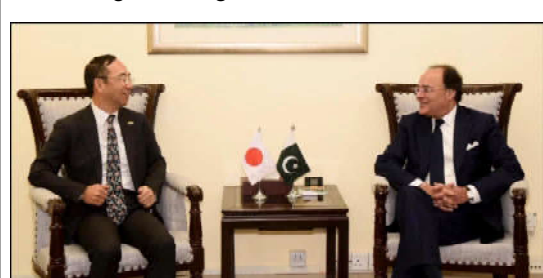
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday adjourned appeals till tomorrow against the conviction of PTI's founder and former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi in Cipher case.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the appeals against the sentence of two accused. Defence Lawyer Barrister Salman Safdar and FIA's Special Prosecutor Hamid Ali Shah appeared before the court.

## Pakistan, Japan pledge to work together towards achieving common goals

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan and Japan on Tuesday agreed to work together in achieving common goals

pressed their desire to further enhance the bilateral cooperation between the two nations.



for the benefit of people of two countries.

The resolve was expressed during a meeting between Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Mitsuhiro Wada, during his meeting with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb in Islamabad today.

A press release issued after the meeting said that both the dignities have ex-

pressed their desire to further enhance the bilateral cooperation between the two nations.

The Japanese Ambassador congratulated the Finance Minister on assuming the office.

The Minister for Finance & Revenue welcomed the Ambassador and stated that the Government is committed to undertake reforms to bring macroeconomic stability and sustainability. He stated that increasing the tax to GDP ratio remains a priority area.

## Envoy urges Social media influencers to promote ideal conduct among Pakistanis in UAE

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to the United Arab Emirates Faisal Niaz Tirmizi urged the social media influencers to play their effective role in educating Pakistani community members living in UAE to demonstrate an ideal conduct.

The ambassador, addressing a gathering of Pakistani community members and social media influencers at an Iftar reception at the Consulate General of Pakistan in Dubai, said the positive conduct should be fostered while giving due respect to UAE laws, rules, norms and traditions and its policies, said a press release re-

ceived on Tuesday.

Appreciating the Dubai government's social media platforms titled "Emirates Love Pakistan", the ambassador said that social media played a significant role in today's world by facilitating communication, information sharing and networking.

He said that around 1.8 million Pakistanis residing and working in the UAE were a source of livelihood for as many families.

He urged Pakistani community members to work collectively for positively representing Pakistan.

## WWF-Pakistan highlights vital role of ground water recharge

ISLAMABAD (APP): WWF-Pakistan arranged a field visit to the University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Lahore, where two groundwater recharge wells have been constructed as part of the Ravi River Restoration Project.

The event brought together industry experts, academia, and members from the Ministry of Water Resources to witness the ongoing efforts towards ensuring the responsible and efficient use of water resources in the region, according to a news release. The Ravi River Restoration Project, funded by the Coca-Cola Foundation in partnership with WWF-Pakistan.

## IHC summons authorized of interior ministry on April 3 on petition against closure of X

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has summoned authorized officer of interior ministry on April 3 in connection with petition against closure of social media platform X.

Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Aamer Farooq remarked we call any one from interior ministry and ask from him. May be it is not liked by some one whatever is written. Much is written on judiciary. Things have changed during 30 years. You can impose curbs under some rules and regulation.

The case regarding closure of social media platform X came up for hearing Tuesday in IHC.

Written reply was filed by PTA in IHC.

## AdVentures delegation calls on Shaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, held a constructive meeting with the delegation of AdVentures.

The delegation, led by the head of the company, Parvez Abbasi, briefed the Minister of State regarding the preparations for World Telecom Day.

During the meeting, Minister of State Shaza Fatima said that Pakistan possesses abundant talent, yet there exists a crucial need to elevate Pakistan's branding at the global level, according to a news release.

She reiterated that the government is extending all possible support to the private sector in this endeavor.

## CPDI urges immediate appointment of members to Balochistan Info Commission

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) extends warm greetings to Mr. Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti, Chief Minister of Balochistan, on his recent assumption of office. While congratulating Mr. Bugti, CPDI emphasizes the imperative need for him to ensure the implementation of the Balochistan Right to Information Act, 2021.

CPDI recognizes the paramount importance of transparency and accountability in governance, essential pillars for a thriving democracy. In light of this, CPDI underscores the urgency of fulfilling the legal mandate set forth in the Balochistan Right to Information Act, 2021.

Passed by the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan on February 1, 2021, and subsequently receiving the assent of the Governor of Balochistan on February 15, 2021, the Act mandates the appointment of members to the Balochistan Information Commission within 180 days of its commencement, as outlined in Section 18(1).

"Regrettably, more than three years have elapsed since the enactment of this crucial legislation, yet the appointment of members to the Balochistan Information Commission remains pending," says Mukhtar Ahmad Ali, Executive Director of CPDI.

"This delay not only contravenes the law but also undermines the fundamental principles of transparency and accountability envisaged by the Balochistan Right to Information Act."

Access to information is an inalienable right enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan. Recognizing its paramount importance in fostering good governance, combating corruption, and ensuring public institutions' accountability,

## Senator Talha joins PPP, envisions broader role in political trajectory

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Senator Muhammad Talha Mehmood, on Tuesday, announced to join the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) alongside his associates, envisioning a broader national role in his political trajectory.

In a press conference held here at the PPP Central Secretariat's Media Cell, he informed that his allegiance to the PPP stemmed from invitations extended by President Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Senator Talha, underscoring the significance of his move, said his previous affiliation solely with the Jamiat Ulema Islam-Fazl, marking this transition as the inaugural departure from his established political journey.

The Japanese Ambassador congratulated the Finance Minister on assuming the office.

The Minister for Finance & Revenue welcomed the Ambassador and stated that the Government is committed to undertake reforms to bring macroeconomic stability and sustainability. He stated that increasing the tax to GDP ratio remains a priority area.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari in a group photo with children from different orphanages on the occasion of Iftar-Dinner hosted by the President on Orphans Day in the Islamic World, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## IFA signs MoU with NIH to bolster food testing capabilities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) Dr Tahira Saddique on Tuesday said that the IFA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Institute of Health (NIH) towards ensuring the safety of consumables in the Federal Capital.

This collaboration aims to enhance food testing capabilities and strengthen efforts to combat the proliferation of harmful health products in the city.

Talking to APP, she said that the MoU was signed between Dr.

Tanveer, Chief Nutrition Wing of NIH, and Irfan Nawaz Memon, Director of IFA.

This collaboration was expected to streamline food testing procedures, ensuring rigorous examination of food samples to identify any potential risks to public health.

She revealed that the partnership entails a series of initiatives aimed at bolstering food safety measures across Islamabad.

With access to the advanced facilities at the NIH laboratory, IFA would conduct thorough inspections of various eateries to eliminate substandard food items from circulation.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari meets officials from Federal Flood Commission and Punjab Irrigation Department.

# Daily Voice of Masses Independent

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## Ceasefire, finally

Over five months since the Gazan slaughter began, the UN Security Council finally approved on Monday a resolution calling for a ceasefire in the occupied Palestinian territory. Several such attempts had been made since the conflict between Israel and Hamas began on Oct 7, yet the US had vetoed three ceasefire resolutions.

This time, probably because of the international backlash against Israeli barbarism, as well as domestic criticism of the Biden administration's 'iron-clad' support for Tel Aviv's murderous campaign in an election year, Washington decided to abstain. This may indicate the American government's moral ambiguity over the mass murder of over 32,000 Palestinian civilians — the US ambassador to the UN said they "did not agree" with everything in the resolution — but perhaps such a position is preferable to stonewalling every attempt to stop the butchery.

While there is little to celebrate, as the level of suffering in Gaza is staggering, at least the people of the besieged Strip will be given a break from the daily dose of death and destruction to mourn their loved ones, and start the long, painful process of healing. The UN secretary general was recently at the Rafah crossing and called for removing the obstacles that are blocking aid from reaching Gaza. Israel is the biggest obstacle, and it is hoped the ceasefire will allow food, water and medical aid to reach hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in distress. Famine — most of it manufactured by Israel — now stalks Gaza, with the WHO saying children in the Strip are on the "brink of death". Moreover, thousands of children have been orphaned in this unholy war, and are in particular need of medical and psychological attention to help them deal with the trauma of watching genocidal violence unfold before their eyes. These must be the immediate goals of the international community.

Apart from extending prompt humanitarian assistance to Gaza's population, all sides must work towards a more permanent cessation of violence. It should be remembered that an almost weeklong truce was agreed to in November, but broke down soon after.

The current arrangement should be more durable. While talk of 'solutions' may be unrealistic right now, once the dust has settled, Israel should be made to pay for the murder of thousands of innocents. Palestinian lives matter, and a generation of orphaned Gazan children will be looking to the world community to secure justice for them.

All eyes will now be on Israel and the US, its chief patron. Will Tel Aviv abide by the UNSC resolution? Or will it live up to its reputation of being a rogue state by dismissing this binding call, and continuing with its criminal campaign in Gaza? The days ahead will be critical for the entire region.

### Jawed Naqvi

March 23 evokes three apparently distinct events in different time zones, which are in a curious way linked. The day marks Pakistan's national day. That's when Delhi-based journalists would wait for their invitation to the annual reception on the Pakistan High Commission's sprawling lawns. Indian invitees included politicians, businessmen, outspoken peaceniks, closet warmongers, and the inevitable sleuths. The prevailing temperature of bilateral ties was gauged from the stature of the chief guest of the day. A foreign secretary or minister showing up was a bonus. Else, a nondescript bureaucrat would be ensconced glumly on the main sofa to indicate the trough.

Kashmiri leaders, many of them in jail today, would hold forth on newly punctuated old scripts about the 'maslaha-i-Kashmir'. Almost by a rule, the warmest handshake and embrace was reserved by the Pakistani hosts for members — of

ten rival members — of the Hurriyat cluster.

The advent of the Modi era 10 years ago changed much of that. He locked up the Hurriyat leaders and made it a challenge for Indians to visit the Pakistani embassy. Cops in civilian clothes probe identities, jutting down number plates of cars, often hissing warnings against visiting the enemy's estate.

Fahmida Riaz made a vivid observation in her acerbic take on Indians picking up Pakistan's bad habits. "Tum bilkul hum jaise nikley?" (You've turned out exactly like us, dear bigots?) What is now known as the Modi way of deterring Indians from meeting Pakistanis borrows from the script the Pakistani establishment had successfully used to discourage their people from meeting Indian diplomats in Islamabad.

Not sure if things have gotten any better since 1997 when one visited Pakistan to film a documentary on Inder Gujral's initiative as prime minister for closer ties with Saarc countries. It wasn't difficult to meet

people and film interviews in Karachi, and it was surprisingly easy to even interview the former army chief Aslam Beg at his home, opposite the Army House in Rawalpindi. The area is supposed to be out of bounds for Indian visitors, according to visa rules. But Gen Beg promised there would be no trouble since he was calling me to his home. The next day, for no good reason other than perhaps common courtesy, I took a cab to the Indian embassy. The high commissioner gave me lunch at the Marriott where he seemed to be a popular visitor. He later drove me to the office of a foreign news agency where I had to meet friends. The moment the envoy's car stopped, and he came out to see me to the gate, loud sirens rent the sky. The doorman was roughed up for not knowing who I was. For the next few days in Islamabad, a motorcycle rider routinely kept a watch on my host's home. Today, the boot is on the Indian foot.

What was the national day all about, which

one could no longer attend in New Delhi? It was the Quid's address to the Muslim League convention on March 23, 1940, in Lahore that created the national day. The address flowed from the mistrust with Nehru that haemorrhaged in the sharp letters they exchanged and which they went on to get published in the press in 1938. From personal law of Muslims to cow slaughter, from the status of Urdu as a language of Muslims to the colour of the national flag, there didn't seem a subject that couldn't be settled amicably by the two educated and articulate men. The outcome was independence that produced a poem of sadness from Faiz, an independence that Gandhi refused to feel joyous about.

Bring in two other events that occurred on March 23, albeit in different time zones, but both of which make the League-Congress dispute seem narrow-minded, unrelated to a truer struggle for freedom. When a kangaroo court hanged the 23-year-old Bhagat Singh

in Lahore jail, the British saw in him a Bolshevik, a scholarly admirer of Lenin and Trotsky, a potentially mortal threat to Britain's sway in Asia. It had to be nipped in the bud. Bhagat Singh's birthday falls on March 23, and while Jinnah and Nehru opposed the sentence, and saw the Marxist revolutionary as a freedom fighter, he thought little of their ability to deliver genuine freedom to India, one that would free the masses from colonial rule and also from the native exploiters who would be the new rulers.

"Stop shouting 'Long Live Revolution', Bhagat Singh chided his followers in February 1931. "The term revolution is too sacred, at least to us, to be so lightly used or misused. But if you say you are for the national revolution and the aim of your struggle is an Indian republic of the type of the United States of America, then I ask you to please let it be known on what forces you rely to help you bring about that revolution — whether national or the socialist, or the peasantry

and labour. Congress leaders do not dare to organise those forces. When they passed the resolution of complete independence — they wanted to use it as a threat to achieve their hearts' desire — Dominion Status."

What inspired Bhagat Singh in the American fight against colonialism? "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?" pleaded Patrick Henry with George Washington on March 23, 1775, at a convention where he campaigned for open war with Britain. "Give me liberty or give me death." The lines presaged Britain's resounding defeat in the battle of Yorktown. It was an act of mercy on Bhagat Singh's troubled soul that he did not live to see what he considered to be short-sightedness of his peers falling way short of his vision of a free people. Preventing the people, thus waylaid, from sharing their joys and sorrows with each other continues to foster the false consciousness, Bhagat Singh had cautioned his comrades about. -- Courtesy Dawn

## China, the neighbour: 'In a way'

### Mosharraf Zaidi

What did Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar mean when, during a press conference in London, he clearly listed Pakistan's immediate neighbouring countries as Afghanistan, Iran and India, but then said that China was a neighbour "in a way"?

The explanation he would likely provide is that one is reading too much into the flubbing of a simple description of Pakistan's sovereign territory — that he spoke in the 'flow' and that he is a responsible and senior leader and doesn't need naysayers nit-picking his every word as the foreign minister.

All of this may be true. He may have distinguished China being a neighbour "in a way" that is different from Afghanistan, Iran and India just as one may cough or clear one's throat, or touch one's beard, during the utterance of an important sentence, with no deeper meaning or intent.

The timing and the specific implications of this distinction however are not so easy to ignore. I will explain why the implications

matter, but to do so, we need to step back and understand how India conducts its relationship with Pakistan.

Since before taking office as India's prime minister, Narendra Modi has been slicing and dicing clumsy foreigners desperate for a piece of the India action. His approach to India's standing in the world is concerted, highly disciplined, consistent, purpose-driven and visionary.

Prime Minister Modi knew who his key people and key ministers would be, years before he had an opportunity to assign them their roles. He stands alone today among living Indian leaders, and in part this is because he does not act alone or in isolation. He is part of a mission-driven organization (the RSS) that has exercised Karmic discipline in its quest to 'cleanse' India and restore it to the RSS's conception of the greatness and goodness of a Hindu Rashtra. This mission enjoys the support of nearly every segment of society because the mission has been engineered to cater to those segments.

PM Modi's approach to India's standing in the world includes within it a

wholesale transformation in the Pakistan-India relationship. The driver for this is not merely the RSS-driven ideological superiority that India asserts in nearly every public (and mostly oblique) reference to Pakistan. It is also part of a larger picture that Indian diplomats and leaders have been painting about India.

Modi's wider Pakistan logic is quite simple. Pakistan is too small for India to be seen as paying it any more attention than any other relatively minor relationship. In this way, Modi is the leader many Indian strategists (including those of a secular persuasion) in South Block have been waiting for their entire lives. Combined, India's thought leaders and diplomats have convinced themselves and most of the rest of the world that India is too big to be hyphenated with Pakistan. They feel that if third parties (be they countries, or multilateral organizations, or the wider international media) continue to see India through the lens of its difficult relationship with Pakistan — they will continue to see a side of India that they don't want anyone (including Pakistanis) to see.

All this has converged nicely with an incredible run of pure GDP growth that has elevated millions out of stark poverty and into lives of hopefulness and optimism about their economic future. In the decade since PM Modi became prime minister, India has graduated from being a middle power that just couldn't ever get it right to being a global power that can do no wrong. It has gone from being an uncertain nagging neighbour to Pakistan (and to Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal) to being an assertive and confident presence in the Quad with Japan, Australia and the United States, and an aggressive (even if for show) adversary to China. In short, India has put on its big-boy pants, and it doesn't want to splash around in the kiddie pool anymore.

Now to understand how this transformation was executed with respect to Pakistan, it is important to remember the enduring facet of PM Modi's leadership of India on the international stage: patient, well-prepared and mission-driven. PM Modi began engagement with Pakistan before he became PM. The

year was 2013, Manmohan Singh was still prime minister of India, and the US had yet to undo the sanctions imposed on then chief minister Modi — for his presiding role in the massacre of Muslims in Gujarat.

In the summer of 2013, newly elected to office, then-PM Nawaz Sharif continued a steady stream of public overtures for normalization. Back then, PM Sharif had not yet been ambushed by his subordinates through their sponsorship of the 2014 dharna. Not knowing how things would go in the Indian election anticipated for the 2014, then-PM Sharif tasked his cabinet to move quickly to establish a template for cross-border trade. The business case for opening up trade had been prepared by academics and scholars and had enjoyed broad political support across all parties — even the still patriotic PTI. Big businesses in Lahore, Sialkot, Faisalabad and Karachi could all see the obvious convergences that would enable access to India's exciting consumer market for their products.

One way to try to understand what Ishaq

Dar meant when he distinguished Pakistan's shared borders with China, from the other three immediate neighbours is to remember that India under Modi has gone from testing the nerve of Pakistani elites to outright running over it.

Could the long-standing backchannel have asked Nawaz Sharif to indicate Pakistan's willingness to demonstrate openness to accommodating India's insistence on equating Azad Jammu and Kashmir (and more crucially Gilgit-Baltistan) with Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir? Hence the 'in a way' border with China?

Could Ishaq Dar's little fumble in London be a deliberate effort to signal Pakistan's seriousness in continuing to seek dialogue with India?

Recent history, both from Nawaz Sharif circa 2014 to 2017 and Qamar Javed Bajwa circa 2019 to 2022, would indicate no hesitation among the Pakistani elite to engage in such dangerous and foolhardy 'diplomacy'. Of course, it could just have been nothing. -- Courtesy TheNews

## All that glitters

### Muhammad Mohsin Masood

The law is all about relationships. Ostensibly, it is a body of rules dictating relationships and the interconnectivity of our shared social experience. States, provinces, governments, statutory bodies, private companies, parents, spouses, and total strangers — the law dictates the interactions between two entities/individuals. The law determines our relationships.

However, what sort of relationships does the law determine? What kind of connection between two groups/individuals does it help set up? When the law compels two groups/individuals to mould their actions in a particular way, what is the result and where does it leave the connection with others in this world?

More often than not, the law helps set up a relationship where one party is stronger than the other. This is truer in the domain of public law. Between a state and an individual, between a parent ministry and an autonomous body, between the Speaker of the House and ordinary legislators — the law wants one in a position of strength and the other in a position of weakness or subordination.

This also holds true for relationships between private parties — from the right of divorce granted to the husband to majority shareholding in a company. In fact, if you look closely, it seems that the law requires one to be higher and the other to be subordinate.

That's how the law deems a relationship to be a lawfully workable one. It is, therefore, not hard to miss why the early jurists looked at the law as simply the com-

mand of a higher power backed by the threat of coercion.

However, this article is not about age-old jurisprudence. One must look beyond the dictates of the law and pierce the veil of legal normality to assess whether this is true. Can society only function if it is held together by the chains of law linking our affairs top to bottom? Determining our relationships where one has power and the other is left at the mercy of the law? Or can this lopsided picture of the law be inverted, and can we forge relationships of equality? Can we act in a way that subverts this understanding of relationships — personal, professional, social and political — that one party is in a position of power and the other is not?

These questions could be answered in the affirmative. One can rage, cry out, march, speak, and shout — these are commendable acts of courage to highlight what one perceives as an injustice. However, you can also look at it another way. The mistake lies in yielding to the legal fiction that the law sets up — of taking the strength of one party at face value. Yes, the party in a 'legally strong' position has an advantage that the law bestows on it but that very strength has its own failings and disadvantages.

On the other hand, those who are looked upon as 'legally weak' are unaware of the inherent strength that lies in that very 'weakness'. Take the example of David and Goliath. At one hand is the massive Goliath, a towering warrior and at the other is David, an apparently weaker and smaller shepherd boy armed with only a slingshot. One seems to

have all the power and the other is at his mercy. However, as Malcolm Gladwell recounts in his book *David & Goliath*, it is precisely because David was seen as small and weak and Goliath as huge and strong that he was able to overcome Goliath. The slingshot was actually a missile aimed at a slow-moving huge lump of muscle which found its mark with devastating effect.

When looking at advantages, disadvantages and the power imbalance between those with strength and those who are weak, we can always invert the picture. Those who are powerful, are also weak because of that very power. Those who are deemed to be weak, have an advantage because of their relative weakness. This is the inner strength that can be tapped into despite the hurdles of the law. This was the inner strength on display during the suffragette's movement, the civil rights movement, the independence struggle and countless other struggles around the world. This is the piece de résistance in any resistance.

We can create relationships anew based on this deeper understanding of our strengths and weaknesses which is more valuable than any understanding of the law. We may hike through precedent, expend all our energy on the letter of the law, take our knives out and slice through arguments, conceptualise and stress the theories of the kings of old.

Just to find the right workings of our relationships in society. However, the true picture may just emerge when you invert those relationships. All that glitters is not gold. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Wasting waste

### Jamil Ahmad

Waste management is a major challenge as the world's material footprint expands to meet the needs of economic development and a large population. Growing at 2.3 per cent annually, global production and consumption of material resources has tripled over the past 50 years. The volume of waste produced has also grown significantly during this period.

As resource exploitation is set to increase, the waste generated in the process will also grow, posing serious threats to human health and the environment, while exacerbating the crisis of climate change, nature loss and pollution.

With their capacity constraints of waste collection and disposal, developing countries feel the impact on multiple fronts. Waste is either dumped in landfills, burnt in the open, or thrown into rivers and other waterways. Chemical effluents and sewage are often discharged into rivers. Thus polluted water and toxic air spread disease and take lives in the absence of effective policy and regulations.

The United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Global Waste Management Outlook 2024 reveals that last year 2.3 billion metric tons of municipal solid waste was generated, which is set to reach 3.8bn metric tons by 2050. An estimated 540 million metric tons of municipal solid waste was not being collected, mostly in developing countries. The problem is acute in South Asia where rapid urbanisation and a growing population have accelerated waste generation. South Asia's 2bn-plus people constitute a quarter of the global popula-

tion with per capita daily waste generation of about 0.5 kilograms.

UNEP estimates that in Central and South Asia only 37pc of refuse generated is collected against a global average waste collection rate of 75pc. In contrast, in developed countries, almost all the waste is collected and disposed of. The huge volume of uncollected municipal refuse is creating health problems and an environmental disaster, while the costs of healthcare and pollution are rising.

However, waste management itself is a costly affair. "In 2020, the global direct cost of waste management was estimated at \$252bn," notes the UNEP report. "Factor-ing in the hidden costs of pollution, poor health, and climate change from poor waste disposal practices, the cost rises to \$361bn." It could almost double to \$640bn by 2050 without urgent action.

The problem is aggravated by the linear approach of the current economic development paradigm, which resorts to the indiscriminate use of material resources in pursuit of raising GDP. For cash-strapped developing countries, the challenge to keep town and cities clean and secure from disease is insurmountable. Establishing or revamping national strategies and developing action plans for waste management is fundamental. They would need innovative ways to urgently prioritise policy actions that reduce waste generation as well as technical and financial support from development partners to implement waste management strategies.

An intersectional approach to policy development for waste management will minimise the multidimensional and harmful impact of municipal solid waste on poor

and marginalised sections of society. UNEP and other UN organisations have identified policy measures which can help. Adapting a circular development model will reduce pressure on resource use and help decouple waste generation from economic growth based on the '3R' principle of reduce, reuse, and recycle. In this way, waste is converted into resource for another cycle of sustainable production.

Circularity and resource efficiency can be improved by harnessing digital technology and AI to mainstream sustainability practices across all sectors and move to a model of a zero-waste economy. Waste can also be used as a re-source to produce electricity. The unregulated urban sprawl in many parts of South Asia without proper waste strategies is escalating the waste problem. More than half the waste generated is organic, which emits greenhouse gases if left to rot. Wasting this waste is unwise. The potential of 'waste-to-energy' must not go untapped.

Local authorities and city administrations responsible for waste management must be enabled and provided with adequate resources for implementing action plans. Human behaviour under the influence of a consumerist mindset and throwaway habits is also a major factor in the generation of waste. Governments, local authorities, industry, civil society, and media will need to work together to encourage a behavioural change for sustainable consumption and to raise awareness among households and citizens.

Achieving the SDGs related to poverty, health, water and sanitation, cities, climate change are all affected by the problem of uncollected and untreated municipal solid waste. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Punjab cabinet decides to consult MPAs before wheat purchase

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: The Punjab cabinet, which met with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in the chair on Tuesday, agreed to consult members of the provincial assembly (MPAs) in matters such as wheat purchase.

The meeting also formed a four-member ministerial committee, headed by the provincial minister for food, to formulate policies regarding the purchase of wheat.

Other members of the committee are the minister for finance, the minister for agriculture, and the minister for information.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister

said that there was a need to first determine the requirements for a crop before starting its cultivation.

She directed that artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies be used in order to determine the requirements for a crop.

CM Maryam also ordered the start of the campaign to motivate bike riders to install safety guards on their bikes in order to protect themselves from metallic strings. She said she was saddened by the loss of lives of Christian workers, and added that legislation would be done in future to ensure the protection of lives of sanitary workers.

The meeting agreed on the proposal to declare Easter a holiday for the Christian employees.

The meeting also agreed on the installation of cameras inside the examination halls and the use of AI to check cheating in exams.

The chief minister directed the ministers, deputy commissioners and other concerned officials to visit examination halls in order to keep an eye on cheaters.

The meeting approved forwarding the recommendation to the federal government to award Quaid-e-Azam Police medals to ASP Syeda Shehrbano Naqvi and SDPO Gulberg.



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif presiding over 4th meeting of Provincial Cabinet.

## CM decides to establish liver transplant center

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has announced plans to establish a liver transplant and bone marrow transplant center aimed at enhancing healthcare services in the province.

The decision was made during a high-level meeting attended by provincial cabinet members, health experts, and officials.

The initial liver transplant center is slated to be established at the Institute of Kidney Diseases in Peshawar, with plans to relocate these vital facilities to Khyber Medical University.

Additionally, the meeting also decided on plans for setting up the Institute of Neurosurgery,

to be located at Fountain House Peshawar.

The provincial government aims to provide accessible liver and bone marrow transplant services to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, thereby mitigating the necessity for individuals to seek treatment outside the province.

Moreover, efforts are underway to ensure round-the-clock availability of dialysis services in government hospitals equipped with such amenities, with endeavors to introduce dialysis services in hospitals currently lacking them.

The Chief Minister said that these initiatives underscore the commitment of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to prioritize the health and well-being of its citizens.

## Governor written letter to CM Punjab for appointments to important posts in universities

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman/Chancellor has written a letter to Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz to draw her attention for permanent appointments to the most important posts in universities across Punjab. Governor Punjab said that in the past appointments to these statutory posts were not made in time in the universities across Punjab. He added that due, the most important positions of the universities

including vice chancellor, registrar, treasurers and controller of examinations are lying vacant. He said that these positions play a key role in running the universities in a better way. The Punjab Governor emphasized that immediate steps should be taken for permanent appointments to these positions so that the universities can make progress in the fields of education and research.

Meanwhile, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman approved the 28-day ex-Pakistan leave of Principal

Aitchison College Michael A. Thomson. In the absence of Principal Aitchison College, Amna Kamran and Khalid Noon Barsar will look after the administrative affairs in his place. Besides, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman strongly condemned the suicide blast in Shangla. He expressed deep sorrow and regret over the death of six people including Chinese nationals in this incident. Governor Punjab also extended his condolences to the families of the deceased.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh chairing a meeting with the Pakistan Maritime Academy officers during his visit to the PMA.

## Khuhro for operation against dacoits, criminals

LARKANA (APP): President Pakistan People's Party Sindh Chapter Nisar Ahmed Khuhro Tuesday said that in order to deal with the law and order situation in Sindh, it was imperative to start a grand operation against dacoits, criminals and street criminals to eliminate them.

In a statement, he said that the law and order situation in some districts of Sindh is not good because bandits and criminals blocked the highways, and Indus highways in various places after evening and committed kidnapping and robbery. He said it is a worrisome practice and such activities by criminals are tantamount to defying the writ of Sindh Government, Police and law enforcement agencies for strict operations against bandits, criminals and street criminals in urban areas of Sindh. It has become necessary so that

peace is restored and the people of Sindh feel secure, he added.

He said that along with the elimination of criminals, modern weapons being used by the bandits and their rackets should also be eliminated.

Khuhro said that the law enforcement agencies and the police should also keep an eye on how these modern weapons are reaching the robbers and criminals.

A close watch should be kept on the black sheep in the police, along with this, to prevent the entry of criminals into Sindh. He also said that, the system of surveillance and inspection should be tightened at the borders.

He also said that the current Sindh government of the People's Party has changed other police officers including the IG Sindh to restore complete law and order in Sindh and the new IG Sindh is a reputed officer.

## Governor condemns Shangla attack

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali has condemned terrorist attack on a vehicle carrying foreigners in Shangla and expressed grief over the killing of six innocents including five Chinese.

In a message issued here Tuesday, KP Governor share the grief of victims' families and expressed sympathies with China people and government over the loss. He also prayed for early recovery of those injured in the terror attack.

He said that these acts of cowardice cannot damage the time-tested cordial relations and friendship between two neighboring countries and added that nation would not desist from its resolve by nefarious designs of miscreants that want to disturb peace and harmony in the country.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali offering Fataha after funeral prayers of mother of senior journalist Gulzar Khan.

## LHC CJ presides over first meeting with D&SJs

LAHORE (APP): Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan on Tuesday presided over the first meeting with the district and sessions judges of all 36 districts of Punjab.

LHC Registrar Sheikh Khalid Bashir, Director General of District Judiciary Malik Muhammad Sajid Ali Awan, and Senior Additional Registrars of all three allied LHC benches were also present on the occasion.

During the deliberations, district and sessions judges from across Punjab voiced their perspectives, laying the groundwork for constructive discourse.

Subsequently, Chief

Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan unveiled a series of immediate directives aimed at bolstering the efficacy and integrity of the judicial process. Among the key initiatives announced:- Implementation of video conferencing technology for evidence recording and argument hearings within the district judiciary; swift dismissal of frivolous litigation upon initial review, with stringent penalties for offenders; mandate for judicial officers to prioritize courtroom presence, with sanctions for prolonged absence; revamping the curriculum of the Punjab Judicial Academy to align with contemporary legal standards.

## Over 303,000 unregistered Afghans via KP: Home Dept

PESHAWAR (APP): As many as 303,162 Afghans have been returned to their own country via three border points in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the volunteer return and repatriation of unregistered and illegally residing foreigners in the country.

According to statistics from the Home Department, 296,412 voluntarily returned to their country while 6,750 were deported through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It said that a total of 297,017 people have returned from the Torkham border point, 5446 via Angoor Ada and 689 through Khariachi.

## Minister reviews healthcare projects

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Communication and Works (C&W) Sohaib Ahmed Bherth, chairing the 66th board meeting of Infrastructure Development Authority of Punjab (IDAP) here on Tuesday, reviewed the ongoing healthcare development projects.

The meeting was attended by C&W Secretary Sohail Ashraf, Secretary Transport Ahmed Javed Qazi, Additional Secretaries of Finance, Agriculture, Primary & Secondary Healthcare and Implementation and Coordination (I&C).

IDAP Chief Executive Officer Shah Meer Ahmed

briefed the minister about three health-related projects in Lahore and Sargodha district. The minister approved IDAP as the executing agency for the construction of Punjab Institute of Cardiology-2 in Jinnah hospital, Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology Sargodha, and Nawaz Sharif Cancer Treatment and Research Center Lahore.

The minister said that it was the topmost priority of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif to provide better healthcare facilities with modernized infrastructure near their homes and districts, adding that it was the responsibility of the executing agency to complete all projects.



GILGIT: Deputy Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Sadia Danish in a meeting with the PPP workers.

## ANF recovers 640 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 640 kg drugs and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that 230 kg heroin and 220 kg crystals were recovered from the Western Bypass Quetta area. In the second operation, 100 kg opium and 80 kg hashish were recovered from Mashkil Chagai. In the third operation, 6.8 kg weed was recovered from three accused arrested from Sher Shah Toll Plaza Multan.

602 grams weed was recovered from Khanna Bridge Islamabad and 2.5 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two accused netted near Saddar in Rawalpindi.

## 16 development schemes worth Rs 72.997b approved

LAHORE (APP): The Provincial Development Working Party, Punjab (PDWP) in its 48th meeting of the current financial year here Tuesday approved 16 development schemes at an estimated cost of Rs 72.997 billion.

P&D Board Chairman Barrister Nabeel Ahmad Awan presided over the PDWP meeting that approved the following schemes:

- 1) Channelization of Jabba Nullah Tehsil & District Mianwali at the cost of Rs 960.456 million
- 2) Concrete Lining of Maggi Magassom Link RD 0 to 58500 at the cost of Rs 420.263 million
- 3) Rehabilitation of 6R/Hakra with System at the cost of Rs 461.283 million
- 4) Rehabilitation of 7R/Hakra with System at the cost of Rs 414.936 million.
- 5) National Program for Improvement of Watercourse in Pakistan (Punjab component) Phase-II at the cost of Rs 47503.49 million.
- 6) Replacement of Beds and other Equipment at RHCs of Punjab at the cost of Rs 1342.338 million
- 7) Program for Provision of CT Scan Service in Selected THQS on Outsourced Model. (Revised) At the cost of Rs 988.917 million.

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7) Program for Provision of CT Scan Service in Selected THQS on Outsourced Model. (Revised) At the cost of Rs 988.917 million.

## Strict decisions to be taken to bring reforms in education system: Minister

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa minister for higher education, archives and libraries Meena Khan Afridi on Tuesday said that strict decisions have to be taken for bringing better reforms in education system of the province.

He said these while chairing a meeting of the regional directorates of higher education department in Civil Secretariat Peshawar.

Additional Secretary, Director, Additional Directors male and female and other officers participated in the meeting.

The Provincial Minister was given a

detailed presentation on Malakand, Hazara and South regions. In the briefing it is said that currently the directorates are managing the affairs of 320 colleges, including 172 male and 148 female colleges.

Besides, 238 general colleges offering BS programs in various disciplines, 20298 students enrolled in Associate Degree Program in 113 colleges. Although, during 2022-23 financial year 41 new colleges in settled areas including 21 boys and 20 girls colleges while 10 new colleges in newly merged districts functionalised.

## Qasim stresses Professionalism and innovation in education, healthcare in visit to KMU

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: The Provincial Health Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, underscored the importance of professionalism and innovation in education and healthcare during his recent visit to Khyber Medical University (KMU). He emphasized that both sectors are top priorities of the government, advocating for the introduction of European model medical facilities in healthcare and market-based subjects in Medical educational institutions.

The visit also featured an enlightening presentation by Vice-Chancellor, KMU Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq, who highlighted the university's endeavors in expanding physiotherapy, nursing,

and allied health sciences programs across Province and Newly merged (NMDs) area. Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah expressed his support for these initiatives and endorsed the proposal to establish KMU campuses in all newly merged (NDSS) districts, with backing from the Higher Education Department.

Minister Helath Syed Qasim Ali Shah expressed satisfaction with KMU's pivotal role in advancing medical education and fostering innovation in healthcare. He lauded the university's commitment to academic excellence and groundbreaking initiatives in the field. Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah actively engaged with students during the visit, distributing scholarships to meritorious individuals.

## Five senior faculty members of PIBC offer resignation

MULTAN (APP): Five senior faculty members of Pak Italian Modern Burn Centre (PIBC) offered resignation against second time appointment of Executive Director, Dr Naveed Akhtar on political basis and indecent behaviour of senior registrar, Dr Ahmed Ali Malik with senior medics.

They sent their resignation to Secretary Specialized Health care and Medical Education, Ali Jan Khan.

Those who offered resignations included Prof of Plastic Surgery Dr Naheed Chaudhary, Prof of Anaesthesia, Dr Waseem Rabbani, Associate prof of Plastic Surgery, Dr Bilal Saeed, Dr Akmal Shah, Dr Naveed Shahzad and Dr Ali Mehdi.

Addressing a news conference in front of PIBC alongwith Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) Multan chapter president, Dr Masood Hira and others on Tuesday, they complained a former MNA.



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

## AG KP says: Governor can't summon assembly session for oath taking on reserved seats

PESHAWAR (APP): The office of Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has submitted reply to the Peshawar High Court and the Law Department saying that the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cannot summon assembly session by himself for the swearing-in ceremony of elected members on reserved seats.

According to the document, "Assembly meeting can be convened on the advice or requisition of the Chief Minister, calling the meeting by the Governor was an

unconstitutional process, so it cannot be implemented."

The reply further said that the governor can convene the first meeting after the election by himself, besides, the governor can also convene the meeting in case of no-confidence motion.

According to the Advocate General's Office, in the current situation, the governor misused his powers, the opposition leader's interference in calling the meeting was also wrong.



LAHORE: Teachers and parents of students of Aitchison College are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, outside Punjab Governor House building in Lahore.

## Finance minister terms tax award winners 'national heroes'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday termed the tax award winners 'national heroes,' urging the countrymen to pay their due taxes being responsible citizens.

"You [the tax award winners] are really our national heroes. The entire nation and the country should follow you as a beacon of light," the minister said while addressing the Tax Excellence Awards distribution ceremony here. The high taxpayers were awarded with the prizes by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Highlighting importance of tax collection in revenue generation, Aurangzeb said direct tax

on domestic side and exports on the external front were levers of the growth and development. "In Pakistan's case, both flows have been raise-bound and therefore underwhelming, and redressing them on urgently basis is critical."

The finance minister reiterated a firm resolve of the government for restructuring and digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), for which it was in process of appointing consultants "for design and implementation in term of end to end digitalization."

He talked about bringing structural reforms, doing end-to-end digitalization and ensuring transparency in the tax-collection system,

stressing that "We have to plug the leakages. There is a huge room for improvement in operational effectiveness of something rolled out few years back."

Aurangzeb was of the view to restore the confidence of superior clients' trust [high tax payers] in the government policies and transparency in the tax-collection system, which would help expand the tax-base.

The minister warned that the import-led and subsidy-supported businesses were not sustainable anymore and the country would have to accelerate export the ledger to achieve the trajectory of sustainable growth.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presents awards to the highest taxpayers and exporters of the country at the Tax Excellence Awards 2024.

## Minister Khalil Sindhu says: Govt implementing IT-based track & trace system in factories to control production

ISLAMABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Human Rights and Parliamentary Affairs Tahir Khalil Sindhu Punjab said on Tuesday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will make the track and trace system fully functional for tax prevention in all sectors including tobacco, cement, sugar, and fertilizer industries.

Talking to PTV News, he said that FBR along with federal ministries and provincial departments is introducing a track and trace system in factories in Pakistan to promote transparency.

He further said that by introducing a track and trace system in various sectors, tax authorities will get quick and comprehensive access to data, facilitate proactive decision-making, and improve the accuracy of tax assessments.

He said that the track and trace system aims to increase tax revenue through better monitoring and regulation.

Replying to a question, he said that Shehbaz Sharif had strongly advised to use of the track and trace system to prevent counterfeiting and substandard products.

This system is now fully functional in all fertilizer industries, he further said. Track and trace systems will also empower businesses to ensure quality control and compliance throughout the supply chain, the minister explained. To another question, the minister added that besides, preventing revenue leakages, it will help in minimizing human intervention and thus pave the way for a transparent and reliable tax compliance system across the country.

## CM Maryam Nawaz says Want to cooperate with China in agriculture, IT, environment sectors

LAHORE: "Pakistan and China have maintained closest and strongest friendship, but there is still a lot of room for improvement in economic ties," said Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with Chairman China State Construction Engineering Corporation, Mr Wang Yaobong. She added, "There are numerous opportunities for collaboration."

Madam Chief Minister expressed her resolve to welcome China's cooperation in agriculture, IT and environmental protection. She appreciated and said, "CSCEC's projects in Pakistan demonstrate construction quality and professionalism." She added, "She is grateful to China State Construction Engineering Corporation for undertaking projects in Punjab like Arfa Karim IT Tower in Lahore."

Madam Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "China's one-window operation system for investment promotion is the best model worldwide." She added, "CPEC is China's gift to Pakistan. Punjab government will fully cooperate for the timely completion of CPEC projects." Madam Chief Minister said, "Sectors have to be identified in which Pakistan's exports can be increased. CPEC projects will create more employment opportunities."

Mr Wang Yaobong said, "Doors are open for friends, Pakistani friends will be warmly welcomed."

Vice Chairman CSCEC Umar Farooq Dayal, Li Weimin and other officers concerned attended the meeting.



LAHORE: Chairman China State Construction Engineering Corporation's (CSCEC) Chairman Mr. Wang Yaobong meeting with Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

## Pak-Qatar sign agreements to boost Pak workforce opportunities in Qatar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government of Pakistan and Qatar have signed several agreements and letter's of Intent (LOIs) with top Qatari companies the main purpose of this initiative was set to significantly enhance employment opportunities for the Pakistani workforce in Qatar.

An official source told APP, the signing of these Agreements with renowned Qatari firms, including Qatari Group Construction (QD-SBG), Hamad Bin Khaled Contracting Company W.L.L (HBK), Ali Bin Ali Holding W.L.L, Sheikh Jabor Bin Mansour Bin Jabor Bin Jassim Al Thani (JM) Holding, Tabeeb Care Medical Services, and Al Rawnaq International Commercial Projects, marks a crucial step in strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and Qatar in the field of human resource development.

In addition to these agreements, the Pakistani delegation held a significant meeting with Mr. Hamad Saleh Al Qamra, Chairman of Al Qamra Holding, focusing on the recruitment of Pakistani manpower for various company projects.

The visit also included a tour of the View Hospital, a part of Elegancia Health Care, where the recruitment of Pakistani health professionals is underway following a recent MoU between Elegancia Health Care and the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) of Pakistan.

The primary objective of these initiatives is to create enhanced employment avenues for Pakistani workers in Qatar. SAPM Ali Bin Ali Holding W.L.L, Malik highlighted the potential of Pakistan as a key manpower exporter and detailed the government's efforts to streamline this process through quality recruitment agencies, skill development, and addressing foreign employers' needs. The CEOs of the Qatari companies expressed satisfaction with the Pakistani workforce and their willingness to increase Pakistani manpower in their companies.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Regulatory Officer Zong Kamran Ali calls on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

## CCP's Statement on proposed PTCL-Telenor Merger

ISLAMABAD (APP): It is clarified that several newspapers have publicized misleading information on behalf of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) regarding the progress of the pre-merger application of PTCL.

The PTCL intends to acquire 100% shareholding of M/s. Telenor Pakistan (Private) Limited ("Telenor") and M/s. Orion Towers Private Limited ("OT").

CCP received a pre-merger application on 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2024 from PTCL Lawyers. Initially, the application was submitted with incorrect fee. The remaining outstanding fee was sent to the Commission on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

CCP requested further information on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2024 to complete its due diligence. The requisite information is still awaited from the PTCL lawyers. The Commission has 30 working days to complete its due diligence after all the required information is submitted. The 30 working days time frame for the first phase review will commence after PTCL lawyers submit the outstanding information requested by the Commission. It is pertinent to mention that the CCP's merger department is processing 21 applications at the moment. Acquisition of Telenor by PTCL is one of those applications. There were altogether five undertakings operative in Pakistan's mobile telecom.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE Hamad Obaid Al-Zaabi calls on Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik.

## Nasir Shah highlights significant investment opportunities in energy

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister of Energy and Planning, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, on Tuesday highlighted significant investment opportunities in energy sector and assured to extend cooperation and single window facility to foreign investors.

Sindh province is the energy hub of Pakistan that possesses vast potential of energy production from renewable sources like wind and solar, he expressed the views in a meeting with British High Commissioner Jane Marriott here, said a statement issued.

The energy minister said that only wind corridor has potential of generating 55000 megawatt electricity while 1845 megawatts of wind power and 250 megawatt of solar power generated in the province were being added to the national grid.

The meeting was briefed that work on various projects was in progress including 100 megawatts waste power generation, 15 megawatts from water, 400 megawatts from floating solar and 500 megawatts from green hydrogen technology project.

The meeting was informed that with the support of the World Bank, all government buildings were being shifted to solar power while a 400 MW solar park was also under construction.

The British High Commissioner appreciated the efforts of the Government of Sindh especially the Department of Energy and assured of all possible efforts and measures to attract British investors to invest in the energy sector in Sindh.

## PM's decision of shifting burden of tough decisions to elite laudable: Shahid

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Tuesday said that the decision of Prime Minister to shift the burden of difficult decisions to the elite rather than the destitute masses was commendable.

In a statement issued here, he said that the state of the economy and the general populace would have been different if a decision of this nature had been made several decades earlier. Shahid Rashid Butt said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif understands the importance of cordial relations between the center and provinces and with neighboring countries and he is aware of the impact of inflation and people's worries, he added.

The business leader said that PM Shehbaz Sharif also knows that running the country was impossible without painful reforms and improving infrastructure.

He said, "The prime minister is making serious efforts to bring investment into the country while increasing the tax base. He thinks raising the revenue collection target which is at Rs9 trillion can be increased to Rs14 trillion if the FBR is automated."

The more automated the FBR system will be, the more transparent it will be.



QUETTA: Members of Pakistan Central Mines Labour Federation are holding protest demonstration for demanding safety and health for Mines workers, at Quetta press club.

## Malik, UAE envoy agree on enhancing collaboration in petroleum sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr. Musadik Malik, and the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi on Tuesday agreed to enhance collaboration in the petroleum sector.

In a meeting, the ambassador congratulated Dr Musadik Malik on assuming the charge of the Ministry of Petroleum, said a news release.

He highlighted the historical significance of relations between the UAE and Pakistan.

Expressing mutual interest in cooperation, particularly in the petroleum sector, Minister Malik highlighted the importance of fostering stronger ties between the two nations.

"The foundation of Pakistan-UAE relations lies in friendship and public engagement," the UAE Ambassador said.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance, Muzamil Aslam is visiting China Window in Peshawar.

## Shafay reviews CM's youth skill development program

LAHORE: Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain chaired a meeting to review the progress of ongoing development schemes and various features of CM Youth Skills Development Programme here at TEVTA Secretariat on Tuesday.

The meeting decided that no new institution would be set up without improving the existing institutions. The provincial minister said that TEVTA's (Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority) institutions and laboratories would be aligned with global requirements. He added that laboratories should be upgraded with the cooperation of universities like UMT (University of Management and Technology), while biometric attendance of students and staff should also be arranged in TEVTA institutes, besides paying special attention towards the future of microchip manufacturing. Language courses including Arabic, German, Korean, Japanese and Spanish.

## Zafar Masud elected the new Chairman of PBA

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA) is pleased to announce that Mr Zafar Masud, President & CEO - The Bank of Punjab (BOP), has been elected as the new Chairman of the Association. This change is subsequent to Mr Muhammad Aurangzeb, the sitting PBA Chairman, assuming the role of Federal Minister of Finance and Revenue for Pakistan earlier this month. To effect this change, the PBA Executive Committee (EC) met and unanimously elected the following: a) PBA's sitting Senior Vice Chairman, Mr Zafar Masud (President & CEO - The Bank of Punjab) as Chairman of the Association. b) PBA's sitting Vice Chairman, Mr Yousaf Hussain (President & CEO - Faysal Bank), as Senior Vice Chairman and; c) Member of the Executive Committee, Mr Ahmed Khan Bozai, (Managing Director & City Country Officer - Citibank N.A., Pakistan) as the new Vice Chairman of the Association.

## Rupee gains 5 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday gained 05 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs278.07 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.12.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs278.5 and Rs281.25, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 60 paise to close at Rs301.44 against the last-day closing of Rs300.84.

## CDNS achieve Rs 65b in Islamic investment bonds

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved Rs 65 billion in Islamic finance bonds during the current fiscal year 2023-24 till March 25.

"The National Savings had issued the Islamic bonds for the promotion of the Islamic finance system, which will help the development of the Islamic economy in the country," a senior official of the Directorate of National Savings told APP here on Tuesday.

The official said that the CDNS had set the target of collecting Rs 75 billion from the Islamic finance bonds in the financial year 2023-24.

## Gold rates up by Rs.1,200 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed an increase of Rs.1,200 and was sold at Rs.229,400 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs.228,200 on the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.1,029 to Rs.196,674 from Rs.195,645 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.180,284 from Rs.179,341.

## Ukrainian says a third of Russian warships in the Black Sea have been destroyed or disabled

### Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Ukraine has sunk or disabled a third of all Russian warships in the Black Sea in just over two years of war, the navy spokesman said Tuesday, a heavy blow to Moscow's military capability.

Ukraine's Navy spokesman Dmytro Pletenchuk told The Associated Press that the latest strike on Saturday night hit the Russian amphibious landing ship Kostiantyn Olshansky that was resting in dock in Sevastopol in Russia-occupied Crimea. The ship was part of the Ukrainian navy before Russia captured it while annexing the Black Sea peninsula in 2014.

Pletenchuk has previously announced that two other landing ships of the same type, Azov and Yamal, also were damaged in

Saturday's strike along with the Ivan Khurs intelligence ship.

He told the AP that the weekend attack, which was launched with Ukraine-built Neptune missiles, also hit Sevastopol port facilities and an oil depot.

Russian authorities reported a massive Ukrainian attack on Sevastopol over the weekend but didn't acknowledge any damage to the fleet.

Pletenchuk said that with the latest attack, a third of all warships that Russian had in the Black Sea before the war have been destroyed or disabled. Moscow officials have kept mum on most of Ukrainian claims, but previous navy losses have been confirmed by Russian military bloggers and media.

At the same time, Pletenchuk acknowledged

that just two of about a dozen of Russian missile carrying warships have been sunk and pledged that Ukraine will continue the strikes.

"Our ultimate goal is complete absence of military ships of the so-called Russian Federation in the Azov and Black Sea regions," Pletenchuk told the AP.

Successful Ukrainian drone and missile strikes have provided a major morale boost for Kyiv at a time when its undermanned and under-gunned forces are facing Russian attacks along the more than 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line.

Challenging Russia's naval superiority also has helped create more favorable conditions for Ukrainian grain exports and other shipments from the country's Black Sea ports.



A view of destruction from Israeli strikes in Gaza City.

## Airstrikes in Syria kill an Iranian adviser and a member of a World Health Organization team

### Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: A series of airstrikes in eastern Syria on Tuesday killed more than a dozen people, including an Iranian military adviser and a team member working for the World Health Organization, officials and reports said. It was not immediately clear who was behind the airstrikes in Syria's eastern province of Deir el-Zour that borders Iraq.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said the strikes killed 15 people including an Iranian adviser

with Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, two of his bodyguards as well as nine Iraqi fighters from an Iran-backed group and two Syrians working with the Iranians. It added that a Syrian engineer was also killed. Iran's state news agency confirmed that a Revolutionary Guard member was killed in Syria.

Dama Post, a pro-government media outlet in Syria, said the strikes targeted the provincial capital of Deir el-Zour that carries the same name, and the towns of Mayadeen and Boukamal.

## Two Moscow attack suspects travelled 'freely' because no arrest warrant: Turkish official

### Monitoring Desk

ISTANBUL: A Turkish security official on Tuesday said two of the Moscow concert hall attack suspects travelled "freely" to Russia as no arrest warrants were issued against them.

Russian authorities detained 11 people in connection with Friday's attack, which saw camouflaged gunmen storm into Crocus City Hall, open fire on concert-goers and set the building ablaze, killing at least 139 people.

Two of those, Tajik nationals Rachabulzoda Saidakrami and Shamsiddin Fariduni, "were able to travel freely between Russia and Turkey since there was no warrant for their arrest", the official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The two had both spent time in Turkey shortly before the attack and entered Russia together on the same flight from Istanbul, the official said.

## Taiwan tests air defences in early morning missile drills

### Monitoring Desk

TAIPEI: Taiwan tested its air defences on Tuesday in early morning drills using surface-to-air missiles, and air, land and naval forces, saying it would continue to intensify training in the face of China's frequent military activities nearby.

Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory, has complained over the past four years of repeated instances of Chinese air force aircraft and navy ships operating close to and around the island.

## Russian investigators query families of shooting suspects in Tajikistan, sources say

### Monitoring Desk

DUSHANBE: Russian investigators were in Tajikistan on Tuesday, questioning the families of four men charged with carrying out a deadly attack on a concert hall near Moscow, three Tajik security sources told Reuters.

The sources, who were not authorised to comment publicly, said Tajik security officials had brought the families to the capital of Dushanbe from the towns of Vakhdat and Gissar, and from the Rudaki district.

## UN expert accuses Israel of several acts of genocide

### Monitoring Desk

GENEVA: A UN rights expert said on Monday there were "reasonable grounds" to determine that Israel has committed several acts of "genocide" in Gaza, also evoking "ethnic cleansing".

Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur on the rights situation in Palestinian territories, said there were clear indications that Israel had violated three of the five acts listed under the international genocide convention.

"The overwhelming nature and scale of Israel's assault on Gaza and the destructive conditions of life it has inflicted reveal an intent to physically destroy Palestinians as a group," she said in a report.

Albanese, an independent expert appointed by the UN Human Rights Council but who does not

speak on behalf of the United Nations, said she had found "reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating the commission of... acts of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza has been met".

The report, entitled "Anatomy of a Genocide", listed those acts as: "Killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to the group's members; and deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part". Israel's diplomatic mission in Geneva said the country "utterly rejects the report". Albanese's report, which she is due to present to the Human Rights Council on Tuesday, maintained that Israel's "genocidal acts" followed "statements of genocidal intent".

## Hong Kong leader says early prison release unlikely for national security offenders

### Monitoring Desk

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's leader John Lee said on Tuesday it would be "common practice" not to grant people convicted of national security offences early release from prison under the city's new national security law.

Lee's remarks at a weekly press conference came amid local media reports that activist Ma Chun-man was the first prisoner blocked from early release for good behaviour after the new law took force at the weekend. The law, known as Article 23, covers new or updated offences including sedition, espionage and interference by external forces, sparking international criticism that some definitions are too vague and it could damage the Chinese-ruled city's international financial hub credentials. Hong Kong officials have said Article 23 was vital to plugging loop-

holes and bring long-term stability after the former British colony was rocked by months of protests in 2019.

Ma, dubbed "Captain America 2.0" for wielding the comic book hero's shield during the 2019 pro-democracy protests, was convicted in 2021 of inciting secession through his slogans, statements and placards under an earlier Beijing-imposed security law. He was sentenced to five years and nine months.

Ma later won an appeal and his sentence was reduced to five years. If granted the usual one-third reduction for good behaviour, he would have been released on Monday.

Lee said endangering national security was a serious crime and it needed to be made clear to everyone that perpetrators of such crimes would not normally be granted an early release from prison.

## Indian opposition supporters detained ahead of protest at Modi's Delhi home

### Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Police in the Indian capital detained dozens of opposition supporters on Tuesday as they attempted to march to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence to protest against last week's arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Kejriwal, a key opposition leader whose Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has governed the national capital territory for a decade, was arrested by the financial crime-fighting agency on corruption charges relating to the city's liquor policy, weeks before India begins voting in general elections on April 19.

He was remanded to the custody of the Enforcement Directorate until March 28, with the lawyer for the agency arguing he was the "kingpin" in the case and needed to be interrogated.

Kejriwal's party, all of whose main leaders are now imprisoned in connection with the case, says he has been "falsely arrested" in a

"fabricated case". The federal government and Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) deny political interference.

On Tuesday, Kejriwal's supporters attempted to march to Modi's residence but were stopped by police at a location where they gathered about five kilometres away.

Television visuals showed several protesters sitting on the ground and chanting slogans as police personnel tried to haul them into buses.

Elsewhere in the city, police used water cannon to disperse BJP supporters trying to march to the Delhi Secretariat to demand Kejriwal's resignation, and detained some of them.

"The chief minister of Delhi is corrupt and dishonest... he will have to resign," state BJP President Virendra Sachdeva told news agency ANI.

AAP leaders said Kejriwal would not resign and protests demanding his release would continue.

## EU probes Apple, Google, Meta under new digital law

### Monitoring Desk

BRUSSELS: The European Union on Monday hit Apple, Google parent Alphabet and Meta with the first-ever probes under a mammoth digital law, which could lead to big fines against the US giants.

Among six firms named as market "gatekeepers" under the EU's landmark Digital Markets Act — along with Amazon, TikTok owner ByteDance and Microsoft — the companies have been obliged to comply with the new law since March 7.

"We are not convinced that the solutions by Alphabet, Apple and Meta respect their obligations for a fairer and more open digital space for European citizens and businesses," said the EU's internal market commissioner, Thierry Breton.

In a statement announcing the probes, the European Commission, the EU's antitrust regulator, said it suspects the measures the firms have put in

place so far "fall short of effective compliance."

One of the main tech lobbying groups, CCIA, whose members include the three giants targeted, lambasted the probes, accusing the EU of "jumping the gun" and acting too hastily.

The EU's competition commissioner, Margrethe Vestager, insisted regulators had "definitely" not rushed to probe the companies.

Senior officials have acknowledged that changes are already taking place, but suggest they do not go far enough.

Under the new rules, the commission can impose fines of up to 10 per cent of a company's total global turnover. This can rise to up to 20 per cent for repeat offenders.

In extreme circumstances, the EU can order the breakup of companies. Unlike the traditional rules that saw past last year for years, the DMA demands regulators complete any investigation within 12 months of its start.



Supporters of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange hold a banner and placards outside The Royal Courts of Justice, Britain's High Court, in central London, UK.

## Japan approves plan to sell fighter jets to other nations

### Monitoring Desk

TOKYO: Japan's Cabinet on Tuesday approved a plan to sell future next-generation fighter jets that it is developing with Britain and Italy to other countries, in the latest move away from the country's postwar pacifist principles.

The contentious decision to allow international arms sales is expected to help secure Japan's role in the joint fighter jet project and is part of a move to build up the Japanese arms industry and bolster its role in global security.

The Cabinet also endorsed a revision to Japan's arms equipment and technology transfer guidelines to allow coproduced lethal weapons to be sold to countries other than the partners.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi

said the changes are necessary given Japan's security environment, but stressed that Japan's pacifist principles remain unchanged.

"In order to achieve a fighter aircraft that meets the necessary performance and to avoid jeopardizing the defense of Japan, it is necessary to transfer finished products from Japan to countries other than partner countries," Hayashi told reporters, adding that Tokyo will follow a strict approval process for jet sales.

"We have clearly demonstrated that we will continue to adhere to our basic philosophy as a peaceful nation," he said.

Japan has long restricted arms exports under the country's pacifist constitution but has rapidly taken steps to deregulate amid rising regional and global tensions.

## Trump wins lifeline in civil fraud case

### Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: Donald Trump was thrown a huge lifeline on Monday when an appeals court slashed what could have been a crippling demand for a nearly half-billion-dollar bond payment and also gave him 10 more days to pay.

The Republican presidential candidate got the unexpectedly positive news about his New York civil fraud case while he was sitting in court for another case — a hearing in his upcoming criminal trial over paying hush money to a porn star.

Trump had been facing a Monday deadline to pay the huge original bond pending an appeal against a judge's decision that he is liable for fraudulently conspiring to inflate his net worth. Trump had made clear he was unable to find the \$454 million and he risked seeing New York state confiscate parts of his property empire in response. Now with Monday's decision, he will have 10 more days to pay just \$175 million.

## 'Bruised, battered' Moscow suspects paraded in court

### Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia has ordered at least seven men, accused of killing at least 137 people in a massacre at a concert hall in the Russian capital, to be held on "terror" charges, even as the death toll is expected to climb.

The men face life in prison, although Russian officials have clamoured for the lifting of a moratorium on the death penalty to deliver even harsher sentences.

In a series of late-night court hearings in Moscow that ran into the early hours of Monday, four of the men — with bruises and cuts over their faces — were dragged into the court in front of dozens of reporters who had assembled at the capital's Basmanny district court.

## Julian Assange wins temporary reprieve from extradition to US

### Monitoring Desk

LONDON: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's extradition to the United States from Britain was put on hold on Tuesday after London's High Court said the US must provide assurances he would not face the death penalty.

US prosecutors are seeking to put Assange, 52, on trial on 18 counts, all bar one under the Espionage Act, over WikiLeaks' high-profile release of confidential US military records and diplomatic cables.

Assange's lawyers in February sought permission to challenge Britain's approval of his extradition,

part of a more than 13-year legal battle in English courts.

In their ruling, two senior judges said he had a real prospect of successfully appealing against extradition on several grounds.

The court said in its written ruling that Assange arguably would not be entitled to rely on the First Amendment right to free speech as a non-US national and that, while none of the existing charges carried the death penalty, he could later be charged with a capital offence such as treason, meaning it would be unlawful to extradite him.

## China says issued 'strong' complaint over Western hacking claims

### Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China said it had issued a "strong" rebuke to the United States on Tuesday after Washington and two key allies accused Beijing of being behind a series of hacks into lawmakers and key democratic institutions.

In rare and detailed public accusations against China — ?the United States, Britain and New Zealand described a series of cyber breaches over the last decade or more in what appeared to be a concerted

effort to hold Beijing accountable.

In response, China on Tuesday insisted it "opposes and cracks down on all forms of cyberattacks" and accused the US of using the Five Eyes spying alliance "to compile and disseminate false information about threats from Chinese hackers".

"China firmly opposes this, has made strong demarches with the United States and relevant parties," foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said.



Aam Aadmi Party activists shout slogans during a protest near India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi residence in New Delhi.

## President calls on provinces to prioritize primary, secondary education for orphans

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday urged provincial governments to take special measures aimed at ensuring access to primary and secondary education for orphaned children across the country.

Stressing the need to actively participate in the cause of education, training and care of orphans, the president said the support and education of orphans was a common responsibility of all of us.

He was speaking at an iftar dinner hosted by him for the orphaned children at the President House on the

occasion of Orphans Day. Every year on 15th of Ramadan, the World Orphan's Day is celebrated on the call of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in all the member countries.

President Zardari said he was delighted to meet the innocent and charming children.

Aseefa Bhutto Zardari was also present at the ceremony. She also met orphans from different cities.

Chairman Pakistan Orphan Care Forum (POCF) Air Marshal (retd) Farooq Habib addressing the event said the POCF

was working for the upbringing and care of orphans.

He said healthy societies always care for the development and education of the vulnerable, especially orphans.

He said there were about 4.6 million orphans in the country while the POCF was taking care of around 100,000 orphan children.

Expressing gratitude to President Asif Zardari, the Chairman POCF said inviting children to the presidency would increase their confidence and motivation.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain, paid a courtesy visit to the office of Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, sparking discussions on matters of mutual interest.

## Law minister chairs meeting for tax reforms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday said that Federal Board of Revenue would nominate full time departmental representative for courts so that tax related cases could be concluded as early as possible.

A meeting regarding tax reforms and tax collection was held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Law Raja Naem Akbar and Afaq Qureshi Member Operations (IR). Some of the crucial decisions were taken during the meeting. The law

minister while giving direction said that FBR will nominate full time departmental representative instead of 15 days duration which will appear on behalf of FBR.

This will help handling the tax related cases in a proper manner and avoid adjournment of cases.

The law minister also advised that each hearing will be reported back with a performa to evaluate the performance. The alternative dispute resolution committee will be constituted in this regard, he said.

Ministry of Law will nominate retired Judges of High Court and FBR, and issue the notification.

## Mangla Dam water level nears critical decline: Only 0.138 MAF remains

MIRPUR (APP): Amidst heavy snowfall in the upper reaches of Jammu and Kashmir, the water level in Mangla Dam, Pakistan's second-largest reservoir, is rapidly declining. Official sources report that as of Tuesday, the water level stands at 1073.30 feet, dangerously close to the stipulated minimum level of 1050 feet.

With only 0.138 MAF of water remaining in the reservoir, concerns are rising about its ability to meet demand.

Mangla Dam, boasting the largest water storage capacity in the country, reached its maximum conservation level of 1242 feet last August during seasonal impounding. However, low inflows have led to a steady decline in water levels.

## DG NAB (Balochistan) conducting general public hearings regularly

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: In compliance to directions of the Chairman NAB, NAB (Balochistan) regularly conducts general Public Hearing on the last Thursday of every month to give direct access to complainants and receive complaints concerning corruption and corrupt practices.

This initiative reflects NAB's commitment to promote transparency and accountability in Pakistan. In this connection a General Public Hearing is being held at the National Ac-

countability Bureau (Balochistan), Shakra-e-Gulistan, Quetta Cantt on Thursday dated 28th March, 2024 from 11:00 am to 03:00 pm. wherein Director General NAB will personally meet with the complainants and receive complaints. It is clarified that as per revised policy, no anonymous/pseudonymous complaints will be entertained. Only substantiated complaints within the purview of NAB will be dealt with in accordance with NAA Act 2022.



ISLAMABAD: Honourable Mr. Justice Iqbal Hameedur Rahman, Chief Justice, Federal Shariat Court administer oath to Mr. Justice Ameer Muhammad Khan as Judge of Federal Shariat Court.

## Measures for creating awareness among public against TB: Doctors

QUETTA (APP): Expert doctors stressed that measures would be taken to provide awareness about tuberculosis (TB) in the public to prevent the same diseases which cases were increasing every year.

Tuberculosis (Tuberculosis) is an infectious and curable disease, despite being a curable illness; its cases are increasing every year, timely diagnosis, treatment and prevention of tuberculosis is very important for which we have to make joint efforts.

These views were expressed by the Chief Executive Officer of Fatima Jinnah Chest and General Hospital Dr. Shireen Khan and other expert doctors in a seminar held in Fatima Jinnah Chest and General Hospital on the occasion of World Tuberculosis Day.

A large number of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, lab specialists and officials participated in the seminar.

The seminar was organized by Pakistan Chest Society with the mutual support of Mercy Corps.

Honorable Dr. Ashraf Bugti was the chief guest of the seminar.

Before the formal start of the seminar, an awareness walk was also organized at Fatima Jinnah Chest and General Hospital to provide awareness about TB. In which specialist doctors, staff nurses, representatives of Mercy Corps and people associated since then participated.

Speaking at the seminar, TB experts said that according to the report of the World Health Organization, 258 people were suffering from this disease in every 100,000 population.

They said that all available resources were being utilized on TB diagnosis and treatment, there was a need to provide awareness about tuberculo-

## ECP issues revised list for upcoming Senate polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday issued a revised list of female candidates for upcoming Senate elections to be held on April 2.

According to Election Commission notification, four candidates will now contest for two reserved seats of the Senate for women from Punjab. The list features Anusha Rehman and Bushra Anjum Butt, who secured tickets from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Faiza Malik representing the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), and Sanam Javed nominated by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for the Senate seats in Punjab.

The Appellate Tribunal of Lahore High Court (LHC) has accepted the appeal of Sanam Javed and allowed her to contest the Senate elections.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Aviation Khawaja Muhammad Asif chairs a meeting on outsourcing of airports and privatization of PIA at aviation division.

## Pakistan committed to complete TAPI gas pipeline project: Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr. Musadik Malik, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, describing it as a flagship project essential for the country's energy needs.

During a meeting with the Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, Atadjan Movlamov, the Minister said that TAPI gas pipeline project is very important for Pakistan's energy requirements, said a news release issued by the Ministry of Energy Petroleum Division.

During Musadik Malik previous tenure in office, the project experienced unprecedented momentum, resulting in significant progress and tangible outcomes. He reiterated his

dedication to advancing the project.

The Ambassador Movlamov felicitated the Minister on assuming office and commended his dedication to the project.

Acknowledging the Ambassador's warm wishes, Dr. Musadik Malik expressed gratitude for the support and pledged to uphold the partnership between both countries.

Atadjan Movlamov briefed about the scheduled intergovernmental commission and working group meetings for the project this year.

The envoy said that TAPI represents a win-win situation for all involved parties.

He extended an invitation to the Minister to participate in the Turkmenistan Energy Forum scheduled to be held in Paris next month.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkmenistan H.E. Atadjan Movlamov called on Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik.

## Shangla Attack: Interior Minister briefs Chinese Envoy about rescue operation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior and Narcotic Control, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi on Tuesday reached the Chinese embassy in Islamabad immediately after the suicide attack on the car of Chinese citizens in Shangla and briefed the Chinese Ambassador about the details of blast and ongoing rescue operations.

In a condemnation statement issued by his office, the minister expressed heartfelt grief and sorrow, condolence to the families

of the deceased Chinese citizens, the attack on the fraternal relations between Pakistan and China is intolerable.

Naqvi said the whole Pakistani nation was an equal participant in the grief of its Chinese brothers, adding that the government would deal with the elements involved in the attack with iron hands by ensuring a comprehensive investigation of the incident. He said the great bilateral relations would not be affected due to such attacks.

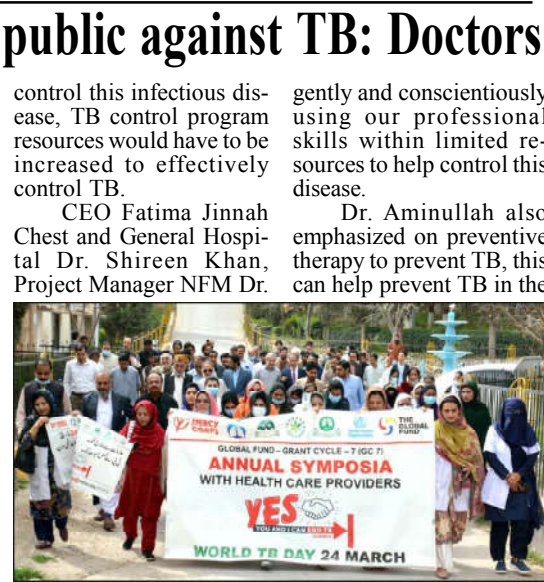
## FM Ishaq Dar, Uzbek counterpart discuss bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov on Tuesday discussed the bilateral ties and all areas of mutual interest between the two countries.

On his X account, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said that he was delighted to receive telephone call from his brother Uzbek FM Saidov. "Thanked him for his message of felicitation.

Discussed all areas of mutual interest and invited him to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience. Also assured him of my full support to further bilateral relations between our two brotherly countries for the benefit of our people," he added.

Reciprocating his post, FM Saidov, posted on X that it was a pleasure to have a phone conversation with Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.



Aminullah, Regional Coordinator NFM Dr. Dad Muhammad and others committed to joint efforts by providing all the necessary awareness about TB to the participants.

gently and conscientiously using our professional skills within limited resources to help control this disease.

Dr. Aminullah also emphasized on preventive therapy to prevent TB, this can help prevent TB in the public.

At the end of the seminar, shields were also distributed among the participating TB experts and distinguished guests.

Finally, Pakistan Chest Society Balochistan General Secretary Dr. Mahmood Shahwani thanked all the honorable

## Government ends gas slab discount, moves to flat rate system

ISLAMABAD (INP): The government has abolished the current tiered gas billing system with slabs and discounts, instead moving to a flat rate system for gas consumption.

This change will impact domestic and industrial consumers alike, as everyone will be charged the same rate regardless of the amount of gas they use.

Under the new system, the price per unit of gas (MMBTU) will be uniform across sectors, including domestic, commercial, general industry, and even export-oriented consumers. The exact price is yet to be finalized and awaits approval. However, it is expected to be around Rs. 4,501 (excluding taxes) for consumers in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad.

This decision comes on the heels of a recent request by Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) for a 147% increase in gas

tariffs. During a public hearing, the company argued that the gas price needs to be raised to Rs. 4,446 per MMBTU to reflect production costs.

Consumers present at the hearing expressed strong opposition to the proposed hike, highlighting the potential for business closures and rising unemployment due to high gas prices.

Stakeholders pointed out that existing gas prices have already forced numerous businesses to shut down, despite the fact that Pakistan sells gas to some customers for as low as \$4 per unit while purchasing it internationally for \$15.

The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) chairman acknowledged the concerns of both consumers and gas companies and indicated that a final decision on gas price revisions will be made after careful consideration.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari was called on by WAPDA Chairman Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Sajjad Ghani.

## PM lauds security forces for foiling terrorist attack on Turbat naval airbase

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday appreciated the security forces for thwarting a terrorist attack on Turbat naval airbase.

Due to a prompt and effective response by the security forces, terrorists were sent to hell, thus saving the country from a huge

damage, PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.

The prime minister also expressed the resolve to crush the specter of terrorism.

The entire nation was standing with their brave security forces and paid tribute to them, he added.

## Pakistan hails UNSC's Gaza ceasefire resolution, urges its implementation

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has welcomed the UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in war-ravaged Gaza, emphasizing that the long-awaited resolution must be implemented.

"We call for the immediate implementation of this Security Council resolution in accordance with Article 25 of the UN Charter," Ambassador Munir Akram said Monday, when asked for his comments by APP.

Under the terms of that Charter article, UN member states agree to carry out the decisions of the 15-member Council.

"This must be a first

step in halting Israel's brutal campaign in Gaza," Ambassador Akram said.

"Pakistan will continue to work actively for a just, comprehensive and durable solution through the establishment of a secure, viable, contiguous and sovereign State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital," he added.

Monday's Council resolution demanded an immediate ceasefire for the holy month of Ramadan, and "the urgent need to expand the flow" of aid into Gaza.

There were 14 votes in favour, with the United States abstaining.



QUETTA: Investigation Officer Federal Ombudsman Ahmed Waqas Kashi alongwith officers of SSGC listening issues of public at open kutchery at SSGC office.

## QMC seeks machinery from PDMA to launch cleanliness drive in city

QUETTA (APP): Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) is seeking waste lifting machinery from Provincial Disaster Management Authority as the corporation has lack of machinery and tools to launch cleanliness drive in the city.

Talking to APP, Administrator Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat said the QMC authority had been not purchased new machinery and vehicles since 1994.

He said an operation would be launched to clean the water courses and nullahs for efficient working of sewerage system so that the rain and waste water could not cause inconvenience to the public.

Under the supervision of Administrator Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, the corporation has collected over 10000 tons of trash from the city

in short period of 12 days.

Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat said the authority has all set to collect door-to-door garbage to make Quetta the cleanest city within two weeks.

Commissioner said the government had taking efforts to increase the waste collecting capacity of QMC by 500 tons to 1600 tons daily by outsourcing the Quetta solid waste management.

Hamza said the plan is in pipeline to operate the solid waste management in Quetta on public private partnership basis to improve sewerage system.

He said the cleanliness drives were being carried out in every area of the city on regular basis and the QMC was ensuring collection and disposal of garbage in every area of the provincial capital city including Sariyab to Nawwan Killi.