

# Independent

Member APNS &amp; CPNE

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www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vdt XXV No 218, Ramzan 17, 1445 AH Thursday March 28, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs.15

PM Shahbaz says

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

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

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

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

Chairing a high level emergency meeting in the aftermath of Besham terrorist attack on Chinese nationals,

the prime minister appreciated the alacrity with which law enforcement agencies and locals responded to the attack, saving many precious lives which could have been lost. The meeting was attended by the Federal Ministers, Chief of the Army Staff, Chief Ministers, Chief Secretaries and Inspector Generals of Police of respective provinces, a PM Office press release said.

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

Continued on page 2



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



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti attending a meeting through video link regarding security of the Chinese nationals chaired by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem and IGP Abdul Khaliq Sheikh are also present

## Pace of work expedited on Gwadar Safe City Project: Proposed SOPs of Interior Ministry being implemented strictly for establishing peace, says CM

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has stated the proposed standard operating procedures are being implemented strictly for establishing peace in the province. This is the reason that the intensity of loss remained less in the incidents of terrorism occurred in the province last week.

While on the other hand, the speed of work has been expedited on the Gwadar Safe city project.

The Chief Minister was addressing the meeting through video link regarding security of the Chinese nationals held with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad

on Wednesday. The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Imran Zarkoon, Additional Chief Secretary for Home, Zahid Saleem and Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh were also present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister informed the meeting about a total of 892 Chinese nationals are working in seven different projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Balochistan.

However, some other Chinese are also working who came through different private companies in the province, he added.

For security of the Chinese nationals, a total of

5690 personnel of the security forces are deployed, he further informed.

The standard of security is rightly according to the SOPs proposed by the Ministry of Interior, he explained.

However, there is a need to enhance the professional capacity of the CTD for effectively dealing the menace of terrorism.

He said that war against terrorism is not of anyone but it has to be fought by all of us together.

The Chief Minister also mentioned that the SOPs of Interior Ministry would continue to be reviewed fortnightly, in light of which the decisions would be made for improving security further.



CHAMAN: Acting Governor Balochistan & Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai visiting new DHQ Hospital

## 20 candidates withdraw nomination papers from Senate elections

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: In all 20 candidates have withdrawn their nomination papers from the Senate elections in Balochistan.

According to the data shared by the spokesman of Provincial Election Commissioner, eight candidates withdrew their papers from general seats of Senate from the province.

Similarly, seven candidates withdrew papers from the seats allocated for technocrats in the Senate from Balochistan while five candidates announced to withdraw their candidates from the seats allocated for women in the senate.

After withdrawal of the candidatures, in all 13

candidates are in the competition run for 11 seats of Senate from the province.

Now at the outset, eight candidates are in the competition run for seven general seats of Senate while three candidates are in run for two seats of technocrats.

For women, two candidates are contesting elections for the even number of seats allocated for the same category.

With this, Rahat Jamali of PML-N and Husna Bibi of PPP are expected to be declared successful unopposed. The final list of candidates would be issued today.

The election on 11 seats of Senate is scheduled to be held on April 2, 2024.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Upon his arrival, the president was received by Ambassador of the People's

Republic of China to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong. The Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also present on the occasion, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

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

He assured the Chinese ambassador that the criminals involved in the gruesome act would be apprehended and brought to justice.

He further said that all

Continued on page 2



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

## Acting Governor visits DHQ Hospital Chaman: Negligence & carelessness not to be tolerated in healthcare sector, asserts Achakzai

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The acting Governor Balochistan and Speaker Provincial Assembly, (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai visited the District Headquarter Hospital Chaman on Wednesday.

The Deputy Commissioner Chaman, Captain (Retd) Raja Athar Abbas

and other high ups were also present.

The District Health Officer Chaman, Dr Aimal Mandokhail and Medical Superintendent of the Hospital, Dr. Abdul Rasheed Nasar briefed the visiting acting Governor about the overall functioning and ser-

vice of the hospital.

He said in 2018 elections, people's right to vote was robbed while in the 2024 elections, people's right to vote was killed. "We reject the [Feb 8] poll results. We have to go to people. We will take them in confidence and unite them for the right to vote," he said. "By creating unity in the ranks of people, we will enable them to protect their vote."

He said in 2018 elections, people's right to vote was robbed while in the 2024 elections, people's right to vote was killed. "We reject the [Feb 8] poll results. We have to go to people. We will take them in confidence and unite them for the right to vote," he said. "By creating unity in the ranks of people, we will enable them to protect their vote."

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

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

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

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

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

waiver for the gas pipeline from Iran.

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

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

Washington has condemned a suicide bombing

that killed five Chinese nationals working on a dam project in Pakistan, saying no country should have to suffer "acts of terror."

"We condemn the attack on a convoy of PRC [People's Republic of China] engineers in Pakistan," Matthew Miller said and added

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of life and injuries sustained, and share our heartfelt condolences with those affected by the attack. The Pakistani people have suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists, and I'll note that PRC nationals in Pakistan have also been the victims of terrorist attacks, and no country should suffer the acts of terror."

## Govt announces to enforce Education emergency in Balochistan

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has announced to enforce education policy in the province.

According to an official notification issued here, all district education officers, headmasters and senior teachers would remain present at their duties places all over the province.

Under the education emergency, no one would leave the duty station without the prior intimation. Moreover, the EDO of every district would pay visit to three schools every day and would present the comprehensive report on the situation, the notification mentioned.

## CM grieved over martyrdom of Levies officer in Pishin

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of an officer of Levies force in Pishin.

In an official statement issued here on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said that the Levies Risaldar embraced martyrdom while performing duty. He paid homage to the martyr Risaldar and prayed for early recovery of those injured in the terrorism incident.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday reiterated

the commitment of the government that all possible steps would be taken to root out the scourge of terrorism from the soil of the motherland.

Addressing a press conference after a high level meeting on security chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, He said that Prime Minister expressed the firm resolve to eliminate terrorism and make Pakistan a peaceful state.

Continued on page 2

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

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

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

hours in the federal capital.

The development took place after the bar associations and legal experts called for a probe into the letter. The sources said that the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan met the CJP and discussed the matter.

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

## Levis official killed, 3 injured in Pishin operation against terrorists

QUETTA (APP): An official of the Levies force was killed and three other personnel suffered critical injuries on Wednesday after the terrorists opened fire at the raiding party of Forces in Pishin district of Balochistan.

"Levis Force Risaldar Hameedullah died instantly while three other personnel of the Levies Force received bullet shots during an operation carried out against the terrorists at Kili Manzari of Pishin district's

Harmazai Tehsil, Deputy Commissioner Pishin Juma Dad Mandokhail said.

The operation was launched, on a tip-off against Dad Mohammad who along with other accomplices was hiding in a house near Inayatullah Khan Pump, instead of surrendering to the Law enforcement agencies, the terrorists opened fire at them. As a result, Levy Risaldar died on the spot and three personnel suffered bullet shots.



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



## Pak-Iran transit trade strengthening through enhanced road-rail connectivity: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Dr Raza Amiri Moghaddam paid a courtesy visit to Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal and congratulated him on assuming the office.

During the meeting, potential areas of cooperation for the upcoming visit of Iran's President to Pakistan came under discussion, a Planning Ministry news release said on Wednesday.

Minister Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the historical ties between Pakistan and Iran and emphasized the importance of enhancing connectivity through trade routes, considering the 900-kilometer shared land and maritime border.

He urged the need for effective road-rail transit routes to boost economic cooperation, aiming to increase the current \$2.5 billion trade volume between the two countries manifold.

Acknowledging Iran's energy as a vital resource, the minister proposed leveraging it to alleviate Pakistan's energy crisis, particularly considering the cost-effectiveness of Iranian energy resources.

He also advocated reviving the cargo train service between Pakistan, Iran and Turkey initiated in 2009 under the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

The ambassador commended the strategic significance of Chabahar, Gwadar and Karachi ports for trade

and expressed Iran's commitment to connecting Chabahar port with the Zahidan railway network, potentially extending connectivity to Russia and Central Asia countries.

The Gabd-Rimdan border crossing was identified as a more viable option than Quetta-Taftan, given its proximity to Gwadar and Chabahar.

Ahsan Iqbal proposed adopting Iran's vocational and technical training mechanism to empower unemployed youth in Balochistan.

During the meeting, both sides agreed that strengthened bilateral ties could contribute to reducing tendencies of terrorism and extremism in the region.



QUETTA: Elites and public representative delegations meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Safaraz Ahmed Bugti

## WAPDA Chairman visits Dasu hydropower project to express sympathies with Chinese workforce

DASU (APP): WAPDA Chairman, Engr Lt General (retired) Sajjad Ghani on Wednesday visited the Dasu Hydropower Project to express solidarity with Chinese engineers following a recent terrorist attack that resulted in the tragic loss of lives including five Chinese individuals.

The chairman accompanied by China's Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, spent sometime with the Chinese workforce engaged in the project, and offered condolences on behalf of WAPDA over the precious loss of lives.

In a statement released by the media wing of WAPDA, Chairman Ghani strongly condemned the incident and expressed heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved families.

He assured that law enforcement agencies are investigating the recent terrorist attack and emphasized the need to enhance security measures to avoid any mishap in future.

The chairman commended the invaluable contribution of leading Chinese firms which are engaged in implementing crucial water and hydropower projects including Dasu. The projects aimed at providing essential water and low-cost energy for the economic stability and social progress of Pakistan.

Despite such cowardly attacks, the Chairman expressed unwavering confidence in the resilient Pak-China friendship and mutual cooperation for the stability and advancement of Pakistan.

## ANF Academy organizes workshop on anti money laundering, counter financing of terrorism

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Academy here on Wednesday organized a three-day Workshop/Seminar on Anti Money Laundering and

Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Islamabad were invited as guest speakers.

Honorable Commandant, ANF Academy Brigadier Ghazi Kamal Kiani graced the closing ceremony on

sectoral endeavor, ANF is actively engaged with all stakeholders namely MoI, NACTA, FATF Secretariat, FMU, Police, FIA, NAB, CTD and FBR for information sharing, cooperation and provision of data



Counter Financing of Terrorism.

the final day of the workshop/seminar.

through a desk involving a dedicated focal person.

53 Investigation Officers and Public Prosecutors from ANF and sister law enforcement agencies benefited from the Workshop/Seminar. Chief Instructor ANF Academy Sahib Khan highlighted the importance of the workshop.

The experts from relevant stakeholders on Anti Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism, including Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), FATF Secretariat and

Commandant ANF Academy appreciated the earnest efforts of ANF Academy to provide a platform for capacity building on money laundering and terrorism financing related issues relevant to various stake holders.

He also highlighted Pakistan's efforts at policy, procedural and operational level to fulfill the requirements of FATF.

He underscored the importance of ANF as a vital link in "National Integrated Approach" being a key member of various national forums on money laundering and terrorism financing. As the task is multi

ANF Academy strives to remain at the forefront of holding specialized courses and workshops for capacity building that in turn, feeds into the national efforts against money laundering and terrorism financing, he added.

The Commandant stressed the need for continuous capacity building of investigation officers and prosecutors to better deal with the dynamics of assets investigation including financial intelligence to undertake proactive pursuit of assets investigation and money laundering cases.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, Dr. Raza Amiri Moghaddam paid a courtesy visit to Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal.

## CM Punjab launches safety wire guard campaign

Orders creating new anti-narcotics department

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif launched Safety Wire Guard installation campaign to save the citizens from the bloody string under the "Safe Punjab" program, here on Wednesday.

The CM launched the campaign at Police Khidmat Markaz Abshar and directed the traffic police to ensure implementation on the Safety Wire installation. She distributed safety wires among the citizens to save them from the hazards of metal string and directed motor bike riders not to remove safety wire guard from their motorcycles.

The CM also visited the Abshar Khidmat Markaz, inspected various counters and reviewed the self-operating system. She

met with the citizens present at the Abshar Khidmat Markaz and inquired from them about the provision of facilities.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Ammara Athar gave a briefing to the CM about the safety wires. She apprised that crackdown against the persons involved in the bloody metal string sport and kite-flying is ongoing. The CM was informed during the briefing that challans would not be imposed due to absence of safety wires on the motor bikes as it is highly essential for the protection of people. Former Senator Pervez Rasheed, MPA Sania Ashiq, IG Police, CCPA, AIG Traffic and other officials were also present.

Meanwhile, Chief

Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz has ordered for creating a new department for anti-narcotics, while chairing a review meeting on Department of Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control. She also ordered for clearing backlog of registration number plates of motor vehicles.

The CM said, "All resourceful people who are not paying tax currently should be brought into the tax net." She added, "Tax on houses needs to be rationalised." She directed the authorities concerned to prepare an assessment report on the difference of property tax due to mismatch in the properties' rental values and the DC rates. She approved to set up a tax consultancy unit for proper evaluation of tax.

## ICC delegation calls on PCB Chairman to discuss Champions Trophy arrangements

Sports Desk

LAHORE: An International Cricket Council (ICC) delegation visiting Pakistan to inspect venues and facilities for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 called on Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday.

Pakistan signed the hosting rights agreement with the ICC in December to hold the tournament. There had been doubts about whether Pakistan would stay as the host country for the Champions Trophy after India had forced the PCB into hosting most of the matches of September's Asia Cup in Sri Lanka.

It will be the first major global cricket tournament to be played in Pakistan since 1996 when it hosted the Men's Cricket World Cup alongside India and Sri Lanka.

According to a press release issued by the board today, the meeting discussed the "lead-up to and successful conduct" of the event next year.

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi said it is an absolute pleasure and welcome development for the board and the fans across the country.

"The PCB will arrange top-notch facilities as per the stature of this historic tournament," he was quoted as saying in the press release.



QUETTA: Activities of joint action committee hold protest outside University of Balochistan.

## All possible steps to be...

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

He said today's high level meeting was attended by Federal Ministers, Chief of Army Staff, Chief Ministers of all four provinces, Chief Secretaries, Inspector Generals of the provinces, Chief Secretaries and IGs of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Attaulah Tarar said that the meeting had the consensus that an integrated strategy should be adopted to wipe out terrorism from this country.

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

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

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

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

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

He said yesterday's sad incident in Bisham resulted

in loss of six precious lives including Chinese citizens.

He said that China was a time tested friend of Pakistan that has always stood by Islamabad at all difficult times and at international forums. He said that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor was the guarantor of economic development in the country. The minister said after the launch of the CPEC about 64 billion dollar investment was done in Pakistan and its GDP had increased significantly.

"Millions of new employment opportunities will be created in the country in future due to CPEC", he added.

Tarar said after the tragic incident, the PM set aside all his engagements and visited the Chinese Embassy and expressed his condolences to the Chinese Ambassador.

He said that the Prime Minister not only condemned the incident but also assured about investigation of the incident.

A message, he said was given to the Chinese leadership through the ambassador that effective action will be taken against the terrorists involved in the distasteful act.

The Prime Minister assured the Ambassador of China that the Government of Pakistan will leave no stone unturned to eradicate terrorism and bring to book the culprits involved in killing of Chinese citizens.

## Negligence & carelessness not...

During the briefing, it was informed that hardships are being faced in the operation theatre due to the ongoing longtime power load shedding. It was also informed that some 120 posts are lying vacant after upgradation of the DHQ Hospital, which is causing shortage of staff there. He was informed that the new posts have been given to the Abdul Rehmanzai district Killa Abdullah. Similarly, the medicines have also been distributed among the two districts.

While speaking on the occasion, acting Governor said that negligence and carelessness would not be tolerated in duties.

He on the occasion expressed anger over allotment of the quarters allocated for the out of district districts to the local staff. He also issued directives to advertise the vacant posts of night watchmen to meet their shortage in the hospital.

Meanwhile, the acting Governor visited the mother child health center established in the old female hospital. Speaking to the media persons, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai said that it is priority of the government to provide basic health and other facilities to the people.

He said that he has directed to the concerned high ups that there should be no hurdle in provision of better health facilities to the masses.

## Terrorism trans-national threat..

Continued from page 1

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif underscored the enduring bond of brotherhood between the people of Pakistan and China and conveyed that the whole nation was saddened by the loss of Chinese lives.

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

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

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

During the meeting, the COAS reiterated the resolve of armed forces to

## Shangla attack...

Continued from page 1

eliminate the scourge of terrorism afflicting the country. COAS stated that the nation had steadfastly fought the war on terror for the last two decades and had defeated the nefarious designs of Pakistan's adversaries.

Noting the recent surge in terrorist incidents, COAS remarked that the enemies of Pakistan had once again underestimated the resilience and grit of the State and the people of Pakistan.

He said, "we shall fight terrorism till every terrorist casting an evil eye on Pakistan, its people and their guests, is eliminated; we shall not leave any stone unturned to ensure that every foreign citizen, especially the Chinese nationals, contributing to the prosperity of Pakistan, is safe and secure in Pakistan. We shall fight terrorism with all our might, to the very end." The meeting concluded with the participants reiterating resolve to comprehensively combat terrorism employing all resources available to the state.



QUETTA: Motorists are standing under the shade of flyover to protect themselves from rain, at Koyla Phattak in Quetta.

**TENDER NOTICE**

**TSE-232403382983** Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Divisional Forest Officer Loralai invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates Tender Fee Rs. 1000/- and Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Work/s	E/Cost
1	Construction of Eco-Tourism Hut at Killi Zangiwal Kudezai	3,000,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 2 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 2,100,000 PKR Amount in 1 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 1,000 PKR **Issuance of tender Documents:** From the date of publication of NIT to 01 April, 2024 during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The Tenders must be submitted latest by 01 April, 2024 till 10:00 AM. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 11:00 AM **Address:** Divisional Forest Officer Loralai Phone no: 3369288138 Email: [ImranMani000138@gmail.com](mailto:ImranMani000138@gmail.com)

**PRO No. 1734/27-3-2024**  
[www.dpr.gov.pk](http://www.dpr.gov.pk) @dpr\_gob @dpr\_gob @dpr\_balochistan

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**TENDER NOTICE**

The Assistant director Police invites bids from Eligible Bidders for supply of following items. **TSE-232403386291** Only electronic bid will be submitted. No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB.

S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	Material Handling and Conditioning and Storage Machinery and their Accessories and Supplies	600,000 PKR

(Total Item(s) Count: 1)

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 10,000,000 in Previous 3 Years. Turn over of at least 10,000,000 PKR in 3 Subsequent Previous Years. Presence in Active Tax Payer List. Sales Tax Certificate. The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. JV is not permissible. Submission of the required Bid Security in case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as in-eligible and non-responsive. Submission of the required Bidding document Fee. The Bidder must provide dealership as well as authorization certificate from the manufacturer. BRA Certificate. The bidder must provide definite delivery period of vehicles. The bidder or the Manufacturer of the vehicle must certify availability of spare parts for at least 10 years

**Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of amount 600,000 PKR specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from [www.bppra.gov.pk](http://www.bppra.gov.pk) **Issuance of tender Documents:** Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at [www.bppra.gov.pk](http://www.bppra.gov.pk) **Last Date of bid submission:** Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 16 April, 2024 till 12:00 PM through supplier dashboard. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at 12:30 PM on EPPS System

**Address:** Central Police Office, Gulistan Road Quetta Cantt  
Phone no: 0819203479 Fax no: Email: [aggen123@gmail.com](mailto:aggen123@gmail.com)

**PRO No. 1732/27-03-2024**  
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Assistant Director/General for  
Inspector General of Police  
Balochistan, Quetta.





**ISLAMABAD:** Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Dr. Qibla Ayaz along with others cutting ribbon at the opening ceremony of Quran Exhibition of Manuscripts organized by Cultural Consulate Embassy of I.R. Iran Islamabad and Iran Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies in collaboration with Safa Gold Mall.

## Exhibition of rare, ancient manuscripts of Holy Quran inaugurated

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the blessed occasion of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, the three-day long exhibition of the rare and ancient manuscripts of the Holy Quran was inaugurated here at Safa Gold Mall on Wednesday. Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Dr. Qibla Ayaz formally inaugurated the exhibition, organized by Iranian Embassy and Iran Pakistan Persian Research Center. The Chairman CCI appreciated the cultural initiative and described the enthusiastic participation of people in the exhibition of Quranic manuscripts as a manifestation of the long-standing friendship between the people of Iran and Pakistan.

He said Holy Qur'an is an essential axis for the

unity and closeness of the hearts of the Islamic Ummah. In the exhibition, along with Quranic manuscripts, calligraphy panels and works of art have been presented and placed before the public. These Qur'ans are written in beautiful Nastaliq, Thulth Naskh calligraphy, and some of them are decorated with gold water and other colors and patterns of flowers and shrubs. The exhibition includes dozens of original manuscripts of the Quran, some of which are accompanied by Persian translations. The organizer said the existence of 800-year-old copies of the Holy Qur'an is an emphasis on the historical status of the legacy of the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihe wa Alihe Wasallam Khatam-un-Nabiyyeen.



**ISLAMABAD:** Governor KPK, Haji Ghulam Ali calls on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan.

## KPK Governor extends congratulation to Jam as fed commerce minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a gesture of support and goodwill, Haji Ghulam Ali, the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday congratulated Jam Kamal Khan as newly appointed Federal Minister for Commerce, highlighting the significant challenges amidst Pakistan's economic landscape.

Governor Ghulam Ali emphasized Jam Kamal's pivotal role in navigating economic complexities and fostering trade relations to spur growth, said a press

release issued here. Jam Kamal Khan acknowledged the task's magnitude, expressed commitment to revitalizing the commerce sector through collaboration and innovation. The collaboration between federal and provincial authorities signifies a collective resolve to address economic imperatives for sustained growth and prosperity in Pakistan, Jam Kamal said. The Governor invited the federal minister to visit KPK and engage with the business community.

## IHC orders Chief Commissioner to file report again on situation of prisoners in Adiala jail

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered Chief Commissioner (CC) Islamabad to file report again about the situation of prisoners of Islamabad in Adiala jail.

The court has issued order on Wednesday on the petition for arranging meeting of its lawyers with PTI founder in Adiala jail.

The petition regarding restriction on jail meetings of PTI founder came up for hearing before Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir.

Adiala jail authorities appeared in the court. On the order of court superintendent Adiala jail filed report in how many cases PTI founder is imprisoned in jail.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir remarked how the prisoners of Islamabad are kept in Adiala jail. There will be some notification. What is settled between administrations of chief commissioner Islamabad with Jail authorities, it should be filed in the court.

Sher Afzal Marwat said interim ministry issued a notification that no meeting can be held in jail.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir remarked the notification on ban on meetings for two weeks has become infructuous now.

The state counsel told Additional Advocate General Punjab Baligh uz Zaman has informed Islamabad High Court.



**ISLAMABAD:** A view of massive traffic jam at Islamabad Expressway during rain in the Federal Capital.

## British High Commissioner calls on Faryal

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

Deputy High Commissioner Sarah Mooney and Deputy Political Counselor Mark Bailey accompanied the British High Commissioner, said a press release issued here by the party secretary.

Sindh Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani, and Sindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro were also present on the occasion.

The meeting focused on discussing matters of mutual interest and enhancing bilateral relations.

## Final four candidates for Islamabad Senate polls unveiled

ISLAMABAD (APP): The returning officer revealed the final list of four candidates for the Senate elections from Islamabad.

The elections will be held for one general seat and one technocrat seat of the Senate on April 2.

Farzand Hussain Shah from Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) and Rana Mehmood ul Hassan from Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) are the candidates for the general seat. Ishaq Dar from PML-N and Raja Ansar Mehmood from Sunni Ittehad Council are vying for the technocrat seat from the federal capital.

Voting for the elections is scheduled to take place from 9 am to 4 pm, in the National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies in next month.

## Centre for national cohesion launched at Lok Virsa

ISLAMABAD (APP): A "Centre for National Cohesion" has been launched at Lok Virsa here Wednesday aimed to work for research, analysis, policy development, and operational strategies to promote national cohesion on a national scale through culture.

Federal Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division, Hassan Nasir Jami was the chief guest on the occasion, said a press release issued here. In his address, he appreciated the efforts taken by team of the National Heritage and Culture division and Lok Virsa for setting up the centre.

He assured full support of his division for promoting the objectives of the centre. Muhammad Uzair Khan, Executive Director, Lok Virsa, Muhammad Kashif Irsahd, Adviser (Culture), Ahmer Bilal Sufi, Advocate and Dr. Zia, Director General, IRI also spoke about the significance of the centre.

The ambassador underscored the historical significance of Pakistan Day and paid tribute to the founding fathers of the country. He also reiterated Pakistan's principled support for right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir and Palestine facing brutal occupation. He expressed these views during an Ifar-dinner reception which was held to celebrate the 84th National Day of Pakistan at the Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa, a press release, on Wednesday, said.

Over 170 guests including Ambassadors from

## Planning Ministry to undergo digital transformation in next 6 months: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives on Wednesday said his ministry would undergo a digital transformation during the next six months under the Intelligent Project Automation System (iPAS).

Stressing on the importance of digital upgradation of public sector organizations, he shared that the digital revolution currently under process in the global arena would completely revolutionize the world in the next 10 years.

"The way we live, work and learn will be fully automated in near future," the minister said during a certificate distribution ceremony organized for officials from different ministries who completed the iPAS training programme to digitize the Public

Sector Development Programme (PSDP) portfolios of respective ministries, a news release said. Intelligent automation

systems have eased everyday processes in all public sector organizations across the world.

Therefore, there is a pressing need for Pakistan government to automate its processes on priority. In an effort to digitize the PSDP processes of Planning Commission, the iPAS was launched in October 2019 as a joint effort of Pakistan Information Technology Board and Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives. The Intelligent Project Automation System (iPAS), brings together different systems to make project work smoother and get enhanced management efficiency. The iPAS is a joint effort by the Ministry of Planning and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) launched in 2019 to assist project managers in making smarter choices with the help of geospatial technology.

Project Director iPAS Qaiser Zahir Shah briefed

the minister about key features of iPAS, launched to digitize the PSDP processes of Planning Commission.

Making a proud announcement, the ministry said that the Spatial Decision Support System was now a part of the iPAS.

"This means we're entering a new era of project appraisals. By mixing different kinds of information using GIS, #SDSS gives decision-makers a complete picture," it added.

Elaborating further, the ministry said the iPAS was not just a technology but like a smart brain. "It gathers information from different places like demographics, economics, and the environment. This helps to make better choices for the future." With iPAS, project managers and ministry officials could get a helping hand that gave them tools to improve project operations, financial management, monitoring and execution of the assigned tasks.



**ISLAMABAD:** Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi addressing seminar on Act for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace in 2010 organized under the aegis of Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA).

## Federal Ombudsman says: Protection against Harassment of Women Act 2010 to ensure living without fear, discrimination

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has said that the Parliament adopted an Act for Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace in 2010 with a view to implementing the relevant provisions in the Constitution and ensuring equal opportunity for men and women and the right to earn a livelihood without fear or any discrimination.

He was inaugurating a Webinar on Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace, organized under the aegis of Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), here Wednesday. It was attended by the members of the AOA besides the human rights practitioners and activists in addition to the members of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) and

the Forum of Pakistan's Ombudsmen (FPO).

Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, who is also the President of the 47-member strong Asian Ombudsman Association, said that the Constitution of Pakistan upholds the principle of equality and dignity along with explicitly prohibiting gender discrimination in all spheres of national life. He further stated that the enactment of the relevant law against harassment in 2010 was followed by two more Acts of the Parliament in 2020 and 2022 respectively, expanding the scope of its legal provision to include men, women and transgendered alike. Enforcement of the Women's Property Rights was also brought within the purview of these legislative provisions, he added. He said that the Webinar is intended

to share the Pakistan's experiences, best practices and the exchange of information with a view to promoting gender equality and the right to work with dignity for all. Later Ms. Fauzia Viqar, Federal Ombudsperson Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (FOSPAP) also made a presentation on the scope of work and operational framework of the FOSPAP, which was established in 2011. She said that FOSPAP was playing a vital role in upholding the constitutional provision of equality and dignity along with striving to create an environment free of harassment and discrimination. She further added that Pakistan has the distinction as being the only country with a dedicated Ombudsperson Institution to deal with the challenges.



**RAWALPINDI:** President Ex-Serviceman Society General (Retd) Abdul Qayyum Malik is holding a press conference at Rawalpindi Press Club.

## Ambassador highlights booming bilateral ties between Pak, Ethiopia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan in Ethiopia Atif Sharif has praised Pakistan's cordial relations with Ethiopia and shared that opening of Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad, inauguration of direct flights and rising trade flows were signs of booming bilateral relationship.

The ambassador underscored the historical significance of Pakistan Day and paid tribute to the founding fathers of the country.

He also reiterated Pakistan's principled support for right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir and Palestine facing brutal occupation.

He expressed these views during an Ifar-dinner reception which was held to celebrate the 84th National Day of Pakistan at the Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa, a press release, on Wednesday, said.

Over 170 guests including Ambassadors from

Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Kuwait, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Oman, Sri Lanka, Cuba, Chile, Finland, Spain, New Zealand and deputies Ambassadors from US, UK, Germany, France, Russia as well as Ethiopian dignitaries, businessmen and Pakistani expatriates attended the event.

Ambassador Gebeyehu Ganga, Director-General (Middle East and Asia Pacific) graced the event as the chief guest.

To share a glimpse of Pakistan's diverse beauty with the participants, the venue was tastefully adorned with vibrant portraits and banners depicting the splendid heritage, dazzling landscapes, and fauna of Pakistan.

Mesmerizing cultural dances of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan were presented by Pakistani youth which earned deep praise from the audience.



**ISLAMABAD:** President Asif Ali Zardari registering his condolence remarks in the visitor's book, at the Chinese Embassy.

## Mobilink Bank launches "Center of Excellence for Women" at Arid University

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mobilink Bank, Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, has reaffirmed its commitment to women's financial inclusion with the launch of the country's first "Center of Excellence for Women" in partnership with Arid Agriculture University, a leading agricultural institution in Pakistan, to advance financial education.

In this joint endeavor, Mobilink Bank will serve as the exclusive financial partner for Arid University's outreach program, which extends its services to approximately 200 rural villages in the Potohar region, said a news release.

Alongside offering

customized financial services, the Bank will actively contribute to advancing agricultural education by supporting financial literacy training, skills development, and capacity building for women.

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers in six dynamic markets that are home to 7% of the world's population.

Pakistan's agricultural sector is a powerhouse, contributing a substantial 24% to the GDP and engaging nearly half of the country's workforce.

## Dr Abrar says: Over 2.6 mln out-of-school children in Pakistan question mark on education system

ISLAMABAD (APP): All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association (APPSCA), Central President Dr. Malik Abrar Hussain on Wednesday said there were more than two million and six hundred thousand children out of schools in the country, which is a big question mark on our education system.

The government should take concrete steps to bring the out-of-school children to schools, whereas the role of private education sector was above all for the educational development, social and economic improvement of the country, Malik Abrar said in a news release.

The Association central president was address-

ing the first meeting of the newly elected central executive body. The first meeting of the newly elected central executive body of the Association was held here at the head office of the association. The meeting was presided over by Central President Dr. Malik Abrar Hussain, While Senior Vice President Rana Sohail Ahmad, Vice President Javed Iqbal Raja, Secretary General Ashraf Haraj, Zulfiqar Ali Siddiqui, Irfan Muzaffar Kayani, Malik Deem Muhammad Awan, Qasim Abbas, Asrar Bakhari, Muhammad Ibrahim, Malik Hafeezur Rehman, Malik Shaikat Ali, Muhammad Arif Advocate, Qari Tariq Mehmood, Antak Hussain, Syed Abid Shah.



**ISLAMABAD:** Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain in a meeting with the Vice President of International Republican Institute Mr. Scott Mastie.

## SC adjourns case pertaining FIA's notices to journalists

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday adjourned hearing till April 2, in a suo-motu case pertaining to FIA's notices to journalists in matter of alleged anti-judiciary campaign.

Attorney General of Pakistan, during the hearing, assured the court that no journalist would be arrested in this matter. He said that procedure has been started to issue the red warrants against the two accused involved in attack on Journalist Absar Alam.

A three-member bench presided by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa

heard the case. The chief justice remarked that the judgment of IHC didn't discuss privacy of people. He questioned the lawyer that whether you allow anyone to click picture of your child. This matter was related cyberstalking under section-24, he said, adding that the court either terminate a clause or interpret it.

The CJ said that serving notices to journalists by the FIA was under section-160 a practice before the registration of the FIR. The court said that it would terminate action if the lawyer would prove anything illegal in it.

## DC for overhauling Capital's progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting to review the performance of Assistant Commissioners in the Federal Capital and orchestrated a roadmap for a more efficient and responsive administration.

According to the

Spokesman of ICT, Dr. Abdullah Tabassum, the recent gathering aimed at gauging the effectiveness of Assistant Commissioners in Islamabad.

The meeting, graced by a multitude of officials and stakeholders, witnessed a thorough briefing session by Assistant Commissioners regarding their operational endeavors.



**ISLAMABAD:** Heavy machinery being used to expand a road at Chak Shahzad in the Federal Capital.



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**  
 Thursday March 28, 2024

## New terror wave

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

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

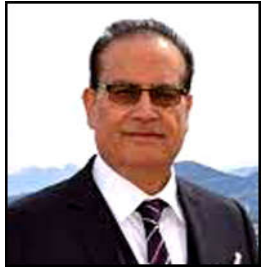
Beijing's reaction has been firm, with the Chinese embassy demanding the Pakistani state take "practical and effective measures" to protect its nationals here. China has come to this country's aid at difficult times, and invested in Pakistan when few others were willing to. Moreover, at a time when Pakistan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

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

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

By Qamar Bashir

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



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

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

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

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

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

Whether the letter was leaked without the consent of the Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council

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

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

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

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

Covert operatives operate discreetly, while deniable operations provide plausible deniability. This makes proving their involvement in suppression and intimidation activities exceptionally difficult, necessitating thorough investigation and forensic analysis to uncover any traces of their involvement.

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

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

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

gation must be met with swift and decisive action to uphold the rule of law and protect the judiciary from undue influence or intimidation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SIFC: A promising future

By Maria Mansab

The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) functions as a dynamic 'Single Window' to ensure smooth facilitation of investors, thereby avoiding intricate business procedures and unnecessary delays. The platform offers a centralized platform for stakeholders to engage in cross-sectoral reforms and provide a conducive policy framework, which is essential for enhancing the investment environment. SIFC enhances the recognition of Pakistan's unexplored capabilities, enabling investors to make well-informed decisions and explore investment prospects that correspond with their goals. The primary objective is to enhance the efficiency of corporate operations by promoting effective coordination among relevant stakeholders and facilitating rapid decision-making and implementation.

SIFC has granted preliminary approval for a total of 28 projects with a projected value in the billions of dollars. These projects are intended to be presented to Gulf nations for investment purposes, encompassing the development of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam and mining

activities at Reko Diq. SIFC is undeniably moving towards pragmatism, according to Al-Zaabi, the ambassador of UAE to Pakistan. Major UAE corporations are eager to engage in many sectors such as aviation, agriculture, renewable energy, education, and healthcare in Pakistan. Pakistan has effectively obtained a significant investment of \$25 billion from Saudi Arabia and has also successfully concluded 10 profitable multibillion-dollar agreements with Kuwait.

The overarching goal of SIFC and the Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI) represents a positive advancement towards the modernization of agricultural methods in Pakistan. Furthermore, the Land Information and Management System (LIMS) serves as the foundation for the forthcoming Green Revolution. The LIMS and GPI programs present a potential avenue for corporate agriculture as a means to stimulate economic revitalization.

One of the primary objectives of SIFC is to facilitate the advancement of corporate farming. In pursuit of this objective, Pakistan and China have

agreed to collaborate in fostering international cooperation in agricultural technology within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

In a noteworthy development, National Transmission and Dispatch Company Limited (NTDC) has effectively acquired the land for the construction of a 600 MW solar power project in Muzaffargarh. The 600 MW solar power plant is expected to mitigate the dependence on costly fuel-based power generation. Additionally, NTDC is currently engaged in the acquisition of land for two further solar power projects located in district Layyah (1200 MW) and district Jhang (600 MW). Constructing these projects will contribute 2400 MW of solar power to the system, thereby addressing the energy demand and enhancing the proportion of solar energy in the thermally dominant energy mix.

Significantly, Cynergico PVT LTD has announced the enhancement of two of its refineries to manufacture Petrol and Diesel that adhere to Euro V criteria. The projected capital outlay for this project

exceeds one billion dollars. The SIFC has played a crucial role in facilitating communication and collaboration between the Government and oil refineries. The recent approval of the 'brownfield oil refinery policy' signifies the increase in local oil refining capability. The aforementioned policy, which underwent revisions in February 2024, is anticipated to generate approximately \$5-6 billion in investment within the refining industry.

The implementation of the upgrade is expected to enhance the refinery's capacity to generate higher profit margins and produce premium products such as petrol and diesel, as opposed to furnace oil. This will lead to a substantial decrease in the importation of costly processed goods and substantial savings in foreign currency. The company has set a goal to increase its stored processing capacity by twofold, reaching a total of 50,000 Barrels.

With the broader objective of SIFC to revolutionize Pakistan's IT sector, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has approved the

establishment of the largest IT Park in Islamabad. Approximately 5,000 to 6,000 freelancers will have the opportunity to engage in employment within the park, which will be managed through public-private collaboration. Similarly, designated areas within the park will be allocated for the establishment of a library and a center dedicated to showcasing IT products.

Furthermore, private IT companies will have the opportunity to establish their offices by leasing various locations within the park.

Notably, InfoTech Group, a Pakistani IT company, and Vallyrian Systems Inc., a US-based company, have formed a partnership with Saudi Arabia's Obeikan Investment Group to revolutionize global healthcare delivery. The cooperation seeks to quickly implement and smoothly incorporate Online Doctors' health platforms, demonstrating a dedication to worldwide healthcare progress and marking the beginning of a new era of innovation.

In November 2023, KTrade, an educational application based in Pakistan, entered into a for-

mal collaboration with Prince Mohammad bin Fahd University. The primary aim of this collaborative effort is to impart knowledge and understanding to students in Saudi Arabia regarding the topics of stocks and savings. The SIFC played a crucial role in eliminating obstacles among departments and enabling the IT industry. Pakistan possesses the capacity to enhance its IT/ITeS export revenues to a range of \$10-\$18 billion by the year 2028, thereby consolidating its status as a prominent global IT center. Furthermore, this proposed growth would lead to a proportional increase in the domestic sector, exceeding an annual estimate of \$6 billion.

It is evident that SIFC is now operating as an effective and productive mechanism to facilitate foreign investment opportunities in Pakistan's key sectors, including agriculture, information technology (I.T.), mining, minerals, and renewable energy.

The columnist is an Mphil scholar from Quaid i Azam University and a freelance writer. She can be reached at [mariamansab@ir.qau.edu.pk](mailto:mariamansab@ir.qau.edu.pk)

## Economic Realities: Pakistan's Battle Against Inflation During Ramadan

By Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

As Ramadan started in Pakistan, concerns over rising inflation intensify, posing significant challenges for policymakers and the populace alike. Despite concerted efforts, the trajectory of inflation remains largely unchecked, casting a shadow over the festive spirit and exacerbating economic hardships.

Price hiking, a persistent challenge in Pakistan, continues to exert significant strain on the economy and households nationwide. From essential commodities to basic services, the relentless upward trajectory of prices undermines purchasing power, exacerbates poverty, and fosters economic instability.

In recent years, Pakistan has grappled with a steady uptick in inflation rates, with the holy month of Ramadan serving as a notable period of exacer-

bated economic strain. During this time, prices of essential commodities, including food items, skyrocket, placing immense burdens on consumers, particularly those from lower-income brackets. Despite sporadic interventions and policy measures, the inflationary pressures persist, posing multifaceted challenges to the economy and society at large.

Several interconnected factors contribute to the surge in inflation during Ramadan in Pakistan. Inefficient supply chains, compounded by logistical challenges and disruptions, often lead to supply shortages and bottlenecks, driving up prices of essential goods. Increased demand for food items and consumer goods during Ramadan exerts upward pressure on prices, as producers and retailers capital-

ize on heightened consumption patterns, further exacerbating inflationary trends.

Escalating energy costs, including electricity and fuel prices, inflate production and transportation expenses, subsequently translating into higher prices for goods and services across the board. Policy inefficiencies, including inconsistent monetary and fiscal measures, coupled with structural deficiencies in governance and regulation, hinder effective inflation management strategies, perpetuating economic instability.

Global economic volatility, fluctuating exchange rates, and international commodity price fluctuations exert indirect pressure on Pakistan's economy, amplifying inflationary tendencies and exacerbating price hiking dynamics. Speculative pricing practices,

driven by market speculation, hoarding, and artificial scarcity creation, exacerbate price volatility and undermine consumer welfare, perpetuating inflationary pressures.

To mitigate the adverse impacts of inflation, particularly during Ramadan, concerted efforts and targeted interventions are imperative. Enhancing the efficiency and resilience of supply chains through infrastructural improvements, technology integration, and streamlined logistics can alleviate supply constraints and stabilize prices. Implementing robust price control mechanisms and intensifying market monitoring initiatives can curb speculative pricing practices and ensure affordability of essential commodities for consumers.

Adopting prudent fis-

cal policies, including rationing taxes and subsidies, reallocating resources towards social safety nets, and enhancing agricultural productivity, can alleviate inflationary pressures and foster economic sustainability.

Identifying responsibility for price hiking in Pakistan involves a complex interplay of factors involving both internal and external stakeholders. The government bears significant responsibility for ensuring economic stability and regulating prices through effective policy formulation and implementation. Regulatory bodies tasked with overseeing various sectors play a pivotal role in monitoring market dynamics, enforcing regulations, and curbing anti-competitive practices. Private sector entities influence prices through production, distri-

bution, and pricing decisions, while global economic trends and consumer behavior also contribute to inflationary pressures.

Moreover, fostering public awareness and promoting consumer education are integral to empowering individuals and communities to navigate inflationary pressures and safeguard their socio-economic well-being during Ramadan and beyond. Addressing the scourge of price hiking in Pakistan requires a concerted and multifaceted approach encompassing structural reforms, policy interventions, and social safety nets. Likewise, sustained efforts and political will are imperative to translate these solutions into tangible outcomes, ensuring affordability and prosperity for all segments of society.



## CM Punjab approves field hospital, clinic-on-wheels project

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has decided to launch a field hospital and clinic-on-wheels project under the revolutionary programme soon.

She presided over the 5th meeting on health reforms in a span of one month here on Wednesday in which approval to such an important project was granted, along with

reconstituting health system and reviewing ongoing health projects. The CM also accorded approval to undertaking revamping of the rural and basic health centres across Punjab.

Maryam Nawaz directed not to delay issuance of funds required to undertake revamping of the projects and ordered to immediately issue Rs.16 billion to undertake

upgradation of the hospitals. She underscored that bringing improvements and reforms in the health sector is foremost priority, adding that if any issue arises in the health sector development projects then it should be appraised to her immediately. "We would ensure provision of quality health facilities at any cost" she said. Where BHUs, RHCs are not available then field hospitals should be

available in such areas. Ultrasound, laboratory test, medicines, initial medical check-up, examination of mother & child facilities would be available in the field hospitals. CM apprised that launching of 32 field hospitals would be undertaken next month. 200 clinic on wheels would be established for the residents of semi urban and katchhi abadies.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the special meeting regarding Health Reforms in province.



KARACHI: Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training addressing Press Conference at NAVTTC Regional office Sindh.

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

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

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

initiatives beyond traditional politics. He underscored the importance of leveraging the significant youth population in the country by providing them training aligned with global standards to meet the demands of the global village. Highlighting the crucial role of technology in the contemporary era across all sectors, Dr. Siddiqui emphasized the necessity of progressive

education to tackle both ill-education and illiteracy simultaneously. He stressed the importance of promoting equality among citizens through comprehensive literacy programs.

During his visit, Dr. Siddiqui toured various sections of the institution and received briefings from authorities on the NAVTTC programs' functioning and performance.

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

LAHORE (APP): Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD) Department and the British agency Sub-National Governance (SNG) have agreed to employ SNG program in preparing new models of solid waste management in Punjab. In this regard, the annual working of the ongoing projects under collaboration of local government and sub-national governance was reviewed in the meeting chaired by Special Secretary LG&CD Asia Gul here on Wednesday. Matt Clancy, Annual Review Lead from British High Commission Islamabad, Governance Advisor Naveed Aziz, Economist Tufail Khan and Program Officer Amala Najeeb also participated.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru on Wednesday categorically said that the establishment of a just system based on justice and elimination of corruption is our priority. "Solving people's problems is most important for us, so the officers should go to the field to solve people's problems".

He was addressing a meeting of officers of all provincial and federal departments in the conference room of Deputy Commissioner Mardan along with the elected members of the provincial assembly from Mardan

district. Besides Deputy Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Fayaz Khan Sherpao, provincial assembly members Abdul Salam Afridi, Ifikhar Ali Mashwani, Tufail Anjum, Amir Farzand Khan, Tariq Mehmood Ariani, Zarshad Khan and ADC Samiur Rehman attended the meeting.

The members of the assembly discussed issues related to education, health, public health, Tehsil Municipal Administration, C&W, Police, Sui Gas, PESCO WAPDA and other departments individually. The minister directed the officers of all the departments to complete the ongoing development.

## Senior Minister reviews foreign funded projects

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that on the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, strict monitoring of development projects would be undertaken along with reviewing quality, speed and transparency for timely completion of these projects after every three months.

Chairing a meeting of Planning & Development Board here, she reviewed the progress on those development projects being executed through foreign financial assistance. Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman apprised the meeting that 11 development projects through the World Bank's financial assistance and eight through Asian Development Bank (ADB) fiscal assistance are underway in the Punjab

province. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb while addressing the meeting stated that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed to ensure emergency care in the Basic Health Centres along with provision of ECG and other medical facilities. Marriyum Aurangzeb added that the CM also aspires to further improve and enhance bilateral cooperation with the World Bank, ADB and other donor agencies.

Under the leadership of the CM, she said, Punjab would become more developed as well as prosperous through excellent planning and coordination. She called for expediting the pace of work to ensure implementation for the establishment of Social Economic Registry for the provision of statistics.

## 18th IATF meeting held at ANF Headquarters

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

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

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

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



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique presides over the meeting regarding Health Insurance Program working group at Department of Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education.

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

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

In short decision, written by Justice S.M Attique Shah, the speaker was also directed to allow and facilitate the members in casting their votes in the upcoming senate election scheduled for April 02, 2024. Earlier, the PHC reserved its decision on the

petitions of oath taking of the members elected on reserved seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly.

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

During the hearing, Justice S.M. Attique Shah inquired whether the Speaker is refusing to administer oath, to which the Speaker's lawyer Ali Azim Afridi replied that it was not the case.



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

## CM stresses for modern house infrastructure in urban peripheries

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

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

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

Necessary amendments in the relevant legal framework be proposed for simplifying the entire process of investment so that maximum private investment could be attracted towards province, he directed. He said that all these efforts would bring about positive change in the lifestyle of people by promoting conducive environment.

## Court orders Pak Railways to pay over Rs 10m in damages

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

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

It may be mentioned that a clash took place between Millat and Sirsyaed express near Dharki. Over 50 persons were killed in this accident.

The family members of one Javed Iqbal who died in the incident had resorted to local court of Karachi for payment of damage.



KARACHI: IG Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon calls on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House.

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

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

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

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

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

The delegation briefed the minister about ongoing projects in the province under UNICEF's cooperation. They briefed him about the support provided to the Health Department so far. It was informed that UNICEF is currently running two major health and nutrition programs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



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

## 14 candidates from Sindh withdraw candidature for Senate polls

KARACHI (APP): Fourteen aspirants for general as well as reserved seats for Senate election from Sindh on Wednesday withdrew their candidature from Senate polls scheduled on April 2, 2024.

According to spokesman of the Provincial Election Commission, candidates including Javed Ahmed Nayab, Ghanhwer Ali Asran, Mukhtiar Ahmed Aajiz, Shabir Ahmed Qaimkhani, Muhammad Abu Bakar, Muhammad Najeeb Haroon, Nighat Mirza, Hamayu Sultan, Muhammad Abdul Rauf Siddiqui, Karim Ahmed Khwaja, Sadhumal Surrender Velasati,

Mussarat Nazir Niazi, Yasmeen Dadabhooy and Sabina Parveen have withdrawn their nomination papers.

The following candidates including Syed Masroor Ahsan (PPP), Syed Kazim Ali Shah (PPP), Nadeem Ahmed Bhutto (PPP), Dost Ali Jessar (PPP), Ashraf Ali Jatoi (PPP), Amir Waluddin Chishti (MQM-P), Sarmad Ali, Zamir Hussain Ghumro, Poonjo Mal, Quratul Ain Marri (PPP) and Rubina Qaimkhani (PPP) submitted their party tickets to the Returning Officer / Provincial Election Commissioner Sindh.



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

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

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

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

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

January 2024, the SBP data revealed.

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

On the other hand, the imports from US into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$1,191.518 million against US \$1,437.237 million last year, showing a decline of 17.09 per cent in July-February (2023-24).

On a year-on-year basis, the imports for US witnessed a decrease of 10.70 per cent from US \$175.873 million in February 2023, against the imports of US \$157.042 million in February 2024.

On a month-on-month basis, the imports from US into the country witnessed an increase of 12.34 per cent during February 2024.



RAWALPINDI: Tailors sew clothes at their shop in Dhok Khaba ahead of Eid al-Adha, in the city.

## CM Punjab orders policy formulation to export buffalo meat, milk to China

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, during a meeting on the Livestock Department, reviewed the livestock related measures and ordered to formulate a policy to export buffalo milk and meat to China.

The CM said only vaccinated and tagged cattle would be brought to cattle markets and slaughterhouses, adding that authentic data of cattle should be prepared and regularly updated. She directed the authorities concerned to pay special attention to research and development.

Maryam Nawaz was briefed about the export potential of livestock sector. She said more work was needed for disease control and breed improvement. She ordered to create disease control

department in Punjab. She said the foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) control programme should be made more effective, adding that vaccination for the disease should be produced locally in large quantities. An advanced mechanism must be created to increase the export of dairy products, she ordered.

The authorities concerned appraised the CM that up-gradation of vaccine production labs would cost Rs 360 million, and up-gradation of zoonosis centre would cost Rs 299 million. It was also briefed that the breed improvement could increase yield by up to 15-25 per cent.

Earlier, the chief minister was apprised that livestock accounts for 14.36 per cent of country's GDP.

## Punjab industries minister briefed on PBTE performance

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain visited the Punjab Board of Technical Education (PBTE) on Wednesday to inspect various matters and also planted a sapling there in connection with the tree plantation campaign.

PBTE Chairman Dr Nazer Khan Niazi briefed the minister about working and organisational structure of the board as well as the steps taken so far and the future plan of action.

The minister said obsolete technology should be replaced with the latest and modern technology to bring about more transparency in the examination system. He said that teachers training programme was very important to improve the quality of education,

adding that solar technology courses were necessary for production of solar panels at local level.

The minister also sought a report on enrollment declining trend in the mechanical technology course. Practical procedures were very important along with the theoretical course, therefore, the relevant laboratories were being upgraded, he said and asserted that enrollment rate could be increased by improving practical system and more skilled manpower could be sent abroad by improving the quality of technical education. The PBTE chairman said that the Punjab Board of Technical Education was ISO certified and conducted examinations for 884 courses, besides providing online services and conducting online exams.



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

## Awais Leghari vows to combat electricity theft

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

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

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

He urged Discos

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

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

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

transparent and impartial approach.

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

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

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



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

## China has over 850 million 5G users

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

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

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

## PSX stays bullish, gains 641 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 641.51 points, a positive change of 0.97 percent, closing at 66,547.79 points against 65,906.28 points the previous trading day. A total of 354,597,630 shares valuing Rs.11.884 billion were traded during the day as compared to 303,710,027 shares valuing Rs.12.078 billion the last day. Some 346 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 179 of them recorded gains and 152 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 15 remained unchanged.

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

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ambassador of Brazil to Pakistan, Olyntho Vieira has urged Pakistan to join international multilateral forum BRICS for becoming part of the global economy.

He said, "Pakistan is a big market in terms of its population which can play an important role in BRICS and promote trade with these countries."

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

Olyntho Vieira said that the BRICs have an important role in the future global economy and with it, South-South cooperation will also grow and international

multilateralism will be strengthened.

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

The Envoy said that Pakistan and Brazil have vast trade and cooperation opportunities in technology and fruits, especially mango and Citrus, which need to be expanded further.

He said that Brazil was part of various economic and trade integration forums in the world and South, South Cooperation were very important from which Pakistan can take full benefits.



LAHORE: A worker preparing vermicelli as per increased demand of customers to be used during Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations.

## Fly Jinnah inaugurates 2nd int'l flight connecting Lahore & Sharjah in UAE

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan's low-cost carrier, Fly Jinnah on Wednesday celebrated the inaugural flight of its second international route connecting Lahore, Pakistan with Sharjah, UAE. The carrier commemorated the start of its new route with a pre-departure inaugural ceremony at Lahore International for guests in Sharjah.

The spokesperson of Fly Jinnah commenting on the launch of the second international route, said, "Just a month following the launch of our international operations with the inaugural flight

from the capital city Islamabad, today we celebrate the inaugural of our second international route into the UAE connecting Lahore with Sharjah. This step not only highlights the importance of strengthening air connectivity between Pakistan and the UAE, it also reflects our commitment to offering our customers new options for affordable and value driven air travel domestically and internationally."

Fly Jinnah remains steadfast in offering convenient and affordable service to its passengers. With its modern fleet of five Airbus A320 aircraft.

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

**Independent Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Mines and Minerals Sardar Ali Gorchani renewed the commitment to foster unrestricted progress within the Mines Department, aimed at benefiting the people of Punjab. Acknowledging the challenges that led to significant losses within the department, he emphasised tapping potential for growth and development in the mineral-rich tribal areas of Punjab.

During a meeting here on Wednesday, he underscored the paramount importance of transparent and equitable processes in leasing mines to harness the abundant benefits of underground mineral resources. He announced a shift towards a merit-based approach and promised

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

Each department head provided valuable insights during the briefing session, enabling the minister to assess performance and provide strategic directives for enhancement. Additional Secretary Ashfaq-ur-Rehman Khan, Mines Commissioner Labour Welfare, Chief Inspector of Mines Riaz Ahmad Chaudhry.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



LAHORE: Women busy in shopping for upcoming Eid ulFitr festival.

## RCCI membership renewal deadline March 31

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) membership renewal deadline is March 31.

Saqib Rafiq, President RCCI, in a statement, said that they had already intimated to the members through letters, emails and SMS that the membership of Rawalpindi Chamber will expire on March 31 while members have been advised to get their membership renewed on or before the last date.

He said that for renewal of membership, "We have to submit an income tax return along with fixed fee and sales tax return if applicable."

## LCCI advocates for business-friendly taxation system

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

LCCI President Kashif Anwar stated this in a conference on 'Economic challenges and their solutions' here at Lahore Chamber where LCCI Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt and a large number of

businessmen were also present.

Kashif Anwar expressed reservations over the SRO 420 under which 'Tajir Dost Scheme 2024' has been introduced, citing that the businessmen, who are outside the tax net and never filed a tax return, are asked to deposit advance tax every month under this scheme which is not viable as the shopkeepers would have to remain associated with the tax lawyers. Secondly, the tax would be determined based on the area of the shop and the value of the property, which has nothing to do with the sale. He suggested that this tax should be simplified.

## Jazz Partners with Huawei to accelerate network digitization through WISDOM framework

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator has entered into a strategic partnership with Huawei to accelerate its network digitization efforts using the WizTech, Innovative, Service assurance, Diversification, Operation Excellence & Mobile (WISDOM) framework.

The collaboration signifies Jazz's commitment to enriching the customer experience

through the strategic implementation of innovative methodologies across its network infrastructure, said a news release.

The partnership entails Huawei implementing the WISDOM framework, a comprehensive approach aimed at boosting digital maturity and stimulating innovation within the organization.

Jazz's current network components using industry standards, aiming to pinpoint immediate accomplishments through the identification of Minimum Viable Products (MVPs).

By incorporating the WISDOM principles, Jazz aims to maintain a leading position in the ever-evolving telecom industry. Commenting on the development, Abdul Rehman Usmani.



FAISALABAD: People standing in a queue waiting their turn outside Utility Store to buy flour at Government subsidized rates.



# 18 Gazans die trying to collect airdropped aid

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

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

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

Israel had earlier said it would stop working with UNRWA in Gaza, accusing the aid agency of perpetuating conflict. The agency said Israel told it that it would no longer approve its food convoys to north

Gaza. Four such requests were denied since March 21, it said.

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

A UN-backed report this month said famine was imminent and likely to occur by May in northern Gaza. James Elder, spokesperson for the UN children's agency Unicef in Gaza, described seeing "paper thin" children in a hospital in northern Gaza and incubators full of underweight babies from malnourished mothers.

"Tens of thousands of people crowd the streets," he told the same briefing, describing his latest visit to the north on Monday.

"They make that universal signal of hand to mouth desperately asking and seeking for food."

"Life-saving aid is being obstructed. Lives are being lost. I saw children whose malnutrition state was so severe, skeletal," he said. Other aid agencies also deliver food parcels to northern Gaza, although UNRWA is the biggest provider. In Washington, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Tuesday that it was a moral and strategic imperative to protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza, and that the humanitarian catastrophe in the besieged enclave was getting worse.

He was speaking at the start of a meeting with Israel Defense Minister Yoav Gallant at the Pentagon as relations between US President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sank to a wartime low.



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

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

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

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

It was the first time

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

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

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

# Ukraine's president replaces a top security official

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

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

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

**Monitoring Desk**  
HEBBARIYE: An Israeli airstrike on a paramedics center linked to a Lebanese Sunni Muslim group in south Lebanon killed seven of its members early Wednesday and triggered a rocket attack from Lebanon that killed one person in northern Israel, officials said.

The strike on the village of Hebbariye came after a day of airstrikes and rocket attacks between Israel's military and Lebanon's Hezbollah group.

# Russia blames Ukraine, US for Moscow attack

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

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

"We believe that the action was prepared by both the Islamist radicals themselves and was facilitated by Western special services," Alexander Bortnikov, director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), said on television. "The special services of Ukraine are directly related to this," Bortnikov said, adding Kyiv had

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

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

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

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

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

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

"This practice will be perceived as normal, a habit," he told the Constitutional Court. The outgoing

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

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

# Rohingya rescued off Indonesia relocated after local anger

**Monitoring Desk**  
JAKARTA: Dozens of Rohingya refugees saved after their boat capsized off Indonesia's westernmost coast last week have been forced from their temporary shelter due to local protests, a United Nations refugee agency official said on Wednesday.

The mostly Muslim ethnic Rohingya are heavily persecuted in Myanmar, and thousands risk their lives each year on long and expensive sea journeys to try to reach Malaysia or Indonesia. But the influx of refugees has sparked anger in Indonesia's Aceh province, where some locals have pushed boats carrying Rohingya back into the sea or tried to storm their temporary shelters in recent months.

The survivors of last week's capsizing were taken to a 10-minute drive away to the local government chief's office in West Aceh, UNHCR protection associate Faisal Rahman told AFP.

"They are moved to

the backyard of the bupati (local regent) office," he said.

Authorities last Thursday rescued 69 Rohingya refugees found after clinging to the hull of their overturned vessel for more than a day. Six others were rescued by fishermen a day earlier.

At least 11 Rohingya were found dead at sea after rescuers called off the search Friday, despite some survivors saying more than 150 people had been aboard the boat when it capsized.

The survivors were given shelter in an old Red Cross building in West Aceh regency, but dozens of locals stormed the facility on Tuesday to demand their eviction, forcing authorities to move the group of 75 refugees. Indonesia Foreign Ministry spokesman Lalu Muhammad Iqbal told AFP Wednesday that Jakarta gave the Rohingya temporary shelter for humanitarian reasons but the UN and nations signed to the UN Refugee Convention were obliged "to give permanent shelter".

# Thousands protest against Hungary's Orban after former insider leaks graft case tape

**Monitoring Desk**  
BUDAPEST: Thousands of people protested in Budapest near parliament on Tuesday demanding the chief prosecutor and Prime Minister Viktor Orban resign after a former government insider accused a senior aide to Orban of trying to interfere in a graft case.

Protesters marched from the chief prosecutor's office towards parliament shouting "Resign, resign", with many carrying torches.

Peter Magyar earlier published a recording of a conversation with Judit Varga, then his wife and Hungary's justice minister, in which she detailed an attempt by aides to Orban's cabinet chief to remove certain parts from documents in a graft case.

The case is centred on former justice ministry state secretary Pal Volner, who was charged in 2022 with accepting bribes from the former head of the Court Bailiffs, Gyorgy Schabl. Both have pleaded not guilty. Prosecutors are

seeking jail terms for the pair.

Prosecutors said in a statement they would analyse the tape, which Magyar said he recorded in January 2023, and further evidence would be collected.

"It is legally and physically impossible to eliminate and meddle into prosecution documents," the statement said.

Prosecutors were scheduled to hold a press conference on Thursday.

The allegations come at a politically sensitive time for Orban ahead of European parliamentary elections in June, and follow a sex abuse scandal that brought down two of Orban's political allies - the former president and the former justice minister Judit Varga - last month.

Magyar, 43, a lawyer formerly close to the government, plans to launch a new party to challenge Orban. "Hungarians thank you ... for coming in the thousands tonight ... to tell those in power that we have had enough."



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

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

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Israel has asked to reschedule a meeting with US officials to discuss its military plans in Gaza's southern city of Rafah, a US official said on Wednesday, days after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu abruptly scrapped the planned talks. Netanyahu called off a planned visit to Washington by a senior Israeli delegation after the US allowed passage of a Gaza ceasefire resolution at the United Nations on Monday, in a move that appeared to reflect growing US frustration with the Israeli premier. US officials said the Biden administration was perplexed by the Israeli cancellation and considered it an overreaction to the Security Council resolution, insisting there had been no change in policy.

On Wednesday, a US official said Netanyahu's office "has said they'd like to reschedule the meeting dedicated to Rafah. We are now working with them to set a convenient date." Netanyahu is considering sending a delegation for a White House meeting on Rafah as early as next week but the scheduling is still being worked out, an Israeli official in Washington told Reuters on condition of anonymity. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli prime minister's office. The planned talks are expected to focus on Israel's threatened offensive in Rafah, the last relatively safe haven for Palestinian civilians in Gaza. The White House said last week it intended to share with Israeli officials alternatives for eliminating the Palestinian militant group Hamas without a ground offensive in Rafah that Washington says would be a "disaster."

# Sri Lanka PM says China to develop strategic infrastructure

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

Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said China - the island's biggest bilateral creditor - would "assist" Sri Lanka's restructuring of external debt, a key condition to maintaining a \$2.9 billion IMF bailout.

Beijing's position on debt restructuring has not been made public, but Sri Lankan officials have said China was reluctant to take a haircut on its loans but could extend the tenure and adjust interest rates.

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

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

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: At least 63,285 people have perished or disappeared on migration routes around the world between 2014 and 2023, with most deaths caused by drowning, the UN migration agency said on Tuesday. A report published by the International

Mediterranean, followed by Africa and Asia.

Nearly 60 per cent of deaths documented were linked to drowning, and more than one third of those identified were from countries in conflict, including Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria and Ethiopia.

IOM's data showed that the deadliest year for migrants in the last decade was 2023, when it recorded 8,541 deaths in part due to a sharp increase of fatalities in the Mediterranean.



**A priest conducts a service near the Crocus City Hall following a deadly attack on the concert venue in the Moscow Region, Russia.**

# A Japanese supplement pill is recalled after two people died and more than 100 were hospitalized

**Monitoring Desk**  
TOKYO: Health supplement products believed to have caused two deaths and sickened more than 100 people have been ordered to be taken off store shelves in Japan.

The products from Kobayashi Pharmaceutical Co., billed as helping to lower cholesterol, contained an ingredient called "benikoji," a red species of mold.

In addition to the products from Osaka-based Kobayashi, more than 40 products from other companies containing benikoji, including miso paste, crackers and a vinegar dressing, were recalled, starting last

week, a government health ministry official said Wednesday.

At least 106 people had been hospitalized, and many more are believed to have been sickened, although it's unclear if all the illnesses are directly linked to benikoji (pronounced beh-nee-koh-jeeh).

The ministry has put up a list on its official site of all the recalled products, including some that use benikoji for food coloring. The company is investigating the cause of the problem. The recalled products could be bought without a prescription from a doctor, and could be purchased at drug stores.

# Finnish unions extend strikes over labour reforms by another week

**Monitoring Desk**  
HELSINKI: Finland's industrial, logistics and electrical workers have agreed to extend strikes in protest against planned labour market reforms to a fourth week, the head of trade union association SAK said on Wednesday.

The workers have been on strike since March 11, targeting exports, imports and cargo transportation. "The strikes will continue from Monday morning onwards for a week," SAK President Jarkko Eloranta told Reuters. "We are trying to negotiate and compromise with the government but unfortunately there has been no response to these efforts."

Several of Finland's largest companies have said the strikes, which are disrupting ports and the rail system, are negatively affecting their operations. Employers' organisation EK said in a statement that SAK had not presented credible alternatives to the planned reforms. It estimated that the strikes had a negative effect on GDP of nearly 300 million euros (\$325 million).

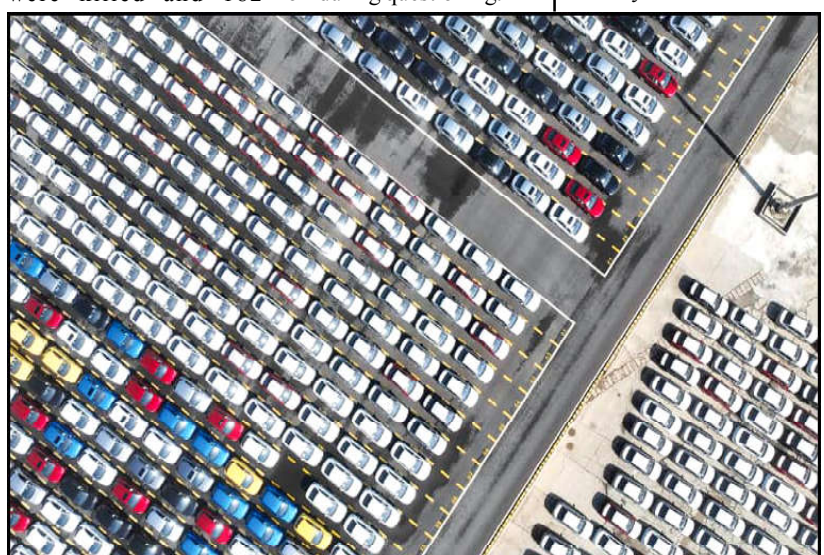
# Climate change, AI in focus at Commonwealth's Oct meeting in Samoa

**Monitoring Desk**  
SYDNEY: Climate change and efforts to keep up with advances in artificial intelligence top the agenda for a Commonwealth meeting set for the small Pacific Islands nation of Samoa in October, the grouping's secretary general said.

A voluntary club of 56 nations headed by King Charles, the Commonwealth evolved out of the British empire to cover 2.5 billion people, with 11 Pacific nations among its members.

"This is not a threat about extinction tomorrow, many of them are thinking, it is extinction today," Patricia Scotland said of the climate change risks that make small Pacific nations particularly vulnerable.

"If we look at what's happened in countries like Vanuatu and Nauru and all of them, they see this rise in sea level and the rise in temperature as an imminent threat," she said, speaking from the Samoan capital of Apia.



**LIANYUNGANG: An aerial view of cars waiting to be loaded onto cargo ships at the Lianyungang Port, in eastern China's Jiangsu province.**



## Steering Committee on 5Es Framework holds maiden meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Empowerment. The National Economic Council (NEC) approved the framework last year in June, following which the Planning Ministry expedited its implementation, the formation of a Steering Committee. "Engagement with all ministries is a part of the exercise which has been started on the directions of Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal," it added. In the one-day workshop, all the stakeholders and experts from various fields including academia and industry will be invited and their proposals to be considered before finalizing the action plan to implement the 5Es framework.

Chairing the meeting, the minister directed all the ministries to come up with solid proposals with their respective Es in the workshop. "The plans should be holistic with inputs and outputs so that its implementation can be ensured.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## NAB organizes seminar on "role of students in eradication of corruption"

Independent Report GWADAR: NAB Sub Office Gwadar organized a seminar at University of Gwadar in connection with anti-corruption awareness campaign on the topic "Role of Students in Eradication of Corruption".

A large number of university professors, students attended the event. Vice Chancellor of the University Mr. Razaq Sabir, Incharge NAB's Sub Office Gwadar Dr. Muhammad Rashad and Mr. Irshad Bulaidi Director ORIC University of Gwadar addressed the students on the topic. Vice Chancellor Mr. Razaq Sabir in his opening remarks welcomed the NAB's team and highlighted



GWADAR: Director NAB Dr. Muhammad Arshad addressing a seminar at University of Gwadar organized NAB Sub-office.

## Missing rent collection mechanism causing bln of rupees' losses annually to QMC

QUETTA (APP): The Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) has been losing billions of rupees a year due to improper legislation and a lack of a mechanism for collecting rent for government-leased shops and properties situated in prime locations of the Quetta.

"Quetta Metropolitan Corporation collects rent from its as many as 900 shops and 63 leased properties located in the prime locations of the provincial capital on a monthly basis for just between Rs 25 and Rs 30," Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, Administrator Quetta said.

Talking to APP, he said that old legislation coupled with incompetence and corruption has exacerbated the financial crisis of the

Quetta metropolitan Corporation. With its 900 stores and 63 buildings, the Corporation may bring in Rs 300 million a month in revenue. Conversely, he expressed regret that only a small amount, measured in thousands, is gathered.

Due to their inability to simplify and bring amendment in the revenue generation method, QMC is now liable for Rs 1.05 billion. He was afraid that the amount would double the following year if it wasn't paid to the contractors and other parties.

Expressing his regret over the apathy of the occupants of the government-leased properties, he said there are 20 shops and leased properties that did not pay a single penny



QUETTA: A representative delegation of doctors organizations meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reiterated Pakistan's firm support to global efforts for peace and stability without compromising on the security of its people, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Addressing an Iftar dinner hosted in honour of the members of the diplomatic corps at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the prime minister said "as a peace loving nation, Pakistan desires peace with all and enmity with none".

He reaffirmed that his government would follow this message of the found-

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

To translate it into reality, different policies had been enacted and every community in Pakistan had the complete freedom to profess their faith and practice their religion, he added.

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

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

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

He said that Pakistan reaffirmed its support to global efforts for immediate ceasefire.

About the holy month of Ramadan, he said that this month signified more than fasting and gave a message of sacrifice, discipline and warm hospitality, respect for all and embodied a spirit of compassion.

He said besides, the month gave a powerful message of harmony, peace and tolerance, adding these qualities were required most in a world grappled with diverse challenges and divides.

## PHC rules in favour of PPP, PMLN on reserved seats

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court on Wednesday ruled in favour of the PMLN and other opposition parties in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province over the issue of reserved seats.

PTI-led government in KP was trying to block the oath of some of the opposition members elected on reserved seats. Consequently, PPP, PMLN and JUIF filed petitions with the PHC.

The PHC - which earlier this month dismissed PTI's petition against the ECP decision to allot dozens of reserved seats to PMLN, JUIF, and PPP - granted the petitions by PPP and PMLN and JUIF in its short order.

The court told the speaker to administer the oath to the MPAs elected on reserved seats.

## Fatima flays attack on Chinese residents in Besham

QUETTA (APP): Leader of Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N)'s Women's Wing, Fatima Khan strongly condemned the terrorist attack on Chinese residents in Besham area of Shangla.

In statement issued here, she said that such heinous acts could not weaken the determination of the Pakistani nation to fight against terrorism, saying that terrorist elements were targeting innocent citizens for the pleasure of their foreign masters and to thwart the ongoing projects for the development and prosperity of Pakistan with the cooperation of Pakistan and China. She said that the terrorist elements would not succeed in their nefarious design, saying that the suicide attack on the citizens.

during last seven years. I'll keep battling against this mafia, and in this regard, I've briefed the court on the damage done to the national kitty.

He promised that once the law is passed and appropriate changes are made, the QMC will begin to earn billions of rupees in revenue from its own properties. The case will be brought before the provincial cabinet for consideration.

Hamza Shafiqat who was assigned additional charge of administrator besides his own duties as Commissioner Quetta by the CM Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, said "he will live up to the expectations of the chief executive by streamlining the metropolitan corporation.

## Zero tolerance policy on absence of doctors, medical staff: Poor people to be provided relief by improving health services in Balochistan, says Sarfraz Bugti

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has assured that the poor people would be provided relief by improving health services in the province. In this regard, positive suggestions of the doctors and stakeholders would be welcomed.

He was speaking to the delegation of Pakistan Medical Association and Young Doctors Association who called on him here on Wednesday.

During the course of meeting, the problems being faced by the doctors in

health sector and suggestions about provision of better healthcare facilities were discussed.

There was consensus on adopting zero tolerance policy on absence of doctors and medical staff in the hospitals and other health establishments.

Moreover, different aspects of public-private partnership were also discussed for improving health service in the hospitals.

It was decided to outsource the services for improving cleanliness situation in the hospitals.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister said that steps would be taken for making the healthcare system functional together with consultation.

He said that action would be taken against the absentee doctors and those having dual jobs.

While on the other hand, the dutiful doctors would be encouraged, he said adding that district officers and medical superintendents would be posted on merit.

He asserted that the duration of posting of the doctors and officers would be protected so that they may perform their duties accordingly.



QUETTA: MNA Nawabzada Jamal Khan Raisani enquiring about health of a patient during his visit to Urology department of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahayan Medical Complex.

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

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

In the conversation, they discussed the situation in Gaza and condemned the

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

## Samina condemns incident of Besham

QUETTA (APP)-Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri on Wednesday strongly condemned the killing of 6 innocent people including Chinese citizens in Besham area of Shangla. In her statement issued here, she said that the incident was a conspiracy to weaken Pakistan-China friendship.

Expressing grief and anger over the incident, she said that the recent terrorist incidents in the country were a systematic conspiracy to destabilize the country, which would not be allowed to succeed under any circumstances. We are an equal participant in the grief of the Chinese brothers, she said adding that the entire nation paid

tribute to the brave security forces for foiling the cowardly terrorist attacks on Gwadar and Turbat.

She said that Besham's suicide attack was also the hand of the same cowardly enemies who were targeting innocent and innocent people with such cowardly acts. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said Pakistan and China are brother countries and the entire nation is mourning the death of Chinese citizens.

We as a nation strongly condemn the Bisham incident and those responsible for the incident and their facilitators will be sent to hell soon, she said.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Health Abdullah Khan presiding over online meeting to review performance of Medical Superintendents of hospitals of different districts.

## SC restrains FIA from arrests of journalists

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court on Wednesday restrained the FIA from arrests of journalists till the next hearing of the case.

"Is it the violation of the law?", Chief Justice of Pakistan asked. "This notice has been under section 160 of the Criminal Procedure Code, it is a notice prior to registration of the FIR," CJP said. "This notice can be served to me tomorrow, why you presume that they will register the FIR. At a time, an officer after comes under heavy pressure from above, issues notice but not registers an FIR, or arrest the person. In this notice they could also summon someone as a witness," CJP said.

"When you show us something illegal than we can declare it void, we will

not declare a legal act as null and void," chief justice said.

"It is necessary to provide complete details of the case with the notice," Barrister Salahuddin argued. "I will be informed of the reason first, if I am being summoned to the police station," he said.

"You are saying the FIR has been compulsory before being summoned. The officer may call you for verification of facts before registration of the FIR," chief justice said.

Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan said that registration of the FIR comes first and summon after it. "Do you want notice under section 157, instead of section 160," he asked. "The notice can be served after registration of the FIR," Barrister Salahuddin said.



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

## IMF demands trace system to curb tax evasion in Pakistan

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

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

Specifically, the IMF has insisted on the installation of an automatic track

and trace system in the manufacturing sector, with a stern directive to seal units not integrated into the system.

Highlighting concerns over rampant tax evasion, the IMF pointed out the lack of effective measures in key sectors such as cigarettes, sugar, fertilizer, and cement.

Notably, the FBR has struggled to implement the track and trace system outside of the fertilizer sector over the past two years. The IMF stressed the urgency of implementing track and trace mechanisms in all four sectors to prevent tax evasion and broaden the tax base before initiating any new programs.

## Secretary Health suspends 2 lady medical officers, nurses on absence from duty

Independent Report QUETTA: The Secretary Health Department paid surprise visit to the Mufti Mehmood Hospital Kuchlak on Wednesday.

During the surprise visit, two lady medical officers and even number of staff nurses were found absent from their duties in the

hospital. The Secretary Health suspended all the absentee lady medical officers and staff nurses.

It was found that additional pharmacists have been posted in the Mufti Mehmood Hospital, thus it was decided to transfer them in hospitals of other districts.



QUETTA: Balochistan National Party (BNP) Leaders, Sajid Tarin Advocate, Ahmed Nawaz Baloch, Musa Baloch and others addressing a press conference, at Quetta press club.

## Step afoot to provide facilities to consumers of QESCO: CEO Shafqat

QUETTA (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), Engineer Shafiqat Ali on Wednesday said that the QESCO was taking practical steps to provide maximum facilities to its consumers in Balochistan.

Talking to APP here Wednesday, he said that action was being taken against electricity thieves and electricity was being cut off for defaulters saying that QESCO's employees were not only fulfilling their professional responsibilities by providing uninterrupted electricity to the fasting people in the blessed month of Ramadan so that people were also getting help in doing worship in a good way.

He said that in the light of the instructions of the Government of Pakistan and the Ministry of Energy Power Division, the transmission of electricity was reviewed from the monitor-

ing cells established in the head office and all circles during the hours of Shri and Ifitari time.

He also appreciated QESCO teams for trying to provide the best facilities to the customers. The CEO Engineer Shafiqat Ali said that support has also been provided to users to get new connections saying that QESCO has always put the interests of consumers first, along with additional measures to minimize losses and ensure consumer protection. He said that in all cases power supply and has enabled prompt redressal of grievances despite the teams of the QESCO were conducting indiscriminate operations against defaulters and electricity thieves across the province. About 4263 written requests have been sent to various police stations for legal action against electricity thieves in respective areas of Balochistan including Pashin, Lorelai, Sibi, Khuzdar and Makran.