

# Independent

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Addresses first meeting of the federal cabinet

## Elite classes don't require subsidies, tax collection vital for national economy: PM

*Says Allah Almighty had bestowed upon them the responsibility to serve the nation and reiterated to meet their expectations by striving day and night*

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday regretted that elite classes in the country had monopoly over the 90 percent resources of the country and stressed that they did not deserve any subsidies.

The prime minister underscored that they required to control the issue of tax evasion and power and gas thefts to ensure availability of maximum resources for the development of the country.

He further said that

the government was ensuring all out efforts for the availability of daily commodities during the holy month of Ramazan at affordable prices and declared that no leniency in this regard would be tolerated.

Addressing the first meeting of the federal cabinet, the prime minister said that Allah Almighty had bestowed upon them the responsibility to serve the nation and reiterated to meet their expectations by striving day and night.

Highlighting the huge economic challenges, he

said that the masses had given them the responsibility to address these serious issues and they were equally answerable to the people who had given them a mandate to form the government.

He urged the members of the cabinet to serve the nation and country with new fervor and commitment so that in the history, they could be remembered for delivering on their promises.

After February 8 general elections, the political parties received a split mandate, the PML-N, PPP and the allied parties were

given the mandate to form the government.

Now, this mandate should be respected which also required that they should concentrate their energies and move on the path of progress rapidly, he added.

The prime minister said that during their previous 16-month government, the people had witnessed their performance, adding that they saved the country from running into default.

The prime minister said when they assumed the reigns of the previous government, they had two

choices; either to sit as silent spectators or be counted, at that time they had decided to take responsibility of the country.

Then the interim government followed them but the economic situation in the country was stable and did not worsen, he opined.

The prime minister said that once more, they took the responsibility of steering the country out of the huge challenges and without wasting time, they should tread upon that path leading to destination.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari administering oath of office to members of Federal Cabinet at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was also present on the occasion.

## Harassment of journalists case: SC rejects reports by police, FIA

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) while expressing reservation has rejected all reports filed by police and FIA in the case of harassment of journalists.

The court has ordered to file fresh reports again on next hearing.

The court while issuing notices to the respondents on the petition filed against Joint Investigation Team (JIT) constituted by FIA on the application of Press Association of SC has sought reply from them within two weeks.

SC has directed police and FIA that replies be filed on next hearing with the latest progress and if it is done so then the court will be forced to think these two institutions are facilitating the criminals.

SC gave these remarks during hearing of the case on Monday.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by the CJP Qazi Faez Isa took up the case for hearing on Monday.

The CJP while giving remarks on the statement of commissioner for allegedly involving him in general election said that no media house deemed it proper to investigate it and they even did not ask from the commissioner who has told him all this.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by CJP Qazi Faez Isa took up the case for hearing Monday.

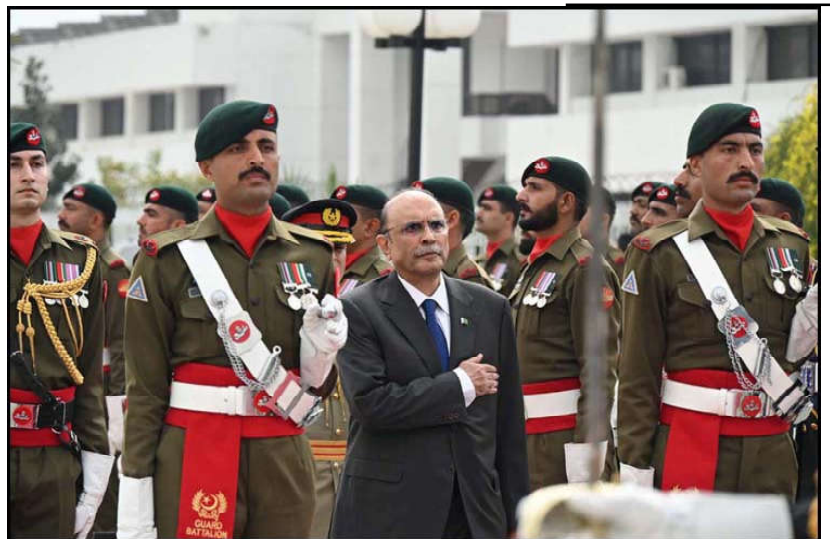
The CJP remarked media houses should have made investigation first of all in this regard and then news like this should have

been run.

He asked from Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) and counsel for Press Association of Supreme Court (PASC) can proceedings of contempt of court be initiated against all media houses for running one statement of SC.

CJP further remarked freedom of media is must as per constitution. It is not only mentioned in the articles related to freedom of press but mention has been made in this regard in other articles as well.

CJP said to Salah ud Din, counsel for PASC what application he has filed with reference to JIT, he should assist court in other cases of media too in addition to it.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari inspecting the Guard of Honour, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## President Zardari, Tajik President reaffirm to further strength bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari and President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon on Monday reiterated their desire to further strengthen bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan in the areas of mutual interest.

Tajik President made a telephone call to President Asif Ali Zardari and extended his warmest felicitations to him on becoming the President of Pakistan, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Talking to his Tajik counterpart, President Asif Ali Zardari said that Pakistan highly valued its ties with the brotherly country of Tajikistan which were based on shared religion, culture and history.

He said that both countries

needed to work together for further improving bilateral cooperation.

While appreciating Tajikistan's high potential in hydel resources, President Zardari expressed Pakistan's desire to work with Tajikistan in this important area for the mutual advantage of the two brotherly countries.

The president also exchanged greetings on the advent of the holy month of Ramazan and also felicitated the Tajik President on the upcoming Nowruz, Persian New Year celebrations.

The Tajik President also extended an invitation to President Asif Ali Zardari to visit Tajikistan.

President Zardari fondly recalled his earlier visits to Tajikistan and accepted the invitation.

## PM says: Transforming Pak-Saudi ties into strategic, economic partnership govt's priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that his government's priority was to transform the time-tested Pakistan-Saudi Arabia ties into a mutually beneficial, strategic and economic partnership, with a focus on attracting Saudi investment for bankable projects in Pakistan.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Saudi Ambassador in Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy, who called on him, thanked Saudi authorities for expanding the scope of the "Road to Makkah" initiative, that would facilitate

Pakistani Hajj pilgrims.

He thanked the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdul Aziz, and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, for their kind wishes on his re-election as prime minister.

Given the special fraternal relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the prime minister said the Saudi ambassador was the first envoy he received after assumption of office.

Extending an invitation to the prime minister to visit Saudi Arabia, the ambassador assured him of the Saudi leadership's full support.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Saudi King greets Zardari on taking oath as President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz has congratulated Asif Ali Zardari on taking oath as President of Pakistan.

In an official message to the President, he wished him success, and further progress and prosperity to the people of Pakistan. The Saudi King also highlighted the depth of brotherly relations between the two countries and expressed the keenness to further develop these ties.

## PM directs uninterrupted gas, power supply during Ramazan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed for ensuring uninterrupted gas and power supply to the consumers during the holy month of Ramazan.

He also directed for provision of every possible facilities to the private sector, local and foreign investors in the exploration of gas and oil, refining and distribution of these natural resources.

The prime minister chaired a high level meeting on petroleum sector, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Senators Ishaq Dar and Dr Musadik Malik, Sheza Fatima Khawaja, Ahad Khan Cheema, Jahanzeb Khan,

Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ali Pervaiz Malik and relevant senior officers.

Addressing the participants, he said that the government was not meant for doing businesses rather its responsibility was to extend all kind of facilities to the private sector and ensure protection of the rights of the consumers especially the vulnerable segments of the society.

He also asked for taking steps for promotion of global investment in exploration of Tigt Gas and undersea oil and gas reserves, regretting that Pakistan's maritime area was huge in size when compared with Balochistan province but no steps were taken to explore its hidden natural resources.

## Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan takes oath as judge of SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan has taken oath as judge of Supreme Court (SC). Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has administered oath to Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan.

The oath taking ceremony took place in SC. SC judges, senior lawyers and court's staff attended the oath taking ceremony.

Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan has served as chief justice of Balochistan High Court (BHC). National Judicial Council (NJC) had recommended to make him judge of SC. With the elevation of Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan, the number of judges of SC has reached 14.



ISLAMABAD: The Honourable Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr. Justice Qazi Faez Isa administering the oath of office to Honourable Mr. Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan, Chief Justice, High Court of Balochistan as Judge of the Supreme court of Pakistan at the Supreme Court.

## 'Fascist govt. has lost its senses': Umar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and PTI leader Umar Ayub has criticized the government, accusing it of authoritarianism and human rights violations following the arrest of over 100 PTI workers during a recent protest.

Addressing reporters in Islamabad on Monday, Ayub expressed concerns over what he termed as the government's heavy-handed response to peaceful protests, alleging that basic human rights were being disregarded. He particularly criticized the police for failing to uphold their duty during the protests and for making unwarranted arrests.

## China welcomes new Govt to carry forward traditional friendship: Spokesperson

BEIJING (INP): China attaches high importance to promote its relations with Pakistan and stands ready to jointly work to carry forward traditional friendship and advance practical cooperation between the two countries, a Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesperson said on Monday.

"We send our warm congratulations to Mr. Zardari on assumption as president," Wang Wenbin said in his regular briefing while commenting on oath-taking of Asif Ali Zardari as President of Pakistan.

The spokesperson remarked that President Xi Jinping has already sent a congratulatory message to President Zardari on his oath-taking as the 14th President of Pakistan. He reiterated that China attached high importance to promote its relations with Pakistan and stands ready to work with Pakistan to carry forward traditional friendship, advance practical cooperation in various fields and upgrade China Pakistan All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership to building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

## 19-member federal cabinet takes oath

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday administered oath of office to a 19-member Federal Cabinet at a ceremony here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The event began with the playing of the national anthem followed by recitation from the Holy Quran.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, leadership of mainstream political parties, parliamentarians and senior government officials attended the event.

The cabinet members who took the oath included Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Abdul Aleem Khan, Jam Kamal Khan, Engr. Amir Muqam, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Attaullah Tarar, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Musadik Malik, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahad Khan Cheema, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, and Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

## Zardari presented guard of honour at Aiwan-e-Sadr

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Asif Ali Zardari was presented guard of honour at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad as he assumed office of the President of Pakistan Monday.

During the ceremony, the national anthem was played while smartly turned-out contingents of the Armed Forces of Pakistan presented him salute. The President inspected the guard of honour.

Later, the President Zardari was introduced with the staff of the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Wife of ANP chairman passes away

ISLAMABAD (Online): Wife of Awami National Party (ANP) chairman Asfand Yar Wali Khan has passed away.

President, Prime Minister, speaker National Assembly, chairman Senate and other political leaders have expressed condolence over the death of wife of ANP chairman.

Zahid Khan spokesperson ANP has confirmed the death of wife of ANP chairman.

President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday expressed condolence over the death of Awami National Party leader Asfand Yar Wali's wife.

"My sympathies and prayers go to the bereaved family," he said, according to a President House press release.

## PTI leaders Latif Khosa, Suleman released

LAHORE (Online): PTI leaders Latif Khosa and Suleman Akram Ranjha have been released.

The family sources of both of PTI leaders have confirmed the reports of their release.

Family sources said Police had arrested Latif Khosa and Suleman Akram Ranjha while they were protesting. They have been released overnight.

It is pertinent to mention here that Latif Khosa, Suleman Akram Raja and MPA Hafiz Farhat Abbas were arrested during PTI rally against alleged rigging in polls on Sunday in Lahore.

## Moon sighted, first Ramazan to begin from today

PESHAWAR (APP): The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khahir Azad on Monday announced that the moon of holy month of Ramazan has been sighted at various nook and cranny of the country and the first of Ramazan, 1445 AH would fall on Tuesday, March 12.



Addressing a press conference, he said despite cloudy weather condition at various areas of the country, the committee had received solid testimonies of moon sighting from a number of areas.

Maulana Azad informed that the meeting witnessed the participation of esteemed members from both Central and Zonal Ruet-e-Hilal Committees, including Director General Syed Mushahid Hussain Khalid from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Ghulam Murtaza from the Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission, Dr Sardar Sarfaraz from the Pakistan Meteorological Department, and Zainul Abedin from the Ministry of Science and Technology.

## AJK government highlighting Kashmir issue: President

MIRPUR (APP): AJK President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry emphasized the primary goal of the AJK government in highlighting the Kashmir issue during a briefing organized by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell (JKLC) on Monday.

He praised JKLC's role in research and youth education on Kashmir and welcomed the establishment of the Kashmir Policy Research Institute, stressing the global importance of Kashmiri voices.

AJK President announced a public awareness campaign from March 16 in Mirpur to expose Indian government activities. He condemned Indian atrocities in Jammu and Kashmir post-2019, highlighting restrictions on fundamental freedoms and media.

He commended the government and JKLC for their efforts in raising global Kashmir awareness and acknowledged the expatriate Kashmiri community's role.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Caretaker debate

As the dust settles on the post-election process, there is increasing public discussion about the concept of caretaker governments, and their utility in Pakistan's political milieu.

Much of this talk has been sparked by the problematic performance of the interim set-up that oversaw last month's general elections. In a recent Senate debate, there were calls to do away with the system of caretakers, with lawmakers saying that it had no place in a parliamentary democracy.

Furthermore, according to some media reports, the PML-N and PPP have decided to jettison the caretaker system. It should be remembered that in the 2006 Charter of Democracy, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif had endorsed the idea of a "neutral caretaker government" to hold free and fair polls. Apparently, events in Pakistan's political history in the years since the Charter was signed have made both parties reconsider their positions.

There was no concept of a caretaker set-up conducting polls in the 1973 Constitution. The idea emerged after the debacle following the 1977 polls, which were widely seen as manipulated. Yet most caretaker governments in the country — with the exception of a few — have failed in their basic task of conducting fair polls accepted by all stakeholders. Criticism of the last caretaker government has been particularly acute, centring on the fact that the administration overstepped its bounds, and did not provide a level playing field. Elsewhere, few established democracies bring in caretaker set-ups; the incumbents go into 'caretaker mode', with certain restrictions imposed on them to ensure transparency. In our region, two examples stand out: Bangladesh had introduced the caretaker system, but later scrapped it. However, elections under the incumbents have hardly been free. On the other hand, India has held regular general elections, largely free of controversy, without an interim set-up, mainly because the Indian election commission is suitably empowered. The new parliament should extensively debate the proposal of eliminating the caretaker set-up before making a decision. While the system in vogue is clearly not delivering, perhaps the reason for this is the weakness of the ECP and its inability to hold polls that all parties consider above board.

While the ECP has been empowered on paper, on the ground its performance, particularly in last month's polls, has been disappointing.

The key to meaningful election reform lies with the politicians. They must build trust amongst each other and empower the ECP so that there are no major complaints about the polls' process. If they are able to pull this off in the current legislature's term, the next general elections may no longer require a caretaker set-up.

While there should be no constant constitutional flip-flopping, laws can certainly be amended to fix the major bugs in Pakistan's electoral system.

### Leaving the past behind

Haris Zaki

On Feb 25, 2024, a video surfaced of an assistant sub-inspector from Rawalpindi beating a local man with a metal object in a crowded police station, for selling kites. This incident came on the heels of a video of a police officer assaulting an elderly woman in Taxila. Rawalpindi's top cop CPO Khalid Hamdani took notice of both incidents, and has since dismissed the concerned officers and ordered inquiries against them. It is laudable that these measures have been taken, but clearly more needs to be done to address the root causes of police excesses.

The 1857 War of Independence had left the British Raj scratching their heads about how they would quell any mutinous sentiments still smouldering in the hearts of the Indian people, and prevent any future uprisings. Revolution, after all, is bad for business, and the colonial overlords in London were loath to suffer any further threats to their rapacity in the subcontinent.

Using the British Royal Irish Constabulary as a blueprint, the Indian Imperial Police was founded in 1861, a decentralised force that existed within a provincial administrative structure. The high-ranking officers were almost entirely Europeans and British, with Indians recruited as the rank and file (largely from the working class). Its raison d'être was the exertion of tight control over the populace, by smothering dissent and enforcing Pax Britannica across the Indian subcontinent through often violent policing methods.

It may come as no

surprise that, similar to many of its institutions, Pakistan's policing system has had a hard time shedding its colonial legacy. It has proved resistant to any meaningful reform, despite numerous attempts over the decades to overhaul and revamp its structure befitting a modern democratic state. It is favourable for the ruling elite to preserve the anachronistic structure of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the NCHR (which have been given investigatory powers under the Act).

We no longer exist as a colonial subject that must be made to walk in line with a lathi over our heads. Both Pakistan's citizens and its police force deserve to exist in a system that is founded on mutual trust and respect, not fear. What is needed more than ever are rules under the Act, which devise a system for independent investigation of incidents of police torture and an accessible complaint mechanism for the public. The government must allocate sufficient resources to, and build the capacity of, the FIA and the NCHR, and spread awareness among the general public about their rights and protections under the new legislation.

It is not this writer's intention to point any fingers at individual police officers or paint the entire force with one brush. Rather, the Rawalpindi incidents have underscored the need to change the way we police our society. Accountability is paramount if there is to be any trust between the people and their watchmen. It is about time CPO Hamdani's commendable measures became an institutionalised, legal norm. -- Courtesy Dawn

Research by Justice Project Pakistan into instances of torture by Faisalabad police in 2014 unveiled conclusive signs of torture in 1,426 out of 1,867 medico-legal certificates. When the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) launched an inquiry based on this research in 2018, they found that none of the officers responsible had been dismissed, and in some cases, had even received promotions.

In November 2022, Pakistan passed the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act. This historic development was a paradigm shift,

an unprecedented step towards concrete, human-rights based police reform. Over a year later, however, the Act has not been implemented. It is unclear whether there have been any investigations or prosecutions, given the absence of clear rules that operationalise the Act and define the roles and responsibilities of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the NCHR (which have been given investigatory powers under the Act).

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### Facing the Shadow

Zarrar Khuhro

It has been over five months since Israel's genocidal war on Gaza and the Palestinian people began. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been massacred, and hundreds more die daily. Millions are homeless and at risk of death from starvation, exhaustion and disease. Every day, we hear of more horrors and there is no end in sight. There are sights that we can never see, images that have seared themselves in our minds — children reduced to skin and bones, people crushed flat under tanks.

Across the world, and in particular in the same Western capitals that bankroll this war and provide diplomatic cover for Israel, we have seen millions pour out onto the streets calling for a ceasefire and for a free Palestine. The actions taken have been many and varied. Pro-Israel businesses have been boycotted, and weapons manufacturers sending arms to Israel blocked.

But what 25-year-old Aaron Bushnell — an active-duty member of the US Air Force and a resident of San Antonio, Texas — did was something entirely new. He recorded himself walking up to the gate of the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C. — dressed in full combat fatigues — and saying that he would not be complicit in the genocide supported by his country's government. He then poured petrol over himself and set himself on fire. With his dying breath, he screamed, "Free Palestine".

The morning before this act, he wrote on Facebook, "Many of us like to ask ourselves, 'What would I do if I was alive during slavery? Or the Jim Crow South? Or apartheid? What would I

do if my country was committing genocide?' The answer is, you're doing it. Right now."

This wasn't the first such attempt to draw attention to Palestine. In December last year, a protester set themselves on fire outside the Israeli consulate in Atlanta, Georgia, surviving with severe burns. However, there has been no follow-up on the story. We don't even know the protester's name or how they are because this story, like so many others that go against the prevailing pro-Israel narrative in the Western media, was buried.

Bushnell's actions bring to mind others who have given their lives in protest for a cause they believed in, or against an action they could not bring themselves to commit. People like Franz Jägerstätter, an Austrian Roman Catholic, who refused to serve in the Nazi army in World War II, saying it was against his moral and religious beliefs. Despite being sentenced to death, he refused to serve the genocidal regime that ruled him and was executed. Like Bushnell, he gave his life for a cause he believed in.

Bushnell also reminds us of Thich Quang Duc, a Buddhist monk who set himself on fire in 1963 in protest against the anti-Buddhist policies of the South Vietnamese government. His picture made history, and the man who took the picture, Malcolm Browne won the World Press Photo of the Year.

No less a person than John F. Kennedy said of the photograph, "No news picture in history has generated so much emotion around the world as that one." Will Bushnell's picture be treated the same way? Certainly not by the Western media. On the day of his death, no Western media network even

bothered to write in the headline which cause he had died for. NPR went a step further, saying that they could not 'verify' Bushnell's motives, despite him having quite literally spelled them out on camera. Newsweek's headline ran: "Bushnell death report reveals police call about 'mental distress'." The headline implies Bushnell had previously suffered from 'mental distress', inviting the reader to think of him as unstable and un-ba-lanced, but if you read the article, you find that the 'police call' in question is about him setting himself on fire.

Then there's the Washington Post, that hallowed torch-bearer of American 'journalism', whose headline reads: "Airman who set himself on fire grew up in religious compound, had anarchist past." What they do not tell you, however, is that the religious compound was that of the Church of the Transfiguration — a twisted pro-Israel, Christian Zionist cult that his own parents were members of. It was this indoctrination that Bushnell rebelled against but the headline makes it seem as though Bushnell was the fanatic.

As for 'anarchist', the term conjures up images of nihilistic terrorism in most minds but what Bushnell espoused was a life-affirming ideology; he spent hours every week helping homeless persons and marginalised communities, who are now paying tribute to this great man.

Will the spark he lit take hold? Will his sacrifice go in vain? We do not know. But we do know that Bushnell, like myself and many others, was a huge fan of Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. It is perhaps fitting, then, that he gave his life fighting the Shadow that threatens to consume us all. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### China, Pakistan enjoy great potential in marine energy exploration: NPC Deputy

BEIJING (APP): China and Pakistan can engage in more comprehensive cooperation on joint marine energy exploration and development, and strengthen the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, said Yan Hongtao, a deputy to the National People's Congress and the general manager of China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) Tianjin.

As the pioneer of offshore oil and gas resource exploration in

China, CNOOC has actively participated in the construction of the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road". In a bid to enhance bilateral friendly cooperation in science, it also took part in the 91-day China-Pakistan joint marine geological survey in the Indian Ocean starting from December 2019.

During the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2023, the two heads of state hope that both sides will seize the 10<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as an opportunity to develop an "upgraded version" of the corridor focusing on growth, livelihood, innovation, greenness and openness. They aim to enhance cooperation in areas such as industrial parks, agriculture, mining, and new energy, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) framework, if we continue to conduct geological

surveys and research in Pakistani waters, we will undoubtedly establish a robust data foundation for delineating potential oil and gas areas, selecting favorable zones, evaluating resources, and analyzing the oil and gas potential in this region. It will promote our all-weather strategic cooperative partnership to a new level," said Yan.

Firstly, Yan suggested to promote China-Pakistan joint energy exploration and development cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding petroleum sector in Federal Capital.



Member (Power) WAPDA Jamil Akhtar watching various equipments of Power plants during his visit to Hydel Museum.

### Minister Agriculture for responsible role of officers to develop agriculture sector

**Independent Report** PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Minister for Agriculture Muhammad Sajjad Monday said that the agriculture sector is very important and to make the province self-sufficient in agriculture and increase agricultural production urging all the officers of the department to play an active role in this regard.

He further said that

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa soil is very fertile and there was a vital need that we should pay special attention to the agricultural sector.

He expressed these views while presiding over an introductory meeting with the officers of Agriculture department.

Secretary Agriculture Javed Marwat, DGs of all wings of the department and relevant officers were also present on this occasion.

### Gold rates stay constant at Rs230,200

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold in the local market remained constant Rs230,200 on Monday, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat and 10 gram 22 karat gold also remained unchanged at Rs197,360 and Rs180,913 respectively. The price of per tola and ten gram silver witnessed no change and was traded at Rs2,600 and Rs2,229.08 respectively.

### WAPDA establishes Hydel museum at Tarbela

ISLAMABAD (APP): WAPDA has established the Hydel Museum at Tarbela 4<sup>th</sup> Extension Hydel Power Station comprising equipment of hydropower plants, aimed at preserving and portraying the tremendous heritage of WAPDA hydel power stations.

The vintage electro-mechanical equipment and parts of Jabban, Warsak, Tarbela, Renala, Kurrum Garhi and Chitral hydel power stations have been showcased in the museum, said a press release.

Besides, the model of Jabban Hydel Power Station (1937) and the structural model of Tarbela

Dam have also been displayed there.

Member (Power) WAPDA Jamil Akhtar inaugurated the WAPDA Hydel Museum. The inaugural ceremony was also attended by GM Hydel (Development) Ihsanullah, GM (Power) Tarbela Nasrum Min Allah, GM Tarbela Dam Project Anwar Shah, Chief Engineer (O&M) Tarbela 4<sup>th</sup> Extension Hydel Power Station Muhammad Tariq, Chief Engineer Tarbela 4<sup>th</sup> Extension Suresh Kumar, Chief Engineer (Power) Tarbela Naseem Khan, Principal, WAPDA Cadet College Tarbela Brig (Retd) Rafaqat Islam.

### CCRI suggests measures to get bumper cotton crop

MULTAN (APP): Director Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) Dr. Muhammad Naveed Afzal said that selection of suitable land for cotton cultivation was very much important to achieve maximum yield. In a statement issued here, he observed, the fertile land, which efficiently absorbs

water and maintains moisture for extended periods, is ideal for cotton cultivation. Dr. Afzal stressed that not all types of land, such as clayey, sandy, or saline, are suitable for cotton cultivation, but with the expert advice of agricultural specialists, cotton can be grown on ridges within such lands.

### Agriculture infrastructure handover ceremony held in district Mohmand

**Independent Report**

PESHAWAR: The USAID's Economic Recovery and Development Activity (USAID-ERDA) on Monday formally handed over nine completed agriculture infrastructure schemes to the farming communities of tehsil Safi and Ambar, District Mohmand in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

The ceremony was attended by representatives from

USAID-ERDA, the local government, and community members.

These interventions irrigating 200 acres of barren land in tehsil Ambar and Safi of Mohmand District, will significantly improve the agricultural productivity of the region.

USAID-ERDA provided vegetable and maize seeds to the farmers community, further supporting the program's goal of enhancing agricultural productivity.

On this occasion, Shakil Ahmad, Additional Deputy Commissioner, District Mohmand said, the Government of Pakistan deeply appreciates the continued support of USAID-ERDA in developing our communities. These infrastructure projects will have a lasting positive impact on the lives of the farmers in Mohmand District. This project is a game-changer for our community, he said.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Seven ships, Eagle, Crested Eagle, Yongheng Ocean, Madison Eagle, Ullswater, Houyoushi Park and CMA CGM Nabucco scheduled to load/offload Rice, Steel coil, Palm oil, LPG, Chemicals and Containers, berthed at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Liquid Terminal, HF Terminal, Engro Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on Sunday.

### Mobilink Bank, BizB partner to empowering women micro-entrepreneurs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mobilink Bank partnered with BizB, a leading marketplace in Pakistan, welcoming the company as a 'Brand Ambassador Organization,' to drive financial inclusion and bolster women micro-entrepreneurs nationwide. This symbiotic partnership strives to offer easily accessible financial services and support the

endeavours of female entrepreneurs in the growing e-commerce landscape, said a news release. Through this partnership, women micro-entrepreneurs under BizB's W-Empower will not only have access to a platform for buying and selling preloved apparel but will also enjoy the full range of features provided by the Dost App.

## CM KP decides to include seminaries in solarization project

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Monday decided to include seminaries (Deeni Madaris) in the project regarding solarization of mosques and worship places in the province.

He directed the authorities concerned to take necessary steps for this purpose and to ensure that all the registered seminaries of settled and merged districts are included in the solarization project.

It is inevitable to convert these seminaries to solar energy for facilitating thousands of students studying and residing there. Under this initiative, solarization of 1000 to 1500 seminaries would be carried out across the

province. He was presiding over a meeting of Energy & Power Department held here at Chief Minister's House.

Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Anjad Ali Khan, Secretary Energy & Power Nisar Ahmad and other officials concerned attended the meeting. The meeting was briefed in details about the development projects, administrative and financial affairs and other related matters of the department.

The chief minister has directed the quarters concerned to ensure appointment of Chief Executive Officer and Executive Committee Members of Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) as

soon as possible. He termed the timely completion of ongoing Hydel Power Development Projects as of vital importance and directed the authorities concerned to ensure that the projects are completed within the stipulated timelines.

He further directed them to fix the priorities in this regard and added that revenue generating projects be funded on priority basis.

Meanwhile, chairing a meeting of the Local Government Department, the Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to release special funds for the payment of salaries and pensions to the employees of financially weak Tehsil Municipal Administrations.



FAISALABAD: A large number of women are waiting for registration at Salimi Chowk Al Fateh Sports Complex to get the Ramadan package.

## Minister chairs meeting of health deptt; seeks details of Sehat card

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for health Qasim Ali Shah on Monday chaired the meeting of the department after assuming charge of the Minister office.

Upon the arrival, the Minister was welcomed by the Secretary and the DGs and heads of different programmes.

An introductory session was held with the staff of the Health Department.

Secretary Health Mehmood Aslam Wazir presented a detailed review

of the health department, an overview of all ongoing development projects and the current situation in the health department.

The Minister was also briefed about health card, ten MTIs and other independent institutions.

The health minister was told that the budget of the health department has exceeded Rs 207 billion, adding that more than Rs 88 billion have been spent so far under the heads of electricity and development projects.

The Minister sought details of Health Card Plus.

## KP CM sets up complaint cell

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has established a complaint cell at CM Secretariat to address public issues.

According to CM Secretariat special staff has been deputed at the cell to receive complains, CM Secretariats on contact numbers: 091-9222461 or 091-9222464.

As per the directives of the CM, immediate action would be taken on citizens' complaints.

## CM extends Ramadan greetings

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has extended Ramadan greetings to the people, emphasizing the significance of the blessed hours of Ramadan as a blessing from Allah Almighty. In her message, she urged everyone to remember the deprived and needy during this holy month and encouraged the affluent to share their blessings with the less fortunate for the pleasure of Allah Almighty.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif also highlighted the importance of remembering oppressed Kashmiri and Palestinian brothers and sisters during Ramadan. She emphasized that fasting is not only a form of worship but also a means of training in moral discipline.

## Minister visits PTC office, reviews operational affairs

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Transport Minister Bilal Akbar Khan conducted a visit to the Punjab Transport Company (PTC) head office here on Monday.

Transport Secretary Dr Javed Ahmed Qazi warmly welcomed the minister on his arrival.

Accompanied by Chairman Board of Directors Rais Abbas Zaidi, the minister inspected various sectors of the Punjab Transport Company.

Later, the minister also

presided over a meeting where the in-charges of various departments gave a detailed briefing to the minister about their working, CEO Farrukh Abbas briefed about the Enforcement Wing and Route Permit.

The minister while issuing orders to improve the driving system, saying that records should be fully computerized as soon as possible, adding that the performance of public transport should be improved in other cities of Punjab.

## Governor Punjab greets Kyrgyz Honorary Consul

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman on Monday felicitated prominent businessman Meher Kashif Younis on his appointment as the honorary Consul of Kyrgyzstan in Lahore, including the territory of Punjab province.

He termed it as a recognition of remarkable achievements of Meher Kashif and his dedication to foster international trade relations. He also appreciated his commitment to serving as a bridge between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The governor emphasized the significance of such appointments in enhancing Pakistan's global outreach and promoting economic growth through collaboration with other countries. He hoped, as an honorary Consul, Meher Kashif Younis would play a pivotal role in strengthening bilateral ties, promoting trade, and facilitating cultural exchanges between the two countries, besides exchange of higher education delegations.

Meher's appointment signifies a testament to his expertise, leadership, and contribution to the business community, reflecting positively on Pakistan's diplomatic endeavors, he remarked.

The governor wished him success in further enhancing the relationship between two countries for mutual prosperity.



KARACHI: Senior journalist Mazhar Abbas speaking at a reference in memory of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists Workers President, Pervaiz Shaukat at Karachi Press Club.

## CM Maryam has zero tolerance policy towards violence against Women: Uzma

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab Information Minister Uzma Bukhari Monday said that the Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif will adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards gender based violence and that the government under her leadership has launched "Never Again" app aimed at enhancing women's safety.

Talking to a private news channel, she said that violence on women is a horrendous crime and strict action will be taken against the people involved in violence against women.

She said CM recognizes the important role women play in the development of society and growth of the nation.

She said on the chief minister's dedication to women's safety, stating the "Never Again" app would be a crucial tool in monitoring.



LAHORE: Secretary Punjab Assembly Chaudhary Amir Habib briefing Ambassador of Austria to Pakistan Mrs. Andrea Wicke during her visit to Punjab Assembly.

## Riphah invites applications for faculty recruitment

FAISALABAD (APP): Riphah International University has invited applications for faculty recruitment at its Faisalabad campus. University spokesman said here on Monday that the Riphah University would recruit professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturers in medical ultrasound technology, dental technology, operation theater technology, neurophysiology technology, optometry & orthoptics, aesthetic & cosmetics technology, project management, bio-medical engineering, architecture, education, nursing pharmacy, anesthesia technology, cardiology, DVM, poultry, engineering management, public health, management science, sports science & physical education, medical imaging technology.

## Blood camp held at SNGPL office

SARGODHA (APP): A blood donation camp was organized with the collaboration of the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited and Ali Zeb Foundation here on Monday.

According to a press release issued by SNGPL office, the camp was held at the regional office under the supervision of Regional Manager Sargodha Region Binyameen Shahid.

Senior Engineer Hassan Raza Kazmi, Executive Engineer Usman Rashid, Executive Engineer Adnan Haider, Executive Engineer Farasat Ali, Senior Officer Umair Ali, Engineer Faheem Sultan, officers and employees donated blood.

The primary purpose of the camp was to maintain a blood reserve for patients suffering from diseases like Thalassemia, Hemophilia, and Leukemia, to meet their blood requirements.

# International News

## Putin hopes a Trump win would change course for Russia On Russian TV ahead of the election, there's only one program: Putin's

Russia's spy service accuses US of trying to meddle in presidential election

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: Thousands of Russians braved the cold for hours earlier this month to honor the opposition politician Alexei Navalny after his funeral. They chanted anti-war slogans and covered his gravesite with so many flowers that it disappeared from view. It was one of the largest displays of defiance against President Vladimir Putin since he invaded Ukraine, and happened just weeks before an election he is all but assured to win. But Russians watching television saw none of it.

A leading state television channel opened with its host railing against the West and NATO. Another channel led with a segment extolling the virtues of domestically built streetcars. And there was the usual deferential coverage of Putin. Since coming to power almost 25 years ago, Putin has eliminated nearly all independent media and opposition voices in Russia — a process he ramped up after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. The Kremlin's control over media is now absolute.

President Vladimir Putin has no doubt he will secure another term in Russia's election. The vote that leaves him in suspense, and could do more to change his policies, will occur eight months later in the United States.

Putin has publicly said he prefers US President Joe



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg gestures as he attends a press conference on the day of a flag-raising ceremony at NATO headquarters following the accession of Sweden to the alliance, in Brussels, Belgium.

## China trying to 'normalise' military drills near Taiwan, island's top security official says

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: Taiwan's top security official told parliament on Monday that China runs "joint combat readiness patrols" near the democratic island every 7-10 days on average, saying Chinese forces were trying to "normalise" drills near Taiwan. China has in recent years stepped up military activities near Taiwan, with almost daily incursions into the island's air defence identification zones and regular "combat readiness patrols" that included drills by its

air and naval forces. China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, over the island's strong objections.

Taiwan National Security Bureau Director-General Tsai Ming-yen said Beijing usually dispatches around 10 warplanes and 3 to 4 naval ships on joint patrols near Taiwan, calling them part of a "multi-front" effort that also includes economic coercions and misinformation campaign to pressure the island.

"They are trying to

normalise their military activities," Tsai said, adding that the patrols were occasionally timed to coincide with diplomatic events such as visits to the island by foreign lawmakers.

Tsai said that Taipei had "close discussions" with international allies on whether a Chinese invasion is imminent and that tensions across the Taiwan Strait have not escalated sharply. "We do not see any signal of a war in the Taiwan Strait breaking out," Tsai said.

## Palestinians prepare for Ramazan in the shadow of Gaza war

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: Palestinians prepared for Ramazan in a sombre mood with heightened security measures by Israeli police and the spectre of war and hunger in Gaza overshadowing the normally festive Muslim holy month as talks to secure a ceasefire stalled.

Thousands of police have been deployed around the narrow streets of the Old City in Jerusalem, where tens of thousands of worshippers are expected every day at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, one of the holiest sites in Islam.

The area, considered the most sacred place by Jews who know it as Temple Mount, has been a longstanding flashpoint for trouble and was one of the starting points of the last

war in 2021 between Israel and Hamas, the militant movement that controls Gaza.

That 10-day conflict has been dwarfed by the current war, which is now in its sixth month. It began on Oct 7 when thousands of Hamas fighters stormed into Israel, killing some 1,200 people, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's relentless campaign in Gaza has caused increasing alarm across the world as the growing risk of famine threatens to add to a death toll that has already passed 31,000.

In a Ramadan message to Muslims at home and abroad, US President Joe Biden pledged on Sunday (Mar 10) to continue to push for humanitarian aid to Gaza.

## China's congress ends with a show of unity behind Xi's vision for national greatness

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: China's national legislature wrapped up its annual session Monday with the usual show of near-unanimous support for plans designed to carry out ruling Communist Party leader Xi Jinping's vision for the nation.

The weeklong event, replete with meetings carefully scripted to allow no surprises, has highlighted how China's politics have become ever more calibrated to elevate Xi.

Monday's agenda lacked the usual closing news conference by the premier, the party's No. 2 leader. The news conference has been held most years since 1988 and was the one time when journalists could directly question a top Chinese leader.

The decision to scrap it emphasizes Premier Li Qiang's relatively weak status. His predecessors played a much larger role in leading key economic policies such as modernizing state companies, coping with economic crises and

leading housing reforms that transformed China into a nation of homeowners.

The nearly 3,000-member National People's Congress approved a revised State Council law that directs China's version of the cabinet to follow Xi's vision. The vote was 2,883 to eight, with nine abstentions. Other measures passed by similarly wide margins. The most nays were recorded for the annual report of the supreme court, which was approved by a 2,834 to 44 vote.

In brief closing remarks, Zhao Leji, the legislature's top official, urged the people to unite more closely under the Communist Party's leadership "with comrade Xi Jinping at its core."

The party leaders who run the State Council used to have a much freer hand in setting economic policy. Neil Thomas, a Chinese politics fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute, said in an emailed comment.



Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi speaks during a joint press conference with Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, the Vatican Secretary for Relations with States, in Amman, Jordan.

## Blinken will attend an urgent meeting with Caribbean leaders as Haiti's violent crisis grows

**Monitoring Desk**  
KINGSTON: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is scheduled to meet Monday with Caribbean leaders in Jamaica as part of an urgent push to solve Haiti's spiraling crisis, while pressure grows on Prime Minister Ariel Henry to resign or agree to a transitional council.

Henry, locked out of his own country after surging violence at home, is expected to attend the closed-door meeting.

It was organized by members of a regional trade bloc known as Caricom who for months have pressed for a transitional government in Haiti as protests demanded Henry's resignation.

## India moves before election to implement citizenship law opposed by Muslims

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: India announced rules on Monday to implement a 2019 citizenship law that critics call anti-Muslim, weeks before Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks a rare third term for his Hindu nationalist government. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) grants Indian nationality to Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians who fled to Hindu-majority India from Muslim-majority Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan before December 31, 2014. Modi's government had not crafted implementation rules for the law after protests and sectarian violence broke out in New Delhi and elsewhere within weeks of the law's December 2019 enactment. Scores were killed and hundreds injured during days of clashes.

## US military airlifts embassy personnel from Haiti, bolsters security

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The US military said on Sunday it has carried out an operation in Haiti to airlift non-essential embassy personnel from the country and added US forces to bolster embassy security, as the Caribbean nation reels under a state of emergency.

The operation was the latest sign of Haiti's troubles as gang violence threatens to bring down the government and has led thousands to flee their homes. "This airlift of

## Military aircraft from 5 countries drop aid over Gaza

**Monitoring Desk**  
AMMAN: Military planes parachuted aid over Gaza on Sunday, an AFP photographer said, the latest airdrop over the besieged territory's north where famine looms more than five months into the Israel-Hamas war. The photographer, on board a Jordanian military plane, saw hundreds of Palestinians rushing to receive the falling pallets of basic supplies. The Jordanian army said in a statement that US, French, Belgian and Egyptian planes also participated in the relief operation.

## Federal Ombudsman disposes of 193,030 complaints

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Ombudsman office (Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat) has disposed of 193,030 complaints, which is 22 percent higher than the previous year.

Briefing the delegation of Associated Press of Pakistan's (APP) Youth Media Training Program (YMP), Senior Advisor, Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, Moiz Bokhari said that during the outgoing year 2023, this office received and processed a record number of complaints which stood at 194,106 that is 18% higher than the preceding year.

He said that a system of strict monitoring, follow up and verification of the implementation of each and every decision was in place and an impressive implementation rate of 85.4% was recorded in 2023, adding that 88% complaints were disposed of within the prescribed limit of 60 days.

The senior advisor informed the delegation that the officers of the Wafaqi Mohtasib Office were dispensing justice to the people at their doorsteps.

Our Investigation Officers visited the remote and far off areas of the country and decided 3149 cases, which spared the complainants from taking the trouble of visiting the Wafaqi Mohtasib office at the headquarters of the major cities of the country, he added.

Dilating on the international linkages of this office, the senior advisor observed that the office of the Wafaqi Mohtasib was an active member of the International Ombudsman's Institute (IOI) the OIC Ombudsman Association (AOA) (OICOA) and the Asian Ombudsman Association.

He said that the Wafaqi Mohtasib was re-elected unopposed as President of the AOA by the General Assembly of the Asian Ombudsman Association, which was a 47-member strong professional body of Ombudsmen of the Asian Region representing more than two third of the world population, which was indeed a great honour for the country.

He said that the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat was often referred to as the poor man's court since it strives to bring administrative justice to the people especially to those belonging to the marginalized and deprived segments of the population.

He said that owing to the hard work and dedication of our officers and by employing instruments like the Khuli Katcharies and the Informal Resolution of Disputes (IRD) programmes, this office had been able to redress large number of public complaints, thereby providing relief to a sizeable segment

of the people in a hassle-free manner.

It was started in April 2022 in some offices but later extended to other as well in view of its massive success in speedy resolution of public problems. He said that there was a great deal of improvement in redressing the public complaints which are lately exhibiting an upward trend due to increase in population and other factors.

He elaborated that during the year 2022 this office received 164,174 complaints, which swelled to 194,099 in 2023 which is, a reflection of the public trust and confidence in this office.

He particularly referred to the steps taken for resolution of the problems and welfare of the Overseas Pakistanis, pensioners and prisoners specially the women and juvenile prisoners in jails, which resulted in considerably improving their lot.

He informed that now there were 18 Regional Offices and four Complaints Collection Centers, covering nearly the entire length of the country.

Advisor (Appraisal) Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat Shahid Hamayyoun, Advisor Media Inam Ul Haq Javed, Registrar Muhammad Saqib Khan and Director General Admin Muhammad Safdar also briefed the delegation.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zabeed Ahmed Babar Sidhu calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## National Policy Framework is all set to submit in NEC

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives is all set to submit the National Planning Framework (NPF) before the National Economic Council NEC after lengthy deliberations.

The Planning Ministry on Monday organized a workshop on NPF which was attended by the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission of Pakistan Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan, Secretary Planning Ministry, Awaiz Manzoor Sumra and other federal and provincial officials of the various ministries. NPF aims to guide planning process, development and improve project effectiveness.

It will help to define contours for federal and provincial public investment financing. The framework will lay out the national objectives and ensure that the polices, plans and projects contribute for the provision of public goods and improve service delivery. Furthermore, it will draw broad jurisdictional lines between federal and provincial domains for funding of development schemes and alignment with the Federal plans. It will also aim to harmonize development spending, done through federal and provincial development programs, to achieve optimum development outcomes at all levels; federal, provincial and

local. Speaking at the occasion, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan NPF is a milestone for determining and coordinating the national and development priorities between the Federation and the provinces. This framework will set the guidelines for determining the scope of federal and provincial governments in the effective use of resources and national priorities," said Khan emphasizing that public welfare is the responsibility of the government, while there is a need to clearly define which areas of development are under the jurisdiction of the provincial governments.

## IHC allows Firdous to meet PTI founder

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has granted permission to Firdous Shamim Naqvi, a member of the core committee of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), to meet the PTI founder at Adiala Jail.

Justice Samman Riffat Imtiaz heard Firdous Shamim's plea on Monday, seeking permission to meet the PTI founder.

Defense Counsel Babar Awan argued before the court that Firdous Shamim, being a member of the core committee of PTI, was deliberately not allowed to meet the PTI founder by the jail administration.

## Senate unveils annual parliamentary Year Report 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate has released the Comprehensive Annual Report for the Parliamentary Year 2023-24, highlighting a year marked by remarkable accomplishments and steadfast dedication to the nation.

The comprehensive report underscores the relentless efforts and exemplary work of the Senate, emphasizing the outstanding performance of its Standing Committees. The commitment of committee members has played a crucial role in advancing the legislative agenda and addressing critical national issues. During the year, the house met for a total of 152 hours and 58 minutes, with an average of 2 hours and 35 minutes per session. The house successfully passed 14 Government bills and 29 private members' bills, out of a total of 99 presented.

Moreover, the Senate addressed 65 points of public importance, demonstrating its responsiveness to the concerns and needs of the public.

Additionally, the report highlights the Senate's active engagement with public petitions, with 45 petitions successfully resolved and 145 petitions

referred to Senate Committees for further consideration. The report also delves into the performance reports of various departments within the Senate Secretariat, identifying areas of improvement and ongoing initiatives aimed at enhancing efficiency.

Furthermore, during the Parliamentary year 2023-24, the Senate received a total of 710 public petitions, with 145 petitions referred to Senate Committees for review and resolution. Embracing modern technology, the Senate has introduced virtual meetings, enhancing efficiency and transparency.

Initiatives such as the first-time live ticker during Senate sessions, the upgrading of broadcasting and post-production facilities, and 4k web-casting of the Senate YouTube Channel reflect the Senate's commitment to embracing digital transformation.

The Senate of Pakistan also takes pride in its active engagement with international delegations and the initiation of Parliamentary Diplomacy initiatives, contributing to fostering diplomatic relations and promoting collaboration on global issues.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of peoples waiting for their turn for collecting Benazir Income Support Program Cash outside Benazir One Window Center at Sector g-7 in the Federal Capital.

## Ensuring safe food: IFA holds awareness session with Nanbai Association

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Director Operations of the Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) Dr Tahira Siddique with the collaboration of Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries (ICSTSI) conducted a session, aimed at fostering awareness within the Nanbai Association (NSA).

Talking to APP, she said that the session highlighted the role and significance of the Islamabad Food Authority which was participated by over 100 participants.

Commencing with an introduction to the authority, the presentation delved into the paramount importance of upholding food standards and ensuring the safety of food products. Emphasizing the dire need for safe food practices, attendees were enlightened on the methods to uphold such

standards and the collaborative efforts required from all stakeholders, she said.

A key focus was placed on the Islamabad Food Authority's mission to prioritize food standards and collaborate effectively to shield consumers from the perils of foodborne illnesses.

The responsibilities of the authority and the implementation strategies for maintaining food standards were meticulously outlined, underscoring the indispensable role of personal and premises hygiene in food establishments.

Moreover, attendees were educated on the various food safety hazards associated with the consumption of contaminated food and were provided with invaluable insights into safe food preparation, handling, storage, and packaging techniques, she added.

## Crackdown at G-6 Sunday Bazaar against price gouging, nabs 9

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Assistant Commissioner City on Monday visited the G-6 Sunday Bazaar and inspected the district administration arrangements, accompanied by the Magistrate City, market staff.

According to the Spokesman of ICT, Dr Abdullah Tabassum, the AC arrested nine violators for failing to display price lists, selling items at high prices, and other violations. They were handed over to the police.

The assistant commissioner emphasized that price lists were mandatory

and should be visible at all fruit, vegetable, and departmental stalls within the market.

This crackdown was part of an ongoing effort to combat price hikes, encroachment, and other offenses. Such operations are conducted daily to maintain order and fairness in the market.

On the occasion, AC warned that as the holy month of Ramadan is approaching and the district administration would leave no stone unturned to facilitate the masses in city while strict action would be continued against the violators.



People offering Namaz-e-Taraweeh of first ramadan at Faisal Mosque in the Federal Capital.

## Palestine issue must be a collective priority of Muslim world: Dr Ateq

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Gaza conflict is not merely politically rooted but fundamentally humanitarian, with a collective responsibility of the Muslim world to provide support through a unified response at all levels as the Palestine crisis requires not just expressions of solidarity but cohesive and collective strength of Muslim Ummah.

This was observed by Dr Ateq Al Garbi, an expert on Yemen-Gulf affairs and the executive director of the Mokka Center for Strategic Studies, Turkiye, during a session on 'The War on Gaza: Dynamics in the Red Sea', held here at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS).

The session, chaired by Brig © Said Nazir, was joined by Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS, Prof Dr Fakhir-ul-Islam, Prof Dr Shahzad Iqbal Sham, Prof Dr Tughrul Yamin, and others, said a press release.



ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of flower blooming on greenbelt along the roadside in the Federal Capital.

### WWF says:

## All housing projects of industrial workers to be completed in stipulated time periods

ISLAMABAD (APP): All housing projects for registered workers in the industrial sector would be completed in stipulated time periods across the country with all required facilities.

An official source told APP, that a mega project of 2056 residential flats in Peshawar for industrial workers had been completed and handed over to the workers since last year.

The sources said that the price of each flat was Rs 2.6 million, out of which a Rs 300,000 subsidy would be provided by the government and the re-

maining amount would be paid by the beneficiaries through easy installments. A three percent quota has been allocated for widows and two percent for persons with disabilities.

Those working in industries for three years are eligible for flats to be awarded on an ownership basis through a lucky draw in a transparent manner. It is the mega housing project of the KP Government, completed in line with the vision of the federal government to provide affordable and low-cost housing facilities for people.

## Khawar Manika appears in Iddat case without lawyer

ISLAMABAD (APP): The ex-husband of Bushra Bibi, Khawar Manika, here on Monday could not present a defense counsel during proceedings of the appeal of PTI founder and Bushra Bibi against their conviction in the Iddat Case.

Session Judge of the District and Session Court Islamabad, Shahrukh Arjmand, heard the appeals.

Khawar Manika appeared before the court and took the position that he had appeared without a defense counsel due to time constraints.

Meanwhile, PTI lawyers Usman Riaz Gul, Shiraz Ranjha, and Khalid Yusuf Chaudhry filed a separate application for the suspension of the sentence on behalf of Bushra Bibi.

The application stated that the court had already declared the application admissible for a hearing.

## Tribunal upholds CCP's order against P&G Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Appellate Tribunal has upheld an order passed by the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) against Proctor and Gamble Pakistan (P&G) for engaging in deceptive marketing practices. The Tribunal dismissed P&G appeal to set aside CCP's ruling.

In its ruling, the Tribunal also stated that the CCP has the authority to determine the legitimacy of a complaint and to decide whether to accept or dismiss it based on the complaint's merits, said a press release issued.

The CCP had imposed a penalty of 10 million rupees on P&G for falsely advertising its product Safeguard as Pakistan's No. 1 anti-bacterial soap. However, the Tribunal reduced the penalty to five million rupees, considering P&G's compliance-oriented approach and the fact that P&G had dropped the No-1 claim shortly after the initiation of enquiry by the CCP in 2014.

The enquiry was initiated based on a complaint filed by Reckitt Benckiser Pakistan Limited.



ISLAMABAD: Sherdils demonstrating their skills during rehearsal ahead of the Pakistan Day parade on 23rd March.

## Development work in Badin among top priorities: MNA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party's Member National Assembly, Haji Rasool Bux Chandio on Monday said the development work in Badin district was his foremost priority including the construction parks for both women and children.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held in his honor here. He said the party has given instructions for the provision of facilities to the people. "Steps will be taken to fix quota for children of poor people in private educational institu-

tions." Rasool Bux Chandio further said that success in the elections will come to those who stay in touch with the people and resolve their problems. He stressed that parks for children and women in various cities of the district would be constructed and existing parks would be improved by providing more facilities.

On the special directives of President Asif Ali Zardari, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhatto Zardari and Farzal Talpur, he said that all the possible facilities would be provided to the common man of Badin.

## Gohar files petition in IHC in connection with meeting with PTI founder

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has filed petition in Islamabad High Court (IHC) in connection with his meeting with PTI founder Imran Khan.

Interior secretary, Chief Commissioner Islamabad and superintendent Adiala jail have been made respondents in the petition.

He has taken plea in the petition that chairman PTI Gohar Ali Khan, secretary general Umar Ayub and secretary Shibil Faraz want to meet PTI founder. Therefore, orders be issued to Adiala jail authorities to allow them to meet

Imran Khan. Later Barrister Gohar Ali Khan while talking to media men said there were some documents related to general election which they had taken with them to meet PTI founder. Senate polls are going to take place therefore application has been filed that permission be given for consultation with PTI founder along-with documents. We have too much expectations from the judiciary.

We always come and hope we will be given justice as well. Decisions have been taken on fast pace basis.

## CDA allots 157 govt residences

ISLAMABAD (APP): The management of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has allotted 157 Government residences of different categories to officers and other employees of authority.

The residences were allotted on the basis of seniority on General Waiting List. However, the allocation of residences was made through balloting.

In all 57 houses were allotted 8n A category, 38 houses 8n B category 25 in C category, 17 in D category while 20 houses were allotted in D category in sectors G-6, G-7, G-8, G-9, G-10, G-11 and F-6.

The CDA Chairman on the occasion said that welfare of employees would remain management's top priority.



ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jams at Islamabad expressway in evening hours, in the Federal Capital.