

# Independent

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## Two terrorists killed in suicide attack on foreign nationals vehicle in Karachi

President, PM condemn Karachi suicide attack; laud timely police response

KARACHI (Online): Two terrorists were killed and 3 persons including 2 security guards were injured in suicide attack on foreign nationals vehicle in Mansehra colony in the area of Landhi Karachi.

According to police two persons who were killed in suicide attack and firing were attackers. Police and Rescue teams reached the scene and started rescue operation. The injured were shifted to hospital.

Those who were injured in explosion include Noor Muhammad, Langar Khan and Suleman Rafiq, 2 injured are stated to be in precarious condition. No foreigner included in in-

jured persons. Foreign citizens were there in the vehicle who remained secure.

According to Malir Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Tariq Elahi, all foreign nationals have been transported to safe and secure location.

Elahi confirmed that the explosion was a suicide attack, with the crime scene revealing the presence of grenades in a bag left behind by the attackers.

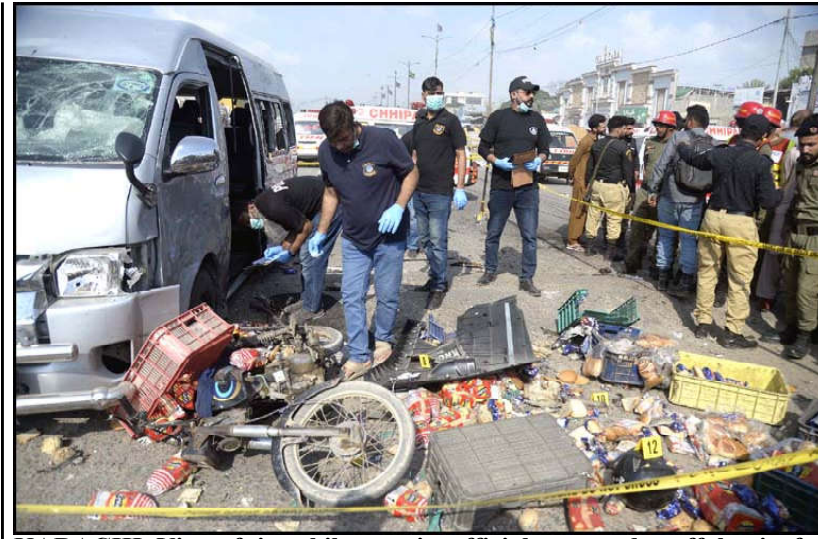
Deputy Inspector General (DIG) East, Ghulam Azfar Mahesar, disclosed that one terrorist detonated himself in the suicide attack, while another was neutralised by police. One terrorist fled. Efforts are under way

to identify the remaining assailants through fingerprints, utilising data from the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA).

He revealed initial findings suggesting that the attackers approached on foot and attacked the vehicle around 6:50am.

Police and security agencies have cordoned off the area and started search operation.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday strongly condemned a suicide attack that took place in Karachi's Landhi area, lauding the timely response by the police to avert casualties.



KARACHI: View of site while security officials are cordoned off the site for inspection and rescue operation after a suicide blast at Landhi area in Karachi.

## PM directs to accelerate countrywide anti-smuggling drive, reiterates zero leniency

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, while reiterating the resolve to purge the country of smuggling, on Friday directed the authorities concerned to accelerate the countrywide drive against the menace.

The prime minister, chairing a high-level meeting to curb smuggling, paid tribute to Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir for his full cooperation with the government in its endeavor against smuggling.

A report of the investigation committee headed by AD Khawaja was also presented in the meeting.

The prime minister lauded the committee for identifying the elements involved in misuse of Afghan Transit Trade for smuggling and the officers facilitating them.

The prime minister was told that a list of smug-

glers, hoarders, and their facilitating officers have been forwarded to the law enforcement agencies and provincial governments.

The prime minister directed for removing the identified officers from their respective posts and initiate disciplinary proceedings against them.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also asked the law enforcing agencies (LEAs) and intelligence agencies to cooperate with each other to curb the smuggling.

Calling for punishing the smugglers and drug dealers, the prime minister asked the Law Ministry to carry out immediate necessary legislation for the purpose.

Affirming no leniency for looters of public money and their facilitators, Prime Minister Shehbaz directed for the measures to provide alternative earning opportunities and conducive at-

mosphere to the youths living in the frontier regions.

He emphasized more swift and effective monitoring of sale and smuggling of Afghan Transit Trade goods in the country, and called for third party audit of the monitoring system.

The prime minister ordered to ensure complete elimination of sugar smuggling and immediate release of funds to examine the prevalence of drugs consumption at the national level.

The meeting was apprised of the smuggling, misuse of Afghan Transit Trade, drugs, besides sugar, wheat, fertilizer, petroleum products and illegal weapons.

It was told that, after consultation with the stakeholders, a national anti-smuggling strategy was in final stage which would be presented for approval.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding country wide Anti-smuggling drive.

## Foreign guests remain safe; one guard injured, CM informed

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday received a report stating that the foreign guests remained safe but one of their guards was injured in the Mansehra Colony incident.

He was informed that due to the timely action of the police, the foreign guests were safe, and only one of their guards was injured.

Meanwhile, the CM had sought a detailed report from the inspector-general

of police (IGP) regarding the attack on the vehicle of the foreign guests. He directed to make immediate arrangements for the injured guard.

Murad instructed the IGP to conduct an investigation of the incident and provide a report, including the identification of the terrorists, their origin, and all relevant information about their supporters. The CM also sought details about the details of the explosives used in the blast.

## Bilawal condemns attack, says foes of Pak-Japan want to spoil relations

KARACHI (APP): The Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned a terrorist attack on a vehicle of foreigners in Karachi.

He said that the beasts involved in the heinous crime will soon be in the grip of the law.

Bilawal lauded the Sindh Police and Security Guards for killing two terrorists in the encounter.

He said the foreigners were our guests, and respecting and protecting guests was the national motto of Pakistanis.

The PPP Chairman said that Pakistan-Japan relations were of great importance and enemies of both countries wanted to spoil relations.

He also prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the attack.

## Speaker NA suspends membership of MNAs for creating ruckus

ISLAMABAD (Online): Speaker National Assembly (NA) Ayaz Sadiq has suspended membership of MNA Jamshed Dastii and MNA Muhammad Iqbal Khan for creating ruckus and playing baja in the house.

During the address of president Asif Ali Zardari in joint session of parliament on Thursday, Jamshed Dastii MNA played baja and created ruckus.

As soon as president Asif Ali Zardari started his address, opposition members started chanting slogans and creating ruckus.

The opposition members started raising slogans Go Zardari Go. PTI members started chanting slogans prime minister Imran Khan.

PTI members while waving posters for release of Imran Khan in the house demanded for his release.

Taking action on Friday, speaker NA suspended membership of both the MNAs Jamshed Dastii and Muhammad Iqbal Khan.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori and Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov cutting ribbon to inaugurate Azerbaijan Air flights for Karachi.

## Karachi receives maiden direct flight of Azerbaijan Airlines from Baku

KARACHI (APP): The maiden flight of Azerbaijan Airlines from Baku touched the ground at Jinnah International Airport late Thursday night making the metropolitan the third Pakistani city having direct air connectivity with the Central Asian State.

Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Sindh Minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Saifullah Dharejo, CEO Trade Development Authority of Pakistan Zubair Motiwala, President Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ahmed and other representatives of business and trade community welcomed the crew and passengers of the inaugural flight.

Ambassador of Azerbaijan in Pakistan Khazar Farhadov was also present at the occasion.

Azerbaijan Airlines' first flight to JIAP Karachi that carried over 90 passengers was welcomed with water canon salute on the runway. The airline was al-

ready operating direct flights to Islamabad and Lahore and it expanded its direct flight operation to Pakistan by starting two weekly flights to Karachi.

Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori speaking at the occasion termed expansion of air operations as a welcome sign for mutual relations of Pakistan and Azerbaijan and felicitated Azerbaijan Envoy, Pakistani officials and business and industrial communities of both the countries.

He said that Pakistan-Azerbaijan bilateral trade volume was \$ 10 million that has witnessed a three time growth after start of direct flight operation. He hoped that air connectivity with the biggest city of the country will help bolstering the trade relation between the brotherly countries. Karachi is not only economic and financial hub of Pakistan but it is gateway to a number of tourist places, he said and hoped that it would help strengthening people to people contacts.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House.

## President confers NI (M) award on Chief of Turkish General Staff

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday conferred the Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) award on Chief of Turkish General Staff, General Metin Gurak in recognition of his illustrious services and contribution to strengthening Pakistan-Turkiye defence relations.

The award was conferred at a special investiture ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr and attended by services chiefs and parliamentarians.

Meanwhile President Asif Ali Zardari called for enhancing road and railway connectivity between Pakistan and Turkiye to further promote people-to-people contacts between the two brotherly countries.

He said that overland transport was cost-effec-

tive, which would not only lead to increased interactions between the two nations but would also enhance bilateral economic ties.

The president expressed these views while talking to the Turkish Chief of General Staff, General Metin Gurak, who along with his delegation, called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, and Ambassador of Turkiye to Pakistan, Dr Mehmet Paacaci, also attended the meeting.

Welcoming the delegation, the president said that Pakistan was committed to further deepening mutually beneficial cooperation with Turkiye in all areas of common interest.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferring the award of Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon the Chief of Turkish General Staff, Republic of Turkiye, General Metin Gurak in recognition of his services in strengthening defence relations between Pakistan and Turkiye at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Pakistan, Saudi Arabia vow to solidify efforts in defence collaboration

RAWALPINDI (Online): Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir has affirmed Pakistan Army's continuing support towards capacity building of Royal Saudi Land Forces.

The assertion was made during a meeting between Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir and Assistant Minister of Defence, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Major General (Engineer) Talal Bin Abdullah Al-Otaibi, who called on the Army Chief at GHQ in Rawalpindi.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defence collaboration including defence production and military training were discussed.

The visiting dignitary acknowledged Pakistan Army's achievements and sacrifices in war against terrorism and Army's valuable contributions towards regional peace and stability.

The Saudi Assistant Defence Minister also participated in the 5th Meeting of Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Defence Collaboration at GHQ, which he co-chaired by Chief of General Staff of Pakistan Army.

The forum discussed challenges to global and regional security and their implications on Defence Forces.

It noted that rapid advancements in modern technologies necessitated defence industrial cooperation in critical capabilities between the two brotherly countries.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir exchanging views with Major General (Engineer) Talal Bin Abdullah Al-Otaibi, Assistant Minister of Defence Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) during meeting held at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

## Dharejo for improving infrastructure in industrial areas

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Industries and Commerce, Jam Saifullah Dharejo on Friday directed the officers concerned to improve infrastructure in industrial zones, eliminate encroachments and ensure timely release of salaries to employees.

The minister, while presiding over an orientation meeting with officers of the department, further directed to maintain good working relationship with industrialists and business community for promoting business and industrial activities in the province.

The provincial minister directed for taking action against ghost employees and activate the biometric system to ensure the attendance of the employees.

Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari wanted to bring an industrial revolution in Sindh, Dharejo said and urged the officers of the department to work hard with dedication to achieve the set goals. He said that he would personally visit the industrial zones to review the problems being faced.

## Barrister Gohar's criticism against president Zardari, a ridiculous act: Sharjeel

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Senior Minister for Information, Transport, Mass Transit, Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that Barrister Gohar attempted to increase his stature through criticism of President Asif Ali Zardari. He said that Gohar's criticism was ridiculous.

In his statement, Sharjeel Inam Memon, remarked that following Shaheed Benazir Bhutto,

Asif Ali Zardari emerged as a symbol of strengthening the federation. Zardari represents a metaphor for promoting democracy and discouraging non-democratic forces, he added.

Memon said President Zardari renamed KPK and connected Gilgit-Baltistan the status of a province.

He remarked that President Asif Ali Zardari strengthened the federation by championing the slogan of "Pakistan Khappe."



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Metin Gurak called on Minister for Defence & Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

## Home minister orders thorough probe into attack on foreign nationals convoy

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Home Minister Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar has taken notice of the recent attack on a convoy of foreign nationals, wherein a security guard was injured and two attackers were neutralized by the prompt response of the police.

According to spokesman for Sindh Home Minister, the minister has instructed the Additional Inspector General of Police, Karachi, to furnish a detailed report on the incident.

He emphasized the importance of thorough investigations by the police into the matter.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### X post facto

As has become its modus operandi, the state is using smoke and mirrors to try to justify its decision to ban X, formerly Twitter. After weeks of denial and plain misrepresentation, including in statements made to the courts, the government recently owned up to blocking the popular social media platform for Pakistani users "in the interest of upholding national security, maintaining public order, and preserving the integrity of our nation".

From representations made on behalf of the interior ministry before the Islamabad High Court, it appears that the 'threat' to Pakistan's national security from X was flagged by intelligence agencies in a 'confidential' report.

The interior ministry thereafter cut off Pakistan's access to X, seemingly without even bothering to fulfil all procedural requirements. One of the 'justifications' now being given by the government for this 'punitive action' is that X refuses to localise its operations here and "does not obey Pakistani laws".

While the state is otherwise entitled and, indeed, expected to take any measures necessary to protect the country's interests, it cannot do so without providing lawful justifications. In the current political climate, where there is widespread public dissatisfaction with the state's policies, it is also rather difficult to take any claim regarding some unspecified 'threat' from social media at face value.

If there really was some clear and present danger to the country from the Pakistani people's ability to access and post on X, which necessitated an immediate ban, this ought to have been spelt out for both the courts and the general public when the X ban was first challenged in the courts. Instead, as one recalls, the government's representatives kept denying that a ban was even in place. When questioned, some of the caretaker ministers had smugly shrugged it off, telling those people who were affected to 'live with it' or use a VPN service.

It may be recalled that the X ban came in the midst of a raging controversy over the widespread manipulation of election results, right after a senior bureaucrat had issued a damning public 'confession' of his own complicity in the same. The correlation of these events, when seen in the broader context of the ongoing campaign to keep mass media in line and 'under control', would give anyone ample cause to doubt the government's rather convenient 'national interest' justification.

As far as the government's complaint regarding X's refusal to open a local office is concerned, it should realise that global tech companies are very wary of markets where regulations are opaque and subject to official whims. No company will want to move to a country where the state can quietly shut down a major global service without justification or due process. Our decision-makers should realise the harm they are causing.

## Lethal streets

Dr Noman Ahmed

Karachi has been in the throes of brutal street crime including robberies, muggings and killings for several months. The recent killing of Syed Turab Hussain Zaidi for resisting robbery is a case in point. The situation has deteriorated to a point where even places of worship are not safe — recently, three worshippers at a mosque in Karimabad were stripped of their cash and valuables by a mugger.

While opposition leaders criticise the performance of the PPP government, officials are quick to lay the blame on multiple stakeholders, including the previous caretaker set-up, leading to the public's loss of trust in the police and administration. According to a report in this paper, between 2022 and 2024, more than 250 people were killed and over 1,000 injured in street crime. Meanwhile, muggings are indiscriminate. From call-centre and night shift workers, students, and domestic help to clerics, shopkeepers and vendors, the menace has spared few. The alarming rise in violence is deeply worrying and the provincial government must address it as a top priority.

However, provincial administrators are still hopeful that certain interventions, including the swift implementation of the much-trumpeted Karachi Safe City Project, will make a difference. The multibillion-rupee venture aims to make city roads and streets safer with CCTVs and other monitoring apparatus. While these are a step in the right direction, the real concern is not about viewing a crime but responding to it with speed and competence on the part of law enforcers. Instead of relying on a failed scheme, the au-

thorities must focus on enhancing the training and fitness of cops, set higher standards for recruitment, and jettison political 'recommendations' to appease constituents.

It must also be kept in mind that Karachi comprises over 10,000 kilometres of roads and streets, along with other public spaces that require a vigilant eye — bus terminals, parks, playgrounds, pedestrian bridges, parking lots, open markets, etc. This figure does not include lanes and cul-de-sacs in the city's dense urban neighbourhoods.

Monitoring these vast spaces requires innovative strategies, which must begin with reviewing and modernising the current approach of the law enforcers. The traffic police, for instance, seldom apprehend swanky vehicles that flout the law, but pounce on smaller vehicles to add to their traffic challan list. Moreover, cars with tinted glass and large jeeps featuring gun-toting private guards break traffic signals and the law with impunity.

People are, therefore, forced to take their own measures. Many neighbourhoods have installed metallic barriers with private guards to close off streets. While the law does not permit restricting access to public spaces, resident groups see it as their sole option. Needless to say, this was the norm a decade ago when the city was gripped by political bloodshed; while the Karachi operation of 2014 did bring some relief, the situation worsened soon after.

Once again, gated communities and streets have returned to the city landscape as many believe that reduced access can staunch the onslaught of fierce violations. But sadly, these

measures have only had a marginal impact as people cannot be confined in fortified precincts; they have to leave for work, or do chores, or get out of their homes for several other things. In so doing, the fragile law-and-order situation haunts them.

Besides, one of the fallouts of curtailing access to neighbourhoods is its effect on the urban poor. A research conducted by this writer some years ago revealed that the installation of barriers and other physical obstructions prevented mobile street vendors, greengrocers and pushcart operators from earning a livelihood from households in gated communities.

However, there are certain effective practices that residents can consider adopting. The Citizens Police Liaison Committee should take the lead and undertake neighbourhood surveillance with a local watch-and-ward system that is supported and assisted by residents.

In the past, this particular crime-control measure proved effective in many neighbourhoods. Several peri-urban settlements, such as Orangi Town, maintained a street chowkidari system to keep an eye on visitors, passers-by and vehicles, so that suspicious movement and individuals could be apprehended. The arrangement should be modernised and bolstered with surveillance devices. Furthermore, alarms and tracking tools fitted in cars and bikes, and advanced geo-fencing mechanisms can rein in street criminals. But Karachi demands more than neighbourhood management. A multipronged policy that entails police reforms, addresses socioeconomic deprivation and convinces the public to trust the law enforcers could prove an effective solution. — Courtesy Dawn

## Why insecure?

Zubeida Mustafa

In his memoirs, Foundations and Form, Mukhtar Husain writes about his first school experience: "In 1955, I started attending Mrs Corks' Private School which was run by a British lady, Mrs Corks. The Corkses lived in a stone house with terracotta roof tiles, located in its own enclave within our Colony and surrounded by a low wall. I was just five years old and hated going to school every morning. I would cry all the way and would go on crying in school as well. At times, I was so difficult that I was sent home during the mid-morning break. Shaukat Aziz [later on, the prime minister of Pakistan], who was perhaps a year older, was often asked to walk me home. But I settled down and soon I was doing well..."

I was curious to find out what upset Mukhtar at school. He told me that he had no idea. But I suspect it was the 'strangeness' of the language used at school which did not allow him to express himself fully. Being an intelligent child, he must have been frustrated. He was accustomed to speaking Urdu at home and the school was all English. A child cries when he feels insecure. Being away from the comfort zone of his home that has his mother's reassuring presence can be quite distressing for a young child. Add to that the barrier of language that prevents the child from communicating with others, and the situation becomes quite distressing.

In any case, Mukhtar was fortunate to have an understanding teacher who sent him home when she felt that Mukhtar was inconsolable. He later adjusted, and to his credit

learnt English, which is evident from the impeccable language of his memoirs.

Nearly 70 years on, education in Pakistan is in the doldrums. A major factor responsible for the mess is the bizarre and hybrid pedagogy that is employed in the low-fee private- and public-sector schools, with the exception of Sindh (however, there is little by way of education there). The language used by the teachers is commonly spoken by the population of the area where the school is located. The textbooks are in Urdu or English, which the students are expected to read, and then write their answers to the questions accordingly.

As a result, there is a lot of rote learning going on and hardly any original writing and critical thinking is taking place in our classrooms. We still have to decide which language is to be the medium of instruction and what is to be the role of the mother tongue in the education system.

Our educationists do not even know how a child learns a language and how it should be used in school to maximise the benefits of education. In a nutshell, the child learns a language the natural way, ie, by listening to it. This process begins soon after birth. Children pick up the language of their community by listening to their family members, and later on, in the marketplace playground, so to speak. They do not have to be taught grammar or syntax; these come naturally to them by listening to others. That is why everyone (if not handicapped) speaks a language even if he has not attended school. Literacy is another ball game and has to be

taught in an organised setting.

By trying to introduce in our education system another language that is not familiar to the child, and through teachers who lack competency in the other language themselves, we confuse the language acquisition process.

The worst impact is on the child's ability to read and her interest in books. Researchers say that the more children read, the more they know. This, in turn, enhances their cognitive development. It is also said that if reading is made an unpleasant and laborious exercise from the start a child would just not enjoy reading books. The fact is that a person who is an avid reader also enjoys it.

Our education system is destroying our children by thrusting on them a language unfamiliar to them. This is done prematurely, without paving the ground for it. It is done in most cases by teachers who are not proficient in the language themselves. The method is also wrong. Instead of focusing on the vocabulary and starting with the spoken language, we want to teach them literacy skills that can be tedious. It is no wonder then that our children shun books. They grow up to be book-hating adults. Children are thus denied the experience of self-discovery that comes from reading books. This is a tremendous loss; the self-directed learning instinct is never kindled in them. Critical thinking that is innate to human beings is destroyed. That would explain why the book industry in Pakistan is not doing well at all. When children have not been exposed to books in the language they can understand and enjoy, they grow up with no interest in them. — Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Minister advocates for IT sector growth with public-private coop.

LAHORE (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Communications Shaza Fatima Khawaja has reiterated the government's dedication to enhancing the IT industry by endorsing and aiding the private sector.

Addressing the participants at the Global Digital Summit during the 24th ICTN Asia Conference at the Expo Centre here on Friday, she lauded the collective zeal for technology and its role in transforming economies and societies. She underscored the value of such summits in fostering collaboration and exchanging knowledge among stakeholders from both public and private sectors.

She emphasised the government's efforts, under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision, to review policies and legislation to

better support the private sector's growth and innovation. The minister stressed creation of a conducive environment in Pakistan for the private sector, focusing on business culture, technology, and the ecosystem. The minister pointed out cybersecurity and the skills gap as major challenges, but also as opportunities, especially in leveraging Pakistan's young population for national development. She highlighted the need to modernise education systems to address immediate lack of skilled labour and employable graduates.

She referenced the industry-academia bridge programme that facilitates on-job training for university students, ensuring their employability upon graduation. She also called for a quicker adaptation of university curricula to keep up with the fast-

paced industry changes. The minister outlined the complexities the universities face with industry advancements and the importance of international exposure for Pakistan.

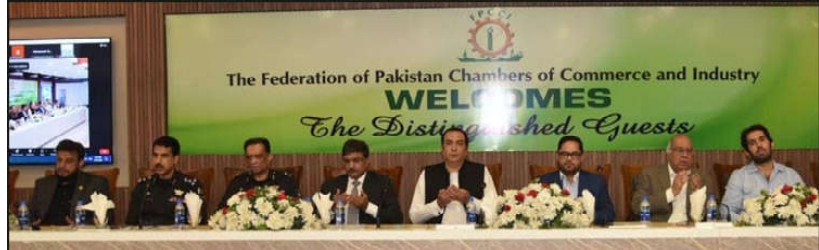
She announced plans for a National Digitization Plan, focusing on governance, economy, and society, which will incorporate modern concepts like the Pakistan stack to streamline services for individuals.

Shaza Khawaja emphasised the government's commitment to engaging with citizens and inviting collaboration for the success of digitization initiative. She discussed the importance of public-private partnerships, ongoing policy developments in data protection and cybersecurity, and the need for an environment conducive to international business.

### Atif Ikram Sheikh says: FPCCI supports innovation Pak customs implements live system to control mis-invoicing

Independent Report

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that Pakistan Customs held a high-profile and interactive orientation session on "Implementation of Linking International Value (LIVE) System under Innovation Framework to Control Mis-invoicing" on Friday. The session was hosted by FPCCI at its head office at the



Federation House and was attended by prominent trade and industry personalities, he added.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh appreciated the efforts of customs; and, especially Directorate of Valuation, Karachi for creating a conducive environment for trade and industry under the leadership of Member Customs Operations, Dr. Fareed Iqbal Qureshi.

Member Customs Operations addressed the audience over zoom in detail regarding the main features and benefits of the LIVE System.



WASHINGTON: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb met with Citibank officials.

### Railways unveils new fuel management system

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Railways has unveiled a state-of-the-art fuel management system, designed to tackle the current challenges.

As per the announcement made on Friday, Railways Chief Executive Officer Amir Ali Baloch has confirmed a new partnership with Pakistan State Oil (PSO), which will now be responsible for ensuring a consistent fuel supply within the

railway's oil supply facilities. The collaboration with PSO brings the introduction of the latest fuel management technology, promising substantial benefits for the railway's operations. In line with the standards set by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), the railway's fuel supply centres are set to undergo comprehensive upgrades to meet international benchmarks.

### ICCI President rendered unprecedented services for business community: Rajput

ISLAMABAD (INP): Group leader Blue Area, Yousuf Rajput recounting the achievements of President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari for welfare of the business community has pledged his and his colleagues unwavering support to the ICCI President. He along with other business leaders was addressing an impressive ceremony held here at Chamber House in honour of the office bearers of different Traders Welfare Associations who have recently proceeded back after performing Umra.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman Founder Group, ICCI Khalid Iqbal Malik said that the business community of Capital was indebted to ICCI President for his unprecedented support for the flourishing of its businesses. He said that Zafar Bakhtawari has been spending millions of rupees from his personal account not only on the welfare of traders and civil society but for the promotion of education in the shape of Water filtration plants and computers. Secretary General United Business Group and former President ICCI Zafar Bakhtawari said that the sitting ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari.

### IFAD Country Director reviews rural economic project

PESHAWAR (APP): The Country Director of International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) Fernanda Thomaz Da Rocha on Friday held a meeting with Syed Intiaz Hussain Shah, the Additional Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to conduct a comprehensive review of the Rural Economic Transformation Project (RETP). The Chief Economist Arifullah Awan and Chief IDS, Sarah Rehman were also present in the meeting.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships namely, Wan Hai, Express Athens, Al-Mothanna, Pelagic Tarpon, Ullswater and Milaha Qatar scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice, Mogas, LPG and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Grain Terminal, Oil Terminal, Engro Terminal and Gasport Terminal respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Project-A and HansaOsla carrying Sugar and Gasoline also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day.

### PM calls for further strengthening economic, trade ties with Turkiye

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reiterated the government's resolve to further strengthen economic relations and trade partnership with Turkiye.

He was talking to a delegation of the Turkish investors which called him here at the Prime Minister Office.

The Turkish investors, expressing confidence in the leadership of the prime minister, took keen interest in investing in Pakistan's diverse areas.

The prime minister said the people of Pakistan and Turkiye had a long-standing brotherly relationship spanning

centuries. He said reforms had been made in the system to take full advantage of the potential of foreign investment in Pakistan.

Ambassador of Turkiye to Pakistan Mehmet Pacaci, CEO Terminal YAPI Cenk Coskun and other Turkish and Pakistani officials participated in the meeting.

Federal ministers Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Ahmad Khan Cheema, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal and relevant senior officials also attended the meeting.

The delegation thanked the prime minister for the warm welcome.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE Hamad Obaid AlZaabi called on Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik.

### Food exports grew by 48.17% in 09 months, reached \$5.651 bln

ISLAMABAD (APP): Food group exports from the country during the first nine months of the current financial year (2023-24) increased by 48.17 per cent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-March, 2023-24, food commodities valued at \$5.651 billion were exported as against the exports of \$3.814 billion in the same period of the last year, according to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

During the period under review, rice exports increased by 83.37 per cent and over 4.550 million tons of rice worth \$2.930 billion were exported as compared to the exports of 2.939 million tons valued at \$1.598 billion in the same period of last year, it added.

Meanwhile, the exports of fruits grew by 17.34 per cent and vegetables by 42.79 per cent as 782,155 metric tons of fruits and 906,836 metric tons of vegetables valued at \$265.655 million.

## CM KP directs to have special focus on addressing the issues of Polio refusal cases

PESHAWAR (APP): An important meeting of the Provincial Task Force (PTF) for Polio Eradication Initiative was held here at Chief Minister's House here on Friday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur in the chair. The authorities concerned briefed the chief minister about the various aspects of Polio Eradication Initiative with special focus on challenges faced in this regard, future course of action and other important matters. Important decisions were also made on the occasion to achieve the cent percent goals of polio eradication drives by improving the existing strategy and making this

whole effort more effective and result-oriented. Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur, Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Abid Majeed, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, administrative secretaries of concerned departments, representatives of partner organizations and other relevant officials attended the meeting. Divisional and deputy commissioners also attended the meeting via video link. The chief minister on this occasion, directed the relevant quarters to further improve the coordination

mechanism amongst all the stakeholders in order to achieve the desired targets of polio eradication campaigns, and said that we can make these efforts successful only through an effective and better team work. He further directed them to have special focus on addressing the issues of refusal cases in addition to making operational affairs of polio eradication campaigns better. "We need to have targeted approach in order to convince the parents who are reluctant to administer anti polio drops to their children", he remarked and directed that Ulema-e-Kiram, Social mobilizers and elected public representatives be involved for this purpose.



FAISALABAD: Provincial Minister of Punjab for Food Bilal Yasin inspection for bread (Roti) at a Tandoor during visit and checking rate list and Roti weight, in the city.

## 817 held for selling roti at higher rate in 5 days, meeting told

LAHORE (APP): A meeting, chaired by Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman at Civil Secretariat, was informed here on Friday that implementation of reduced price of roti was being ensured across Punjab on the orders of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. The meeting was told that 817 people had been arrested over violation of the orders, 347 cases registered and Rs. 11.7

million fine imposed collectively during the last five days. A report regarding the actions was presented during the meeting. The administrative secretaries of industries and food departments, Chairman PITB and officers concerned attended the meeting, while all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video-link.

## Tribal Clash claimed one more precious life of minor boy

Independent Report SHIKARPUR: The dirty game of Bloodshed under the umbrella of Tribal Clash could not be discouraged which resulted one more minor boy lost his life over Tribal Clash on Friday. According to initial reports reached here that one minor boy identified as Meer Hassan of 8 son of Ali Hassan Brohi was gunned down by their enemy groups men at village Sanaullah Brohi in the jurisdiction of Sultankot police station on Friday. The assailants managed good their escape after firing upon their rival enemy groups men. The dead body of deceased minor boy Meer Hassan was shifted to RHC Sultankot for Medico Legal formalities and later handed over to his heirs after conducting postmortem examination from there. The cause behind the incident was said to be an ongoing old Tribal dispute between Kakepotta and Brohi communities of the area, area police disclosed.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali witnessing the funeral prayer of the customs officers who were martyred in D.I Khan attack, at custom House.

## Administrative machinery actively checking price, weight of roti/naan: Bilal

FAISALABAD (APP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin has said administrative machinery is active for checking price and weight of roti and naan across the province on special instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He was presiding over a meeting at the commissioner's office here on Friday. Commissioner Silwat Saeed, Deputy Commissioner Abdullah Nayar Sheikh and other officers were present. The minister said that measures were being taken on a daily basis to monitor the new rates of roti and naan, which had been fixed after consultation with relevant stakeholders including Anjuman-e-Tajran, Tandoor Hotels Associations and flour mills, etc. The government is not in favour of enforcing its decisions on any section forcefully, he said.

## Market-based subjects being introduced in educational institutions: Minister

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi has said that subjects that are compatible to need of modern era have been introduced in educational institutions. He was chairing a meeting that was convened to discuss problems being faced by girls' degree colleges. The meeting was also attended by Secretary Higher Education, Arshad Khan and principles of Bacha Khan Girls Degree College, City Girls Degree College, Hayatabad College and Frontier College for Women. On the occasion, the minister was briefed about problems of girls' colleges and shortage of staff in these institutions. Chairing the meeting, provincial minister said that necessary steps have been taken for promotion of girl education that is among top priorities of government.

## Dr. Rauf Iftikhar's services for the ailing humanity are commendable: Baligh

Independent Report LAHORE: Kidney Transplant Surgeon, Dr. Brigadier (Rtd) Rauf Iftikhar Ahmed called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore. Director Vigilance Punjab Human Organ Transplantation Authority, Adnan Ahmed Bhatti was also present in the meeting. During the meeting, measures to improve the kidney transplant sector was discussed. Talking on this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that Dr. Brigadier (ret'd) Rauf Iftikhar Ahmed's services for the ailing humanity are commendable. He said that he will also draw the attention of concerned authorities to give civil award to Dr. Brigadier (Rtd) Rauf Iftikhar Ahmed in recognition of his services. Kidney Transplant Surgeon Dr. Brigadier (Rtd) Rauf Iftikhar Ahmed informed the Governor Punjab about the performance in the field of Kidney Transplant. He said that he has done more than two and a half thousand successful kidney transplants in CMH Rawalpindi and other hospitals.



LAHORE: Kidney Transplant Surgeon Brigadier (ret'd) Rauf Iftikhar Ahmed meeting with Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman.

## Advisor asks tourists to avoid visiting Kaghan during current rains

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Zahid Chanzeb, Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture and Archeology, has expressed sorrow and concern over the damages caused by heavy rains in the province. He has advised the local administration and police to play an active role in helping out and guiding the travelers in the tourist areas and hill stations and urged the tourists to take full care of the SOPs. Zahid Chanzeb went on to visit the severely affected Kaghan Valley and Mansehra district to personally assess the situation caused by the prolong rains, where he along with the relevant authorities of local administration, Kaghan Development Authority and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Authority reviewed situation at highways and hotels at various places. He also assessed the arrangements for the tourists there. He issued an advisory for the tourists to refrain from visiting the Kaghan Valley and traveling along highways in the mountainous areas in general in view of the dangerous situation caused by the rains.

# International News

## Bombs rain on Rafah as US tries to 'prevent' all-out offensive

Monitoring Desk RAFAH: Birds sang and planes rumbled overhead as Abdeljabbar al-Arja dug the remains of his dead neighbours from the rubble in Gaza. An overnight Israeli strike hit the home where a displaced Palestinian family was sheltering in the southern city Rafah, relatives and neighbours told AFP as they scraped at the soil with their hands. "We retrieved the remains of children and women, finding arms and feet. They were all torn to pieces. This is horrifying, it's not normal," Al-Arja said, adding that at least 10 people were killed in the blast. Soon after the war began on October 7, Israel told Palestinians living in the north of Gaza to move to "safe zones" in the territory's south like Rafah. But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has since vowed to invade the city, where around 1.5 million people live in shelters, more than half the territory's population. "How is Rafah a safe place?" said Zeyad Ayyad, a relative of the victims. In a separate strike on a house in Rafah's Al-Salam neighbourhood overnight on Tuesday, rescue crews recovered the corpses of eight family members including five children and two women, Gaza's civil defence service said. Meanwhile, senior US and Israeli officials held a virtual meeting on Thursday expected to include a discussion of both Israel's plans for the southern Gaza city of Rafah and its con-

sideration of a retaliatory strike against Iran. President Joe Biden has urged Israel not to conduct a large-scale offensive in Rafah to avoid more Palestinian civilian casualties in Gaza, where Palestinian health authorities say more than 33,000 people have been killed in Israel's assault. At the United Nations, Secretary General Antonio Guterres painted a dark picture of the situation in the Middle East, warning that spiraling tensions over the war in Gaza and Iran's attack on Israel could devolve into a "full-scale regional conflict." Guterres also said Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip had created a "humanitarian hellscap" for civilians trapped in the besieged territory.



Palestinians attempt to salvage their belongings from the rubble of a damaged building in the city of Nuseirat, in central Gaza Strip.

## Kenya mourns defence chief killed in helicopter crash

Monitoring Desk NAIROBI: Kenya began three days of mourning on Friday after its defence chief and nine other senior officers were killed in a helicopter crash, the latest military accident involving a high-profile figure. General Francis Omondi Ogolla, the Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces (CDF), was killed when his helicopter went down shortly after takeoff in a remote forested area of northwestern Kenya on Thursday. "A distinguished four-star general has fallen in the course of duty and service of the country," President William Ruto said as he announced the deaths that evening. He said the nation would observe three days of mourning from Friday, with the national flag flying at half-mast across the country and at Kenyan missions abroad. Ogolla's family announced that a funeral would be held on Sunday at his home in Siaya County in the west of the country, followed by a memorial service in a Nairobi suburb on April 26.

## Tehran signals no retaliation against Israel after drones attack Iran

Monitoring Desk TEHRAN: Explosions echoed the Iranian city of Isfahan on Friday in what sources described as an Israeli attack, but Tehran played down the incident and indicated it had no plans for retaliation — a response that appeared gauged towards averting region-wide war. Israel had previously warned it would hit back after Iran fired hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel almost a week ago, in retaliation for a deadly strike — which Tehran blamed on its foe — that levelled Iran's consular annex at its embassy in Syria. While most of the Iranian strikes were intercepted, fears of a major regional spillover from Israel's Gaza offensive have since soared. The limited scale of the attack and Iran's muted response both appeared to signal a successful effort by worldwide diplomats who have been working round the clock to avert all-out war since the Iranian move last weekend. Iranian media and officials described a small number of explosions, which they said resulted from Israel's air defences hitting three drones over the city of Isfahan. Notably, they referred to the incident as an attack by "infiltrators", rather than by Israel, obviating the need for retaliation. A senior Iranian official told Reuters there were no plans to respond against Israel for the incident. "The foreign source of the incident has not been confirmed. We have not received any external attack, and the discussion leans more towards infiltration than attack," the official said.



Iranians attend an anti-Israel rally in Tehran, Iran.

## US slaps sanctions on entities that raised funds for West Bank settlers

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday imposed sanctions on two entities that it said helped raise tens of thousands of dollars for two violent extremists in the West Bank already targeted with US sanctions, the Treasury Department announced in a statement. Washington had previously sanctioned five settlers and two unauthorized outposts in the West Bank in two rounds of

sanctions aimed at punishing ill-behaved Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank, where Palestinians envisage a future state. One entity, Mount Hebron Fund, launched an online fundraising campaign that raised \$140,000 for settler Yinnon Levi, Treasury said, after he was sanctioned on Feb 1 for leading a group of settlers that assaulted Palestinian and Bedouin civilians.

## European Union official von der Leyen visits the Finland-Russia border to assess security situation

Monitoring Desk COPENHAGEN: The head of the European Union's executive branch said Friday that Finland's decision to close its border crossings with Russia over a surge in migrants is a security matter for the whole 27-member bloc to consider. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen made the remarks during a trip to the frontier, visiting a part of the border located in south-eastern Finland. "We all know how (Russian President Vladimir) Putin and his allies instrumentalize migrants to test our defenses and to try to destabilize us," von der Leyen told officials. "Now Putin is focusing on Finland, and this is no doubt in response to your firm support of Ukraine and your accession to NATO."

## India begins voting in gigantic election as Modi seeks historic third term

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: India began voting on Friday in the world's largest election as Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks a historic third term in office on the back of growth, welfare, his personal popularity and Hindu nationalism. The vote pits Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) against an alliance of two dozen opposition parties which is challenging him with promises of increased affirmative action, more handouts and what they say is the need to save democratic institutions from Modi's dictatorial rule. The gigantic exercise involving almost one billion voters will be spread over seven phases across the world's most populous country at the peak of summer. It ends on June 1 and votes will be counted on June 4. On Friday, in the largest of the seven phases, 166 million voters in 102 constituencies across 21 states and territories will vote, including in Tamil Nadu in the south, Arunachal Pradesh on the Himalayan frontier with China.

## Pentagon chief Austin discusses Iran, Gaza aid with Israel's Gallant

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Thursday spoke with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant to discuss Iran's actions in the Middle East, other regional threats and aid into Gaza, the Pentagon said in a statement. Austin discussed "the importance of increasing and sustaining" the flow of humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza, including via a new route from Ashdod Port in Israel, the Pentagon said. Israel recently reopened the Erez crossing into northern Gaza and allowed the temporary use of Ashdod port in southern Israel after US President Joe Biden threatened to impose conditions on support for Israel unless it took steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Israel has faced growing international calls to do more to help civilians in Gaza, where nearly all of the 2.3 million population is displaced and enclave also suffers widespread hunger. The Israeli military said on Wednesday food trucks entered the blockaded Gaza Strip from Ashdod Port for the first time since the government approved the opening of the port to aid shipments. The Pentagon said Austin and Gallant discussed what it called "destabilizing actions" from Iran in the Middle East. Over the weekend, Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles in a retaliatory strike against a suspected Israeli strike on its embassy compound in Syria. Most of the drones and missiles were downed before reaching Israeli territory.

## Man arrested in Paris after Iran consulate incident

Monitoring Desk PARIS: French police on Friday arrested a man who had threatened to blow himself up at Iran's consulate in Paris, but on being searched was found not to be carrying any explosives. A police source told Reuters the man was seen at about 11 am (0900 GMT) entering the consulate, carrying what appeared to be a grenade and explosive vest. Police cordoned off the area.

# FM Aurangzeb says Pakistan wants larger, extended loan programme with IMF

**FM commends WB's blueprint to propel Pakistan to High Middle-Income status**

WASHINGTON (INP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb has said that Pakistan wants to enter into a larger and extended loan programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Attending the Roundtable conference with Investors in Washington, the finance minister highlighted Pakistan's stable macroeconomic indicators including declining inflation, stable currency, strong growth of agriculture sector, strong remittances, rising forex reserves and buoyant stock market.

He also discussed key priorities of the Government around taxation, energy sector reforms and privatization programme.

Finance Minister

Muhammad Aurangzeb also met with Citibank officials in Washington DC and briefed them on the positive economic indicators including rising stock market, renewed interest of foreign buyers and institutional flows on the back of Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) signed with IMF.

The Finance Minister said Pakistan has successfully repaid Eurobond on time. He said the government has initiated discussion with IMF on a larger and extended programme.

He also highlighted priority areas of taxation, energy sector overhaul and reforms in state owned enterprises.

Meanwhile, the Finance Minister also held a meeting with Moody's Investor Service on the side-

lines of IMF and World Bank Spring meetings in Washington.

During the meeting, the finance minister briefed them about key economic indicators and how macro-economic stabilization has been achieved after entering into Stand-by Arrangement with the IMF.

Aurangzeb highlighted key priorities of the government around tax reforms, energy sector reforms and privatization agenda. He said the government wanted to tap international capital markets with a focus on Middle East and China. He also addressed key questions related to inflation, level of foreign exchange reserves, debt repayments, external account vulnerability and domestic liquidity.



WASHINGTON: Finance Minister, Muhammad Aurangzeb attending the "Roundtable on Implementing for Faster Results and Greater Impact" organized by the World Bank.

## Matters related to Saudi investment of 9 billion dollars in Pakistan finally settled: FO

**Pak "deeply disappointed" by UNSC dissensus on Palestine's full UN membership; regrets US veto**

ISLAMABAD (Online): Foreign Office (FO) has said the visit of delegation of the Kingdom Saudi Arabia to Pakistan remained positive and good omen.

At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad Friday FO Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said the matters related to Saudi investment of 9 billion dollars in Pakistan have been finally settled.

She held Pakistan played an active role on Palestine issue. Situation in Gaza and Palestine is very grave.

At the 'Saudi Arabia-Pakistan Investment Conference' co-chaired by the two Foreign Ministers, the two sides discussed investment proposals in diverse sectors such as energy, mining, agriculture, information technology, construction, human resource development and exports. The investment conference was aimed at paving the way for Saudi investments in Pakistan. We will continue our constructive engagement with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to enhance our economic and strategic partnership.

## Chief of Naval Staff calls on President Zardari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf Friday called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr and congratulated him on assuming the office of the President.

The Naval Chief briefed the president about the operational readiness of the Pakistan Navy in safeguarding the maritime interests of the country.

He highlighted that the Pakistan Navy had the capability to defend the national sea frontiers.

The president commended the professionalism of the Pakistan Navy in protecting the maritime interests of the country.

## MQM-P asks HESCO to stop outages, over billing

HYDERABAD (APP): Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday held a telephonic conversation with President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The prime minister's call was centered on his admiration for the strong resolve and impeccable efficiency with which the UAE leadership had confronted the challenges that had emerged from the recent rains in the country, a PM Office news release said.

He lauded the UAE President, who had once again demonstrated his outstanding leadership qualities and proven his strong commitment to ensuring the welfare of the Emirati people.

The prime minister said that Pakistan had also witnessed heavy rains in recent days, resulting in loss of many precious lives. He called for collective actions to combat the challenge of climate change and suggested that both countries strengthen their collaboration in the field.

## Commissioner for integrated efforts to make Karachi encroachment-free

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi on Friday said that all the departments concerned need to work together to get rid of encroachment in the city.

He was chairing a meeting in his office to review efforts to eradicate encroachment in the city.

He said that the deputy commissioners anti-encroachment force, land ownership agencies and police should make co-ordinated efforts.

Director anti-encroachment force Raja Tariq informed the meeting about the progress of the encroachment removal from the government land, details of the procedure and future planning to eradicate the encroachment.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Sukkur and other senior officers concerned.

The meeting focused on reviewing the advancement of development projects in various sectors including electricity, roads, health, education, and tourism.

## Sukkur authorities focus on food safety, quality control in wheat purchases

SUKKUR (APP): Divisional Commissioner Sukkur, Fayyaz Hussain Abbasi on Friday directed the food department to prepare next season's wheat purchase plan to get approval from relevant authorities.

He issued these directives while chairing a meeting of the food department that discussed matters relating to food safety authority and the mandate of the food department.

He stressed ensuring transparency in the buying process and maintaining the quality of wheat.

Commissioner Sukkur said a bumper production of wheat crops was made this year due to timely cultivation, better weather conditions, hard work of farmers and agri scientists by introducing new varieties.

## President hails Banking Mohtasib for providing Rs 1.26 b relief to customers

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has hailed Banking Mohtasib for processing over 25,000 complaints and providing monetary relief amounting to Rs. 1.26 billion to banking customers in 2023.

These views were expressed by him while talking to the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan (BMP) Sirajuddin Aziz, who called on him here at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Friday and presented the Annual Report of BMP to him.

Asif Ali Zardari also appreciated the Mohtasib for providing an overall relief to the tune of Rs. 6.4 billion to the complainants since its inception.

The banking ombudsman while giving briefing to the president highlighted the role and performance of the Banking Mohtasib for the expeditious redressal of grievances of the banking customers who had been deprived of their hard-earned money and life-savings by fraudsters.

He further informed that BMP had recently introduced a user-friendly system of online portal, making it easier for complainants to register their grievances.

President Zardari highlighting the significance of providing expeditious justice to fraud victims said that the banking Mohtasib, as an institution, played an important role in delivering free-of-cost justice to people and promoting good governance. He stressed the need to keep pace with technological advancements to expeditiously dispose of complaints.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## PM calls UAE President to admire his leadership role during rains

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday held a telephonic conversation with President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The prime minister's call was centered on his admiration for the strong resolve and impeccable efficiency with which the UAE leadership had confronted the challenges that had emerged from the recent rains in the country, a PM Office news release said.

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The meeting focused on reviewing the advancement of development projects in various sectors including electricity, roads, health, education, and tourism.



HYDERABAD: Workers of Pakistan Sunni Tehreek hold a protest rally against Israeli aggression in Gaza.

## Rangers, police conduct joint operations, apprehend suspects in riverine areas

KARACHI (INP): The efforts led by Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police to combat criminal activity in the remote riverine regions of Sindh are underway.

As reported by a spokesperson for Sindh Rangers on Friday, joint operations by the Pakistan Rangers Sindh and police resulted in the apprehension of nine suspects across various areas within the Kashmore district. These operations were executed based on intelligence gathered covertly.

The detained individuals are implicated in various criminal activities, including firing upon Rangers personnel along the Indus Highway, aiding criminal elements, perpetrating robberies, engaging in kidnappings for ransom, and other offenses.

Among the arrested suspects are individuals wanted by authorities, including Murtaza, Irshad, Zulfiqar, Manzoor and Buggi Jakhrami. Additionally, during a separate operation, five more individuals, including Ghulam Shabbir, Ghulam Hussain, Khadim, Yar Muhammad and Ghulam Abbas were apprehended. Authorities seized weaponry such as a 7 mm rifle with ammunition, two 30 bore pistols with rounds, two SMG magazines with five rounds, along with nine mobile phones and two motorcycles from the possession of the suspects.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chairing the meeting of National Action Plan Coordination Committee at NACTA Headquarters.

## Interior ministry decides to launch joint operation in Kacha area of Sindh

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi, after consultation with all stakeholders in the interior ministry decided to conduct a joint operation in Kacha area of Sindh province, with full force to clear the area from dacoits.

An important meeting of the National Action Plan Implementation Review Committee was held at NACTA headquarters here on Friday under the chair-

manship of the Interior Minister which was attended by Federal Interior Secretary, Head NACTA, DG FIA, Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

IGs and provincial secretaries Interior besides National Coordinator NACTA, all teams of National Action Plan and Intelligence agencies and Chief Commissioners also attended the meeting.

The meeting also addressed the recent suicide attack on foreigners in Manshra Colony, Landhi, Karachi. The IGP Sindh commended the swift and effective response of the police, which prevented the attack and ensured the safety of all foreigners involved.

## IGP Sindh chairs meeting on foreigners' security

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon chaired a high-level meeting at the Central Police Office (CPO) Karachi to review security arrangements for foreign nationals.

The IGP Sindh emphasized the need to establish a dedicated unit within the Special Branch equipped with modern security techniques tailored for the protection of foreigners.

He stressed the strict implementation of the standard operating procedures issued by the Government of Sindh regarding the security of foreign visitors/

delegates and regular issuance of security advisories by the concerned officers.

Supervisory officers at the range, district, and zone levels were instructed to reassess security measures for foreigners to formulate a concrete and effective police strategy and submit a review report within three days.

The meeting also addressed the recent suicide attack on foreigners in Manshra Colony, Landhi, Karachi. The IGP Sindh commended the swift and effective response of the police, which prevented the attack and ensured the safety of all foreigners involved.

The agenda included formation of committees to improve the efficiency of all departments of the municipal corporation, providing mosquito spray machines to every Unit committee, setting up 'Bachat' bazars to provide relief to the citizens, eliminating traffic congestion and repairing of roads in Lahori Mahalla, setting up public washrooms in markets, distributing sewing machines to poor women. The agenda was unanimously approved by all the council members.



HYDERABAD: Members of Civil Society hold a protest against Israeli aggression in Gaza.

## Sindh govt signs lease land agreement for Dhabeji SEZ

KARACHI (INP): A major development, the lease land agreement for the Dhabeji Special Economic Zone (DSEZ), a vital part of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), in Sindh province, was signed between key stakeholders, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday.

Sindh Economic Zones Management Company (SEZMC) stated in a brief announcement that Dhabeji Special Economic Zone (DSEZ) has taken "a leap forward with the signing of the lease land agreement".

The statement also highlighted that the zone will be developed under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode, led by the Sindh Government.

"DSEZ aims to attract investment to Pakistan and will offer a plug-and-play platform for investors," the SEZMC's statement further read.

Last year in June, during the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, BOI's Approvals Committee granted Dhabeji Industrial Zone (DIZ) the status of SEZ to pave a new era of industrialization for Karachi and Pakistan.

DSEZ will facilitate the potential investors of China and other countries to either start new enterprises or transfer their facilities to Pakistan.

According to CPEC's official website, 1530 acres of land have been allocated to establish DSEZ which will be developed in two phases.

MIRPURKHAS (APP): The Mirpurkhas Police on Friday launched a full-scale operation to tackle organized crime, drugs and illegal substances like gutka, mawa and country liquor. According to the spokesman, the operation ordered by Sindh Home Minister Zia Lanjar and IG Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon was spearheaded by Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Mirpurkhas Range Javed Sonharo Jaskani.

DIG Jaskani warned that corrupt police officers involved in drug-related activities will face severe consequences. He also promised to reward officers who perform well. A meeting was held at the DIGP Office in Mirpurkhas with Station House Officers (SHOs) from Mirpurkhas, Umarkot and Tharparkar districts to discuss the plan.

## Chief of the Turkish General Staff calls on defence minister

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Metin Gurak called on Minister for Defence & Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif in Islamabad, Friday.

Defense Minister extended warm welcome to the esteemed Turkish defence delegation.

He described the bilateral defence relations between Pakistan and Türkiye as robust. Defence Minister acknowledged the active role being played by Türkiye for controlling the situation and suffering in Gaza.

The visiting dignitary commended Pakistan's efforts in fostering regional peace and stability, as well as Pakistan Armed Forces' role in combating terrorism.

## Mayor LMC chairs council meeting

LARKANA (APP): Mayor Larkana Municipal Corporation (LMC) Anwar Ali Nawaz Lohar on Friday presided over a meeting in which seven point agenda was presented to address the issues of different localities.

The agenda included formation of committees to improve the efficiency of all departments of the municipal corporation, providing mosquito spray machines to every Unit committee, setting up 'Bachat' bazars to provide relief to the citizens, eliminating traffic congestion and repairing of roads in Lahori Mahalla, setting up public washrooms in markets, distributing sewing machines to poor women. The agenda was unanimously approved by all the council members.

The meeting discussed previous anti-Polio drive besides formulating the strategy for the next anti-Polio campaign to be started from April 29 to May 6.

The DC said that Polio was a crippling disease for which every child up to 5 years of age must be administered OPV against it.

## Mirpurkhas Police crack down on crime, drugs

MIRPURKHAS (APP): The Deputy Commissioner Matiari Muhammad Yusuf Shaikh on Friday presided over an emergency meeting of Health Department and Revenue officials to prevent measles epidemic in district Matiari. During the meeting, directives were issued to the Health Department to form special teams and work under comprehensive strategies to prevent the increasing spread of measles.

Additional Deputy Commissioner-I Noor Ahmed Khahro, District Health Officer (DHO) Pir Ghulam Hussain, representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) Dr. Babar Hussain, District Manager PPHI Iqra Bhatti, Assistant Commissioners Abdul Sattar Shaikh, Abid Qamar, Abdul Khaliq and others participated in the meeting.

The Deputy Commissioner Matiari directed the PPHI and health department officials to submit daily reports regarding measures taken to prevent measles and control the disease. DHO Pir Ghulam Hussain briefed about the outbreak, stating that upon the emergence of measles cases, immediate action was taken by the health department in Matiari, including the deployment of special teams of doctors to start treatment and initiate vaccination. He mentioned that from January to the present month, 138 measles cases have been reported, out of which 64 tested positive. Furthermore, 5,617 children in affected areas have been vaccinated against measles.

## 'No criticism on Pakistan allowed in Parliament', says Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar on Friday lambasted the Opposition benches for hurling criticism against the state and warned that no criticism against the country would be allowed.

Speaking on Point of Order at the National Assembly, the Minister said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had damaged the country's interests through its concocted narrative of foreign conspiracy that allegedly resulted in the regime change and put a dent to the foreign policy of the country.

He said the PTI's founder had been jeopardizing the foreign interests of the country and he compromised the confidentiality of the entire diplomatic communication.

The PTI leadership had been accusing foreign countries for interference in the country which was retracted by the spokesperson of the PTI through its official social media handles, he added.



KARACHI: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Leader, Saif-ur-Rehman addresses to media persons during press conference, at Karachi press club.

## DC Larkana chairs meeting to review strategy for anti-Polio drive

LARKANA (APP): Deputy Commissioner Larkana Dr Sharjeel Noor Channa chaired a meeting of the District EPI and Polio Eradication Committee at his office here Friday.

The meeting discussed previous anti-Polio drive besides formulating the strategy for the next anti-Polio campaign to be started from April 29 to May 6.

The DC said that Polio was a crippling disease for which every child up to 5 years of age must be administered OPV against it.

## DC Matiari chairs emergency meeting to prevent measles epidemic

HYDERABAD (APP): The Deputy Commissioner Matiari Muhammad Yusuf Shaikh on Friday presided over an emergency meeting of Health Department and Revenue officials to prevent measles epidemic in district Matiari. During the meeting, directives were issued to the Health Department to form special teams and work under comprehensive strategies to prevent the increasing spread of measles.

Additional Deputy Commissioner-I Noor Ahmed Khahro, District Health Officer (DHO) Pir Ghulam Hussain, representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) Dr. Babar Hussain, District Manager PPHI Iqra Bhatti, Assistant Commissioners Abdul Sattar Shaikh, Abid Qamar, Abdul Khaliq and others participated in the meeting.

The Deputy Commissioner Matiari directed the PPHI and health department officials to submit daily reports regarding measures taken to prevent measles and control the disease. DHO Pir Ghulam Hussain briefed about the outbreak, stating that upon the emergence of measles cases, immediate action was taken by the health department in Matiari, including the deployment of special teams of doctors to start treatment and initiate vaccination. He mentioned that from January to the present month, 138 measles cases have been reported, out of which 64 tested positive. Furthermore, 5,617 children in affected areas have been vaccinated against measles.