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MBS hosts Iftar PM Shahbaz, Saudi Crown Prince discuss bilateral relations

Matters in connection with trade and investment between the two countries also discussed

Monitoring Desk MAKKAH: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who is on three-day visit to Saudi Arabia, on Sunday attended Iftar hosted by Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman at Al-Safa Palace in Makkah. "Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman hosts an Iftar at Al-Safa Palace in Makkah, attended by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Crown Prince of Bahrain, where they all broke their fast together," reported Saudi Gazette. According to details, the Saudi crown prince welcomed the premier and his delegation. Both the leaders had discussed the bilateral relations between two brotherly countries.



MAKKAH: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman at Al-Safa Palace

Khawaja Asif says: Pakistan stands firm to defend its sovereignty

ISLAMABAD (APP): Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Saturday asserted that Pakistan was fully prepared to provide a comprehensive response if India takes any aggressive action. Talking to a private news channel, he emphasized Pakistan's readiness to defend itself against any potential threat, stating, "If India takes any action, it will receive a full reply. "We are prepared, and if anything occurs, we will not hold back", he said. The minister highlighted Pakistan's unwavering commitment to safeguarding its sovereignty against any form of aggression.

Islamabad starts work to complete 80-km section of Pak-Iran gas pipeline

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi expected to visit Pakistan on Apr 22; Islamabad faces penalty of \$18bn for failure to complete project; 80-km section to be completed in 24 months at cost of Rs44bn.

ISLAMABAD (INP): With Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's expected visit to Pakistan on April 22, authorities have commenced the work to begin the construction of the 80-kilometre section of the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline from Gwadar to a point where it can be connected with the Iranian section of the project, reported an English daily on Sunday. As per the publication, citing a senior official of the Energy Ministry, the Inter-State Gas Company (ISGS) has already issued tenders seeking the much-delayed re-validation of survey and Front-End Engineering Design (FEED) by consultants. The development comes amid the United States' explicit opposition to the bilateral project, coupled with warnings of potential sanctions, which has faced a nearly decade-long delay as it was set to be completed in December 2014 followed by its operationalisation in January 2015. Over the years, Pakistan maintained that it could not materialise the project in its territory because of the US sanctions imposed on Iran, a view which authorities in Tehran have never subscribed, saying the US sanctions are not justified. However, in January, Tehran issued the last notice to Islamabad seeking the completion of its side of the pipeline by February-March 2024 or face a \$18 billion penalty under the penalty clause of the Gas Sales Purchase Agreement (GSPA) of the 781-kilometre project. According to the official, the laying down of the 80-km section of the pipeline is essential to avoid arbitration in France which may lead to the imposition of the aforesaid penalty on Pakistan. Furthermore, he also added that re-validation of early survey and FEED is crucial as the 80-km section provisions two compressors one at the border and one at Gwadar as the 80-km part of pipelines would absorb 100mmcf initially compared to the 750mmcf which the project is expected to take-off for 25 years.

Oath taking to be on 1st working day after Eid: Balochistan cabinet to be formed soon after Eidul Fitr: GoB spokesman

Independent Report QUETTA: The spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind has announced that the provincial cabinet would be formed soon after Eidul Fitr. In an official announcement made here on Sunday, the spokesman of provincial government said that the oath taking ceremony of the provincial cabinet would be held on first working day after Eid vaccinations. Shahid Rind said that there is consensus on the formula of formulation of provincial cabinet. The ceremony of cabinet's oath taking had been decided some days ago, the spokesman informed. However, the Chief Minister had to leave abroad on emergency basis due to medical check up of his brother. The provincial cabinet would now be formed soon after Eidul Fitr's vaccinations, the spokesman added. It may be mentioned here that the formation of provincial cabinet was delayed for over a month. Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti was sworn in as the Chief Minister Balochistan on March 2. In interaction with media, the Chief Minister had announced that the cabinet would be formed by April 4, 2024.



MAKKAH MUKARAMAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is being received by Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Nawaf Al Saeed Al Malki.

President Zardari calls for strengthening bilateral ties with Turkiye



ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari and President of Turkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Sunday called for further strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries in various fields. The two leaders spoke over the phone and discussed matters of mutual interest, a post on President of Pakistan X account said. President Zardari felicitated the Turkish President on the forthcoming Eid-ul-Fitr and invited him to visit Pakistan, besides expressing his best wishes for him and the people of Turkiye, another related X post said.

Two terrorist killed in North Waziristan

RAWALPINDI (Online): A fire exchange took place between the security forces and terrorists in North Waziristan District on Sunday. Pakistan Army troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location as a result of which two terrorists were killed. Weapons and explosives were also recovered from them. Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area as the Security Forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country.



QUETTA: Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola and MPA Raheela Hameed Durrani attending a programme on "reflections and way forward for gender equality and women empowerment policy 2020-2024 organized by the Women Development Department in collaboration with the UN-Women.

Two killed, five injured in Khuzdar blast

KHUZDAR (Agencies): At least two were killed and five injured including a woman in a blast near Umer Umar Farooq Chowk in Khuzdar. Khuzdar Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Arif Khan said that the bomb was planted in a motorcycle parked in the middle of a commercial centre. The bodies and the injured were moved to the nearby hospital, he added. Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti condemned the blast, saying that the targeting of innocent citizens was a cowardly attack. CM Sarfraz Bugti vowed to punish the perpetrators of the bombing, saying that security forces with the help of Pakistanis will end the scourge of terrorism in the country.

Shangla attack: Report reveals vehicle carrying Chinese nationals was not bullet, bomb-proof

PESHAWAR (INP) - The preliminary investigation of Besham suicide attack on Chinese nationals show that neither their vehicle was bullet nor bombproof. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police sent second report of the tragic incident to federal government. The report revealed that a woman engineer was also among the deceased. Five Chinese nationals were killed when the vehicle they were travelling by was attacked near Besham - a town located in Shangla district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A suicide bomber had rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the convoy of Chinese engineers which was on its way from Islamabad to their camp in Dasu. According to report, the bus of Chinese nationals plunged into a 300-foot deep ditch after the suicide blast. The Besham police station was just 6 KM away from the site of incident while Dasu dam was at the distance of 77 KM. The report added that the CCTV cameras were installed in all the buses of Chinese convoy.

Eid Special departs for Rawalpindi from Quetta

Independent Report QUETTA: The Eid Special Train departed for Rawalpindi from Quetta Railway Station on Sunday morning. The Eid Special left Quetta was consisted of 11 passenger coaches of mostly Economy class. According to the Railway authorities, over 700 passengers were travelling by Eid Special for Rawalpindi from Quetta. The Eid Special is scheduled to reach Rawalpindi today (Monday) afternoon. Needless to mention here is that the PR authorities had decided to run the Eid Special to facilitate maximum passengers proceeding for celebration of Eidul Fit with their dear ones.

Way forward for gender equality & women empowerment policy: Govt. determined to take measures for women empowerment in all sectors: Deputy Speaker BA

Independent Report QUETTA: The Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Ms. Ghazala Gola Begum has stated that the provincial government is determined to take necessary measures for making women empowered in all sectors besides making legislation for protection of their equal rights. This was stated by the Deputy Speaker while addressing the programme on "reflections and way forward for gender equality and women empowerment policy 2020-2024 organized by the Women Development Department in collaboration with the UN-Women here at a local hotel the other day. Also participated in the programme was by the former Speaker and current Member of Provincial Assembly, Ms. Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani, Secretary Women Development, Sardar Khan Bugti, head of UN-Women in Balochistan, Ms. Ayesha Wadood, representatives of the civil society and other concerned. Ms. Ghazala Gola maintained that the empowered women happen to be asset of any society, and as such the government would provide equal opportunities to women in education and other sectors so as to bring them at par women of other parts of the country. She said that it is included in our priority to engage the women in all sectors especially health, education and vocational training so that they are able to play their vital role in the country's development and prosperity. Speaking on the occasion

PM constitutes body to review climate change governance, funds

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Prime Minister has constituted a high-level committee to review Climate Change Governance and Mechanisms to access Climate Funds and nominated Climate Change Minister, Romina Khurshid Alam and Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr Abid Suleri as its members along with other senior members. The Minister of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination has issued a detailed notification explaining the context, mandate, terms of reference (TORs) and list of the members of the Committee. The committee will be chaired by the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission that comprised of government officials, parliamentarians, representatives from civil society and environment NGOs, private sector, research institutes, and expert/advisors with knowledge on specific topics. The members are



QUETTA: A large number of people are busy in Eid shopping at Liaquat Bazar.

Health deptt decides to conduct inquiry into funds released for scholarships of doctors

Independent Report QUETTA: The Health Department, Government of Balochistan has decided to conduct inquiry into the public funds released for the scholarships of post-graduate and house officer doctors in the province. An official letter has been sent to the Director General Audit by the Health Department on directives of the Secretary Health, Abdullah Khan. As per the sources, the DG Audit has been requested to conduct audit of the funds released on account of the scholarships of the postgraduate doctors and house officers for last five years. In this regard, the audit of the approval and payment of the scholarships would be scrutinized, it was learnt. According to the sources, alleged irregularities were reported in the funds allocated for payment of the scholarships of the postgraduate and house officer doctors serving in the province.

Soft drinks vendor shot dead in Panjgur

QUETTA (INP): A soft drinks vendor was shot and killed by unidentified assailants in Panjgur, Balochistan, on Sunday. Police officials reported that the attackers, who arrived on a motorcycle, fired five to six shots at the vendor sitting on his cart. The victim, identified as Sajid Hussain from Rajanpur, Punjab, died instantly. The assailants managed to escape the scene. Imran and his spouse

Toshakhana case Info minister rebuts Imran's fabricated, baseless allegations

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Sunday rebutted former prime minister Imran Khan's allegations against the senior military leadership in connection with the Toshakhana case, saying they were "false, fabricated and baseless". The former premier had alleged that the senior military leadership "implicated" him and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana reference "in an attempt to stifle my spirits". Imran and his spouse were sentenced to 14 years in jail in the case in January, days before the February 8 general elections. Last week, the Islamabad High Court suspended the sentences. However, appeals against the convictions in the case are still pending. A post shared on Imran's official account on X gave a transcript of his conversation with reporters at Adiala Jail - where he is currently incarcerated - on Saturday. Imran claimed that the senior military leadership was "driving the state affairs".



QUETTA: Members of Civil Society Balochistan are holding protest demonstration against Israeli cruel and inhumane acts and express unity with the innocent people of Palestine, at Quetta press club.



## Highly successful Kakul training camp strengthened unity among players: Babar

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: Pakistan skipper Babar Azam said on Sunday that the "highly successful" training camp at the Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul had strengthened unity among the players and made them "better, fitter and mentally tougher athletes".

He made the remarks in a press release shared by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Sunday.

Earlier, the PCB said the camp — organised in collaboration with the army — was "strategically designed to prepare the players for the upcoming series and tournaments," including the home T20 series against New Zealand and the forthcoming ICC T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies.

The board had sent 29 players — including Babar, Mohammad Rizwan, Shadab Khan and Shaheen Shah Afridi — to the training camp at PMA Kakul on March 26. All-rounder Imad Wasim and pacer Mohammad Amir — both of whom had recently announced their decision to end their retirement from international cricket — had also participated in the camp.

In the statement issued today, the PCB said that players underwent training

and drills designed by army experts and strategists.

"Under the guidance of experienced trainers and coaches, the players underwent a comprehensive training regime tailored to elevate their fitness levels, agility, leadership, strategic thinking and overall performance on the field," the board said.

In the press release, Babar was quoted as saying that this was his third boot camp and he had "gleaned new insights" with each one.

"This time, our focus extended beyond physical fitness to encompass team bonding activities and performance-improving lectures. These elements are crucial considering our team environment where collective performance is paramount for achieving desired results," he said.

"The notable deviation from previous camps was the absence of cricket-centric activities. Instead, the emphasis was squarely on physical conditioning, teamwork and mental resilience," he said, adding that all players had experienced "significant growth".

"I'm confident that we will return to competitive cricket as better, fitter and mentally tougher athletes, thereby enhancing our overall performance," he said.

"Unlike our usual routine during other camps and international series, we engaged in confidence-building exercises and team-building activities. Notably, we opted to share rooms, facilitating deeper connections among team members.

"These shared spaces fostered discussions ranging from strategic planning and team combinations to the evolution of cricket, latest innovations in the sport, analysis of opponents and our approach to each day's challenges," Babar said.

"Given the upcoming cricket fixtures, this camp proves exceptionally valuable. It not only mitigates injury risks but also augments both individual skills and collective team performance," he said.

Other players joined the skipper in lauding the camp. Fast-bowler Naseem Shah said, "There was a significant emphasis on physical fitness [...] I believe we have successfully met our objectives, and I'll return as a fitter and more adept athlete."

Meanwhile, Imad stated, "These sessions and drills were markedly different from cricket-related training [...] we dedicated extra hours that I'm confident will benefit us all in match situations."



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chairing a meeting of the Agriculture Department.

## Norway removes Pakistan from its National Threat Assessment List

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant development, Norway has taken the decision to remove Pakistan from its National Threat Assessment List, a private news channel reported on Sunday.

This decision follows effective diplomatic efforts by Pakistan, which successfully persuaded Norwegian authorities to exclude Pakistan's name from their list of nations of security concern.

The announcement came through the latest report issued by Norway's Police Security Service, which holds responsibility for intelligence and security

matters within the country.

For years, Pakistan, among other nations, had been listed in Norway's National Threat Assessment List, posing challenges for Pakistani students and researchers who encountered obstacles due to their country's inclusion on the list.

Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives bore fruit, leading to its removal from the list.

This decision is anticipated to bolster Pakistan's positive image on the global platform and create new educational opportunities for its students and researchers.

## Former CS Punjab Javed Mehmood passes away

LAHORE (APP): Javed Mehmood, former chief secretary (CS) Punjab, passed away on Sunday.

He had been fighting cancer and receiving treatment at Jinnah Hospital in



Laahore, according to the family sources.

The funeral prayers will be held in his hometown, Roshan Bheela in Kasur, at 10am on Monday.

## Marwat dismisses reports of differences within PTI

ISLAMABAD (INP) — PTI leader Sher Afzal Marwat has refuted reports of differences within the party. In a statement on Sunday, Marwat stated that all PTI leaders were standing by the party founder's cause, emphasising that this solidarity was imperative at this juncture.

The PTI leader also asserted that he would not respond to any questions about the party in a manner that could sow seeds of discord within its ranks.

## PUC welcomes Dr Al-Issa's visit, anticipates boost in interfaith harmony

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) on Sunday extended a warm welcome to Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL), as he embarks on a pivotal visit to Pakistan from April 7 to 16, 2024.

Talking to media, Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said the visit is anticipated to herald a new era of collaboration and understanding, fostering interfaith harmony and cooperation in the region.

He emphasized the significance of Secretary General Al-Issa's visit, highlighting his steadfast commitment to humanizing the world and enabling individuals to practice their faiths and beliefs freely. Ashrafi commended Dr. Al-Issa's efforts in promoting tolerance and understanding on a global scale.

He specifically pointed to the recent global conference organized by the MWL, titled "Building Bridges

between Islamic Schools of Thought and Sects," to enhance understanding and unity among different Islamic schools of thought and sects. Ashrafi lauded the initiative as a crucial step towards fostering greater cohesion within the Muslim world. Expressing optimism about the outcomes of Al-Issa's visit, he underscored the potential for strengthened bilateral ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, particularly in the realm of religious pluralism. Ashrafi emphasized the importance of collaboration between the two brotherly nations in various sectors, envisioning a future marked by mutual respect and cooperation.

As MWL Secretary General engages in a series of meetings and engagements during his visit, he expressed hope that Dr. Al-Issa's presence will serve as a catalyst for enhanced interfaith dialogue and cooperation, paving the way for a more harmonious and inclusive society in Pakistan and beyond.

## Pak Army continues provide of ration to needy people of KP during Ramadan

PESHAWAR (INP): Pakistan Army continues the process to provide ration to the needy people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during Ramadan.



During the whole process, it was ensured that no deserving person is deprived in Bajaur, North Waziristan, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, Swat, Dir and Chitral. The ration includes dates, flour, pulses, rice, sugar, dry milk, cooking oil and summer drinks.

The people of these districts paid tribute to the high officials of Pakistan Army for this great work.

## Pakistan squad for NZ series expected to announce on April 9

**Sports Desk**

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) expected to announce T20I squad for the upcoming New Zealand series on Tuesday (April 8).

The national selection committee will announce the squad through a press conference. Sources divulged that it is expected that an 18-member squad will be announced for a home series.

Usman Khan, Imad

Wasim, and Mohammad Amir will also be part of the squad.

Meanwhile, Irfan Niaz and Abbas Afridi are also expected to get the opportunity to represent Pakistan. Other players who are likely to become part of the squad are Babar Azam, Saim Ayub, Mohammad Rizwan, Shadab Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Azam Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, and Zaman Khan.

It would be Abrar Ahmed or Usama Mir, who will be selected, whereas pacer Harris Rauf will be dropped due to the injury.

According to sources, Salman Ali Agha, Sahibzada Farhan, Mohammad Wasim, and Fakhar Zaman will also be part of the squad.

Govt. determined...

Continued from page 1 sion, Ms. Rahila Hameed Durrani said that it has always been her endeavour to raise voice for rights of the women.

She said that she is the firm believer in gender equality and therefore, she always spoke about it at the assembly's and other forums.

The Secretary Women Development Sardar Khan Bugti said that the government is resolute to provide equal opportunities of livelihood to women besides making them empowered, in collaboration with the UN Women.

He said that we are working under comprehensive planning to have an access to the women in remote areas of the province.

Earlier, the Head of UN Women, Ms. Ayesha Wadood highlighted the endeavours of UN Women for gender equality and women empowerment.

another pressing issue. Dr. Bangash emphasizes the scarcity of pediatric heart specialists in Pakistan,

with only 100 physicians and a mere 25 pediatric heart surgeons nationwide. Karachi itself houses just 7 surgeons, with 4 stationed at the NICVD, and one each at Aga Khan Hospital, Liaquat National Hospital, and SIUT.

This shortage significantly impacts access to treatment. Dr. Hameedullah Malik, a pediatric physician, underscores the importance of early detection. He emphasizes that with timely intervention, 85% of children with CHD can survive. However, a staggering 60% of Pakistani children, mirroring the situation in developing countries, lack proper diagnosis and treatment.

KARACHI (INP): A staggering number of Pakistani children, exceeding 70,000 annually, are born with congenital heart disease (CHD), according to healthcare professionals. This alarming statistic highlights a critical public health concern in the country.

Professor Dr. Sohail Khan Bangash, head of the pediatric surgery unit at the National Institute of Cardiology (NICVD), Karachi, sheds light on the breakdown of these cases. He reveals that roughly 80% of these children have holes in their hearts, while the remaining 20% suffer from various other heart ailments.

Ages of affected children range from newborns to 14 years old.

The lack of readily available specialized care is

## Police report reveals arsenic presence on threatening letters received by judges

ISLAMABAD (INP) — The Islamabad Police have forwarded the investigation report concerning the threatening letters received by judges of the Islamabad High Court to the Ministry of Interior.

The report reveals that the letters were tainted with arsenic powder, although the amount was not lethal.

Also, data regarding the pens used to write the letters has been gathered, and the names of the sender(s),

along with CCTV footage, have been transmitted to the ministry.

The report also indicates that analysis of the postal stamps affixed to the letters is ongoing, and anti-terrorism teams have been established for Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

The report further states that daily updates are being compiled and submitted to both the Supreme Court and the Islamabad High Court.

## PM Shahbaz, Saudi Crown...

Continued from page 1

Muhammad Aurangzeb, Abdul Aleem Khan, Attaullah Tarar, and Ahad Khan Cheema.

Earlier Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has arrived in Makkah Mukarama from Madina to perform Umrah. The members of federal cabinet including Ishaq Dar, Khawaja Asif, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Abdul Aleem Khan, Attaullah Tarar and Ahad Cheema are accompanying the Prime Minister.

Earlier, the Prime Minister offered Isha prayers and nawafil at Masjid-e-

Nabvi and paid respects at Roza-e-Rasool (PBUH).

He especially prayed for progress and prosperity of Muslim Ummah and nation.

He also made special prayers for oppressed Muslims of Palestine and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. During the visit of Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will also meet Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz and discuss issues of mutual interest.

They will also exchange views on regional and global developments.

## PM constitutes body to...

Continued from page 1

It includes evaluating the effectiveness of existing and proposed institutional mechanisms such as the National Climate Change Council, SIFC, proposed Climate Change Authority, Climate Change Fund, National Disaster Risk Management Fund, and coordination with key ministries.

Additionally, there is a need to review institutional mechanisms and policies to mobilize climate finance, including climate funds and innovative financial instruments. The appraisal of institutional mechanisms and policies to mobilize carbon finance is also crucial.

Furthermore, assessing institutional mechanisms and policies to attract private capital from various sources such as Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), Pension Funds, Insurance Companies, Commercial Banks, Venture

Capital, and Private sector firms is essential. Examining institutional mechanisms and policies to enhance engagement with Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to reduce the cost of finance and leverage private sector investment through grants, guarantees, and concessional climate funds will also be recommended by the Committee.

The committee will make recommendations to strengthen climate governance, access climate and carbon finance, and mobilize the private sector to drive decarbonization of industry, integrate into green value chains, and boost exports in alignment with evolving international regulatory mechanisms such as carbon border adjustments. Additionally, the role of media, academia, and research entities in policy advocacy and formulation should be articulated.



QUETTA: A view of massive traffic jam due to people arrive the market for Eid shopping at the Meezan Chowk.

## Karachiites demands release of PTI founder Imran Khan

**Independent Report**  
KARACHI: In a significant political development, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) staged a rally in East Karachi district, demanding the release of its founder chairman, Imran Khan, the participants of rally made protest against theft of PTI mandate, and demanded judicial freedom.

The rally commenced from Hakim Saeed Ground University Road near Baitul Mukarram Masjid of Gulshan-e-Iqbal Karachi, a spot in Karachi accessible from various routes, reached Shahrah-e-Quaidin.

The event saw the participation of prominent PTI leaders, including Haleem Adil Sheikh, President of PTI Sindh, along with Raja Azhar, President of PTI Karachi, and other key figures of PTI like Jamal Siddiqui, Arslan Khalid, Fahim Khan, Amjad Jah, Nazirullah Mehsud, Waqas Khan, Agha Arslan, Sarina Adnan, Aftab Jahangir, and others.

Joining the rally were representatives from various wings of PTI, including the Insaf Lawyers, Women Wing, Insaf Youth Wing, Insaf Student Federa-

tion, and others. Participants of the rally vigorously expressed their demands for Imran Khan's release and vehemently condemned the theft of the mandate and demand for freedom of judiciary.

Addressing the rally participants, PTI Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh reiterated the unified voice of the nation in demanding Imran Khan's release. He warned the government to heed the anger of the youth, stating that failure to do so would leave no path for their return. The streets of Karachi are filled with people, echoing the singular demand across the nation: "Free Imran Khan."

Sheikh highlighted the critical state of affairs in Pakistan, emphasizing that while the people's mandate is being stolen, attempts are being made to snatch away the mandate they provided. He asserted that Karachi's mandate has been snatched and handed over to an anti-state party; he said we are united for peace, rule of law, and constitutionalism. He defended the right to protest, stating that holding rallies is their constitutional right; he said Pakistan and

its towns, its streets, and even the armed forces belong to us.

Haleem Adil Sheikh urged the people of Karachi to attend the massive gathering planned at Bagh-e-Jinnah on April 28, where over a million participants are expected. He urged ten million voters to join the event and show those who stole the mandate that the nation stands united against them.

Promising a vigorous campaign against Imran Khan's imprisonment and mandate theft, Sheikh vowed that their struggle would continue until Khan is freed and the stolen mandate is returned. He expressed confidence that Imran Khan would soon be free and would become the Prime Minister of the country.

PTI Karachi President Raja Azhar, speaking at the rally, announced a grand gathering in Karachi on April 28 and said Imran Khan will soon be with us and addresses the people of Karachi. He clarified that PTI workers are not terrorists but peaceful citizens, and the rally faced no roadblocks or interruptions.

## Indian Sikhs to arrive in Pakistan for Vasakhi Mela on 13th April

LAHORE (APP): Sikh pilgrims from India will come to Pakistan on April 13 to participate in the celebrations of Khalsa Janma Day and Vasakhi Mela.

Officials of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), Pradhan and other Sikh leaders will welcome the guests. ETB Secretary Farid Iqbal said all facilities would be provided to the Sikh pilgrims. In this regard, arrangements under the supervision of the Board's Additional Secretary Shrinis Rana Shahid Saleem have been finalized. The main ceremony will be held at Gurudwara Panja Sahib, Hasan Abdal, on April 14. The pilgrims will reach Nankana Sahib from Hassan Abdal on April 15 and on April 18, they will go to Gurudwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, Narowal. On April 20, the yatrees will visit Aimanabad and reach Lahore where he would stay for one day. The Sikh pilgrims will return to India after completing their 10-day pilgrimage on April 22.



QUETTA: Commuters pass through nearby an open sewerage main hole that may cause any accident specially in night hours, showing the negligence of concerned departments, at Bacha Khan Chowk in Quetta.



## PM renews pledge to ensure health facilities to all

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday renewed the commitment of the Government of Pakistan to provide and ensure health facilities for all of population. "Towards our destination of a healthier nation, I once again reiterate the commitment to transform Pakistan's healthcare sector at all levels that will ensure that each and every Pakistani has access to quality healthcare," the prime minister said in a message on World Health Day being observed on Sunday.

He said that the year's theme "My health, my right" aptly encapsulated every citizen's right to quality health services.

In order to ensure

health for all and as promised to the nation in the PML-N manifesto, the prime minister said their focus would remain on improving primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare, medical education, preventive healthcare and improved governance.

"We will partner and encourage provincial governments to expand and upgrade health facilities, launch mobile health clinics for enhanced access, re-energize immunization and improve mental health services," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.

The prime minister said that the establishment and operationalization of Medical City, establish-

ment of Cancer Care Hospital and Pakistan Kidney & Liver Institute facilities in each province remained their key priority.

"We take pride in having launched the Health Card during PMLN's 2013-18 tenure. We remain committed to universal health coverage and universal health insurance for our population, particularly providing free-of-cost healthcare services to low and middle-income families," he added.

On the World Health Day, the prime minister also applauded the services of health professionals, paramedical staff, nurses, and other health workers who selflessly worked day and night to provide health services to the nation.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Austria to Pakistan Andrea Wicke looking handmade work on a stall during Eid Bazaar, at a local hotel in Federal Capital.

## NAB asks AAA Associates' victims to submit compensation claims within fortnight

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has instructed individuals robbed by AAA Associates to submit their compensation claims to the NAB Rawalpindi bureau within the next two weeks. Those who have already submitted claims are advised not to resubmit their applications.

According to NAB, Rawalpindi sources, the Bureau was investigating the allegations of extortion of money, fraud, cheating, and false promises perpetrated by individuals such as Fawad Bashir, Shahzad Ali Kayani, and others from AAA Associates, targeting the general public.

The Bureau is probing allegations of money extortion, fraud, cheating and false promises perpetrated by individuals like Fawad Bashir, Shahzad Ali Kayani, and others associated with AAA Associates. Their alleged activities, centered at office no. 20121 on the Second Floor of the Business Centre in Bahria Town, Rawalpindi, have targeted the general public.

The NAB has asked individuals deceived by AAA Associates with false promises to submit their claims for the return of their stolen money. These individuals are required to provide supporting documents, including a copy of their Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) and receipts, either via post or email within next fifteen days. This will enable the commencement of legal proceedings against the culprits. Victims are asked to submit their claims, along with required documents, to the office of the Director General, NAB Rawalpindi, the Investigation Officer at Investigation Wing-II, National Accountability Bureau (Rawalpindi), situated at Melody, Islamabad, G-6, Civic Centre. Contact details for inquiries include Fax: 051-9220832, Phone: 051-9222064, and email: rawalpindi@nab.gov.pk.

## IFA inspects 1291 food outlets, issues fines worth Rs 2.8m

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Director Operations (DDO) of Islamabad Food Authority (IFA), Dr. Tahira Sadiq, while sharing a monthly report of the authority, stated that the authority inspected 1,291 food outlets and imposed fines totaling Rs 2.8 million on errant shopkeepers found flouting regulations. Talking to APP, she said that with an unwavering commitment to quality assurance, the authority's latest report underscored its relentless pursuit of adherence to food safety standards across the Federal Capital. On the directions of Director Food, Irfan Nawaz Memon, she accompanied by the Food Safety Teams (FSTs) inspected 1,291 establishments and sealed 16 outlets due to substandard food quality and inadequate arrangements, with legal actions initiated against three offenders, she said.

Additionally, she said

a staggering total of 664 oral warnings and 446 written notices were issued, signaling a zero-tolerance approach towards violations. Responding promptly to citizens' concerns, the authority diligently addressed 14 complaints, ensuring accountability and responsiveness in its operations, Dr Tahira said. She said that during the holy month of Ramadan, the IFA intensified its oversight, conducting thorough inspections at 360 points within Ramadan Bazaars. Furthermore, in a bid to streamline operations and promote compliance, licenses were granted to 43 food establishments, bolstering the regulatory framework. Highlighting its commitment to combating adulteration and excess, Dr Tahira said the IFA disposed of 6,500 kilograms of compromised food items, reaffirming its dedication to upholding stringent quality standards and protecting consumer welfare.



ISLAMABAD: An elderly couple on the way carrying bags on their head in Federal Capital.

## Notorious gang involved in ATM card fraud apprehended

ISLAMABAD (INP): The security team at the Centaurus Mall in Islamabad has successfully captured a notorious gang involved in ATM card fraud across various areas of the city including the mall itself.

It revealed that in recent months the gang had been targeting customers engaging in fraudulent activities such as stealing ATM cards, passwords, and making unauthorized withdrawals. This led to multiple complaints and FIRs being filed by affected customers at Margalla and

19 police stations. Through meticulous surveillance led by Senior Supervisor Yasir Abbasi and the internal security personnel, the gang was traced and apprehended upon their arrival at the mall. Two members of the gang were caught in possession of multiple ATM cards belonging to different individuals.

This achievement owes much to the dedicated efforts of Col. Farooqi, the CCTV team, and the supporting security staff at The Centaurus Mall.

## Search & combing operation conducted at Sihala Police Station jurisdiction

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) conducted a search and combing operation at Sihala police station jurisdiction, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directives of SSP Counter Terrorism Department Islamabad, the search and combing operations are being conducted in different areas of the city, to ensure the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens.

different areas of Sihala police station by CTD and local police teams.

During the search and combing operation 80 suspicious persons, 55 houses, 12 motorcycles and 07 vehicles were thoroughly checked.

SSP CTD Islamabad said that, the purpose of the search and combing operations was to heighten the security in the federal capital. All zonal officers were directed to continue these operations in their respective areas. Citizens are also



ISLAMABAD: A group of people, including police officers, gathered for a search and combing operation.



ISLAMABAD: Executive Director Pastor Samson Sohail, Waras Bahtti, Dr. Asif Riaz, Samil Masih, Pastor Naseem John and others pose for a group photo during the book launching ceremony of Dr. Yousaf Riaz organized by United Council of Churches, Country Development Foundation and Green Life Ministry.

## Mobile phone prices plummet in Pak ahead of Eid festivities

ISLAMABAD (INP): Amid sales targets challenges and appreciation in the Pakistani rupee against the US dollar, all the local and foreign mobile phone manufacturers in Pakistan have slashed the prices of over 20 mobile phone models ahead of Eid from Rs400 to a maximum of Rs10,000.

All Pakistan Mobile Phone Association have confirmed that all manufacturing companies significantly reduced the prices of not only push-button phones but also smartphones.

According to experts, the sales targets of the mobile phone companies are not being met due to which the prices are being reduced significantly.

Moreover, while the number of mobile phones being manufactured in Pakistan which were giving challenges to global companies resultantly international companies were bringing down the prices.

The representatives of the mobile phone companies have confirmed that

efforts are being made to stabilize the mobile phone industry in the Pakistani market by significantly reducing the rates.

Earlier, the office bearers of the Pakistan Mobile Phone Manufacturing Association (PMPMA) claimed that even the iPhone was ready to come to Pakistan but was reluctant due to inconsistent government policies.

According to the Engineering Development Board (EDB), lack of policy directives and coordination between various govt departments and ministries were key hurdles to growth in mobile phone manufacturing in Pakistan.

According to tech enthusiasts, the prices are declining amidst positive economic indicators suggesting a potential reduction in the inflation rate. Both local and foreign mobile phone manufacturers operating in Pakistan have responded to this economic momentum by implementing price reductions on a total of 20 smartphone models, slashing rates ranging from

Rs400 to Rs10,000. Additionally, reports indicate a modest reduction in prices for keypad mobile devices, with decreases of up to Rs500 observed.

The decision to lower prices has been attributed to a combination of factors, including the optimistic economic outlook and a drive to meet sales targets amid heightened production levels. Spokespersons representing various companies emphasized that the recent price adjustments are aimed at bringing stability to the phone industry in Pakistan. While the precise list of smartphones benefiting from price cuts is yet to be officially disclosed, it is anticipated that the move will provide consumers with increased accessibility to cutting-edge technology at more affordable rates.

This development will boost the mobile phone market and potentially stimulate higher consumer spending in the sector. Meanwhile, Samsung mobile phone prices provided a huge relief to inflation-hit people as phone rates dropped.

## APHC condemns fresh arrest spree by Indian forces in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has strongly condemned the fresh spree of raids, crackdowns and arrest unleashed by the Indian forces in every nook and corner of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) ahead of Indian Lok Sabha election.

According to Kashmir Media Service, APHC spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas in a statement issued in Srinagar termed the house

raids and arrest of dozens of activists by Indian forces' personnel in different parts of valley as the worst form of political vengeance to punish the Kashmiris for challenging India's illegal occupation of their motherland. He expressed serious concern over the victimization of common people by the Indian forces' personnel as well as sleuths of dreaded National Investigation Agency (NIA) and State Investigation Agency (SIA) during cordon and search operations.

## Crackdown against hoarders continues across country

ISLAMABAD (APP): The crackdown against hoarders is continued across the country to facilitate general public.

According to the radio Pakistan, the relevant authorities collected 26762 metric tons of fertilizer, 2420 metric tons of flour, 53954 metric tons of ghee and 9340 metric tons of sugar during this crackdown. During the last week of previous month, 168 metric tons of fertilizer, 0.544 metric tons of flour, 869 metric tons of ghee.



ISLAMABAD: A model of Faisal Mosque placed at a local hotel during Holy Month of Ramadan in the Federal Capital.

## Arsenic letters probe teams visit stores to identify accused in twin cities

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) investigative teams visited New Town Rawalpindi and Sector I-10/4 Islamabad on Sunday and obtained data of stores to identify the accused involved in sending the arsenic letters to high ups.

The investigative teams also questioned the owners of the stores where arsenic powder was reported to be available.

The three investigative teams were probing the letters laced with poisonous substances which were

sent to the judges of Supreme Court and High Courts and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Arsenic powder has also been found on these letters.

The investigation teams obtained the data of stores located near both the areas where arsenic powder was likely to be obtained.

The investigation teams have directed shopkeepers to keep record of buyer's information before purchasing any suspicious chemical.

However, during the investigation no arrests were made so far from Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Earlier, authorities have put post offices and courier companies on alert. The post office officials and courier services have been asked to be vigilant and check thoroughly any letter sent to any high-profile personality.

Sources said that all the post offices and courier services were directed not to open any 'suspicious' letter addressed to high-profile personalities.

## Citizens should ensure precautionary measures before leaving to home

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: The DIG Operations Islamabad Syed Shahzad Nadeem Bukhari issued an important message for the federal capital residents traveling to their hometowns during the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, a public relations officer said.

In his video message, the DIG Operations Islamabad said that the Islamabad Capital Police is continuously engaged in ensuring the safety of residents' lives, property, and dignity.

He further said that, citizens leaving for Eid holidays should leave their homes with appropriate security arrangements, ensure proper lighting inside and outside the house, lock the main gate from the inside, and install CCTV cameras around the house.

Ensures proper arrangements for the safekeeping of valuable items such as jewelry and cash,



ISLAMABAD: A police officer in uniform, likely the DIG Operations Islamabad, speaking at a podium.

## IRSA releases 81,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 81,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 84,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1419.29 feet and was 21.29 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 19,200 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1101.50 feet, which was 51.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 33,200 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 44,400, 34,100, 29,000 and 7,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 18,800 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 7,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

## Reaping bounties as Ramazan culminates

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the holy month of Ramazan culminates with all its bounties, the faithful sought Allah's benediction Saturday night - during Laylatul Qadar (The Night of Decree) - 27th night of Ramazan.

It was one of the series of five Nights of Decree falling during last Ashra of Ramazan - a night better than thousands months worshipping and the most important segment of an Ashra defined for seeking Allah's blessings (Jannah) and protection from Hell.

Starting from the first decade of blessing and benediction and then to second decade of forgiveness, this month culminates with salvage from Hell during last decade and entering one of Allah's favorite Jannah (Paradise).

Additional to the Laylatul Qadr - also known

as the Night of Power or the Night of Destiny - and besides all other charity and prayers - Aitkaaf (seclusion) is another hallmark of this decade.

Forgoing their families and societal duties, the faithful cut off themselves from everybody to pray in seclusion in an artificially erected cabin at a Mosque to seek forgiveness and benediction of Allah Almighty.

This is surely the peak of worshipping during this holy month when it is the last decade; there is Laylatul Qadar in odd nights; and then there is somebody restricting himself to seclusion diligently searching Allah's benediction and blessings.

"We wait this month whole of year. This is Allah's gift for us to gain certain level of piety and get our sins cleared," said

Aamir Chaudhry, a common citizen. "But, seeing my surroundings and comparing it with my childhood, it feels that people response to Ramazan has changed."

In his 50s and a regular fast observing citizen, Aamir recalled his childhood with grandparents at a native village and said, "we could feel Ramazan all around - in everybody's conduct, in wearing, talking, praying, meeting, business - almost everything. People were fearful of Allah in disrespecting anybody, abusing, fighting or deceiving others."

"But, now the situation feels like a bit different. Today we live with evils like short measuring, lying, deceiving, adulterating, missing prayers and so on even during Ramazan," he said. "So what change we feel, is increased number of

devout at mosques and the volume of charity."

Muslims engage in intensified devotion, prolonged prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, and supplications in a bid to deepen their spiritual connection and seek divine mercy and blessings during these precious nights.

Wrapped in contemplation and solitude, they devote themselves entirely to spiritual pursuits, seeking closeness to the Almighty.

Beyond personal spiritual endeavors, the final Ashra also underscores importance of Sadqa Fitr - a charitable act of Muslims providing sustenance and support to less fortunate in their communities.

Throughout Ramazan, the faithful exhibit unwavering patience and devotion, for introspection, renewal of faith and seeking

blessings for years ahead.

"This Ramazan owes more responsibility on us amidst rising inflation and dearth," said Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman, Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi.

"In this situation, we need to be more vigilant about our neighbors, relatives and poor around us, upholding our spiritual aspirations of fasting and taking care of those hardly meeting ends."

He said as Muslims dutifully observe fasting as a pillar of Islam, the prevalence of inflation undermines essence of compassion, empathy and social responsibility. "Therefore, it is obligatory on those affluent who can afford to help the deserving fellows, to come forward and share their woes. It is equally as good as any other spiritual endeavor."



ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted Constitution Avenue during Sunday holiday in the Federal Capital.



## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Monday April 08, 2024

### 9th May's sorry saga: Is reconciliation on the table?

While 9th May, 2023's sorry saga would always remain in the mind of each and every patriotic Pakistani as the "black day" and flash when spate of attacks on military installations, memorials, and sanctuaries of martyrs were witnessed in different parts of the country with no exception to the Rawalpindi and Lahore, it is obvious that the State of Pakistan remains resolute in its stance against engaging in any form of negotiation with individuals or groups who have become instruments of external forces to sow discord within the nation.

The whole nation still remembers the gory incidents rather riots in the country by the violent leaders, workers and supporters of a particular political party with its total backing and instigation what was also called as "9/11 type" attacks on the country's national interests.

As sorry affairs of the 9 May were just mind boggling and shocking, an impression seems to be created among different circles including social media ones that whether reconciliation is on the table?

How can just forget when the violent people had broken the fighter jets of 1965 war, what means they had attacked the pride of Pakistan Air Force attained by defeating the enemy in the air war.

Similarly, the model of Chagai Mountain, which reminded the nation of nuclear tests carried out by its scientists that made the country's defence invulnerable, was also set on fire.

Then there seemed to be a scheme/method behind that madness on 9th May last year as all such symbols were targeted selectively which had a link either with national heritage or were the pride of the Armed Forces.

In this backdrop and that in light of the tragic events of 9 May, one thing must be crystal clear that no dialogue shall be entertained with perpetrators, facilitators or sympathizers associated with the planning and execution of such acts.

Obviously, unless those responsible openly condemn the heinous attack and publicly accept responsibility for their actions without expectation of any absolution from the state, there is no option of conciliation.

They must issue a public apology and commit to abstain from any involvement in similar incidents in the future, what has not been witnessed yet, another sorry state and condemnable.

What's most important is that unless those accountable openly denounce the heinous attack and publicly accept responsibility for their actions without anticipating absolution from the state, reconciliation is off the table.

And of course, they also must issue a public apology and pledge to refrain from any future involvement in similar incidents.

It appears to be the policy of state that those individuals who contributed to internal polarization at the behest of external inimical powers, fostering division and promoting hatred to the extent of negating each other's existence, will not be engaged in dialogue.

Similarly, individuals who, for vested interested, inflicted economic or political damage while marring the international image of the country will not find any avenue for negotiation or reconciliation with the government.

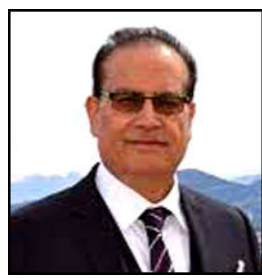
Those who, driven by personal interests, orchestrated economic or political harm against the nation on the international stage, will also not be afforded the opportunity for negotiation or reconciliation at all.

Matter of fact remains that those involved in the sorry saga of 9th May, 2023 do not deserve any mercy and reconciliation under the given situation as they had attacked the national heritage and pride of the armed forces besides making a reckless attempt to tarnish the very image of the country. Last but not the least, after all, the ongoing legal proceedings should make its way in this regard.

## "Extrajudicial Killing: Responding to India's Actions"

By Qamar Bashir

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



In January 2024, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary made a significant revelation, alleging that India had orchestrated at least 12 extrajudicial killings in Pakistan linked to the Kashmir cause and the Khalistan movement. This disclosure marked the third high-profile accusation against India following similar allegations involving Canada and the United States. By engaging in these unlawful acts, India has aligned itself with countries like the USA, Russia, and Israel, known for eliminating adversaries both domestically and internationally with impunity.

The statement made by Pakistan's Foreign Secretary in January this year did not gain significant traction and was dismissed within and outside the country as routine accusations exchanged between the two countries for political point-scoring, lacking substantial evidence.

The Foreign Secretary's statement was vindicated when similar allegations were corroborated by an investigative

report by "The Guardian," on April 4, 2024 disclosing that nearly 20 killings in Pakistan since 2020 were attributed to India. The Guardian report was authenticated when in a revealing interview with CNN, Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh admitted to carrying out extrajudicial killings and warned of similar actions in Pakistan if terrorists sought refuge there after committing acts of terrorism. While aimed at Pakistan, this admission hinted at India's readiness to extend such operations across international borders, including in the territories of influential nations like the USA and Canada.

The narrative of the Indian espionage agency was compelling. This is how the narrative unfolds. India has successfully managed the rebellion and insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir and has, for the most part, tightened its grip over Sikh separatists inside the nation. However, neutralizing their handlers—who were mostly based in Pakistan, the US, and Canada—was a more pressing issue. To resolve the issue, the Indian government authorized RAW to conduct covert operations to kill firebrand Sikh and Kashmiri leaders and handlers, in the US, Canada, and Pakistan motivated by the KGB, Mossad, and CIA, which are notorious for eliminating its enemies abroad.

The RAW launched strikes in three distinct nations as part of Compliance. It eliminated Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a well-known Sikh activist who was shot and killed in Vancouver, Canada, in September of 2023. On 30 Nov, 2023, RAW enlisted the help of a hitman in New York to murder Gurbatwani Singh Pannun, another Sikh activist, but before the killer had accomplished the task, the US security forces frustrated the attack.

The RAW was particularly careful while targeting Pakistan. It first created sleeper cells in the UAE, later established a system to finance the killing spree through Dubai, Nepal, and Mauritius. Later, it cultivated local criminals, Afghan illegal aliens, and Jihadis to carry out the assassinations of individuals primarily connected to Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, allegedly linked with masterminding high profile terrorist attacks inside India.

The narrative, while seemingly logical and compelling, ultimately failed to achieve its objectives in any of the three cases. Canada and the United States reacted assertively, issuing stern warnings to India and demanding accountability for the masterminds, financiers, and RAW operatives involved in the killings. Canada went a step further by expelling the Indian Ambassador and downgrading

diplomatic and economic ties. This action could potentially jeopardize Canadian Investment of \$3,754.05 Mn and Bilateral trade of \$9.9 Bn in 2022 with India. Similarly, strained relations with the United States will impact Indian exports of \$118.8 billion and US investments totaling \$63.03 billion.

The Guardian report garnered significant attention in Pakistani media, becoming the main topic of prime-time talk shows, however, the Pakistani government did not provide its official response until the next day, when the Foreign Office spokesperson issued a detailed press release beginning with customary rhetoric, but later offered specific details about two assassinations: that of Shahid Latif and Mohammad Riaz.

In both cases, a RAW agent stationed abroad recruited a professional killer in Pakistan, who then assembled a team of target killers responsible for targeted assassination. In both the cases, assassins were apprehended, leading to the disclosure of the entire plan to Pakistani authorities.

The Press Release primarily drafted for consumption of the media ended with a safe, calibrated and measured customary response, where it condemned India, charged it for breaking the United Nations Charter, violating the sovereignty and integ-

ity of Pakistan and international diplomatic norms, and calling on the international community for collective action to hold India accountable. However, it fell short of outlining Pakistan's concrete counteractions.

While behind closed doors, the government must be thinking of adopting a firm and strategic approach, drawing inspiration from the responses of Canada and the United States to similar incidents and giving a befitting response to India.

Though the diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan have already been downgraded, however, similar to Canada's expulsion of the Indian Ambassador and reduction of diplomatic ties, Pakistan may be considering diplomatic measures to register its protest.

Pakistan-India economic ties have already been downgraded, and this development has impeded any possible efforts through formal or informal channels to reconnect any meaningful trade, investment and business ties.

Pakistan must be actively engaging with the international community, particularly through the United Nations and other multilateral forums, to raise awareness and seek support for holding India accountable for its actions. This could involve filing formal complaints or seeking resolutions condemn-

ing India's violation of Pakistan's sovereignty.

The Pakistani ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) on its part must be conducting thorough investigations to uncover any other instances of foreign interference or covert operations on Pakistani soil. This could involve strengthening counterintelligence measures and monitoring suspicious activities more closely and developing appropriate, proportional and effective countermeasures as deterrent to any such attack in future.

While maintaining restraint and prioritizing de-escalation, the Pakistani armed forces must have already increased vigilance and readiness to defend the country's sovereignty against potential threats or provocations. This may have included enhancing border security, and maintaining preparedness to respond effectively to any hostile actions, similar to the responses against past airspace violations by India, Iran, and Afghanistan.

Pakistan's response should be calculated, strategic, and focused on exposing India's misconduct on the international stage while ensuring the protection of Pakistan's national interests and security besides increasing collaboration with allied nations and multiplying diplomatic efforts aimed at garnering support and achieving accountability for India's extrajudicial actions.

### Memorizing the Quran:

## A Miracle Witnessed Through My Son Muhammad Mustafa Iqbal

By Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



In the midst of life's trials and tribulations, there are moments of profound beauty and spiritual revelation that leave an indelible mark on our souls. For me, such a moment unfolded when I witnessed my son, Muhammad Mustafa Iqbal, reciting the Quran from memory. It was a testament to the miracle of memorizing the Quran and the transformative power it holds.

As a parent, seeing my son immerse himself

in the sacred verses of the Quran filled me with a sense of awe and gratitude. The Quran, regarded as the ultimate guide for humanity, holds immense significance in the lives of billions worldwide. But to witness its words flowing effortlessly from the lips of my own child was a moment of profound spiritual fulfillment.

The journey of memorizing the Quran is no small feat. It requires dedication, perseverance, and unwavering faith. For my son, it was a journey filled with late-night study sessions, countless revisions, and the guidance of knowledgeable teachers.

But beyond the sheer determination, there was a divine grace at work—a grace that made the seemingly impossible, possible. However, our joy

was bittersweet. My father Chaudhary Muhammad Iqbal, Mustafa's grandfather, had harbored a fervent desire to host a grand celebration upon Mustafa's completion of his Hizf Quran. Tragically, he departed from this world just one and a half year before Mustafa achieved this milestone. Yet, I find solace in knowing that his soul rejoices in paradise, witnessing Mustafa's remarkable achievement from above.

One of the most heartwarming moments came when Mustafa began accompanying me to the mosque for Taraweeh prayers during Ramadan. It was during these blessed nights that I witnessed the true extent of Mustafa's connection with the Quran. I asking him which

Surah and Parah the Qari was reciting, and to my amazement, Mustafa replied with unwavering accuracy. His knowledge and understanding of the Quran were truly awe-inspiring.

When Mustafa recited, each word resonated with a clarity and depth that transcended mere recitation. It was as if the verses themselves were alive, pulsating with divine energy. In that moment, I understood why memorizing the Quran is often referred to as a miracle—because it defies logic and human capabilities.

But the miracle extended beyond the mere act of memorization. It was evident in the transformation that took place within my son. Memorizing the Quran instilled in

him a sense of discipline, humility, and reverence for the divine. It shaped his character, instilling values of compassion, empathy, and righteousness.

Moreover, the Quranic verses he had committed to memory became a source of solace and guidance in times of difficulty. They served as a beacon of light, illuminating the path forward amidst life's challenges and uncertainties. And as a parent, witnessing my son draw strength from the words of the Quran was nothing short of miraculous.

In a world filled with distractions and temptations, the Quran stands as a timeless beacon of truth and guidance. And through the miracle of memorization, its words continue to resonate in the hearts and

minds of believers across the globe. My son's journey is but one example of the transformative power of the Quran—a power that transcends time and space.

In a nutshell, the experience of witnessing my son, Muhammad Mustafa Iqbal, recite the Quran from memory was nothing short of miraculous. It reaffirmed my faith in the divine and served as a reminder of the profound impact that memorizing the Quran can have on one's life. As parents, educators, and members of the community, let us cherish and support the noble endeavor of Quranic memorization, for in doing so, we participate in a truly miraculous journey of spiritual growth and enlightenment.

## Nepotism in KP Police Undermines Chinese Security Efforts

By Syed Fawad Ali Shah



Following a recent attack on Chinese nationals in the Shangla district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Pakistani federal government has initiated actions against senior police officials, casting a spotlight on deep-

rooted issues within the region's law enforcement. The incident, which occurred within the Malakand range in Shangla district, saw terrorists utilizing a non-customs paid vehicle from Malakand to carry out the assault on Chinese citizens in Bisham. However, a concerning development ensued as an inaccurate report was submitted to the federal government by the KP administration, misstating the incident location as the Hazara range instead of Shangla within the Malakand range. Consequently, the federal govern-

ment took action against DIG Hazara Ijaz Khan instead of addressing the responsibility of DIG Malakand Muhammad Ali Gandapur, leading to a cascade of controversy. This misreporting was allegedly driven by familial ties, with the KP Inspector General of Police purportedly aiming to shield his cousin, DIG Muhammad Ali Gandapur. The situation is further complicated by the appointment of police officials based on nepotism and political affiliations rather than merit. In several districts and ranges of KP,

key positions are held by relatives of politicians or influential bureaucrats, fostering an environment where accountability and effective policing are compromised. This concerning trend is highlighted by the fact that officers who face convictions, lack recommendations, or are deemed unfit for standard roles are often transferred to oversee the security of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor CPEC. Notably, security responsibilities for Chinese citizens are managed by a system that, according to security experts,

is riddled with flaws and mismanagement. Furthermore, reports suggest that only a marginal portion—merely two percent—of allocated funds for Chinese security is being utilized effectively, with the remainder allegedly falling victim to misappropriation. The decision to target DIG Ijaz Khan, described by sources as innocent, underscores wider issues with the selection and management of law enforcement officials tasked with safeguarding Chinese interests in KP. The alleged involvement of family connections and politi-

cal influence in police postings raises serious questions about the integrity and efficacy of security measures. As the federal government contemplates its next steps, concerns mount over the safety and security of Chinese nationals operating in the region. The need for a thorough review of security protocols and leadership appointments becomes increasingly urgent to restore trust and ensure the safety of all stakeholders involved. — The writer is a senior journalist, @syedfawadali303

## Uncovering our shame

By Muna Khan



I am assisting my youngest sister in the US on a documentary, which is part personal narrative, part investigation on the closure of a bank in the 1990s. As part of "research", we have been watching documentaries together, to understand narrative arcs, styles, even camera techniques and last week were incredibly moved by To Kill a Tiger. I highly recommend watching it on Netflix. The documentary is about the gang rape of a 13-year-old girl in India who, with her parent's support, chooses to pursue a criminal case.

It exposes the deep rot of misogyny, often disguised under honour and shame

and how men and women enforce patriarchal values. The female lawyer of the men accused of rape, along with women village members, ask why the young girl stayed out late. Sure, what the boys did was wrong, but what was her role in their action? The lawyer goes as far as saying she wouldn't trust her own son. This right here is the rot in our society, too.

It is a reminder that rape culture—trivialising violence against women—is prevalent in the rural and urban in the subcontinent. It is frightening how sexual violence has been normalised. Not a minute goes by on social media where women are not threatened with rape and mutilation.

Former prime minister Imran Khan blamed everyone but men for the rise in rape cases in 2021. In 2005, Gen Pervez Musharraf said women cried rape to get visas to

Canada. The list of misogynist comments from political and religious leaders, and their women supporters who defended these comments as "taken out of context" is shameful. Conversations on our screens rarely ask "why didn't the rapist listen when the woman said no" and focus on why the woman was out driving at 2am on the motorway or, of course, what she was wearing. You can be covered head to toe in this country and still be raped. You're not even safe in a grave.

Documentaries like To Kill a Tiger, however, fill me with a sliver of hope because they shine a light on the brave men like the father who stood by his daughter and fought his community, his village, his detractors, and the system that makes it hard to get justice. He also had support from lawyers and activists who fought tirelessly with his family's

quest for justice.

Pakistani documentarians too have done good work in highlighting the social ills in this country but they don't get airtime here; instead, they face abuse for shaming Pakistan. We should all watch Mo Naqvi's documentary Pakistan's Hidden Shame about sexual abuse of boys. Most of us will not leave our children alone with maulvi sahibs but think airing this issue is part of an international conspiracy to 'get' Pakistan.

Is it possible to at least reduce the burden on children and women who face rape stigma?

Two incidents, almost back to back, equally gruesome, have given me reason to pause and ask if we're nearing a tipping point. The first was the video of a man filming his brother strangling their 22-year-old sister, as their father sat next to him and watched. It has been de-

scribed as an honour crime when it should be called femicide, the worst form of gender-based violence.

The second centres around a maulvi from a banned religious outfit. First, a video surfaced of him in handcuffs, being berated by a police officer for raping a boy. Then his release was reported, following the boy's father forgiving the assailant, reportedly due to an intervention by a religious scholar. I believe the state plans to prosecute the case now.

The other day, as I began to write this column—to berate the so-called champions of democracy who always fail their vulnerable citizens—Dawn reported a story about a man observing a maulvi rapping a boy observing a maulvi in Mu--zaffargarh.

Social media is rightly fuming. The voices demanding an end to such vile crimes seem to outweigh the usual suspects

deflecting or doing the whataboutery. I was heartened to see Mohammed Malik ask Allama Ibtisam Zaheer tough questions on his TV show and others also report on the case. This is journalism at its finest.

Pakistan isn't the country you grew up in. Its youngsters won't stand idly by and watch these gross acts of injustice; they won't be bullied into silence. Social media provides a platform to air demands which can no longer be ignored, even if you ban X etc. Something's got to give. And it's got to be the egos of the men in charge of this country who overlook rapists and terrorists because it suits... well... something. That something has to change now—no ifs and buts or whatabout-that-time-they-did-it? Our children need us and their abusers must be sent packing. We must not fear them anymore.



## Healthy population backbone of prosperous society: Maryam

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that a healthy population is the backbone of a prosperous society.

In her message on the World Health Day on Sunday, she said that the purpose of celebrating World Health Day is to make people aware of the importance of health. She said, "It is very important for every individual to understand the importance of his health. A person's health is not just his personal matter but it affects the entire family."

She resolved, "We want to ensure equal access to health facilities by every citizen."

The CM said that there is also a need to

promote awareness about healthy lifestyle along with the provision of treatment facilities. She advised people to choose healthy lifestyle, and eat nutritious diet.

She said that health reforms have been initiated under "Healthy Punjab Programme" and added that the Punjab government is providing resources worth billions of rupees for the improvement of public health facilities. The Chief Minister said that an air ambulance service will be started, and Punjab's first official Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Cancer Hospital will be built in Lahore while Nawaz Sharif Cardiology Hospital is being built in Sargodha.

She said that supply

of free medicines in government hospitals has started, and their free delivery at patients' doorsteps will also start soon.

She explained that upgradation of 2500 Basic Health Units (BHUs) and 300 Rural Health Centers (RHCs) has been initiated while 32 field hospitals are also being started to provide health facilities in remote areas. The CM said that a program of 200 Clinics on wheels has been launched for the provision of treatment facilities to slum dwellers in the province.

Maryam vowed to fulfil the goal of building three medical cities in South, Central and North Punjab.



LAHORE: People boarding on train at Railway Station to leave for their hometowns to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with their loved ones.

## Govt decides to complete ongoing tourism, culture projects on priority: Advisor

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture and Archeology Zahid Chanzab on Sunday said that the provincial government has issued clear directives for early completion of all ongoing projects on priority basis under the Tourism, Culture and Archeology department.

He said that it is also decided to transform the archaeological sites, ruins, museums and religious places in the province as per the requirements of the modern era, initiate its digital marketing, provide more facilities to the visitors and prepare documentaries in the languages and cultures of

the respective countries.

It has also been decided to launch an all-out campaign to spread such documentaries among the people there through diplomatic means.

This was revealed by Zahid Chanzab, the Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture and Archeology, during his visit to the Provincial Tourism and Culture Secretariat in Peshawar and the briefing held there on. During the visit, he held introductory meeting with the tourism officers and learned about the various sections of the department.

Addressing the meeting that was held at the committee room of the department, he urged the

officers to work with a renewed spirit of national reconstruction in view of the various challenges being faced by the province and focus on achieving the goals.

He said that tourism and culture officers have to leave their offices and work side by side with the field staff for obtaining better results so that they could be aware of the ground realities of their respective fields.

Likewise, he said development schemes should not be delayed in any way, while in case of unavoidable situations, financial or administrative difficulties should be directly brought to his notice so as to ensure its timely resolution at the highest level.

## Restoration of law, order top priority of Sindh govt: Nasir Shah

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan People's Party Leader and Sindh Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah on Sunday said that the top priority of the Sindh government was to restore law and order situation at any cost in the province.

While reacting to a press conference of MQM-P leader Khawaja Izzat Hussain, he said that the Sindh Chief Minister held a meeting with the IGP Sindh and AIGP Karachi and directed

them to restore law and order situation.

Nasir Shah said that the Police and Rangers were not only carrying out targeted operations in Karachi but also cracking down on street crimes. I do not understand, why did Khawaja Izzat was feeling bad on the appointment of an IGP of good reputation, he asked.

The minister said that the Sindh government would restore law and order in the entire province.



SKARDU: A participant reciting Holy Quran during the Husn-e-Qiraat and Hafiz Quran competition at Jamia Masjid Skardu-Balistan in the Holy Month of Ramazan.

## CEO ICLN distributes Eid gifts amongst children

**By Adeel Ahmed**  
SHIKARPUR: Gift of Eid clothes were distributed among the children of different schools of Shikarpur.

CEO Indus Cottage Libraries Network Pakistan (ICLN) visited the schools of Shikarpur along with other social and intellectual personalities of the city.

Gifts of Eid clothes were distributed among students in different schools of Shikarpur, Zarkhail and Sultankot.

CEO of Indus Cottage Libraries Network Pakistan, Agha Noor Muhammad Pathan along with Chairman of Shikarpur Social and Literary Forum, syed Naseem Bukhari, Mr parwaiz Abro CEO of famous NGO CARD and Secretary of Sindh Adabi Sangat branch, Shikarpur, Dr. Aamir Abbas Soomro, Babar Ali Farooqui. And the famous writer Anwar Ali Soomro paid tribute to

the students and teachers who showed interest in reading books in the libraries established in the schools of Shikarpur and thanked them for their cooperation in the establishment of libraries.

Dr. Amir Abbas soomro said that knowledge is the third eye of a person that takes him from floor to the throne. CEO "CARD" Parvez Abro said that knowledge and love of books make human character great. Well-known columnist Naseem Bukhari said that school libraries play an important role in the intellectual development of children and teachers.

Agha Noor Muhammad CEO ICLN PAKISTAN who especially came from Islamabad said that there is a serious need to promote book reading culture in our society because some people are promoting the culture of fighting and friction.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Peshawar Zubair Ali addresses to media persons during ceremony of the Journalists Ramadan Sports Gala, held at Peshawar press club.

## Minister uncovers huge corruption in illegal mining, sand/stone supply chain

LAHORE (APP): In a significant crackdown on illegal mining activities, a major operation, led by Provincial Minister for Mines & Minerals, Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani, uncovered rampant corruption and illicit practices in the sand and stone supply chain, amounting to millions of rupees in losses to the national exchequer.

The operation, conducted in the mountainous region of Sakhi Sarwar, DG Khan, revealed widespread irregularities in the supply of sand and stone, with daily kickbacks totaling millions extracted from local officials and employees, severely undermining the national treasury.

Accompanied by his team and local law enforcement, Minister Gorchani personally

oversaw the swift apprehension of suspects, resulting in the filing of multiple FIRs and immediate suspension orders issued against the Deputy Director and Assistant Director of the Mines & Minerals Department.

Furthermore, directives have been issued to initiate FIRs against all implicated officials and employees, signaling a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption and malpractice within the department.

Addressing the media, Minister Gorchani expressed grave concern over the unchecked illegal supply of sand and stone via truckloads across the country, with an estimated 3,000 such trucks reported daily, each reportedly paying bribes ranging from two to three thousand rupees per truck.

## CM orders complete treatment of boy

LAHORE (APP): On the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, 2-year old Muhammad Moaz, a resident of Sialkot, has been provided with Rs6.862 million for medical treatment.

Provincial Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Rafique conveyed an early health recovery message of CM Maryam Nawaz by visiting the residence of young Moaz. Muhammad Usman of Sialkot suburban area Jamke Cheema had appealed to CM Maryam Nawaz for his child's treatment. 2-year old Muhammad Moaz is suffering from a "genetic disease" MPS Type9 by birth. On the direction of CM Maryam Nawaz, treatment of young Muhammad Moaz is underway in the Children Hospital Lahore. Muhammad Usman thanked CM Maryam Nawaz, saying that he had no words to express his gratitude to the CM for saving the precious life of his child. He prayed that may Allah Almighty keep CM Maryam Nawaz safe and sound.

## DG Ghotki visits market

**By Tanveer Ahmad**  
MIRPUR MATHELO: Deputy Commissioner Ghotki visited the markets of Mirpur Mathelo, checked the prices of consumer goods, strict action should be taken against those who cause inflation. According to the details, Deputy Commissioner Ghotki Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah, Assistant Commissioner Mirpur Mathelo Babar Ali along with Mukhtar Kar Abul Hasan Rahoo visited the markets and reviewed them. Instructions have been issued to take effective measures to prevent artificial inflation. Deputy Commissioner Ghotki Dr. Syed Muhammad Ali said on this occasion that artificial inflation is not acceptable.

## 21 dead, 1587 injured in 1430 RTCs in Punjab

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: At least 21 persons were killed and 1587 injured in 1430 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 725 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 862 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals.

Furthermore, the analysis showed those 855 drivers, 62 underage drivers, 174 pedestrians, and 579 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 301 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 321 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Faisalabad 101 with 119 victims and at third Gujranwala with 83 RTCs and 78 victims.

## Campaign against drugs continues in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): On special direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the campaign against users and sellers of drugs has been intensified.

In the last 17 days, more than 10,000 raids were conducted across Punjab, in which 4713 accused were arrested and 4941 FIRs were registered. Over 3,398 kg hashish and 20 kg opium were recovered, besides the recovery of 17.5 kg of the most dangerous drug, ice.



LARKANA: Members of Government Secondary Teachers Association (GSTA) are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands held at Jinnah Bagh in Larkana.

## Punjab Govt initiates health reforms under 'Sehatmand Punjab'

LAHORE (Online): Punjab Government has initiated the health reforms under "Sehatmand Punjab" vision.

This was stated by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in her message on World Health Day.

She said Punjab's first

public sector Nawaz Sharif Cancer Hospital will be built in Lahore while Nawaz Sharif Cardiology Hospital is being set up at Sargodha.

Maryam Nawaz said the target of building three Medical Cities in South, Central and North Punjab areas will be accomplished.

## 2 killed, 3 injured in road accident

FAISALABAD (APP): Two people were killed while three others sustained injuries in a road accident in the area of Roshanwala police station.

A Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday that a worker was busy repairing a puncture of a truck parked on Bypass Road near Miani Stop when two speeding vehicles collided with it.

As a result, 32-year-old Sajid Ali and 25-year-old Wajid Ali received serious injuries and died on the spot whereas Rescue 1122 shifted three others including Mukhtar Ali (40), Wajid (28) and Sheharyar (28) to hospital.

## Commissioner visits bus terminals, reviews facilities

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Divisional Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa Sunday visited bus terminals to ensure that no passengers, going to their hometown to celebrate Eid, was overcharged by the bus services.

In a surprise visit to the Badami Bagh Lorry Adda, he checked tickets and expressed his displeasure upon finding men present in the women's passenger hall. He ordered for deployment of a guard outside the women's hall and warned of another unannounced visit to ensure compliance.

In a strict move to ensure passenger safety, Commissioner Randhawa suspended a passenger bus for 72 hours for issuing a

ticket for roof travel to Lucky Marwat. He said the administrator lorry adda and secretary Regional Transport Authority (RTA) were also guardians of passengers' lives and safety, and instructed them to take stern action against any instances of passengers traveling on roofs or complaints of overcharging.

The commissioner promised that monitoring of all passenger buses and vehicle stands would continue until Eid, with an ongoing crackdown on bus owners, who overcharge passengers. He also directed all assistant commissioners to visit bus stands and ensure that the government fare list was prominently displayed.



SUKKUR: Relief goods is being distributed among needy persons during food aids distribution ceremony organized by Sunni Tehreek during the Holy Month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, in Sukkur.

## LWMC CEO reviews ongoing cleanliness activities

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Babar Sahib Din and Chairman Bilal Zulfiqar Khokhar conducted late-night visits to various areas of the provincial capital and reviewed mechanical sweeping and washing operations.

According to LWMC sources here on Sunday, during the visit both inspected the cleanliness of mosques, emphasizing the importance of

maintaining sanitation standards during Ramazan. CEO Babar Sahib Din directed the manual scraping and mechanical sweeping at U-turns and service lanes on main boulevards, ensuring a comprehensive cleaning approach.

Under the supervision of CEO over 175 workers, 40 mechanical sweepers, and 10 mechanical washers were engaged in the night shift to enhance Lahore's cleanliness.

## Irregularities in purchase of health equipment surfaced in IKDP: Audit Report

PESHAWAR (APP): Complaints of widespread irregularities in procurement of equipment and construction contracts at the Institute of Kidney Diseases Peshawar surfaced in an audit report released here Sunday.

According to an audit report, by buying various equipment for the kidney center at expensive prices from the market rate and giving the construction contract to the company after approval, the exchequer has caused a loss of millions of rupees.

In the audit report of the Institute of Kidney Disease Peshawar, objections were raised on medical devices and other items. Medical equipment and other items were purchased at prices higher than the market rate and by purchasing medical

equipment at higher prices, the exchequer suffered a loss of Rs 9.7 million, according to the audit report. Surgical gloves were purchased at Rs 112 instead of Rs 71 and a loss of Rs 2.5 million was caused by the purchase of surgical gloves at a higher price, according to the audit report. Plastic bags were bought at Rs. 230 instead of Rs. 197, thus the sale packs were bought at a cost of Rs. 5160 more than the market rate.

Chemicals used in IKD were also bought at high prices, the audit report revealed. The contract for the beautification and construction work of the hospital was given against the rules. The contract is worth Rs. 88.7 million was given to a private company.



KARACHI: Members of local NGOs holds placards during protest rally against Israel attack on Gaza, at old Numaish Chowranghi.

## ZAB anniversary meeting to be held on April 14

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan People's Party Sindh Chapter's President Nisar Ahmed Khuhro on Sunday said that the main public meeting of the Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's 45th death anniversary would be held at Garhi Khuda Bux on April 14. He said that the Chairman of Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari would deliver his speech to a large number of people in the public meeting.

He expressed these views in a meeting pertaining to the public meeting held at the People's Secretariat. The

meeting was attended by PPP Sindh Chapter's General Secretary Senator Waqar Mehdi, Javed Nagori and other PPP leaders.

The meeting decided to ensure the presence of a large number of the people to pay tributes to Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

Nisar Ahmed Khuhro on the occasion said that the all arrangements were being made regarding the public meeting. He said that the apex court had washed the dark stain over the historical verdict of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's reference.

## FWMC cleanliness plan for Eid

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Waste Management Company (FWMC) has made a comprehensive cleanliness plan for Eid-ul-Fitr.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) FWMC Rauf Ahmad in a statement here on Sunday that leave of entire FWMC field staff have been cancelled to ensure proper cleanliness across the city including sites of Eid congregations.



## CM KP for modern farming technology in agriculture

PESHAWAR (Online): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chaired an important meeting of Agriculture Department, in which important policy decisions were taken to develop the agriculture sector on modern lines. The Chief Minister has directed the relevant authorities to take innovative measures in order to have maximum production with minimum cost, adding that modern farming technology should be introduced and the field of research in agriculture be aligned with contemporary requirements for this purpose.

He further directed them to collect detailed data of agricultural lands across the province and to take necessary steps for the cultivation of saffron in suitable lands by upcoming season, adding that saffron crops being grown in neighboring countries should also be evaluated in order to have better production.

He urged upon authorities to ensure useful

utilization of available agriculture land in the province so as to make it an effective source of income for the provincial government. He directed that agriculture department should cultivate itself instead of giving these agricultural lands on contracts. However, he said that farmers should also be encouraged to cultivate saffron in the land suitable for this purpose.

The Chief Minister further directed them to initiate wild olive grafting program in the merged districts. He underlined the need for the construction of small artificial dams to cultivate vegetables in the districts where there is shortage of water, adding that drip irrigation system can also be introduced in such areas; agricultural activities should be carried out keeping in view the specific climatic conditions and other related aspects of different regions of the province.

Self-sufficiency in agricultural production is much needed to control prevailing inflation, he said

and added that his government will extend its all-out support to agriculture department for the purpose. He directed the department to take special steps for promoting horticulture and carry out survey for planting suitable fruit trees in every district of the province.

Moreover, he directed them to ensure complete transparency in the donor-assisted projects, set up an effective coordination mechanism between the department of agriculture and other related departments, and to establish different wings under the department with determined role and responsibilities for achieving sustainable goals as per priorities of incumbent provincial government. Ali Amin Gandapur made it clear that food security is one of the most priority areas of his government? concerted and integrated efforts are needed to ensure speedy implementation of CRBC and other major projects in this sector.



ISLAMABAD: President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and president IBECHS Tariq Mehmood discussing matters of bilateral interest during a meeting.

## Kyrgyz businessmen want to collaborate with Pakistani counterparts, says Meher

LAHORE (APP): The primary focus was on exploring avenues for cooperation in key sectors, notably pharmaceuticals, textiles and education etc. He said the response from Kyrgyz entrepreneurs to Pakistani counterparts was overwhelmingly positive, reflecting a shared enthusiasm for collaboration.

Meher said that beyond these specific sectors, the delegation also emphasized the importance of strengthening overall bilateral trade cooperation between the two countries.

By building upon existing economic ties and exploring new avenues for collaboration, they aimed to enhance mutual prosperity and contribute to regional stability.

He said as both countries continue to navigate the complexities of the global economy, partnerships built on mutual respect, trust, and shared objectives would be instrumental in realizing their collective economic aspirations. This visit marked a significant step towards realizing those goals and lays the groundwork for a more robust and enduring partnership between the two countries. He said the pharmaceutical industry holds promise for mutual growth and development, with both countries recognizing the potential for partnerships in research, manufacturing and distribution.

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HYDERABAD: Women selecting and purchasing artificial jewelry from vendor in preparation of upcoming Eidul Fitr.

## Persistent, sound economic management needed by Pak's economy: Saigol

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF), Faheemur Rehman Saigol has said that persistent and sound economic management was needed by Pakistan's economy amidst continuous hike in cost of production in the country.

In a statement on Sunday, he asked the authorities for undertaking economic reforms and improving the regulatory environment to boost foreign investment so that financial stability can be achieved in the long-run.

Faheemur Rehman Saigol stressed the need for reducing cost of doing business, besides evolving a new price control mechanism, as huge taxation, rising oil prices and constant jump in electricity and gas tariffs have lifted the inflation to

decades high level. He warned the authorities that inflation above 6 percent can hurt economic growth and a careful policy is required to keep it in control. He said that the pace of inflation is skyrocketing at a time when the economic activity is slowing down.

As the oil prices have been increased and power tariff has gone up further the PIAF chairman stated that the government has dropped a fuel bomb on the businessmen after it suffered an electric shock to meet the conditions of IMF for the revival of the stalled loan program- a recipe to shake the trade and industry.

He said that the decision would prove detrimental to the industries due to high cost of doing business and will also open the floodgates of inflation.

## China's forex reserves rise to \$3.2457 trillion in March

BEIJING (APP): China's forex reserves totaled \$3.2457 trillion as of the end of March, rising by \$19.8 billion, or 0.62 percent, from the end of February, according to data released on Sunday by the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE).

The increase was driven by factors including exchange rate fluctuations and rising asset prices, according to the SAFE.

In a statement, the SAFE said that China economy continues to show signs of recovery and steady progress, providing support for maintaining the country's stable foreign exchange reserves, CGTN reported.

On the same day, the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, also released data showing that China's gold reserves at the end of March reached 72.74 million ounces, up from 72.58 million ounces at the end of February, marking the 17<sup>th</sup> consecutive month with increasing gold reserves.

## Profiteers fined for over pricing in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): In order to stop increasing artificial price hike during holy month of Ramadan, Karachi administration has speed up action against hoarders and profiteers and fine of Rs 978000 was imposed against 81 violators on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of Ramadan (Saturday).

According to statement issued by the Commissioner's spokesman here on Sunday, action has been taken in all seven districts of Karachi division and profiteers were fined for not implementing government fixed rates.

## Tailors overcharging irk Eid shoppers in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The overcharging by tailors has irked Eid shoppers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and demanded of the district administration to take stern action against price-hikers and profiteers.

As only few days left in Eidul Fitr celebrations, the male and female tailors started overcharging people by earning almost double profit in the last days of Ramadan than normal days that annoyed customers of all aged groups.

In Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera, the tailors are heavily charging customers demanding upto Rs3,000 per suit for stitching these days.

Expressing dissatisfaction on overcharging and quality of stitching clothes by tailors, the Eid shoppers asked the district administration to maintain check and balance over the market rates and regulate charges of tailoring as quickly as possible.

"The tailors started looting people as one suit was being stitched at Rs Rs2500 to Rs3000 these days. Therefore, I opted to buy ready-made cloth to save tailors charges," said Qaiser Khan, a resident of Nowshera district.

He accused the district administration for its failure to regulate stitching rates of tailors, forcing many to purchase ready to wear clothes on Eid.



MULTAN: Labourers are busy in unloading tomatoes bags from delivery trucks at Vegetable Market.

## Hybrid seed association wants representation in NSDRA to end seed mafia

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Sunday voiced its demand for inclusion as a stakeholder in the National Seed Development and Regulatory Authority (NSDRA) to make it an effective national body for achieving desired results crystal clearly enshrined in its mandate.

Talking to media persons here, PHHSA Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik said the genuine call stems from the

association's commitment to enhancing the quality of seeds and combating the detrimental activities of the seed mafia, which continue to inflict substantial losses to farmers and agricultural production. "The PHHSA's genuine demand as a stakeholder in the NSDRA underscores the importance of industry representation in regulatory bodies tasked with overseeing seed development. By participating in decision-making processes,

## Wheat procurement drive to commence from April 22: DC

FAISALABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh said on Sunday that wheat procurement drive in Faisalabad would start from April 22, 2024.

Chairing a meeting, he directed the Food Department to complete necessary arrangements for issuance of 'Bardana' (bags) to farmers so that wheat procurement could be started on time. He said that distribution of 'Bardana' would start from April 19 and for the purpose, wheat growers should apply through 'Bardana App' from April 13, 2024.

He said that 11 procurement centres would be made functional where farmers could sell their wheat produce at government-fixed rate.

He directed the assistant commissioners and food controllers to finalise their arrangements at tehsil level so that the wheat procurement drive could be launched in a fair and transparent manner.

The district food controller briefed the deputy commissioner.

## Beggars flock to Lahore's markets, malls ahead of Eid

LAHORE (APP): As Eid-Ul-Fitr approaches, professional beggars have flocked to markets, main roads, Ramadan bazaars, traffic signals and shopping malls to seek fortunes.

The beggars of all age groups can be seen seeking alms outside mosques after prayers and at shopping centres, markets, as scores of people head to markets for Eid shopping in the evening.

Also they ensure their presence at traffic signals and other major roads and use different ways to seek alms from commuters.

But the story goes beyond further as several begging rackets become active as Eid draws nearer. These begging rackets divide their respective areas while special persons are deployed to monitor their activities and "earnings" on special occasions like Eid, said an elderly man Mushtaq Ali.

Likewise, Bushra, an 16-year-old girl, who seeks alms on Ferozpur Road, told APP that no one from her family was educated and this was the best way to earn a living.

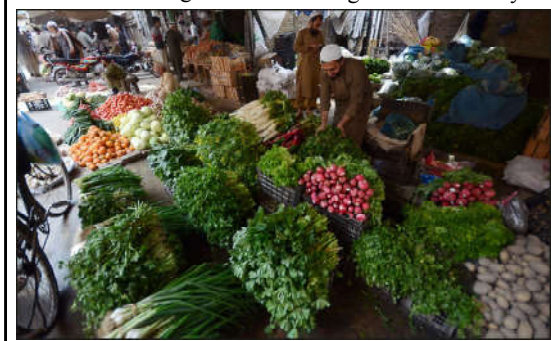
Bushra said that she come here daily from Sundar Adda along with her

mother, 9-year-old brother and a younger sister to seek alms as this is the best way to earn a square meal, she told APP.

It may be mentioned here that to add to the misery, police and district authorities concerned are least bothered about the social evil and seldom take action against professional beggars leaving little for those needy.

Talking to APP, Search For Humanity, an NGO, chairman and child rights activist Iftikhar Mubarak said that police authorities were not paying attention to control this social evil.

This issue was related to the Child Protection Welfare Bureau (CPWB), which was not working in a proper manner, he added. When contacted, a CPWB official said that there was no information available on child beggars or "missing children". "Our teams are cracking down on child begging and launching raids in different areas of the city as per the strategy." Lahore police sources said that they have launched a special campaign to curb this curse following the directions from the SSP Operations and have nabbed scores of beggars during the last two days.



PESHAWAR: The shopkeeper is selling vegetables on city Sabzi mandi.

## Int'l Conference on Food: Over 27 % world population face food shortage

MULTAN (APP): Chairman Department of Human Nutrition Dr Tauseef Sultan has said that about 27 percent of world population was faced with issue of food insecurity.

However, Half of Pakistan's populace is undergoing malnutrition. He said this while addressing International Conference at the department. The world conference was attended by scholars like Dr Esatanely (Nigeria), Dr Traner (Indonesia), Ahmed ul Aareb (Saudi Arabia), Dr Amjid (Turkiye), Dr Ansar (Australia), Mazhar Iqbal (Doaba Foundation), Pervaiz Iqbal Ansari (Farmers Development Organization), Dean Department of Food Science and Nutrition Dr Saeed Akhtar and many others attended the conference.

According to World Hunger Index 2021-22, nine countries were suffered badly in terms of food insecurity. Dr Tauseef stated that there was need to educate and impart awareness to farmers on modern agricultural practices so that they could be able to produce maximum food.

Dr. Estanely presented his research paper on how to lower glucose level in blood. Dr Asim shed light on benefits of camel milk and meat. Dr Hafiz Ishaq proposed solutions to the food shortage.

Dr. Shakeel Ahmed provided insight into improving crop cultivation amidst climate change, advocating for adopting specific guidelines. Dr Tanveer stressed upon the rising challenge of animal diseases, posing a significant hurdle to food acquisition.

Dr. Tariq shed light on nutritional deficiencies in rural areas. Dr. Ramzan shared his views on plight of small scale farmers.



RAWALPINDI: A worker hanging vermicelli for dry at his workplace as demand increased for upcoming Eidul Fitr Festival.

## NEPRA disposed of 17,545 consumers' complaints

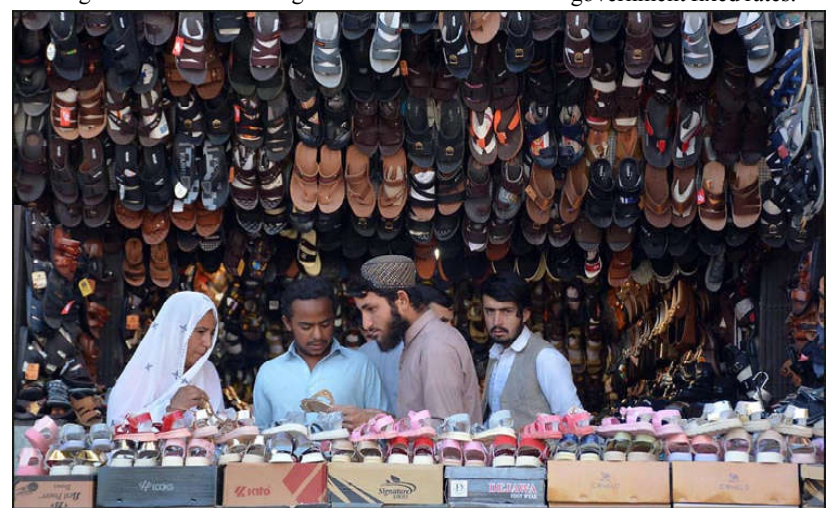
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Consumer Affairs Department of National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) disposed of, 17,545 complaints of electricity consumers against various power distribution companies (DISCOs) during the last fiscal year 2022-23 while 1,294 were still under process.

According to official data, the authority received a total of 18,839 complaints from the electricity consumers against various DISCOs during the fiscal year 2022-23.

As per breakup, out of total, the head office received 2,209 consumers' complaints against various DISCOs while the regional offices received 16,630 complaints during the last fiscal year.

Similarly, the head office disposed off a total of 1,946 complaint while the regional offices disposed off 15,599 complaints of consumers during the said period.

The head office received a total of 313 complaints against Islamabad Electric Supply Company, 268 Peshawar Electric Supply Company, 223 Hyderabad Electric Supply Company, 419 K-Electric, 133 Sukkur Electric Supply Company.



QUETTA: A family purchasing shoes for Eid from a roadside vendor.

## PCMEA demands supports for carpet sector

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) has forwarded a set of 12-point proposals for upcoming budget 2024-25 to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and other authorities concerned.

In the budget proposals sent by PCMEA Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf, the Association termed various SROs and duties an obstacle to the promotion of exports of hand-woven carpets, according to PCMEA spokesman here Sunday.

It has been demanded that duty tariffs, international freight charges should be reduced to be competitive in global markets. Usman Ashraf also demanded that in case of export of handwoven carpets as luxury item status, the credit period shall be extended to 270 days.

He said that 11 procurement centres would be made functional where farmers could sell their wheat produce at government-fixed rate.

He directed the assistant commissioners and food controllers to finalise their arrangements at tehsil level so that the wheat procurement drive could be launched in a fair and transparent manner.

The district food controller briefed the deputy commissioner.



## Yellen, Premier Li express hope for US-China cooperation

### Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: United States Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Chinese Premier Li Qiang sounded a hopeful tone on US-China cooperation on Sunday, though the American policymaker noted both sides cannot shy away from tough conversations.

The US-China relationship can only move forward with direct and open communication, Yellen told Li, after arriving in the Chinese capital from the southern city of Guangzhou.

“China sincerely hopes that the two countries will be partners, not adversaries,” Li said in welcoming remarks to Yellen. He added that Chinese internet users have closely followed the details of her trip since her appearance in Guangzhou, showing “expectation and hope for the China-US relationship to continue to improve.”

Yellen held a series of meetings in the southern port

city, including hours of discussions with her counterpart, Vice Premier He Lifeng. Both countries have since agreed to hold talks on balanced growth under an existing working group, allowing officials to discuss the key US concern of overcapacity.

This refers to a situation where Chinese government support to industries fuels production capacity, but risks a surge of exports at depressed prices to the global market, undercutting international competitors. Washington is especially concerned about this phenomenon in new industries such as electric vehicles and solar energy. Yellen’s trip marks her second visit to China in less than a year.

“While we have more to do, I believe that, over the past year, we have put our bilateral relationship on more stable footing,” she said in opening remarks to Premier Li as she began two days of high-level talks in Beijing.

Rather than avoiding hard conversations, this has meant “understanding that we can only make progress if we directly and openly communicate with one another,” the Treasury chief said. Yellen also stressed, ahead of talks with Beijing mayor Yin Yong, the need to engage with local officials to understand China’s “economic future.”

“Local governments play a critical role, from boosting consumption to addressing overinvestment and Beijing of course has particular importance,” she said. A senior treasury official told reporters on Saturday that Washington believes household spending needs to be a bigger part of China’s economy. Speaking to professors from the Peking University National School of Development, Yellen said she was keen to hear their perspectives on “the potential long-term impacts of today’s policy decisions.”



US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen meets with Chinese Premier Li Qiang at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

## Israeli embassies ‘no longer safe’ after Syria strike: Iran

### Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: An adviser to Iran’s supreme leader warned on Sunday that Israeli embassies are “no longer safe” after a strike in Syria which Tehran blamed on Israel killed seven Revolutionary Guards members.

“The embassies of the Zionist regime are no longer safe,” Yahya Rahim Safavi, senior adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was quoted as saying by the ISNA news agency.

Tehran has vowed to avenge Monday’s air strike on Damascus that

levelled the Iranian embassy’s consular annex, killing seven Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) members including two generals.

“The resistance front is ready; how it (the response) will be, we have to wait,” Safavi said, noting that “confronting this brutal regime is a legal and legitimate right.”

He also noted that multiple Israeli embassies around the region “have been shuttered.”

There was no immediate comment from Israel.

## Blast kills seven children in Syria

### Monitoring Desk

DAMASCUS: Seven children were killed in southern Syria’s Daraa province on Saturday when an “explosive device” detonated, state media reported.

“Seven children” were killed “and two other people were injured, one of them a woman, when an explosive device planted by terrorists” went off in the city of Sanamayn, state news agency SANA reported, quoting a police source. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor gave a different toll, saying that “eight children of different ages were killed and another was wounded” in the blast.

## Israeli military reduces troops in southern Gaza, spokesperson says

### Monitoring Desk

JERUSALEM: The Israeli military has withdrawn all ground troops from the southern Gaza Strip except for one brigade, a military spokesperson said on Sunday.

The military did not immediately provide further details. It was unclear whether the withdrawal would delay a long-threatened incursion into the southern Gaza city of Rafah, which Israeli leaders have said is needed to eliminate Hamas.

## 25 civilians killed in militia attack in eastern Congo

### Monitoring Desk

BUNIA, Democratic Republic of Congo (Reuters) - The death toll from an attack in a village in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo’s Ituri province rose to 25 on Sunday, a local chief and civil society leader said, after a government spokesman and a U.N. document confirmed the attack on Saturday.

The Cooperative for the Development of the Congo (CODECO) group, one of many militias operating in the conflict-ridden east, carried out the killings in the village of Galayi, 70 km (45 miles) northwest of the city of Bunia, they said.

Fifteen bodies were discovered on Sunday, in addition to 10 bodies recovered on Saturday, Banzala Danny, a local chief, and Vital Tungulo, a civil society leader, told Reuters.

An internal U.N. document seen by Reuters, and Jules Ngongo, spokesperson for the governor of Ituri province, both confirmed the attack and the initial death toll of 10 civilians.

“We assure that all the killers will be punished by justice,” Ngongo said. The human rights situation in Ituri has deteriorated since the beginning of the year as CODECO carries out more attacks, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO) said in a report published in March. CODECO and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), another militia group, are responsible for most civilian killings in eastern DRC, according to a report by the U.N. peacekeeping mission released in March.

## US, Britain, Australia weigh expanding AUKUS security pact to deter China, FT says

### Monitoring Desk

LONDON: The US, Britain and Australia are set to begin talks on bringing new members into their AUKUS security pact as Washington pushes for Japan to be involved as a deterrent against China, the Financial Times reported.

The countries’ defence ministers will announce discussions on Monday on “Pillar Two” of the pact, which commits the members to jointly developing quantum computing, undersea, hypersonic, artificial intelligence and cyber technology, the newspaper reported on Saturday, citing people familiar with the situation.

They are not considering expanding the first pillar, which is designed to deliver nuclear-powered attack submarines to Australia, the FT said.

AUKUS, formed by the three countries in 2021, is part of their efforts to push back against China’s growing power in the Indo-Pacific region. China has called the AUKUS pact dangerous and warned it could spur a regional arms race.

Rahm Emanuel, the US ambassador in Tokyo, wrote in an opinion piece, opens new tab in the Wall Street Journal on Wednesday that Japan was “about to become the first additional Pillar II partner.”

A senior US administration official told Reuters on Wednesday that some sort of announcement could be expected in the coming week about Japan’s involvement but gave no details. Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will likely discuss expanding AUKUS to include Japan when the president hosts the prime minister in Washington on Wednesday, a source with knowledge of the talks said.

## Zelenskiy hopes to set Swiss world peace summit date within days

### Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said in remarks broadcast that he hoped that he and Swiss President Viola Amherd would set a date within days for a world peace summit in Switzerland with 80 to 100 countries.

Russia has said such a meeting would be pointless if it did not participate. Kyiv has previously proposed a world peace summit but has said Russia would not be invited.

Zelenskiy said in a television interview that he and the Swiss president would have to agree on the date between them and then send invitations to world leaders.

“We expect to have 80 to 100 countries.” He added, “This is the number of countries, I believe, that will be able to at least try to force Russia to a fair peace.”

In the interview, recorded during a visit to Chemihiv region, where he visited fortifications work on Friday, Zelenskiy said

that they did not yet have a specific list of countries. “We will agree how it will happen in coming days,” he said. “Days, I hope, not even weeks.”

Asked about the role of Turkey, Zelenskiy said he was grateful to Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan for his support and desire to mediate, noting Turkey also had other interests and strong relations with Russia.

“Turkey as a mediator is not enough for us,” he said. “Undoubtedly, they will be among those leaders, countries that can perform a mediation mission but not the mediation,” he added. Zelenskiy said the format of the summit would be very complex, bearing in mind the many interests involved in a summit involving so many countries, including historical and contemporary relations with Russia, Europe and elsewhere. “Nevertheless, get all of them together, find the format, the way we go forward, and agree on it,” he said.

## Greta Thunberg held twice after Dutch protest

### Monitoring Desk

THE HAGUE: Climate activist Greta Thunberg was detained twice by Dutch police on Saturday after she and a group of marchers blocked a main road in The Hague to protest against fossil fuel subsidies.

Earlier, Thunberg joined hundreds of protesters on a walk from The Hague’s city centre to the nearby A12 arterial highway that connects the seat of the Dutch government with other cities including Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht. The march was organised by the Extinction Rebellion environmental group (XR) — who previously swarmed the highway and blocked off traffic for hours before being sprayed by a police water canon and taken away.

On Saturday, dozens of police officers, including some on horseback, blocked the group from accessing the motorway, warning that “violence could be used” should the marchers try to get onto the road.

Carrying XR flags and placards saying “Stop fuel subsidies now!” and “The planet is dying!”, chanting protesters were then locked in a tense standoff with police who formed a wall of law enforcement. Thunberg joined in with the chants and slogans during the protest. “It’s important to demonstrate today because we are living in a state of planetary emergency,” Thunberg said as police blocked marchers. “We must do everything to avoid that crisis and to save human lives,” she said.

Some activists, however, found another route and blocked a main road close to the highway where they — including Thunberg — sat down on the tarmac. Asked whether she was concerned about police action and arrest, Thunberg said: “Why should I be?” But shortly afterwards, Thunberg herself was arrested and dragged away by police to a waiting touring bus where she was detained with other activists.



Workers unload medical aid from a truck near Kamal Adwan Hospital, in the northern Gaza Strip.

## Gaza’s largest hospital an ‘empty shell’ with human graves: WHO

### Monitoring Desk

GENEVA: The World Health Organisation said on Saturday that Gaza’s largest hospital had been reduced to ashes by Israel’s latest siege, leaving an “empty shell” with many bodies. Israeli forces pulled out of Al Shifa hospital in Gaza City on Monday after a two-week military operation, during which it said it had battled Palestinian militants inside what was once the Palestinian territory’s most important medical complex. A WHO-led mission finally accessed the hospital on Friday, after multiple failed attempts since March 25, the UN health agency said, describing the massive destruction.

“WHO and partners managed to reach Al Shifa — once the backbone of the health system in Gaza, which is now an empty

shell with human graves after the latest siege,” agency chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

He said the team had seen “at least five dead bodies during the mission”. They had also found that “most of the buildings in the hospital complex are extensively destroyed and reduced to ashes”, the WHO chief said. “Even restoring minimal functionality in the short term seems implausible,” he said, adding that “an in-depth assessment by a team of engineers is needed to determine if the remaining buildings are safe for future use”. Tedros lamented that efforts by WHO and other aid groups to revive basic services at Al Shifa after Israel’s first devastating raid on the hospital last year “are now lost.

## US, Russian, Belarus ISS colleagues return to Earth

### Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: A Nasa astronaut, a Russian cosmonaut and Belarus’s first ever space traveller on Saturday returned to Earth safely after a fortnight aboard the International Space Station, Russia’s Roscosmos agency reported.

“Today, at 10:17am Moscow time (0717 GMT), the descent vehicle of Sozuz MS-24 manned spacecraft landed near the Kazakh city of Zhezkazgan,” Roscosmos reported. “The (vessel’s) descent and its descent to Earth went off normally,” the agency added.

Russian cosmonaut Oleg Novitsky and the first ever Belarusian cosmonaut, Marina Vassilevskaya, “spent 14 days in orbit”, while American astronaut Loral O’Hara completed a 204-day mission. For Vassilevskaya and O’Hara it was their first ever stint on the ISS.

## Kuwait PM submits cabinet resignation following election

### Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Sabah al-Saleh al-Sabah submitted his cabinet’s resignation as expected to the Kuwaiti emir, the state news agency reported.

The move comes after a new parliament was elected on Thursday and is a procedural one as the current government has to submit its resignation before the legislature’s inauguration.

Kuwait’s new Emir Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Sabah will now either reappoint the same prime minister or a new one who will be tasked with forming a new cabinet.

## Mexico says diplomatic staff leave Ecuador after embassy raid

### Monitoring Desk

QUITO: Mexico’s diplomatic personnel were leaving Ecuador on Sunday, its foreign minister said, as the two countries severed ties after Quito’s security forces stormed the Mexican embassy in a raid that prompted searing international rebukes.

“Our diplomatic staff are leaving everything in Ecuador and returning home with their heads held high [...] after the assault on our embassy,” said Foreign Minister Alicia Barcena on

social network X, formerly Twitter.

She spoke after Spain and the European Union joined the United Nations chief and Latin American countries in condemning Quito for the raid — which it carried out in a bid to arrest former Ecuadorian vice president Jorge Glas, who was sheltering at the embassy.

Glas sought refuge there last December after an arrest warrant was issued against him for alleged corruption.



The officials and their families at the Quito airport accompanied by the ambassadors of Germany, Panama, Cuba and Honduras, as well as the president of the Ecuador-Mexico Chamber, the Mexican Foreign Ministry said in a separate statement.

## UK sends Royal Navy ship to boost aid for Gaza and set up a new maritime corridor

### Monitoring Desk

LONDON: A British Royal Navy ship will supply aid to Gaza as part of an international effort to help set up a new humanitarian maritime corridor in early May, the foreign office and ministry of defence said on Saturday.

The multinational effort, involving the United States, Cyprus and other partners, will develop a new temporary pier off the coast of Gaza, British foreign minister David Cameron said.

“The situation in Gaza is dire and the prospect of famine is real. We remain committed to get-

ting aid to those who so desperately need it,” Cameron said in a statement.

Cameron has also pledged 9.7 million pounds (\$12.26 million) for aid equipment and logistical expertise to help set up the maritime corridor from Cyprus to Gaza, his office said.

The initiative will see aid pre-screened in Cyprus and delivered directly to Gaza, through the new US temporary pier being constructed off the coast or via Ashdod Port after Israel agreed to open it, the foreign ministry said.

## Record flood waters rise in Russia’s Urals, forcing thousands to evacuate

### Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Flood waters were rising in two cities in Russia’s Ural mountains on Sunday after Europe’s third longest river burst through a dam, flooding at least 6,000 homes and forcing thousands of people to flee with just their pets and a few belongings. A string of Russian regions in the Ural Mountains and Siberia, alongside parts of neighbouring Kazakhstan have been hit in recent days by some of the worst floods in decades.

The Ural River, which rises in the Ural Mountains and flows into the Caspian Sea, swelled several metres in just hours on Friday due to melt water, bursting through a dam embankment in the city of Orsk, 1,800 km (1,100 miles) east of Moscow. More than 4,000 people were evacuated in Orsk as swathes of the city of 230,000 were flooded. Footage published by the Emergencies Ministry showed people wading through neck-high waters, rescuing stranded dogs and travelling along flooded roads in boats and canoes.

## Two dead, seven wounded in Florida martini bar shooting

### Monitoring Desk

FLORIDA: Two people were killed and seven were wounded, including a police officer, during a shooting at a martini bar in Doral, Florida, police said.

The shootout followed an argument in which one patron pulled out a weapon and then shot and killed a security guard who responded. Six of the people shot were bystanders and a police officer was shot in the leg, police said. The US has the highest level of firearm homicides among high-income countries with populations over 10 million.



Police detain Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg during a climate march against fossil subsidies in the Hague.





KARACHI: A large number of people getting board on Eid Special Train at Cantt Railway Station, departing to their home towns to celebrate Eidul Fitr, festive with their loved ones.

# Govt greenlights "Gwadar rail freight connectivity"

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a major development, the Pakistani government has green-lighted the mega project "Gwadar Rail Freight Connectivity" that aims to link Gwadar Port with the rest of the country, especially the Balochistan hinterlands.

The Gwadar Rail Freight Connectivity, under the Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan, will reinforce inland connections, enhance cargo flows, and ensure Gwadar's competitiveness as a newly emerging modern port, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

It will also unlock en-

vironmental benefits by reducing the logistics and transportation carbon footprint through train freight movement, including cargo loading and unloading from the sea leg.

In this regard, Pakistan Railways and the Gwadar Port Authority have already carried out a detailed survey outlining the framework for laying down the railway track and allied structures.

According to the master plan of Gwadar city and port, the track is planned for construction along Koh-e-Batil and the Eastbay Expressway. A Gwadar Port Authority official stated that the Senate

Committee on Maritime Affairs has deliberated on the crucial option of railway connectivity from Gwadar Port with the ML-1 and Quetta regions.

The proposed track will connect the berths of Gwadar port with the main railway yard of Gwadar, which will be extended further upcountry.

For this purpose, the Gwadar Port Authority and port operator have begun vacating the infrastructures along the route.

Following instructions from Prime Minister of Pakistan Shahbaz Sharif, the Gwadar Development Authority has initiated efforts to acquire 50 acres of

land, adjacent to the already acquired Pakistan Railway land, for the construction of a container yard.

A Gwadar Port Authority official stated that the Senate Committee on Maritime Affairs has deliberated on the crucial option of railway connectivity from Gwadar Port with the ML-1 and Quetta regions.

During the deliberations, the committee envisioned rail connections as playing a pivotal role in facilitating trade and transportation, positioning Gwadar Port as a pivotal hub in both national and international logistics networks.

## MQM-P blasts Sindh govt over alarming rise in Karachi street crimes

KARACHI (INP): The rising crimes in Karachi are not possible without police acting as accomplices, said MQM-P leader Faisal Subzwari who also asked why the federal government wasn't taking notice of the alarming situation.

Regretting the fact that nothing is being done check the increase in street in crimes in the port city, he said most of the criminals at the end had always been found to be from the police, as he blasted the PPP government over the killing of dozens of people by criminals during robberies.

Subzwari censured the Sindh home minister over his comments in which he had blamed media for dis-

proportional coverage of crimes in Karachi. He must speak only after thinking properly, otherwise, remaining silent was the best option, he remarked.

The MQM-P leader said how it was possible that the police didn't receive a share from the criminals snatching mobile phones from citizens when they had been getting money from those involved in illegal business of Iranian oil and the goods meant for Afghan transit trade.

Subzwari, who was addressing a press conference along with other party leaders, announced that they would formed neighbour committees to keep an eye on the illegal

activities and criminal elements. The provincial government had failed miserably in protecting the lives and property of people, he noted.

The law and order was worsening in not just Karachi but also in the entire province, he added—a clear reference to the dacoits operating freely in the Katcha area located along Indus River in upper Sindh.

Subzwari also mentioned that the mobile phones and bikes snatched or stolen in Karachi were not "airlifted" to other parts of the country. The goods were transported by road, he said and questioned how and why the police were not able to confiscate the same.

## Secretary-General MWL Dr Al-Issa visits Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, a distinguished figure in the realms of religion and philanthropy, on Sunday arrived in Pakistan for a significant visit from 7th April to 16th April 2024, aimed at fostering interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

As the Secretary General of Muslim World League and Chairman of Council of Muslim Scholars, Dr Al-Issa has long been at the forefront of promoting a more inclusive and tolerant understanding of Islam. Dr Al-Issa's efforts to combat Islamophobia and promote religious co-existence have garnered international acclaim.

In 2019, he spear-

headed a groundbreaking dialogue among Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, resulting in the signing of "The Charter of Makkah," a testament to his dedication to fostering understanding and mutual respect.

During his current visit to Pakistan, Dr Al-Issa is set to lead the Eid-ul-Fitr prayer at Faisal Mosque, one of the largest mosques in the world, located in the capital city of Islamabad.

Additionally, he will inaugurate the groundbreaking Seerat-un-Nabi Museum, the first of its kind in Pakistan, dedicated to showcasing Prophetic Relics and employing modern technologies such as virtual and augmented realities to elucidate the life and teachings.



MADINA MUNAWWARAH: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif paying respect at Roza-e-Rasool (SAWW)

## GoB condemns killing of juice vendor in Panjgur

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has strongly condemned the killing of an innocent juice vendor in Panjgur district of the province.

According to an official hand out issued here, the spokesman of provincial government said that the killing of a labourer in Panjgur is strongly condemnable. He said that the bereaved family of the deceased labourer is being contacted. He said that it is sorrowful to target and kill the labourers who came to Balochistan from remote areas for earning livelihood.

He said that the body of deceased labourer was dispatched to Quetta from Panjgur. The same would be sent to his native area, Rajanpur, the spokesman said.

## Ramazan teaches mutual love, brotherhood, patience & tolerance: Fatima

QUETTA (APP): Pakistan League-N Balochistan Women's Wing leader Fatima Khan has said that the month of Ramazan teaches mutual love, brotherhood, patience and tolerance. In the month of fasting, Allah Almighty blesses us with His immense blessings for which as much as we are grateful, we should also include the orphans and the poor in our happiness on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. She expressed these views while addressing in ceremony the Iftar dinner in honour of orphaned children on behalf of Helping Hands.

She said that fasting in the month of Ramazan creates feelings of compassion and sacrifice for the weak and needy sections of the society.

Ramazan Mubarak is the month of gaining closeness to Allah and helping the deserving people, she said.

She said that in this month full of blessings, Muslims should help their poor and deserving brothers with an open heart.

She said that the month of Ramazan teaches us patience, adding in this holy month, we have our moral and spiritual training, we can reach the true spirit of Ramazan only by forgiving each other's mistakes because this month teaches us kindness and brotherhood. She said that fasting in the month of Ramazan creates feelings of compassion and sacrifice for the weak and needy sections of the society.

She said that in the month of Ramazan, we should provide maximum financial assistance to the poor, destitute and orphans so that they could also join in the joy of Eid-ul-Fitr because true happiness can only be achieved by involving others in your happiness.



QUETTA: People waiting for transport to travel to hometowns to celebrate Eid ul Fitr with their loved ones at a local bus stand

## Govt orders Wapda employees to submit zero power theft surety certificates

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government has decided to launch a crackdown against Wapda officers and officials who were found involved in power theft and in this respect, the Power Division Ministry has sought surety certificates from Senior Superintendents to Linesmen of Wapda.

According to details, now all power distribution companies' officers and other staff will submit surety certificates to the government that their areas are free from power theft and if any irregularity is found in the area then the concerned officer and official will be held responsible.

The Pakistani government has announced a crackdown on electricity theft in the country in a bid to reduce power bills. Last

week, protests erupted across the country with electricity consumers burning copies of their bills and refusing to pay them alleging they were inflated and beyond their means.

A partial shutdown strike was observed in different parts of the country, prompting the government to take measures to reduce power bills without violating the terms set by the International Monetary Fund.

The government has announced a strategy to crackdown on power theft and reduce bills without compromising on the IMF conditions. The minister clarified that because of the electricity theft and refusal by some consumers to pay bills, the loss gets transferred to those who dutifully pay their bills.

## Senate Secretariat establishes facilitation desk

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Secretariat has established a facilitation desk in the Parliament House on Sunday to assist and support the recently elected members of the Upper House of the Parliament.

Muhammad Qasim Khan, the Secretary of the Senate, has already sent letters to the Senators. Additionally, he has directed the formation of a coordination committee to manage the registration and facilitation procedures for the newly elected Senate members.

Staff members from different departments are actively involved in assisting the incoming Senators. The desk will be operational from 9 am to 5 pm to ensure the smooth completion of the registration process.

## Solar Eclipse will not be visible in Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department has said that the total Solar Eclipse on April 08 and 09 will not be visible in Pakistan including Sindh.

However, it will be visible from West in Europe, North America, North in South America, Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic.

## Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee to sight moon on Tuesday

ISLAMABAD (Online): A pivotal meeting of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee is scheduled for Tuesday to determine the sighting of Shawwal-ul-Mukarram moon at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony. Headed by Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khair Azad, the meeting will witness the participation of esteemed members from various institutions, including the Ministry of Science and Technology, The Pakistan Meteorological Department, and The Space and Upper Atmo-

sphere Research Commission (SUPARCO). Among the notable attendees are Director General Syed Mushahid Hussain Khalid, along with prominent figures such as Allama Muhammad Dr. Hussain Akbar, Mufti Fazl Jamil Rizvi, and Maulana Muhammad Yasin Zafar, among others. Zonal members from Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, and Peshawar will also contribute to the deliberations.

Emphasizing the importance of public involvement, Maulana Azad encouraged citizens to actively engage in moon sighting efforts.



QUETTA: Relief goods is being distributed among needy persons during food aids distribution ceremony organized by charitable organization during the Holy Month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak.

## Chinese Embassy hosts Iftar for the needy people in Gwadar

GWADAR (INP): The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan in collaboration with China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC), the operator of Gwadar Port and Free Zone organized an iftar dinner for the needy families in Gwadar.

The program was organized with the collaboration of local volunteers under the platform of Helping Hand Foundation Gwadar. More than 300 needy people participated in the program which will continue till the closing of Ramadan. They were served date, milk, fruits and boxes of rice.

This is the third consecutive year that the Embassy and COPHC sponsor this program in collaboration with Helping Hand Foundation, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

Earlier this week, Karachi Consulate and Linyi Trade city distributed 4000 packages of rice and cooking oil to the local people affected by rain.

Moreover, following the heavy shower, COPHC donated canned food items to 1000 families.

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## Eid shopping gains momentum

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: Commercial markets, bazaars and shopping centers the provincial metropolis are witnessing a huge crowd of people as Eid-ul-Fitr is just around the corner. The stalls of cosmetics, henna and bangles, shoes, dresses, have been set up everywhere particularly in busy markets and bazaars.

Different fashion brands and boutiques have displayed an exquisite variety of fabrics offering different price ranges according to the affordability of the customers. The shopping frenzy has reached its peak during the last Ashra of Ramazan with only three days left in the Eid while the women are busy now in buying the food items like vermicelli, meat and other eatables for Eid.

## Abdullah Gul, Chinese envoy discuss growing Indian terrorism in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Tehreek-e-Jawanan Pakistan (TJP) Mohammad Abdullah Hamid Gul on Sunday held a detailed meeting with the Chinese Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Jiang Zaidong and discussed important issues mainly growing terrorism of India in Pakistan and the world. In a statement received here, Abdullah Gul said, "On this occasion, how the defense minister of India is admitting the massacre in Pakistan. Despite this, no international peace organization has taken notice of it." He declared the negligence of global community tantamount to permitting a license for terrorism to India.

## Pishin media community slams harassment of Najeeb Tareen by MS Civil Hospital

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The media community of Pishin has condemned the harassment of a senior journalist Najeeb Tareen by the Medical Superintendent of Civil Hospital Pishin.

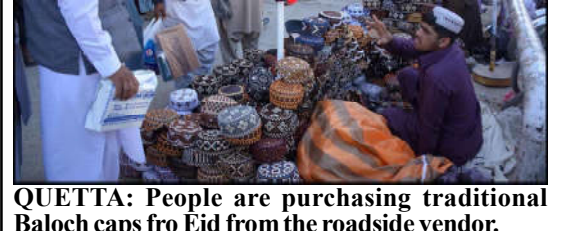
A meeting of the media persons was held under presidency of Vice President of National Press Club Pishin, Hazrat Khan Kakar at Media House on Sunday.

Those participated in the meeting were included President Samiullah Tareen, General Secretary Waseem Ahmed Rajput, Roohullah Kakar, Zeeshan Rajput, Matraajuddin, besides others.

The participants strongly condemned the harassment of the senior journalist by the Medical Superintendent of Civil Hospital and the lab Assistant. They said that the media persons are being harassed through different tactics on doing reporting based on facts.

Due to the situation, the real media persons are going to be unsafe, which is condemnable, they said.

They said that an application had been submitted in the police station against harassment of the journalist but instead of taking action on it, a bogus case was registered against the journalist.



QUETTA: People are purchasing traditional Baloch caps from the roadside vendor.

## Shahrah-e-Iqbal & Liaquat Bazaar declared No Parking Zone

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Shahrah-e-Iqbal and Liaquat Bazaar have been declared No Parking Zone.

In this regard, ban has been imposed on every kind of parking on both the important and busy roads.

According to an official handout issued here on Sunday, there would be no permission to park vehicles, motorcycles, cycles and push carts on the Shahrah-e-Iqbal and Liaquat Bazaar.

In case of violation of directives, the district administration, traffic police and Metropolitan Corporation have been issued directives to take stern action in this regard.

Needless to mention here is that the decision has been taken to tackle the traffic jam and rush in the main city.

The Commissioner Quetta Division and Chairman RTA had issued directives in this regard.



QUETTA: On the directives of Commissioner Quetta Division staff of RTA and Traffic Police taking action against transports who charged extra fares