

# Independent

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## Iranian President Raisi to reach Islamabad today with a focus on regional dev., connectivity, trade

*This will be the first visit by any head of state to Pakistan after the February 8 general elections*

ISLAMABAD (INP): Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will reach Pakistan on Monday for a three-day visit, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Sunday, to become the first head of state to arrive in the country after the Feb 8 general elections.

During his stay, Raisi will meet President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani and National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the statement said, adding that he was also scheduled to visit Lahore



and Karachi, where he would hold talks with the provincial leadership. The Iranian president would be accompanied by his spouse, the foreign min-

ister and other cabinet members, senior officials as well as a large business delegation.

According to the Foreign Office, the two sides will have a wide-ranging agenda to further Pakistan-Iran ties and enhance cooperation in diverse fields including trade, connectivity, energy, agriculture and people-to-people contacts.

"They will also discuss regional and global developments and bilateral cooperation to combat the common threat of terrorism," the statement read.



The ballot casting process is underway at a polling station during the By-Election in PB-22 constituency in Lasbela

## Parvez Elahi loses PP-32 seat to Musa Elahi in Gujarat PML-N takes lead as results pour in of by-elections in 21 NA, PA seats

*A clash between PML-N and PTI workers in Narowal's PP-54 resulted in death of a PML-N worker; ECP takes notice of PML-N activist killing, 'abduction' of polling staff*

LAHORE (INP): The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has taken the lead in the by-polls held on nearly two dozen national and provincial seats on Sunday, as per unofficial and preliminary results.

Provisional results of the by-elections in five national and 16 provincial constituencies have begun trickling in as the vote count commenced following the conclusion of polling on Sunday.

Polling continued from 8 am until 5 pm without any break – across five National Assembly seats, 12 Punjab Assembly seats, two Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa As-

sembly seats and two Balochistan Assembly seats – amid stringent security measures.

In a major upset, former Punjab chief minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-backed (PTI) Sunni Ittehad Council candidate Parvez Elahi, contesting from PP-32, faced defeat from Gujarat as Musa Elahi from the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) secured victory.

Musa Elahi emerged victorious with an impressive count of 63,536 votes, as per unofficial results.

In contrast, Chaudhry Parvez Elahi could only manage to secure 18,237 votes, according to the un-

official tally. This outcome marks a significant shift in the political landscape of Gujarat, signaling a change in representation for the constituency.

The results of the 21 by-elections started pouring in as per the unofficial and unverified after polling concluded amid violent incidents reported in Narowal.

Elections were originally scheduled for 23 constituencies. However, the results of two seats, one national [NA-207 Shaheed Benazirabad] and one provincial [PS-80 Dadu], had already been announced.

*Continued on page 2*

## FM declares negotiations with Int'l financial institutions as positive

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb has declared negotiations with international financial institutions as positive.

Addressing a news conference in Washington along with Pakistan Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan, he said that Pakistan Stock Market witnessed a historical bullish trend in recent days due to positive indicators of economy.

The Minister said that the mechanism regarding tax collection was also being improved through reforms.

He said that Pakistan was heading towards financial stability as government's vision regarding revival of economy is quite clear.

Muhammad Aurangzeb also stressed the need for concrete measures to reduce government expenditures.

INP adds: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb has expressed

*Continued on page 2*



QUETTA: Former Chief Minister Balochistan Senator Abdul Qudus Bizenjo, Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango and MPA Asghar Rind congratulate Justice Hashim Khan Kakar on becoming Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court.

## Armed men kidnap polling staff in PB-50, Qila Abdullah

QILA ABDULLAH (INP): Armed men have kidnapped the polling staff deputed at several polling stations of PB-50, Qila Abdullah, Balochistan during voting in the constituency in connection with a by-election on Sunday.

Members of the polling staff have been kidnapped from polling station number 33, set up at Girls' Primary School; polling station number 72 set up at Government Primary School; polling station number 96 set up at Government High School Norak; polling station number 97 set up at Rural Health Center Norak, and polling station number 99 set up at Government High School Norak.

On the other hand, talking to the media, Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) candidate from the constituency Mirwais Khan Achakzai has demanded the immediate recovery of the polling staff.

He has called upon the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to fulfill its responsibilities to ensure free, fair and transparent election.



QUETTA: Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party Central Leader, Abdul Rahim Khan Ziaratwal along with addresses to media persons during press conference held at Quetta press club.

## Gohar calls by-elections a farce, slams ECP for failing to ensure transparency

GUJRAT (INP) – Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan criticised the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Sunday, accusing it of failing to conduct the by-elections on 21 national and provincial seats transparently.

Speaking to reporters outside the Khattala polling station in Gujrat's PP-32

constituency, Gohar called the by-elections a farce, arguing that parliament should consist of genuine public representatives with popular support, rather than those installed through electoral malpractice.

Gohar declared that the PTI would not recognise the results of the PP-32 constituency by-polls.

## Pakistan sends humanitarian assistance tranche for Gaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar on Sunday said that Pakistan dispatched 8th tranche of humanitarian assistance for the people of Gaza.

The 400 tons assistance consisted of winterized tents, tarpaulins, blankets, medicines and food supplies through sea, the foreign minister posted on his X account. "The shipment will be received by the Pakistani Ambassador at Port Said, Egypt and handed over to the Egyptian Red Crescent for onward delivery to the people of Gaza. Pakistan remains committed to addressing the urgent humanitarian needs of our brothers and sisters in Gaza," he further posted. Ishaq Dar on Sunday said that Pakistan dispatched 8th tranche of humanitarian assistance for the people of Gaza.

## Saudi citizen abducted in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: A Saudi Arabian citizen has been reportedly kidnapped from Sector F8 of Islamabad, prompting swift action from law enforcement authorities.

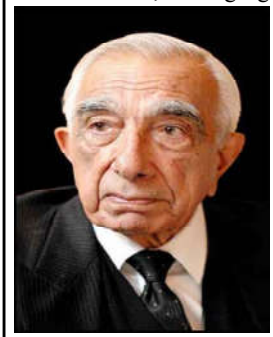
The Margalla police station has registered a first information report (FIR) at the request of an official from the Saudi embassy.

According to the FIR, the accused, identified as Abdul Wahid Shahid Khan, allegedly kidnapped Saudi citizen Hanan Abdullah al-Bashar. The FIR also highlights the urgency of the situation, emphasizing the need for the kidnapper to face legal consequences and for the prompt recovery of the abducted individual.

## Former bureaucrat Roedad Khan passes away at 101

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former bureaucrat Roedad Khan passed away at the age of 101 here on Sunday.

Since his entry into the Pakistani Civil Services in 1949, he has held a number of positions, including those of chief secretary of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, managing



director of PTV, information secretary during Yahya Khan's regime, secretary ministry of labour and tourism, interior secretary of Pakistan, secretary general ministry of interior, federal minister of accountability, and adviser to the prime minister and president.

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LAHORE: Eminent religious scholar Dr. Raghib Hussain Naecmi calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## People rejected PTI's narrative of falsehood by overwhelmingly voting PML-N in by-polls: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Sunday called the victory of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) as a manifestation of the people's trust in the people-friendly policies of the government and a clear rejection of the narrative of falsehood worked out by the leadership of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) from behind the bars.

"Preliminary results of today's by-polls have validated the fact that the

people of Pakistan firmly believe in the leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and they fully welcome the people-friendly policies of its government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif," said the minister in a video message on the by-polls held in multiple constituencies today.

He said the economic reforms implemented by PM Shehbaz Sharif and his team had given a hope to

*Continued on page 2*

## Pakistan Navy continues rescue, relief operation in flood hit areas of Gwadar

GWADAR (INP): Pakistan Navy in the aftermath of recent unprecedented rain spells in Gwadar, Ormara and adjoining villages of Balochistan, was actively undertaking rescue and relief operation named 'Operation Madad' from past three days.

Immediate relief was provided to affected families on Sunday upon receiving information through local sources that large number of people were stranded into houses

due accumulated water in vicinity and were in immediate need of ration supplies.

Pakistan Navy Rescue teams immediately coordinated the efforts and air dropped ration bags to affected people of Muradi, Dando, Kulanch and adjoining isolated areas of Gwadar District. Pakistan Navy Sea King helicopters undertook multiple sorties to ensure ration supply to hundreds of stranded families.



Pakistan Navy rescue teams air dropping ration bags to trapped people of Muradi, Dando and Kulanch near Gwadar.



WASHINGTON DC: Finance Minister Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb's interaction with Pakistani media at Pakistan Embassy.

## Deputy Commissioner suspended: CM grieved over death of a child due to falling in well in Musakhail

**Independent Report**

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed sorrow over death of a child due to falling in a well in Musakhail district.

According to an official handout issued here on Sunday, the Chief Minister expressed anguish over delay in rescue operation after the incident.

On the delay in rescue operation, the Deputy Commissioner Musakhail has been suspended, stated in the handout.

The Chief Minister asserted that action would be taken against the officers who committed negligence in this regard.

In a tweet, the Chief Minister asserted that the officers and other employees doing good job would be encouraged.

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## Two more customs officials shot dead in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (INP): At least two Customs officials were killed and two were injured in a firing incident near Parking Plaza in DI Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, police sources said.

Unidentified assailants opened fire as the Customs officials were targeted near Parking Plaza. DSNV vehicle of a private TV news channel also came under the fire, luckily the staff remained safe.

The attackers escaped the scene after the shooting incident. The bodies and injured were moved to the District HQ Hospital.

On 18 April, at least four Customs officials were killed in a firing incident near Saggu road in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's DI Khan.

Last month, at least two soldiers of Pakistan army embraced martyrdom in DI Khan suicide attack.

According to Inter-Services-Public-Relations, two security personnel embraced martyrdom as a

vehicle-borne suicide bomber exploded himself on a security forces' convoy in Dera Ismail Khan District.

In February this year, at least five cops were martyred and two others sustained injuries as explosion occurred near police vehicle in Kulachi.

Meanwhile Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi strongly condemned the incident of firing on customs officials in the limits of Dera Ismail Khan Police Station on Sunday.

The minister expressed grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of three customs officials in the attack and expressed his heartfelt sympathy to the families of the martyrs and for the speedy recovery of the injured.

The martyred officers were identified as Inspector Hasnain Tamdi, Constable Ziad Khan and the civilian was identified as Amir.



LAHORE: Interior Minister and Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi inaugurating Inter-Club Cricket Championship

## Panda bonds will unleash potential in Pakistan for the first time this year

BEIJING (INP): Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, indicated in an interview that he hopes to issue up to USD 300 million of panda bonds for the first time this year, due to issue renminbi-denominated bonds would allow Pakistan to diversify its funding sources and reach investors in new markets.

Panda bonds are bonds denominated in renminbi, or Chinese yuan, but issued by foreign borrowers, including companies, multilateral agencies and governments, says a report carried by Gwadar Pro.

"Frankly, we should have considered this a long time ago. China is the second largest and deepest bond market in the globe, and leveraging the Chinese bond market is the right thing for Pakistan given that it has issued dollar bonds and Eurobonds."

The finance minister said that the first batch of panda bond issuance will be approximately USD 250 million to USD 300 million, as well as further issuances will follow.

Aurangzeb said that the government's cash balances were strong enough, and it was able to pay its debts on time. The payments were unlikely to put pressure on the currency, and he expects the rupee to remain stable, he added.

In a global context, onshore renminbi bonds saw record issuance in 2023, as the market continues to develop. China's Panda bond market is gaining momentum and attracting new issuers, thanks to lower funding costs and a policy push.

Issuance of Panda bonds by offshore borrowers in China's interbank market reached RMB 11.7bn (USD 15.3 billion) in the first nine months of 2023, a record for the period, according to data from the National Association of Financial Market Institutional Investors (NAFMII).

The amount has already exceeded the full-year total of RMB 80.5 billion in 2022. Landmark deals include the first African sovereign Panda bond, from the Arab Republic of Egypt, as well as a debut offering by German

## West Indies Women beat Pakistan by two wickets

KARACHI (APP): Nida Dar reached the significant milestone of 100 wickets, becoming the second Pakistani women's bowler and the 27th overall to achieve this feat.

However, despite her remarkable achievement, the West Indies Women secured a thrilling last-ball victory with two wickets to spare in the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 fixture held at the National Bank Stadium on Sunday, taking a 2-0 lead in the series.

The visitors found themselves at 213 for five in 48 overs while chasing a target of 224 for victory. Requiring five runs off the last over and three runs off the final ball, a boundary off an outside edge from Karishma Ramharack's bat dashed the hopes of the home team.

The West Indies Women were in control of the match at 180 for three in 41 overs before Nida Dar initiated a middle-order collapse.

Nida, who joined Sana Mir as the only Pakistani bowler to claim 100 wickets, dismissed opener Rashada Williams and further dismantled the West Indies innings by accounting for Chedean Nation, Aaliyah Alleyne, and Chinelle Henry, leaving them struggling at 219 for seven after 49 overs.

## Former bureaucrat Roedad Khan

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A Profile

Roedad Khan was born in a small village of Mardan, North-West Frontier Province, British India, to an ethnic Pashtun family of the Yusufzai tribe.

In 1939, he graduated from local high school and went to attend the Forman Christian College and gained BA in English Literature in 1942. The atmosphere in the college was liberal, tolerant and progressive.

Respecting his father's wishes, Khan attended the Aligarh Muslim University and gained MA in English history (literature and linguistics) in 1946.

Upon his return to Mardan, Khan taught history at the Islamia College, Peshawar and opted for Pakistani citizenship in 1947.

In 1949, he joined the elite Pakistan Administrative Service, then known as DMG of the Central Superior Services and started his career in 1951 as the secretary of chief minister of Sindh.

His career was at peak when he served with Chief Martial Law Administrator

## People rejected PTI's...

Continued from page 1

the masses who shown their trust in the government by voting the PML-N that had kicked off the journey of economic stability in the country by curbing inflation and increasing foreign reserves.

On the other hand, the minister said the people had rejected the false and misleading narrative of the PTI whose leadership was allegedly conspiring against the country from behind the bars to achieve their ulterior motives.

"They are issuing statements from jails that seriously damage credibility of Pakistan at international level," he said, adding the anti-state narrative was further pushed through such false statements.

The people of Pakistan had rejected the PTI founder's "politics of hatred, chaos, division, falsehood and hypocrisy", the minister remarked.

He said the performance of the PML-N governments in federation and Punjab spoke volume and the results of today's by-polls is its true manifestation.

PML-N stood victorious in most of by-polls today, he said vowing that the government was aggressively taking measures to restore stature of the country at international level and provide relief to the masses by stabilizing the economy.

He paid tribute to the people for exercising their democratic right and standing by truth and burying the narrative of the falsehood.

He thanked the Almighty for the victory of PML-N in today's by-polls.



QUETTA: Traffic Police officials are keeping a barrier for traffic in the middle of the road due to traffic rush, in Quetta.

# New Zealand overpower Pakistan in third T20I

Mark Chapman single-handedly leads his side to victory

Sports Desk

RAWALPINDI: New Zealand outclassed Pakistan in the third Twenty20 international in Rawalpindi on Sunday as Mark Chapman single-handedly led his side to victory to level the series.

Pakistan bowlers failed to produce wicket-taking deliveries in the match. They only managed to get three players out of the visitors. Chapman was not out for 87 runs.

In the first innings, all-rounder Shadab Khan and skipper Babar Azam led Pakistan to 178-4 in the match. Shadab hit a 20-ball 41 with two sixes and four boundaries while Azam scored a 29-ball 37 after Pakistan were sent in to bat by New Zealand on a flat Pindi Stadium pitch.

Opener Saim Ayub scored a robust 22-ball 32 and Muhammad Irfan Khan chipped in with a 20-ball 30 not out as Pakistan added 54 in the last five overs.

Azam and left-hander Ayub gave Pakistan a brisk start of 55 as the duo played some aggressive shots. Shadab and Irfan boosted the innings with a brisk 62-run stand for the fourth wicket.

For New Zealand, leg-spinner Ish Sodhi was the best bowler with 2-25.

New Zealand, who lost the second match by seven wickets at the same venue on Saturday, made two changes with pacer Will O'Rourke and allrounder Zac Foulkes making T20I debut.

They replaced Ben Lister and Ben Sears.

Pakistan rested pacer Mohammad Amir in a like-for-like replacement in Abbas Afridi.

The first match, also in Rawalpindi, was washed out after just two deliveries.

The remaining matches are in Lahore on April 25 and 27.

Teams

Pakistan: Babar Azam (captain), Usman Khan, Abrar Ahmed, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Rizwan, Abbas Afridi, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi

New Zealand: Michael Bracewell (captain), Mark Chapman, Cole McConechie, Jacob Duffy, Dean Foxcroft, Jimmy Neesham, Tim Robinson, Will O'Rourke, Zac Foulkes, Tim Seifert, Ish Sodhi



KARACHI: Supporters of PTI take part in a rally at Shahrah-e-Faisal.

## Results trickle in as vote count...

Continued from page 1

During today's by-polls on 21 national and provincial assembly seats, the polling process was marred by violent clashes between workers of different political parties in different areas of Punjab.

The cellular and internet services also remained suspended in some districts of Punjab and Balochistan to maintain law and order situation during the electoral process.

A PML-N activist was killed in a clash which broke out in Narowal's PP-54 with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) workers.

The deceased worker from the ruling party was identified as Muhammad Yousuf who lost his life after the opponents hit his head with a stick during the fight, according to the police.

The police said that the worker was taken to hospital where he succumbed to injuries, adding that the polling was stopped in this constituency.

PML-N Vice President Hamza Shehbaz expressed sorrow over the loss of life of a party worker in Narowal.

Expressing condolence over the activist's death, Hamza slammed the PTI without taking its name, saying that hooliganism of a political party claimed life of an innocent man during the by-polls today.

The ruling party's senior leader added that the politics of hatred spread chaos in the society.

PML-N Secretary General Ahsan Iqbal said that PTI cannot win elections through hooliganism. He added that the killers will be brought to justice.

National Assembly [by-election on five seats]

NA-8 Bajaur

Independent candidate Mubarak Zaib leading with 10,245 votes. SIC's Gul Zafar Khan trails behind with 9,784 votes.

NA-44 DI Khan

SIC's Faisal Amin Khan has won this seat with 56,995 votes, beating PPP's Abdul Rasheed Khan Kundi who could only garner 9,533 votes.

NA-119 Lahore

PML-N's Ali Parvez Malik leading with 14,593 votes. SIC's Shahzad Farooq trails behind with 10,780 votes.

NA-132 Kasur

PML-N's Rashid Ahmad Khan leading with 57,213 votes. SIC's Sardar Muhammad Hussain Dogar trailing behind with 30,613 votes.

NA-196 Qambar Shahdadkot

PPP's Khursheed Ahmed Junejo has won this seat with 56,790 votes, beating TLP candidate Muhammad Ali who could only bag 2,896 votes.

Provincial Assemblies [by-election on 16 seats]

Punjab

PP-22 Talagang

PML-N's Falak Sher Awan leads with 22,409 votes. SIC's Muhammad Nasir Ahmad trails behind with 19,654 votes.

PP-32 Gujrat

PML-N's Musa Elahi has won this seat with 63,536 votes, defeating SIC's Parvez Elahi who could only garner 18,327 votes.

PP-36 Wazirabad

PML-N's Adnan Afzal leads with 15,202 votes. SIC's M Fiaz Chattha trails behind with 9,314 votes.

PP-54 Narowal

SIC's Awas Qasim leads with 26,873 votes. PML-N's Ahmad Iqbal Chaudhry trails behind with 26,397 votes.

PP-93 Bhakkar

PML-N's Saeed Akbar Khan leads with 18,922 votes. Independent candidate Muhammad Afzal Khan Dhandla trails behind with 9,125 votes.

PP-139 Sheikhpura

PML-N's Rana Afzal Hussain clinched the seat with 48,347 votes, defeating SIC's Ejaz Hussain who bagged 31,262 votes.

PP-147 Lahore

PML-N's Muhammad Riaz leads with 5,235 votes. Independent candidate Muhammad Khan Madani trails behind with 4,412 votes.

PP-149 Lahore

IPP candidate Muhammad Shoaib Siddiqui leads with 17,213 votes. SIC's Zeeshan Rasheed trails behind with 13,040 votes.

PP-158 Lahore

PML-N's Chaudhry Muhammad Nawaz leads with 8,254 votes. SIC's Moonis Elahi trails behind with 6,215 votes.

PP-164 Lahore

PML-N's Rashid Minhas won the seat with 31,499 votes, defeating SIC's Muhammad Yousaf who secured 25,721 votes.

PP-266 Rahim Yar Khan

PPP's Mumtaz Ali leads with 10,212 votes. PML-N's Muhammad Sa'dar Khan Laghari trails behind with 9,936 votes.

PP-290 Dera Ghazi Khan

PML-N's Ali Ahmad Laghari won the seat with 66,413 votes, beating SIC's Sardar Muhammad Mohiuddin Khosa who got 19,322 votes.

Balochistan

PP-20 Khuzdar

BNP's Mir Jehanzeb Mengal leads with 22,721 votes. Independent candidate Mir Shafiq Rehman Mengal trails behind with 12,467 votes.

PP-22 Lasbela

PML-N's Muhammad Zareen Khan Magasi leads with 26,101 votes. Independent candidate Shah Nawaz Hassan trails behind with 1,273 votes.

PP-50 Kalla Abdullah

PkMAP's Mir Wais Khan Achakzai leads with 899 votes. ANP's Zamarak Khan trails behind with 544 votes.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PK-22 Bajaur

Independent candidate Mubarak Zaib leads with 2,212 votes. SIC's Gul Dawood Khan trails behind with 1,622 votes.

PK-91 Kohat

SIC's Dawood Shah won the seat by getting 22,193 votes, defeating Independent candidate Abdul Masud who could bag only 11,722 votes.



LAHORE: Women voters showing their national identity cards and marked thumbs after casting their votes during the by-election 2024 at Garhi Shahu School.

## FM declares negotiations...

Continued from page 1

financial package, said once the mission is back in Islamabad, we are going to agree on the priorities and the principles. "I believe it is Pakistan's programme. It is not an IMF programme. It is a Pakistan's programme and it is supported, assisted and funded by the IMF. What's the size, and the reality and where we are, it's premature to talk about that. We have our own views and we'll share it with IMF. But I would rather leave it to the joint meetings in terms of the size and the duration of the programme." Aurangzeb told a group of journalists and think-tanks in Washington on Saturday.

Asked by TRT World if Islamabad would revisit its National Finance Commission (NFC) award the allocation of revenues between the federation and the provinces once IMF approves the new loan programme, Aurangzeb said, Pakistan needs to review it in the context of 18th amendment where a lot of stuff has been devolved to the provinces.

"It is a discussion which we will have with the provinces in terms of either expenditure sharing or requesting them to incentivise to bring up the tax base, because the reality is, after the 18th amendment and the NFC award, some of the sectors which need to be brought in a much bigger way into the tax net are actually provincial markets," he said.

"Whether it is agriculture, real estate or property construction, we can help support systems, but it is for them to actually go ahead and do it," he said, adding he has already engaged with the chief ministers of Punjab and Sindh provinces with respect to starting the dialogue.

Pakistan signed a short-term agreement with IMF in 2023. Pakistan is seeking a new bailout of up to \$8 billion when the current one of \$3 billion expires, he added.

The finance minister's visit to US comes as IMF published its updated World Economic Outlook that shows Pakistan will grow at 2 percent.

The IMF has kept the country's growth rate at 3.5 percent for the next fiscal year.

Meanwhile, Aurangzeb ruled out any further significant rupee devaluation.

Speaking at round table meeting with Bloomberg team in Washington, he said Pakistan's solid reserves, stable currency, and growing exports support against rupee devaluation.

The finance minister said that his country was ramping up support for industries, agriculture and IT to boost national growth above four percent in the coming years.

## Ish Sodhi supports test match series between Pakistan & India

RAWALPINDI (INP): Currently visiting senior player of the New Zealand cricket squad Ish Sodhi on Saturday strongly supported the test match series between Pakistan and arch rival India.

Captain of the Indian cricket team Rohit Sharma had suggested a cricket test series between two neighboring teams, India and Pakistan few days ago. Rohit had stressed the need of holding cricket matches between teams of two countries for the promotion of the cricket. To a query asked by the INP at the Rawalpindi cricket stadium Ash Shodi completely agreed upon that magnificent cricket is watched whenever both teams clashed against each other.

## MoHR helpline received 1,460,460 calls since inception

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Human Rights Helpline 1099 has received 1,460,460 calls since its inception and provided services in 5,5323 relevant cases, said an official here on Thursday.

According to an official source, all the callers being victim of human rights violation received legal assistance and were referred to the concerned departments.

During this period, 41,615 call backs and follow-up calls have been made to the victims.

During the financial year 2022-23, individuals seek 131,309 inquiries 1,657 were provided with

comprehensive legal advice and other essential support services. The Helpline, diligently committed to ensuring the utmost efficacy and efficacy of its operations, further undertook 28,904 call backs and follow-up calls in relation to the pertinent cases during this specified period.

Total of 88 calls received relating to matters of rights and welfare of children. These inquiries are regarding child protection, education, health, and general well-being.

The helpline received 403 calls concerning to challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. These inquiries cover

accessibility, discrimination, employment opportunities, and the provision of adequate support and services.

A significant number of 577 calls were received concerning governance-related human rights issues. These inquiries encompassed issues such as transparency, accountability, corruption, and the protection of civil and political rights within the broad framework of governance and administration.

The helpline received a minimal number of 2 calls relating to land rights. These inquiries involved matters such as land ownership, disputes, and the protection

of land rights for individuals and communities.

The helpline received two calls specifically requesting free legal assistance. These inquiries sought guidance and support on various legal matters, including criminal cases, civil disputes etc.

He further added that a total of 288 calls fell under the miscellaneous category, encompassing a wide range of inquiries that did not fit into the other predefined categories. These inquiries covered topics such as employment rights, social welfare, consumer protection, and various other individual concerns.



ISLAMABAD: The Constitution Avenue of Federal Capital decorated with Pak-Iran flags and banners ahead of visit of President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, undertaking an official visit to Pakistan from 22 to 24 April 2024.



ISLAMABAD: Capital Police and ATF Officials participating in search and combing operation.

## Search and combing operation conducted at Khanna & Industrial area Police Stations jurisdiction

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

He said that, following the special directives of Islamabad SSP Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), the search and combing operations are being conducted in different areas of the city, to ensure

the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens.

Following these orders, a search and combing operation was conducted in different areas of Khanna and Industrial Area police stations by CTD and local police teams.

During the search and combing operation 126 suspicious persons, 72 houses, 13 motorcycles and 48 motor vehicles were thoroughly checked while police team shifted three 12 bore rifles, one SMG rifle, four 30 bore pistols, ammu-

## SSDO urges Punjab to conduct LG election as 100 days agenda

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) has urged the Punjab government to prioritize holding local government elections within its first 100 days in office.

"While ending the democratic crisis and forming a new government is a positive step, building a strong democratic system is crucial for long-term progress," Syed Kausar Abbas, Executive Director of SSDO said on Sunday. "Restoring the local government system isn't just a legal obligation, it's a cornerstone of democratic governance."

The SSDO argues that empowering local communities through elected representatives is essential. They propose that instead of allocating development funds to provincial and national assembly members, the government should channel those resources directly to locally elected officials. This, they believe, would empower local people to drive their own development.

"Pakistan's history demonstrates the impor-

## Wafaqi Mohtasib takes notice of growing complaints in ETO Office

ISLAMABAD (APP): An inspection team from the Wafaqi Mohtasib's Office is scheduled to visit the Excise and Taxation Office located in Islamabad tomorrow (i.e., Monday, April 22) to look into the growing number of public complaints regarding maladministration in the said office.

"It may be pointed out that the Wafaqi Mohtasib, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, responding to a

large number of public complaints regarding delay and difficulties in getting vehicular registration, vehicles' tax assessment, and examination, constituted an Inspection Team to be headed by its Senior Advisor to conduct a thorough probe into the matter," said a press release issued here on Sunday.

These complaints alleged malpractices in the said office, along with the

undesirable activities there and other irregularities that were causing great inconvenience to the general public.

The team would listen to the public complaints on the spot besides interacting and interviewing the people there before finalizing its recommendations for finding a workable solution in coordination with the administration of the ETO Office.

## Paper cutting art exhibition to start at PNCA today

ISLAMABAD (APP): A paper cutting exhibition themed "The Guiding Light" would be organized at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Monday. In this regard, the PNCA invited the famous Paper Cutting Artist Tufiq Ahmad to create and display Paper-cut Arts with different meanings.

Tufiq is the paper cutting artist whose work depicts Islamic stories. "One honor that I am particularly proud of is that I am the only paper cutting artist in the world that focuses on Islamic stories," said Tufiq Ahmed told APP on Sunday.

## PHEC offers expertise to Kyrgyzstan to modernize education system

ISLAMABAD (APP): Honorary Consul Kyrgyzstan Meher Kashif Younis on Sunday said Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC) has offered its expertise to Kyrgyzstan for developing their existing educational disciplines on modern scientific lines at par with international standards to meet global challenges.

Talking to a delegation of industrialists at Kyrgyzstan Consulate, he said that he had a fruitful and result oriented meeting with Chairman PHEC Dr. Shahid Munir (Tamgha-I-Imtiaz) who assured full cooperation for offering services, expertise and techni-

cal skills to Kyrgyzstan for significant improvements in their existing educational system especially technical higher education, said a news release. He said collaboration with Kyrgyz to enhance its educational system marks a significant step towards fostering global cooperation and academic advancement. He said the partnership encompasses various aspects aimed at elevating the quality of education to international standards. PHEC can offer expertise in curriculum development, drawing upon its own experience in aligning educational content with contemporary scientific principles.

## Two members of thief gang held; stolen cash, mobile phones & valuables recovered

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Anti Robbery and Dacoity Unit (ARDU) police team arrested two wanted members of a thief gang involved in

## European Film Festival to start from May 15

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 3rd European Film Festival will start from May 15, featuring an exciting fusion of cinema, culture, and diversity in the federal capital. Film enthusiasts from Islamabad and three other cities across Pakistan will get a unique opportunity to discover European cinema at the third European Film Festival. The film festival will take place in four cities across Pakistan, including Islamabad, Peshawar, Quetta, and Gujrat.

## 18 outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons recovered

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 18 outlaws from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of DIG Operations Islamabad Syed Shahzad Nadeem Bukhari, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.



numerous theft activities and recovered stolen cash, mobile phones, motorbikes and valuables worth 9.3 million rupees from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of DIG Operations Islamabad Syed Shahzad Nadeem

Following these directions, the Aabpara police team arrested an accused namely Muhammad Gulraiz and recovered 550 gram hashish from his possession. The Karachi Company police team arrested two accused namely Hamad and Waseem involved in theft activities and recovered theft tools and stole items from their possession.

## Mirwaiz Umar grieved over demise of several personalities in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of the mother of Abdul Hameed Sofi, General Secretary of Nusratul-Islam Trust Islamabad, and several personalities who passed away in the last few days.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the deceased personalities include the young daughter of a leading businessman and social activist Rauf Ahmad Punjabi, wife of Qazi Burhan Shonhoo of Majid Bagh Sanat Nagar; Ghulam Rasool Sofi of Braripora Nawakdal, who was the father-in-law of Farooq Ahmad Soudagar.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq expressed heartfelt condolences and solidarity with all the bereaved family members.

## UNESCO has announced MAB Young Scientists Awards 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): UNESCO has announced MAB Young Scientists Awards 2024 for the young researchers carrying out interdisciplinary research in line with UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.

The researchers (under the age of 35) either pursuing research in UNESCO Biosphere Reserves or potential sites or their work contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals may apply for the awards.

According to the ECOSF Pakistan, the deadline for submission of applications for the MAB Young Scientists Awards is May 15 while the priority will be given to projects carried out in biosphere reserves. Created in 1989, the grant sheds light on interdisciplinary research in line with UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme carried out by young scientists.

Since 2022, with the generous support from the Principality of Monaco, five additional annual fellowships are granted specifically to studies on marine, island and



ISLAMABAD: An attractive eye catching view of blooming flowers to mark the spring season at Constitution Avenue of the Federal Capital.

## Death anniversary of Allama Iqbal observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The nation solemnly commemorates the 86th death anniversary of Allama Muhammad Iqbal today, paying tribute to his struggle and services for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Subcontinent.

Born in Sialkot on November 9, 1877, Allama Iqbal is revered as the national poet of Pakistan, affectionately known as Mufakkir-e-Pakistan (the thinker of Pakistan), Shair-e-Mashriq (the poet of the east), and Hakeemul Ummat (the doctor of the Muslim Ummah).

Allama Iqbal's profound vision laid the foundation for the concept of an independent nation for Muslims, ultimately culminating in the establishment of Pakistan in 1947.

Renowned for his literary prowess in both Urdu and Persian, his works such as *Asrar-e-Khudi*, *Payam-i-Mashriq*, *Bang-i-Dara*, *Bal-i-Jibril*, *Zarb-i Kalim*, and *Armughan-e-Hijaz* are cherished as masterpieces of literature.

## From trash to treasure: Recycling of unmanaged solid waste urged

ISLAMABAD (APP): The unmanaged solid waste generation of the rapidly populated federal capital has sought attention of the authorities concerned to turn the trash into treasure by scientific management system and recycling endeavors. The capital inhabiting around 2.6 million people generates some 1,535 tonnes of solid waste per day whereas the civic agency is only able to manage 60-70% of it while leaving rest to rot in open dumps, streets and empty places that is being burnt causing serious air pollution leading to smog and poor air quality in the scenic federal capital.

A study titled "Open Waste Burning and Its Health Hazards" by Desk Review claimed that solid waste mismanagement allowing open trash burning was seriously detrimental to human health and environment at large as collectively injurious pollutants spewed into the atmosphere cast multidimensional consequences mainly

complex health impacts on humans and biodiversity.

The open waste burning resulted into serious pulmonary complications, cardiovascular and carcinogenic ailments along with other chronic infections and allergies, putting children, elderly, pregnant women, and individuals with prior conditions at risk. It was putting wildlife, ecology, biodiversity and ecosystems equally at risk by degradation quality of biome in its habitats. Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri told APP that globally waste management is not an issue but rather an opportunity that has been availed in the form of waste-to-energy projects not only in the advanced states but in developing countries across by transforming solid waste as a resource at par with the developed world.

"Pakistan is facing energy crisis and it can venture into waste-to-energy opportunities to open another venue to ensure its

energy security and resource management within one intervention," he said.

The situation in the peri-urban and town areas across the country is unmanageable in terms of solid waste management whereas a strong local government system is imperative to address the issue as the local body system bears the responsibility after the municipal authorities for ensuring waste management, he added. Dr. Mansoor Ali from the Royal Academy of Engineering, UK said the peripheral waste burning in the federal capital and Rawalpindi's vicinity is a very challenging issue. The question is not the competence but the affordability of the most-modern technology, making waste to energy as a resource a daunting task for the federal capital to embrace innovative ideas.

Dr. Abida Shareef, FJWU leading an integrated solid waste management project has conducted a resourceful survey among 11,000 households through

the door-to-door campaign in rural area of Bhara Kahu in Islamabad.

The survey revealed hilarious facts as 52% of the survey respondents believed that household waste is not hazardous. Similarly, 53% of the respondents opined that garbage cannot be segregated whereas it is possible by imparting training to females at home. It proved the little knowledge of the community on waste management that needed to be improved through awareness and education.

She also noted that 58% of the respondents thought it was not illegal to burn waste, whereas 47% thought it was a smart way to burn and manage waste. The survey found out that females burning waste at the household level were few whereas the major problem was at the communal level at open dumping sites where communities and waste management officials were involved in setting up trash at fire.

Interestingly, Aqsa Arshad, a Quaid-i-Azam



ISLAMABAD: A graceful flock of pigeons takes flight along the roadside in the heart of the Federal Capital.

Monday April 22, 2024

**Elections in India**

India's mammoth multi-stage elections have begun and the popular issues gripping the voters this time are unemployment, inflation and related economic despair.

This is far removed from the divisive polls of 2014 and 2019, and it is not because pro-Hindutva campaigners are not trying to kindle the fires of communalism. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has personally signalled the intent by using an election speech to attack opposition leaders as Mughal-like meat-eaters, not just ordinary lovers of mutton and fish.

Despite the enormous funds and the hard advertising put into it, the controversial Ram temple inauguration is being listed by analysts as way down in the voters' list of priorities. The perceptible absence of polarisation — usually derived from Muslim-bashing, often by falsely conjuring a Pakistan link — could bring surprises when votes are counted on June 4.

Consider the case of Navneet Rana, a feisty woman candidate for the BJP from Amravati in Maharashtra. She has been unfailingly reminding her supporters to not rest on their oars in the delusion that there is a Modi wave, or that he would see her through. "There is no Modi wave this time. Stay very vigilant." The Rana video is not the only call to toil for BJP supporters.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is a member of the Rajya Sabha and she has been quoted as turning down the BJP's offer to fight the Lok Sabha polls, saying she simply did not have the kind of money needed for the elections. This is being seen as an oblique criticism of the electoral bonds scam in which the BJP was a major beneficiary.

Ms Sitharaman is tame compared with her political economist husband Parakala Prabhakar. His book *The Crooked Timber of New India: Essays on a Republic in Crisis* is a critique of the Modi years and has predictably baffled many. Mr Prabhakar has claimed in TV interviews there would be no constitution if Mr Modi returned to power. However, he also predicts that the BJP would not cross 200 seats, 72 short of the halfway mark. Similar claims have been made by Rahul Gandhi and other opposition leaders.

Independent accounts by online media outlets and spot reports circulating on the alternative media channels are at variance with Modi-friendly TV anchors and they do not see easy victory for the prime minister.

Parallel accounts share much with the reliable pre-poll survey by the Lokniti Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. Even as it places Mr Modi ahead of any rival for the top job, the survey lists issues in the elections that make him vulnerable. Barring a game-changing event like Pulwama or the Muzaffarnagar riots, these Indian elections look poised to surprise everyone in the fray and in the galleries.

**Muhammad Amir Rana**

The Faizabad sit-in inquiry report is another chapter in the country's probe commission history. However, it falls disappointingly short of fixing responsibility or uncovering substantial evidence.

Like its predecessors, the report has stirred controversy but has not reached a concrete conclusion. Key figures are now surfacing with 'new facts', suggesting that further investigation may be warranted. However, any such endeavour will likely meet the same fate as the report.

One significant critique of the report is its notable failure to address the Supreme Court's explicit directive concerning the timing of and rationale behind the submission and the withdrawal of review petitions about its judgement.

Specifically, in its ruling on Nov 13, 2023, the Supreme Court anticipated that the inquiry commission would thoroughly investigate the factors contributing to the failure to implement the Faizabad dhama

**Maheen Shafeeq**

With the 18<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha elections in India in full swing, the country's political parties have relied on rigorous campaigning to expand their voter bank.

Prior to the last Lok Sabha elections in 2019, the BJP depended on sensational campaigning by opting for a false flag operation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). In 2019, anti-Pakistan rhetoric peaked in India, and the BJP cashed it to influence the Indian public and secure their votes overdrastically.

India used the backdrop of February 14, 2019, when a convoy of the Indian Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel was attacked in Pulwama, IIOJK, and the BJP leadership ordered so-called 'surgical strikes' inside Pakistan. In a revealing interview given to Karan Thapar on April 14, 2023, the former governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Satyapal Malik, exposed that the attack on the CRPF was due to a series of lapses and ignorance of

judgement and examine the context surrounding the submission and withdrawal of the review petitions. The report's failure to adhere to this directive raises concerns about the thoroughness and impartiality of the investigation. The report risks its credibility and effectiveness by neglecting to address such a crucial aspect of the Supreme Court's instructions.

The recommendations, outlined in the report, as conveyed by the media, lack exclusivity, having been previously suggested and incorporated into policy documents concerning the mitigation of violent extremism and internal security. Emphasising a 'zero tolerance' stance towards violent extremism, the report urges the government to reassess its policies and target the underlying causes of this threat. It advocates for enhanced coordination among the law-enforcement agencies, Pemra, and the interior ministry to monitor social media for content that breaches legal standards.

Furthermore, the commission identifies shortcomings in implementing the National Ac-

tion Plan and proposes reforms within the criminal justice system to bolster the anti-terrorism agencies. In its concluding remarks, the report directs both the federal and provincial governments to actively monitor and prosecute individuals promoting hate, extremism, and terrorism.

The leaked report neglects the imperative for state institutions to abandon the use of religious and extremist groups for political purposes. The rise of the TLP exemplifies this trend, as its popularity is fuelled by emotional rhetoric rooted in radical ideology and its manipulation by state entities for political goals since 2018. Despite losing backing from these institutions in 2024, the TLP managed to amass even more votes, reaching 2.89 million, compared to the 2.2m votes it garnered in 2018. This highlights the urgent need to confront the fusion of extremist factions with political interests. Addressing this issue is crucial to safeguarding the integrity of political processes and preventing further entrenchment of radical ideologies within the political landscape.

In his book *The Fallacy of Militant Ideology:*

**India's election ploys**

India and said that the "payload of hastily escaping Indians aircraft fell in open space" in a tweet on X with images of damage to a tree and a crowd. The violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity prompted Pakistan to deliver an immediate and appropriate response to India's action.

In the early hours of February 27, 2024, under Operation Swift Retort, the Pakistan Air Force carried out six airstrikes on non-military targets in IIOJK. During the operation, the Pakistan Air Force depended on F-16 and JF-17 Thunder to down two Indian aircraft that violated Pakistan's territory. India refuted Pakistan's claims of shooting down the jets while Pakistan denied India's claim of the loss of an F-16 jet during the aerial encounter, which was also refuted by the US Department of Defence (DoD) officials who verified Pakistan's inventory.

The pilot of the downed Indian MiG-21, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, was taken into custody

by Pakistan and treated with dignity and under international law before being returned to India as a peace gesture. However, failing to appreciate Pakistan's maturity, former Indian diplomat Ajay Bisaria penned down a distorted version of this history in his recent book arguing disingenuously that Pakistan returned the pilot due to India's aggressive posture and threats to escalate tensions further. These claims have been quashed by Pakistani analysts, underlining that if Pakistan was apprehensive about Indian aggression and escalation, it would have not carried out Operation Swift Retort.

Contrary to India's false narrative peddled in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and in the following years, the day (February 27, 2019) clearly belonged to Pakistan. First, the Indian strikes in Balakot had miserably failed and there was no independent verification of the 'losses' that India claimed to have inflicted. Second, Operation Swift Retort demonstrated that Pakistan held adequate defence capabilities as

Competing Ideologies and Conflict Among Militants, the Muslim World, and the West, author Munir Masood Marath argues that ideology serves as the "centre of gravity" for terrorism and extremism, emphasising the importance of understanding militants' belief systems to counter these threats effectively. Marath, a police officer, contends that societal and state perceptions of religious narratives are often oversimplified. Religious institutions play a pivotal role in shaping and propagating these narratives, with seminaries influencing students and local clergy (ulema) outside the formal education system, influencing society as a whole. This "informal religious indoctrination" arises from the marginalisation of religious education, leaving the secular population reliant on less qualified imams.

The state still needs to devise a comprehensive strategy to address the challenges of radical groups like the TLP effectively. State institutions believe they can manage extremism through engagement and disengagement tactics. However, genuine innovation arises only when aca-

demic campuses are granted the freedom to explore ideas, with the state as a guardian of this freedom. Otherwise, groups promoting exclusivity find favour with state institutions.

Without addressing this deficiency, the state will continue to bow to radical groups, as in 2021 when the TLP took to the streets to pressure the government to expel the French ambassador. Despite efforts by police and paramilitary forces, they struggled to control the fanatical elements. Under pressure from the TLP, the government opted to remove several TLP leaders, including Saad Rizvi, from a terrorism watch list and rescinded the group's proscribed status.

The sit-in commission report has brought attention to these compromises without holding anyone accountable, exonerating almost everyone involved in the 2017 sit-in. Consequently, this report has once again thrust the TLP into mainstream discussions as it seeks to garner attention in the mainstream media. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Plan for Pakistan****Aisha Khan**

We are living through a turbulent time in history. The changes that have taken place in the last 100 years are both a cause for celebration and a matter of concern. From the wounds of world wars to the economic transformation, and from the miracles of science and technology to the climate crisis — all are part of a lived experience that has altered the geopolitical and geo-economic landscape of the planet that we call home.

Today, we face a troubling convergence of climate crisis, armed conflict, soaring interest rates, and escalating debt burdens in many nations. The lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges. This complex scenario poses significant obstacles to achieving the global climate objectives outlined in the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Broadly speaking, the challenges are myriad and solution pathways vary. However, there is a need for prioritising actions and coalescing multiple streams into a point of convergence for strengthening resilience. In moving forward, it is important to leverage learning to set priorities for an implementable action agenda. Right now, all actors should focus on designing their diplomatic strategies to increase space for multilateral discussions and action on climate and nature taking into account the need for.

Increasing ambition on Nationally Determined Contributions and implementing commitments through national and subnational policies informed by the Global Stock-take and the findings of the Inter-governmental Panel

on Climate Change.

Emphasising the need to move away from current fossil fuel approaches in a just, orderly and equitable manner, making sure that ambition and commitments at the international level are implementable at the domestic level.

Unlocking finance and making it fit for purpose by building a fairer economic and financial system that ensures scaling up public and private finance and making it available equitably to meet the escalating need for mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and nature conservation. This includes negotiations on a 'New Collective Quantified Goal' for climate finance, growing momentum for connecting the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and ongoing focus on the urgency for reform in the global financial architecture.

Accelerating technology development for transitioning to renewable energy and investing simultaneously in technologies for capturing and storing carbon dioxide emissions.

A sequence of events this year will provide opportunities to move forward on these priorities with a focus on implementation. This includes meetings of the G7, G20, UNFCCC work programmes and inter-sessionals sessions in Bonn as well as the IMF-World Bank meetings, Clean Energy Ministerial and Summit of the Future on the road to COP29.

The year 2025 will mark the halfway point in this 'critical decade'. It will also be the next forcing moment of the Paris Agreement ambition cycle with the parties expected to submit new and enhanced climate plans.

For countries in South Asia, this is going to be a decade of difficult decisions. Living on the arc of vulnerability that stretches from the cryosphere to the coast, the impacts on the Third Pole will not remain confined to the two billion people who share water, air and land resources. Its cascading impact will destabilise the global climate regime, disrupt supply chains, and throw the global economy in a flux, creating conditions for conflict.

A South Asia caught in a climate crisis means pushing one quarter of the global population into turmoil. It also means depriving a large young cohort of a fair future and exposing women, who constitute approximately half the population, to higher risks. Fintech provides yet another opportunity for bringing countries in South Asia on one platform. It is a critical component of any climate solution strategy to ensure a better, brighter and beneficent future. Fintech integration should not be seen only as an instrument for meeting climate targets but as an investment in regional peace, security and stabilisation.

We are living in unusual times where it is imperative to overcome divisions and work together to achieve objectives shared under the Paris Agreement. We need to uphold the spirit of deep cooperation that led to its conclusion in 2015, and see it as essential to any climate-win scenario.

Pakistan needs to plan for a future in which business as usual may not be the best option to cope with a future beset by challenges. This is a realisation that needs to be acknowledged across party lines, society and diaspora to survive this critical decade. -- Courtesy Dawn

**No good options****Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry**

For over six months, Israel has been on a killing spree in Gaza, bombing residential buildings, hospitals, mosques, even refugee camps. The overwhelming majority of casualties are civilians, mostly women and minors. Adding to Israel's crimes against humanity are the restrictions on the Gazans' access to humanitarian assistance, including food and medicine supplies, and the killing of aid workers. The harrowing details of the apocalyptic, famine-like conditions in Gaza are heartbreaking.

Initially, after the Hamas attack on Israel last October, Western countries justified the ferocious assault on Gaza's people as Israel's right to self-defence. However, when the bombings intensified and the killings multiplied, massive protests erupted across the world, including in major American and European cities. Public opinion in the West began to swing against the Israeli government for the brutalities it was committing. A series of Security Council resolutions were mooted, calling upon Israel to effect an immediate ceasefire, but the US veto prevented their adoption. In January, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel must take measures to prevent the crime of genocide against the Palestinians. The ICJ is now considering charges against Germany for facilitating Israel's genocide by supplying weapons.

With public pressure growing, the US modulated its position and abstained on the Security Council resolution of March 25 that called for an immediate ceasefire. President Joe Biden's calls for Israel to reach a

deal with Hamas also became more emphatic. At home, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is losing popularity, and has been facing protests from the families of the hostages.

A desperate Netanyahu ordered an attack on the Iran embassy premises in Damascus on April 1, ostensibly to shift global attention from Gaza to Iran, and bring the US into the war. Iran gave a measured three-step sequential response through the launch of drones and missiles, some of which pierced Israel's iron dome defence system and hit the intended target. There are reports of Israel's missile strike near Isfahan, which Iran has downplayed.

The world now waits with anxiety as Iran and Israel weigh their options. Three factors are relevant. First, the US has made it clear to Israel that it is opposed to a wider war, even though the Western countries stand firmly behind Israel and are reinforcing sanctions against Iran. Second, both countries have tested each other's offensive and defensive capabilities and Iran is satisfied that its deterrence has been established. Third, Israel's effort to divert attention from Gaza and drag the US into the war have failed. Global attention will shift back to the situation in Gaza, in particular Rafah.

However, given that the war in Gaza is still continuing, further escalation of confrontation by other means cannot be ruled out. In the days ahead, Israel might carry out a major strike against pro-Iran militant groups, particularly Hezbollah in Lebanon, obliging Hezbollah to respond with force, aided by other militant groups in the area. If this confrontation expands, Iran would again

get involved. In such circumstances, if Israel attacks the Iranian nuclear installations deliberately, covertly, or by mistake, the ambit of conflict would escalate sharply. A nuclear war would engulf not only the region but the entire world. The consequences of this scenario are so horrendous that Israel would be careful not to move in this direction.

A more likely scenario, however, is that Israel will continue its low-key attacks on Iranian regional proxies, coupled with intensified covert operations against Iranian assets, evoking similarly covert responses from Iran. Since Israel's efforts to expand the ambit of war have failed, the US pressure on Israel would grow to end the war in Gaza, and allow humanitarian access, particularly because of America's election dynamics.

In every scenario, Israel emerges as the loser. It has killed tens of thousands of innocent civilians, reminiscent of what the victims of apartheid and the Holocaust faced. Israel's hubris about the invincibility of its military machine has been shattered. Given that Iran could penetrate Israel's high-tech defence, the people of Israel are feeling increasingly worried.

The Arab countries have not been able to exert much pressure on Israel beyond efforts to facilitate negotiations for ceasefire. All said and done, Israel has failed to achieve its objectives of creating a 'Greater Israel' or eliminating Palestinian resistance. For its part, Pakistan can take pride in having extended consistent and unwavering support for the right of Palestinians to have a sovereign state of their own within pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. -- Courtesy Dawn

# Maryam denounces political violence

**Says PML-N working to solve public problems**

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said on Sunday that people, who bring politics to the level of personal enmity and violence are enemies of the nation. In a statement, she said the PTI's bullying would not be tolerated in any case. The CM offered condolences and expressed heartfelt sympathies with the family of Muhammad Yousaf, a PML-N worker who was killed in Narawal. She said that politics is the name of service and reform, not violence and intolerance. Turning politics into hatred and personal enmity is a big challenge for society, she added. The accused involved

in the killing of PML-N worker have been arrested. Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said on Sunday that the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, is sincerely trying to solve public problems. In her message to PML-N voters on the day of by-elections, she said PML-N voters were coming out, which is a welcome sign. "We have given relief, relief and only relief to the people of Punjab in a short span of time," she said. The CM highlighted that "the Ramadan Nighban Relief Package, 20,000 bikes, low-priced

flour and bread are proof of our few days' performance. Labourers, farmers, students and women of Punjab are at the top priority of the government. The Rs 130 billion farmer package reflects Nawaz Sharif's agriculture-friendly vision." She said, "My team and I always strive to make things easier for the common man. Laptop and iPad schemes are also going to be introduced in Punjab soon." All candidates of PML-N will succeed with a clear majority, Inshallah, she hoped. "My mission is to carry forward the vision of your and my leader Muhammad Nawaz Sharif" she concluded.



**LAHORE: Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Mr. Nasir Bosal calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.**

# Punjab Governor says: Supremacy of constitution and law is vital for the development of country

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedal Khan Nasir met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore. Matters of mutual interest and other important issues were discussed in the meeting. During the meeting, Governor Punjab congratulated Syedal Khan Nasir assuming the

office of Deputy Chairman Senate. Speaking on the occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the supremacy of the constitution and law is vital for the development of country. He said that uniform development of all units is very important for the strength of the federation. Governor Punjab said that we have

to strengthen our democratic institutions for sustainable development of country. He said that the current leadership is taking concrete steps to address the challenges facing the country. Governor Punjab said that an economically self-sufficient, energetic Pakistan and a socially empowered society with high morals and mutual respect is our destination.

# Minister Zeeshan says: Modern system of waste management to be introduced in Punjab

SIALKOT (APP): Provincial Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Rafique has said that a comprehensive and modern system of solid waste management will be introduced on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and a uniform sanitation system will be implemented in the entire province. In this regard, orders were issued to the Chief Officers (Cos) of all waste management companies to report on the operational model by working jointly. While introducing a uniform and modern sanitation system, planning should be done for the quality and sustainability of local

government system and municipal services. He stated this while addressing participants in an "Open Kutcheri" at Camp Office Daska. Assistant Commissioner (AC) Daska Anwar Ali Kanjo, Chief Officer (CO) District Council Ulfat Shehzad, SDO Municipal Committee Daska Uzair, officers of relevant departments, political and social leaders of constituency PP-51 were also present. The minister said that vacancies had been created due to reforms in the local government, which would create employment opportunities for people. Jobs will be provided on merit, he added.



**LAHORE: Female voters casting their votes in a polling station during the by-election 2024 at Garhi Shahu School.**

# Iqbal gave spiritual energy to Muslims of Subcontinent: Qureshi

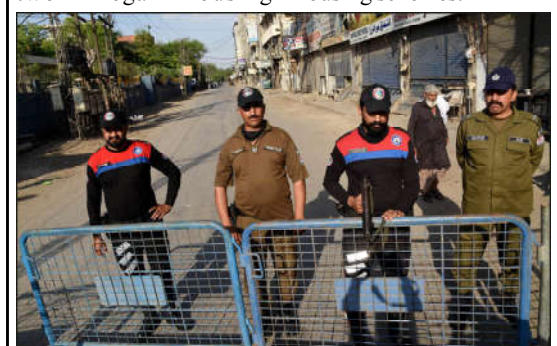
SARGODHA (APP): Senior Vice President Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Tehsil Sillanwali Makhdoom Shah Kameer Qureshi said on Sunday that Allama Muhammad Iqbal dreamt of a separate country for the Muslims of Subcontinent and gave them spiritual energy and guideline to wage a movement for creation of Pakistan. He said it was Allama Iqbal's dream that the Muslims of Subcontinent should have a country which would be a cradle of peace, political forbearance and brotherhood. Kameer Qureshi, stressing renewal of a pledge to achieve Iqbal's vision, said the Poet of the East wanted the youth to

take the country to acme of progress and development with their constructive approach. On the 86th death anniversary of Dr Muhammad Iqbal, the PML-N leader said the entire nation had been praying for high ranks of the departed soul in Heaven. "Dr Muhammad Iqbal, through his thoughts and teachings, stressed the unity of Muslim Ummah," Qureshi recalled. In a special talk with APP, he said Allama Iqbal taught the youth to wage consistent struggle and exhorted them to carve paths in the future through gaining knowledge, carrying out research and learning from the past glorious periods of Muslims.

# RDA advises citizens not to invest in illegal housing societies

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has advised the citizens not to invest in illegal housing societies, said a RDA spokesman here Sunday. He informed that the Authority on the directives of the Director General, RDA Kinza Murtaza, was taking action against the rules violators. The RDA had issued notices to two illegal housing schemes namely "Park View City," Phase-II and "Baku City", he said. The Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate RDA issued notices to the owners of two illegal housing

schemes namely "Park View City Phase II" near T-Chowk GT Road Rawat and "Baku City" located in mouza Trahia Chakbeli, Link Road Rawalpindi which had started development work and marketing without approval from RDA. He said that the illegal housing schemes were selling plots fraudulently, adding, the DG RDA had directed the Director MP&TE that action in accordance with the law should be taken against illegal advertisements and marketing and First Information Reports should also be lodged against the owners of illegal housing schemes.



**LAHORE: Police officials stand alert outside the polling station during the by-election 2024 at Barf Khana Chowk Railway Road.**



**LAHORE: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedal Khan Nasir in a meeting with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.**

# Advisor urges Expedited projects, 100% goal achievement for tourism development

**Independent Report**  
ABBOTTABAD: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture, and Archaeology Zahid Chanzab on Sunday emphasized the urgent completion of tourism projects and activities, as well as achieving 100% of the set goals for tourism development in the province. He conveyed this message during a meeting and briefing held at Pakhtunkhwa House Islamabad, attended by the Kaghan Development Authority (KDA) and delegations from Mansehra's elite. The advisor made it clear to the authorities that the current PTI-led KP Government will evaluate departmental performance based on target achievement rather than mere claims. Chanzab stated that funds and staff of under performing

departments or institutions will be reduced, while those demonstrating excellence will receive strong encouragement and funding. During the KDA meeting, Director General Mohammad Shabbir updated the Tourism Advisor on progress regarding the management of hotels from Mansehra to Lake Saif Al-Muluk, tourist facilities along highways, and other tourism-related schemes. Presentations were made on ongoing and new projects for tourism development, with managers of various KDA sections highlighting their contributions to promoting the tourism sector in the region. He was also briefed on efforts to open the Mansehra-Naran to Jhalkot (MNJ) road, which is typically closed every winter due to severe weather conditions.

# CM grieves over death of two Rangers jawan

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah expressed grief over two Rangers jawans' death in Nangarparkar accident on Sunday. According to the Spokesman, CM Murad said, "I am very saddened by the death of two jawans". He directed to provide the best medical treatment to the injured jawans. The accident occurred due to tyre bust in the Nangarparkar, the Spokesman added.

# Azma condemns PML-N worker's killing in Narawal

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari on Sunday condemned the killing of a PML-N worker Muhammad Yousaf in Narawal, who was allegedly tortured by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers. In a statement issued here, she expressed condolences with the family of the deceased. She said the law-enforcers should arrest the killers immediately. Azma said it was very unfortunate that the PTI was using all negative tactics to rig by-polls.

# Mayor Larkana reviews sanitation arrangements

LARKANA (APP): Mayor Larkana, Advocate Anwar Ali Khan Lohar visited various areas of the city here on Sunday and reviewed sanitation arrangements. The mayor was accompanied by the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board and officials of Chinese Ginsu Company officials including Gul Muhammad Sheikh, Iftikhar Narejo, Sadaqat Junejo, Darya Khan Jalbani and Municipal Officer Javed Ahmad Abbasi.

# BISP registration process continues in Sargodha

SARGODHA (APP): The registration process for the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) survey of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is currently underway in Sargodha, as well as other parts of the country. The tehsil offices of the programme have established registration centres to facilitate the process. Deputy Director BISP Sargodha Malik Mazhar Awan while talking to APP here on Sunday, said that low-income groups could register themselves with the BISP by visiting the registration centres, opened from Monday to Saturday. People have been asked to bring their Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) and B forms of their children for registration purposes. Individuals are

required to provide their electricity or gas bills to update a database for future government subsidies, he added. The official urged people to provide their accurate data at the time of registration, while those who would provide false information would not be allowed to become part of the programme. People having any complaint about the programme could contact the office concerned. "We are ready to resolve the complaints of citizens in shortest possible time, he added. The deputy director said, "We encourage not only poor segments to participate in the survey but also middle class, lower and upper middle class for compilation of their data." It will help the government provide them any subsidy or facility in the time of any emergency.

# Food Minister visits Sahadi Yateem Khana in Mardan

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah Toru along with Member Provincial Assembly Abdul Salam Afridi and Deputy Commissioner Mardan Fayaz Sheerpao visited Sahadi Yateem Khana located on Shamsi Road Mardan. The minister distributed prizes and gifts among the children who achieved prominent positions in the annual examinations. On this occasion, Zahir Shah Toru was informed about serious issues and problems of the institution. The minister assured to solve the problems timely and said that the upbringing of orphans is the responsibility of the government. He said that the government is well aware of its responsibilities in this regard.



**LAHORE: Mujibur Rehman Shami, Dr. Mumtaz Vito and other senior journalists present a commemorative shield to senior journalist Chaudhry Saeed Asi in the annual function of GC Sahiwal Alumni Association.**

# EUM syndicate sets up endowment fund

MULTAN (APP): Emerson University Multan (EUM) syndicate established an endowment fund with seed money of Rs 10 million in its 4th meeting for varsity development. Chaired by Secretary of Higher Education Department (HED), Dr. Farrukh Naveed, the meeting approved all agenda items unanimously lauding the university's strides in introducing market-driven programmes, embracing technological advancements, fostering sports and co-curricular activities, championing environmental initiatives,

# Two killed, three injured as roof caves in Sargodha

SARGODHA (APP): A roof collapse incident in a nearby village, left two dead on the spot and injuries to two others, in the jurisdiction of Cantonment police station here on Sunday. Rescue-1122 district emergency officer Mazhar Shah said the incident took place in Chak No 78/N-B where the roof of a dilapidated house caved in, as a result of which five members of a family buried under the rubble. Two victims identified as Muhammad Yousaf (45) and Dilshad (33) died on the spot while Dildar (38), Allah Rakha (43) and Saleem (48) received.

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# Pakistan: A land of tourism, archeological wonders

PESHAWAR (APP): Internationally recognized as home to six United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) heritage sites, second highest mountain peak, long coastline and vast cultural and religious heritage, Pakistan offers plenty of tourism activities for local and foreign tourists. It is also a unique country with enchanting deserts, mesmerizing plains and snow covered peaks, adventurous sea shores and plenty of cultural and archeological sites, ancient Muslim

architecture and religious sites of Buddhism and Sikhism. Archeological wonders of Mohenjo-Daro in Sindh, Harappa in Punjab, Buddhist Ruins in Takht Bhai and Sahri Bahlol in Mardan and Taxila, ancient Indus and Gandhara civilizations, Thal and Thar deserts and architecture of ancient rulers especially Mughal era can be future hot spots for tourism. Five highest mountains peaks of above 8,000 meters, including the second highest peak - the K-2 (8611m), 108 highest peaks of above 7000

meters, Deosai plain, cultural diversity of Sindh, Punjab, KPK, Balochistan and Azad Kashmir, historical monuments and much more across Pakistan are other hallmarks of our tourism treasure. Although local tourism flourished visibly in recent years yet unfortunately these bounties remained untapped to the maximum due to multiple reasons like insufficient projection, facilities for tourism and law and order situation due to turmoil in the region. Since Pakistan has a meager share in global revenue earning from

tourism, the experts believe that if the government fully employs the latest digital techniques and social media to highlight these hidden destinations, it can earn billions of dollars annually. "Today is an era of digital tourism. Technological advancements has fast started transforming the travel and hospitality industry even in developing countries," said Abu Zafar, President Alpine Tourism Club of Pakistan. "We have the most beautiful skiing spots, picturesque valleys, rivers and brooks, hiking

tracks, polo grounds, ice hockey fields, deserts for car rallies, sea surfing and mighty peaks for scaling." But, he said, most of our areas remained insufficiently highlighted across the globe. "Therefore, we need to fully employ the power of social and digital media as well as ensuring amicable environment for tourists." Despite its diverse potential, Pakistan's share in global tourism economy is too low. Therefore, at a time when international media predicts full recovery of tourism industry during 2024.



**KARACHI: Gilgit-Baltistan Youth workers protesting outside the Karachi Press Club for the arrest of Shahzad's killers in the Provincial Capital.**

## Ambassador Hashmi visits Shouguang Vegetable Science and Technology Expo

BEIJING (APP): As a part of his orientation tour to Shandong, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi paid a one-day visit to Shouguang county, renowned for being China's "vegetable capital" at the invitation of the Shouguang government.

The ambassador also delivered remarks at the opening ceremony of the 25<sup>th</sup> China (Shouguang) International Vegetable Science and Technology Expo and took a tour of the expo and visited the Pakistan pavilion.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Expo, Ambassador Hashmi praised the Expo's role in promoting global agricultural innovation and cooperation.

He commended Shouguang's leadership in the field of vegetable production, highlighting its international reputation as a center for excellence in facility vegetables.

Ambassador Hashmi also underscored the longstanding partnership between China and Pakistan, particularly in agriculture, recognizing it as a cornerstone of their bilateral relations.

He highlighted Pakistan's agrarian landscape, showcasing its substantial contributions to GDP and employment, and emphasized the country's commitment to enhancing agricultural productivity through collaboration with Chinese partners.

He outlined favorable policies and conducive frameworks for collaboration, emphasizing the potential for mutually beneficial partnerships and continued growth in agricultural trade and technology.

He also highlighted



SHOUGUANG: Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Mr. Khalil Hashmi paid a one-day visit to Shouguang county, renowned for being China vegetable capital at the invitation of the Shouguang government. Ambassador Khalil Hashmi also delivered remarks at the opening ceremony of the 25th China (Shouguang) International Vegetable Science and Technology Expo. He took a tour of the expo and visited the Pakistan pavilion.

## SAARC Chamber urges Afghan Taliban to fulfill their Doha pledges

LAHORE (APP): The SAARC Chamber has called upon the Afghan Taliban to fulfill their commitment, made in Doha, which was aimed at promoting peace in the region, particularly between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and preventing the Afghan soil from being used against Pakistan.

Talking to a delegation of traders, led by Muslim Khan Bunerri here on Sunday, SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former president Iftikhar Ali Malik said the Doha agreement, signed between the United States and the Taliban in February 2020, outlined various commitments from both sides. One key aspect of the agreement was the Taliban's assurance that they would not allow Afghan territory to be used by any group of individual to threaten the security of other countries, including Pakistan, he added.

By urging the Taliban to honour the commitment, the trade leader emphasised the significance of stability and cooperation between Muslim nations. By preventing Afghan soil from being used for activities that could harm Pakistan, he believed that both countries could work towards maintaining peace in the region.

He said that promoting peace and stability in the region was crucial for fostering economic growth, facilitating trade, and enhancing the overall well-being of people in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

By reminding the Afghan Taliban of their commitment, Iftikhar Malik emphasised playing a constructive role in maintaining peace and security in the region. However, the ultimate responsibility lies with the Afghan Taliban to follow through on their commitments and work towards creating an environment of peace and cooperation with their neighbours, including Pakistan. He said Pakistan had raised the issue of cross-border terrorism with the Afghan authorities on a number of occasions.

## PIAF takes strong exception to continued hike in POL prices

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) took strong exception to the continued escalation in the petroleum prices, urging the government to give the solid plan of low cost energy provision in the country to improve economic growth.

In a statement on Sunday, Chairman PIAF Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that oil and electricity consumers were very easy targets for taxation, with the government preferring to levy higher taxes on them rather than expanding the tax net. He said that consumers may face increased taxes in the upcoming budget due to IMF pressure. There were indications that the government may raise the petroleum levy rate in the forthcoming budget to bolster revenue collection from oil consumers, he added.

Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the federal government raised the prices of petroleum products by up to Rs8.14 per liter this week, marking the second price hike in petroleum products this month.

According to a notification, the price of petrol has been raised by Rs4.53 per liter, from Rs289.41 to Rs293.94 per liter. The price of high-speed diesel (HSD) has also been increased by Rs8.14 per liter, from Rs282.24 to Rs290.38 per litre. Earlier, the government raised the price of petrol by Rs9.66 per liter on April 1.



HYDERABAD: A vendor displaying the inflatable pools to attract the customers at roadside.

## Nonstop borrowing escalates production cost, debt vulnerability: Anjum

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Businessmen Panel (BMP) of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Mian Anjum Nisar has said that the nonstop debt growth carries significant fiscal costs and exposes the country to huge debt vulnerabilities.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he emphasized that persistent fiscal deficits and debt repayments have resulted in consistently high annual gross financing needs, averaging 28 percent of the GDP over the past decade. This level is notably higher than the emerging market threshold of 15 percent.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that in the past two decades, Pakistan has witnessed two consecutive years of the highest budget deficits in 2023 and 2024. He pointed out that for the current fiscal year, a budget deficit of 7.7 percent of the GDP is anticipated, a staggering Rs1.3 trillion above the government's target. He expressed concerns over these persistent large budget shortfalls, which have led to the rapid accumulation of public debt. This, in turn, has crowded out private investment and contributed to macroeconomic volatility.



GILGIT: A blacksmith busy in making saw in traditional way on his work place at River view road.

## Enhance cotton production Agri industry extends maximum cooperation with farmers

MULTAN (APP): The owners of agriculture industry on Sunday have expressed resolved to extend maximum cooperation towards the farming community in order to enhance cotton production.

During a meeting with Secretary Agriculture Punjab Iftikhar Ali Sahu, the delegation from private agriculture industry extended offer of maximum cooperation in government's efforts to enhance cotton production.

Punjab Secretary Agriculture Iftikhar Sahu appreciated the gesture shown by the industrialists and stated that coordination and cooperation between stakeholders was of vital importance. They also discussed different aspects of cotton enhancement plan. It was decided that adoptive tehsil groups would be introduced for proper patronage of the farmers at tehsil level. The industry owners will impart all possible technical assistance towards the farming community. It was also decided that comprehensive campaign at mainstream, local and social media would be run to create maximum awareness.



FAISALABAD: Farmers feed harvested wheat crop into a thresher during the ongoing harvesting season, at Sumundari Road in the City.

## China-Pak JV introduces advanced harvester machine for canola crops

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Evyol Group have demonstrated advanced harvester attachments aimed at controlling shattering losses in canola crop in Bhakkar district of Punjab on Wednesday. The Evyol Group provides high-quality canola seeds developed by Wuhan Qingfa Hesheng Seed Co. to Pakistani farmers under a joint venture with the Chinese company.

Qingfa's HC-021C canola has 0.7 percent Erucic Acid and 15 mm/gm Glucosinolate, much lower than the global standard of 2% and 30 mm/gm, respectively. Therefore, the Chinese canola variety is dubbed as '00' for having the least hazardous contents, Zafar Iqbal, Head Certus Seeds, a division of Evyol, said during a presentation to farmers and journalists. Zafar said that they observed shattering losses to the tune of 200-400 kilograms per acre. "We informed our Chinese JV partner, which sent these advanced attachments to control the losses", Zafar said. The optimum yield of HC-021C is around 1500-1600 kgs per acre, he said. In the next phase, the Chinese partner will send small pressing machines to enable the farmers to extract canola oil at household level, he added. Zafar said that Pakistan imports 4.4 million tons of edible oil worth around \$3.8 billion.

The Chinese canola variety can bridge this gap and save precious foreign reserves for Pakistan besides increasing profitability for local farmers, he said.

"We started selling the HC-021C seeds in 2019. So far, it is being cultivated on over 100,000 acres of land. Our target is 12.5 million acres to make Pakistan self sufficient in edible oil", Zafar said.

## PFC to participate in 5-day Canton Fair China

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) will participate in 135<sup>th</sup> 5-day Canton Fair China commencing from April 23 aiming to explore export markets and foster bilateral trade relations.

Chairing council board of directors meeting, PFC Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq said this strategic move underscores Pakistan's commitment to expanding its footprint in the global furniture industry, said a news release here on Sunday.

He said the delegation's agenda likely includes networking with potential buyers, engaging in business-to-business meetings, and gaining insights into emerging trends and consumer preferences in the global furniture market.

## SNGPL disconnects connections during operation

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) launched operation clean-up and disconnected three connections including two commercial and one compressor user and removed illegal extensions from two houses.

According to details, task force raided and disconnected connections of two consumers who were illegally using domestic meters for commercial purposes.

A consumer was drawing gas through a compressor machine whose meter was also disconnected. A consumer was illegally shifting service from one place to another along New Gulberg colony on which action will be taken under Section 462C. The service has been removed.

## PHMA terms rising energy cost major issue of textile exporters

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PHMA) has termed the high cost of doing business dangerous for the value-added export-oriented knitwear industry, as the ever-increasing gas and power tariffs are the real threat to the economy amidst frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar.

Senior Vice Chairman PHMA North Zone Amanullah Khan stated this while chairing an interactive session held here at PHMA Zonal office on Sunday to review the challenges faced by the PHMA members.

Participants of the meeting urged the Central Bank to allocate funds for renewable energy schemes, including solar energy financing exclusively to the export-oriented value-added textile sector. This strategic allocation will not only boost apparel sector's growth but also promote a more inclusive and resilient economy.

Amanullah Khan said that all stuck-up claims of the exporters, including DLTL, DDT, Customs Rebates and Sales Tax refunds should be released. The liquidity crunch was a major stumbling block in the way of improving exports. Demanding the restoration of zero rating regime, he suggested that the Sales Tax regime for export sector should be totally separated from the local business and that refund of Sales tax to exporters be ensured within 72 hours of the filing of claim.

The apparel sector was showing regular growth in exports and should be encouraged through long term policy measures so that foreign exchange earnings for Pakistan could be increased. Senior Vice Chairman PHMA North Zone proposed the central bank to review its credit policies by fixing a special quota to finance.

## Excise Dept sends letter to 26 banks for payment of token tax

MULTAN (APP): Excise and Taxation Department Punjab sent a letter to 26 bank heads of Pakistan over not paying token taxes of more than 20,000 vehicles.

According to ETO Admin Khalid Hussain Qasoori, as per the letter, the vehicle registration could be cancelled, 100 percent fine and banks' properties may be seized and auctioned and bank sale.

The letter further stated that banks receive monthly installments of their leased vehicles along with markup but neither they pay token tax of Punjab excise themselves nor encourage those who buy vehicles to pay in installments.

The token tax could not be collected despite repeated notices, meetings and reminders through newspaper advertisements. The token tax with 100 percent fine would be collected along with cancellation of registration and banks sealing in case.



LAHORE: A vendor displaying raw dates to attract the customers at his roadside setup.

## Cattle farming vital to alleviate poverty in rural areas

SARGODHA (APP): Livestock is considered a precious asset not only to run the kitchen smoothly on a daily basis but also help meet expenditures in emergency situations.

About 67 percent of the rural population in the culturally rich region of Sargodha division is directly linked to the livestock sector. The presence of animals is like a cheque which can be encashed at any time.

Livestock has over a 14pc share in gross domestic product (GDP) of the country. It has immense potential not to alleviate poverty in rural areas but can also revolutionize the living standards of the people. Pakistan is ranked fifth in milk production country. The production of milk and meat could be enhanced significantly by working on animal genetics. The best semen quality could play a vital role in improving animal health, milk and meat production. Similarly, it could also help generate maximum income for the farmers as well as the country's economy.

At the national level, about 10 million people are rearing cattle. According to the animal census and Economic Survey Report, there are 58.7 million big animals in the country. Similarly, the country has 83.3 million small animals (goats). As per the last Economic Survey Report, the production of milk increased from 63.698 million tonnes to 69.784 million tonnes.

Apart from this, district Sargodha owned 4,611,324 big animals (buffaloes, cows), 2,882,689 small animals (goats, sheep) and 1,975,816 rural poultry. Besides this, the farmers also rear 919 camels, said Deputy Director Livestock.

In rural areas, it is easy to rear animals because of the cultural environment, easy access to infrastructure and nutrition. In rural communities, the role of women farmers in cattle rearing is highly important. Without women farmers' participation, the livestock sector could not be managed properly, said Deputy Director Livestock.

Dr Wajid Ali here on Sunday while talking to APP. He said that livestock was performing an important role in poverty alleviation in rural areas. He recalled that the government had launched a special initiative to provide buffaloes and cows to widows, especially hailing from rural areas. The government had a very unique idea to provide animals to widows whose children were availing school education. The Livestock Department provided a good number of small and big animals to widows after thorough verification from schools concerned. The widows are now successfully running their kitchen.

Kosar Noreen, a widow and a resident of Shah Nikdur in Sillanwali who got a big animal in 2020, told APP, "I own one buffalo and one calf and it is a good source of my regular income".

She said that she had also earned Rs180,000 by selling three calves. She expressed pleasure and thanked the government for the provision of the buffalo which helped her overcome economic woes.

Rauf, a resident of Farooqa, said that he was eager to sacrifice an animal on Eid ul Azha. He said that he had purchased a small animal against Rs20,000 and nurtured it for the whole year. He expressed pleasure that he had sacrificed the animal for first time in his life.



MULTAN: Traders are displaying melons on the delivery trucks to attract customers at the fruit Market.

US House okays aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: The US House of Representatives with broad bipartisan support passed a \$95 billion legislative package providing security assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, over bitter objections from Republican hardliners.

Russian invasion. The unusual four-bill package also includes funds for Israel, security assistance for Taiwan.

"The world is watching what the Congress does," the White House said in a statement on Friday.

Zelenskiy says he is grateful for US House approval of Ukraine aid

Monitoring Desk KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy expressed gratitude for the passage by the U.S. House of Representatives of a military aid bill for his country and said the assistance would save lives and "bring a just end" to the war with Russia.



Lawmakers walk past pro-Palestinian protesters prior to a US House of Representatives vote on legislation providing \$95 billion in security assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, at Capitol Hill in Washington, US.

Edmundo Gonzalez, Venezuela's low-profile and last-minute opposition candidate

Monitoring Desk CARACAS: As time was running out, Venezuela's opposition chose low-profile former diplomat Edmundo Gonzalez to run against President Nicolas Maduro in a July election that political analysts said will require Gonzalez to build name recognition among voters.

sador to Argentina at the turn of the century, will have an arduous path. "He is a little-known candidate and his challenge will be to make himself known," said Ricardo Rios, who directs local consulting firm Estrategia y Poder.

Palestinians to reconsider US ties after membership veto

Monitoring Desk RAMALLAH: The Palestinian Authority will "reconsider" its relationship with the United States after Washington vetoed a Palestinian bid for full UN membership earlier this week, president Mahmud Abbas said on Saturday.

Massive river flooding expected in China's Guangdong, threatening millions

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: Major rivers, waterways and reservoirs in China's Guangdong province are expected to unleash dangerous floods, forcing the government to enact emergency response plans on Sunday to protect more than 127 million people.

disaster relief funds and materials to ensure affected people have food, clothing, water and shelter. The province, a major exporter and one of China's main commercial and trading centres, has seen major downpours and strong winds for several days, in a weather pattern affecting other parts of the country.

Prosecution seeks 12 years jail for duo in 'Panama Papers' trial

Monitoring Desk PANAMA CITY: Hearings in the money-laundering trial of the heads of the now-defunct law firm Mossack Fonseca, the epicentre of the global "Panama Papers" scandal, concluded on Friday in the Panamanian capital.



Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan meets with Ismail Haniyeh, leader of the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Istanbul, Turkey.

Erdogan meets Hamas leader in Turkey, discusses efforts for regional peace

Monitoring Desk ISTANBUL: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan discussed efforts to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza and reach a fair and lasting peace in the region during a meeting with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Istanbul on Saturday, his office said.

ish presidency said in a statement. The visit took place amid escalating regional tensions following Israel's reported attack on Iran this week.

Israeli strikes on southern Gaza city of Rafah kill 18, mostly children, as US advances aid package

Monitoring Desk RAFAH: Israeli strikes on the southern Gaza city of Rafah overnight killed 18 people, including 14 children, health officials said Sunday, as the United States was on track to approve billions of dollars of additional military aid to its ally.

its ground offensive to the city on the border with Egypt despite international calls for restraint, including from the U.S.

North Korea tests 'super-large warhead'

Monitoring Desk SEOUL: North Korea has tested a "super-large warhead" designed for a strategic cruise missile, state media said on Saturday, the most recent test since UN sanctions monitoring against the nuclear-armed nation was upended last month by Russia.

1 dead, 7 missing after two Japanese military helicopters crash

Monitoring Desk TOKYO: One person was killed and seven people were missing on Sunday after two Japanese military helicopters collided before crashing into the sea, officials said.

craft in the sea, and we believe that the two helicopters crashed. "At this point the cause is unknown, but firstly we do our best to save lives," Kihara told reporters.

Iran's Khamenei thanks armed forces for attack on Israel

Monitoring Desk DUBAI: Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei thanked the country's armed forces for their operation against Israel, and urged them to "ceaselessly pursue military innovation and learn the enemy's tactics," Iran's official news agency reported on Sunday.

Russia says US facing humiliation in Ukraine like in Vietnam

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russia said on Sunday U.S. lawmakers' support for \$60.84 billion more in aid for Ukraine showed that Washington was wading much deeper into a hybrid war against Moscow that would end in humiliation on a par with the Vietnam or Afghanistan conflicts.

istry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said it was clear that the United States wanted Ukraine "to fight to the last Ukrainian" including with attacks on Russian sovereign territory and civilians.

Maldives votes in election key to its India, China relations

Monitoring Desk MALE: Voters in the Maldives were flocking to the polls on Sunday in a parliamentary election that may determine whether the Indian Ocean island nation continues its shift toward China and away from its longstanding ties with India.

National Congress has asked voters to elect a majority that will swiftly fulfil his presidential campaign pledges. Opposition parties, criticising Muizzu's government on areas including foreign policy and the economy, are seeking a majority that can hold his government accountable.



Mourners carry the bodies of Palestinian men killed during an attack by Israeli settlers on Aqraba, a village in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

China's imports of Russian oil near record high in March

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: Russia remained China's top oil supplier in March, data showed on Saturday, as refiners snapped up stranded Sokol shipments. China's imports from Russia, including supplies via pipelines and sea-borne shipments, jumped 12.5 per cent on the year to 10.81 million tonnes, or 2.55 million barrels per day (bpd) last month, according to data from the General Administration of Customs.

March, as Russia worked to clear a glut of stranded supply in the wake of tightened US sanctions. More than 10m barrels of the oil supplied by Sakhalin-1, a unit of Rosneft, had been floating in storage over the past three months amid payment difficulties and sanctions on shipping firms and vessels carrying the crude.

15 people suffer minor injuries in tram accident at Universal Studios theme park in Los Angeles

Monitoring Desk LOS ANGELES: A tram accident at Universal Studios Hollywood in Los Angeles injured 15 people Saturday night, authorities and the company said. Los Angeles County Fire Department units were dispatched to the theme park on Lankershim Boulevard shortly after 9 p.m., the department said in a social media post.

Taiwan to discuss new funding with US as Chinese warplanes get close to island

Monitoring Desk TAIPEI: Taiwan's military said on Sunday it will discuss with the United States how to use funding for Taipei included in a \$95 billion legislative package mostly providing assistance to Ukraine and Israel, as Chinese warplanes again got close to the island.

Underlining the pressure Taiwan faces from China, the ministry said on Sunday morning that over the previous 24 hours 14 Chinese military aircraft had crossed the sensitive median line of the Taiwan Strait.

North Kosovo Serbs boycott referendum on removing ethnic Albanian mayors

Monitoring Desk BELGRADE: Most Serbs in volatile North Kosovo boycotted a local referendum on Sunday on whether to remove ethnic Albanian mayors in four municipalities whose appointment led to violence last year, the country's election commission said.

ter a guerrilla uprising. By around midday, less than 100 out of around 46,000 registered Serb voters had cast ballots in all four predominantly Serb municipalities - Northern Mitrovica, Zvecan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic, the commission said. Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0500 GMT) and were scheduled to close at 7 p.m. Last September the Pristina government agreed to annual local elections in Kosovo's north and hold new ones, bowing to Western pressure to allow local Serbs overwhelmingly boycotted.

Fossils of colossal snake unearthed in Indian mine

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: Fossil vertebrae unearthed in a lignite mine are the remains of one of the largest snakes that ever lived, a monster estimated at up to 49 feet (15 metres) in length - longer than a T. rex - that prowled the swamps of India around 47 million years ago.

Some Chinese aircraft on Saturday got as close as 40 nautical miles (70 km) from the northern and southern parts of Taiwan, according to a map the Taiwanese ministry provided, though that remains outside its contiguous zone, which is 24 nautical miles from Taiwan's coast.



A woman uses a megaphone during a demonstration for a change in the tourism model in the Canary Islands, in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain.

**Pak makes case for infrastructural development to achieve SDGs**

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has called for the development of infrastructure connectivity to fortify global resilience and promote sustainable development, especially in developing countries.

Ambassador Munir Akram made the call in his capacity as co-chair of the Group of Friends of Sustainable Infrastructure Investment, while delivering a statement during the U.N. General Assembly's Sustainability Week in New York, on the theme: "In-formal dialogue on building global resilience and promoting sustainable development through infrastructure connectivity."

"The achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and our climate goals requires a major transition to sustainable infrastructure – in energy, transport, housing, communications and industrial and agricultural production and consumption," the Pakistani envoy said, noting that this was recognized in the "Just Energy Transition" document adopted at COP-28.

"Yet," he said, "pub-

lic and private investments in sustainable infrastructure are not commensurate to realize either the SDGs or the climate goals, pointing out that a majority of developing countries do not have the public resources to finance infrastructure investments nor are they able to secure sufficient private investment. To achieve a "just transition", he called for mobilizing significantly larger concessional finance to mitigate country and project risks, enhance credit quality, improve financing terms and thus incentivize private infrastructure investment in the developing countries. In this regard, Ambassador Akram cited the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which said there was a funding gap of \$2.5 trillion annually in infrastructure, two-thirds of which is in the developing countries.

"Cumulatively, for a 1.5°C Scenario, financing needs for clean energy are estimated to be about USD 4.3 trillion per year up until 2030, increasing thereafter to USD 5 trillion per year up until 2050," he said, pointing out that investment in renewable energy only reached USD 0.5 trillion in 2022, the majority concentrated in developed countries.

The Pakistani envoy also underscored the need to create a pipeline of viable and bankable projects in the developing countries which can attract public and private investments.

Pakistan, he said, advocates the establishment of a public-private entity under UN auspices to help developing countries formulate and structure such a pipeline of viable infrastructure projects utilizing the UN country offices.

"Such a public-private entity could bring together all stakeholders – recipient and donor countries, development institutions and the private sector; develop a template for national and international regulatory frameworks and develop de-risking measures to incentivize private investment in developing countries and present the projects for financing to the appropriate public and private sources of investment capital."



SHOUGUANG: Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Mr. Khalil Hashmi paid a one-day visit to Shouguang County, renowned for being China's "vegetable capital" at the invitation of the Shouguang government.

**40th Annual Conference of Pak Society of Gastroenterology & GI Endoscopy ends**

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The 40th Annual Conference of Gastroenterology and GI Endoscopy concluded here in Quetta on Sunday.

More than 300 health experts from the country and abroad dealing in the medical fields of gastroenterology and endoscopy participated in the conference organized by the Pakistan Society of Gastroenterology and GI Endoscopy.

The free endoscopy of the patients was also

performed by the participating experts.

The medical experts presented research papers besides delivering state of the art lectures in the main sessions of conference.

The awareness session was also held for the people on conference.

Addressing the closing ceremony of conference, Chairman organizing committee, Professor Dr Dawood Ghilzai stressed the need to prepare comprehensive strategy for coping with the challenge of

increasing liver and Gastro diseases in the country.

He also stressed the need to make sincere efforts for launching lever transplant programme besides establishing lever institute in the province.

He expressed his deep concern over increasing number of patients suffering from lever disease.

Professor Ghilzai said that we need to ponder upon the situation and make endeavors for establishing at least one center for lever transplant in Quetta.

**No one can weaken PTI: Dawood Kakar**

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The provincial President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Dawood Shah Kakar has stated that no one can weaken the political party like PTI, which has its routes in the masses.

He alleged that the people who have been sent in the assemblies through political engineering have

of National Democratic Movement Balochistan, Asfandyar Kakar announced to join the PTI along with his companions after resigning from his party.

Also present on the occasion were the senior provincial leaders of Sardar Khadim Hussain Wardag, Dawood Utmankhail, Provincial general Secretary,



Jahangir Rind, Muhammad Asif Tareen, Noor Khan Khilji, President PTI District Lorailat, Wali Darman, Iqbal Shah and others.

Dawood Shah Kakar on the occasion welcomed Asfandyar Kakar and others on their joining PTI.

He said that the fake representatives were imposed in the February 8 elections.

The acting Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Ms Ghazala Gola has extended congratulations to the Pakistani karatekz, Shahzaib Rind on winning his international karate combat fight against Indian player.

In a felicitation message issued here on Sunday, the acting Speaker of provincial assembly said that Shahzaib Rind has made the whole nation proud by knocking out the Indian player in the combat fight.

She said that we are really proud of the talented players like Shahzaib Rind who are brightening the name of country and province at the international level.

**PTI leadership always instigated people to de-stabilize country for personal gains: Talal Ch**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Central leader of Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) Senator Talal Chaudhary while strongly condemning Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership on Sunday said that PTI had always resorted to all those acts which could de-stabilize Pakistan.

In a statement on local Television, Talat Chaudhary said the PTI leadership did not tolerate their political opponents

and PTI founder always instigated the people to de-stabilize the country for his personal gains. The PTI leadership instigated people to carry out May 9 incident, he added.

He highlighted, "The court has declared both PTI founder and his spouse guilty in theft cases and now they wanted to create chaos in the country to divert attention of the people from their wrongdoings."



LAHORE: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naemur Rehman addressing "Labaik Ya Aqsa" march.

**Normalizing relations with Israel for financial gains not acceptable: Hafiz Naem**

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Hafiz Naemur Rehman has said that any attempt to normalize relations with Israel for financial gains and the two-state solution to the Palestine issue is not acceptable at all. Addressing a Palestine Solidarity March in Lahore, he reiterated his stance against the government, which he said came to power through fraudulent means, asserting that the people have lost faith in it to champion the cause of Palestine. Nevertheless, Hafiz Naemur Rehman emphasized that the JI demanded the government to raise its voice for Palestine or brace itself for the wrath of the people.

Referring to Quaid-i-

Azam's stance, he denounced Israel as an illegitimate state, formed by seizing Palestinian Muslim land. He said Pakistani rulers now are being offered dollars to recognize Palestine and relinquish Kashmir, warning that the nation would vehemently resist such schemes. The Ameer JI called for a summit of Muslim nations and non-Muslim states sympathetic to the Palestinian cause to advocate for a ceasefire. He urged Islamabad to extend medical assistance to Gazans, especially children, as a minimum gesture of support.

This march marked the first public gathering led by JI Emir after assuming office. Thousands, including

**By-elections is 'big message for PTI as supporters did not come out': Sanaullah**

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Rana Sanaullah said on Sunday that the voter turnout of today's by-elections is a "big message" for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

"PTI voters have not come out today [during by-elections]," Sanaullah claimed while speaking to a private tv channel, adding that his party was satisfied with the poll results and had always accepted the election outcomes.

Calling upon political parties to use relevant forums for addressing the election-related complaints, he was of the view that the Nawaz Sharif-led party he used to raised objections to the election results "within the system" but the PTI founder Imran Khan always tried to "bulldoze" the existing mechanism.

Commenting on today's electoral event, the PML-N stalwart said that voter turnout is usually low in by-polls and only loyal

supporters head towards the polling stations for their parties.

He expressed satisfaction over the by-polls and said that results were pouring in from all polling stations, as well as Form 45 was being issued.

Sanaullah said the complaints would be lodged if any wrong doing was committed on the polling day.

The former interior minister, who faced defeat by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf backed independent Dr Nisar Jutt in the February 8 nationwide polls on Faisalabad's NA-100 seat, urged PTI central leader Ali Muhammad Khan that he should sit with the PML-N to identify and address flaws via reforms in the electoral system instead of "bulldozing" the system.

He added that his party has always worked for the betterment of the country and invited political stakeholders to resolve issues via dialogues.



RAWALPINDI: Ex Servicemen Society President General (Retd) Abdul Qayyum Malik addressing the National Council meeting held at a private hotel.

**Finance Minister met to representatives of S-P Global, Fitch Ratings**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb, met with the representatives of S&P Global and Fitch Ratings on the sidelines of the IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington D.C.

During the meetings, he highlighted positive indicators of the country on the back of the Standby Arrangement (SBA) signed with International Monetary Fund (IMF), said a press release issued here on Sunday.

He provided details on the government's ongoing reforms in priority areas, including taxation, energy, and privatization over short, medium and long-term horizons. He also referred to his recent engagements with Managing Director of the IMF, President of the World Bank, and heads of multilateral institutions including Asian In-

frastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB). He reaffirmed that the World Bank's agenda aligns with Pakistan's priorities on climate change, digitalization, and human development. The Finance Minister also mentioned potential investments in the pipeline from Saudi Arabia. He also addressed the rating agencies' concerns related to Pakistan's external position, inflation levels, primary fiscal balance, and interest rate regime. Other engagements of Finance Minister included interaction with officers of the Embassy of Pakistan, Washington D.C., media interviews with the Voice of America and The National and Press Conference with Pakistani media. Finance Minister is leading Pakistan's delegation in the IMF / World Bank's 2024 Spring Meetings being held in Washington DC.

**Ahsan alleges PTI activists of killing innocent PML-N worker**

NAROWAL (INP): Federal Minister for Planning, Ahsan Iqbal has alleged that activists of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have killed innocent PML-N worker and I will call him a political martyr.

Talking to media persons in Narowal on Sunday, he pledged to root out all kinds of oppression and hooliganism from Zafarwal.

Ahsan Iqbal said that he strongly condemns the hooliganism that PTI has done against the PML-N workers in the country.

He alleged that PTI people have resorted to high tactics after seeing the

**ECP launches swift helpline for election complaints**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has introduced a proactive helpline, 051-111-327-000, for citizens to swiftly register and resolve by-election-related complaints round the clock. Official sources have confirmed that the helpline will assist in registering and resolving complaints, with the goal of improving accessibility and responsiveness in addressing concerns leading up to the by-elections. The ECP has established the Election Monitoring and Complaint Centre (EMCC) to facilitate.



LAHORE: President Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan Dr. Hafizur Rehman sending 8th tranche of relief goods for people of Palestine.

**63 persons killed, 78 injured due to torrential rains in KP: PDMA**

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) issued a report on Sunday of the loss of lives and property in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) due to heavy rains. So far, 63 people have died and 78 people have been injured, the report added.

According to the report, "Around 33 children, 15 men, and 15 women are among the killed, while 17 women, 37 men, and 24 children are among the injured."

A total of 3,202 houses were damaged due

to the collapse of walls and roofs in different districts, of which 477 were completely damaged and 2,725 were partially damaged.

Due to heavy rains, life and financial accidents occurred in various districts, including Khyber, Dir Upper and Lower, Chitral Upper, Swat, Bajaur, Shangla, Mansehra, Mohmand, Malakand, Karak, Tank, Mardan, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Buner, Hangu, Batagram, Bannu, North and South Waziristan, Kohat, DI Khan, and Orakzai. On the special in-



RIYADH: Senator Prof. Sajid Mir representing Pakistan in International Conference of Muslim World League.

**'Modi regime trying to promote its false narrative in IIOJK'**

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Modi-led fascist Indian regime is trying to distort truth and twist facts to promote its false narrative in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

A report released by Kashmir Media Service on Sunday said the Modi regime intends to hoodwink the world into believing as if everything is normal in the occupied territory.

It said India is con-

tinuously spreading propaganda to push the false narrative of so-called normalcy returning to IIOJK. India is crafting false narratives of investment and development to justify its illegal actions of 5th August 2019 in the occupied territory. The report said continued detentions, slapping of draconian laws on the Kashmiris, everyday raids and cordon and search operations debunk India's claim of normalcy.

**Quetta Admin, Irrigation department to remove encroachments on Nullahs**

QUETTA (APP): Administrator of Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC), Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, said on Sunday that a plan, devised in collaboration with the irrigation department, had been devised to remove encroachments on Nullahs and restore them to their original shape, with the aim of preventing any flood-like situations in the city.

Talking to APP, he said, "Balochistan Chief

Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has ordered to launch anti-encroachment operations in collaboration with the irrigation department in order to remove encroachments on water courses for immediate cleaning of the closed drains across the city."

He said, "Quetta's rainwater major drains have been encroached at 82 places, which may cause urban flooding due to heavy rainfall."

Hamza Shafiqat said,

**Complaints of clashes in Gujrat, Rahim Yar Khan addressed promptly: ECP**

ISLAMABAD (INP): The by-election for 21 seats of National and provincial assemblies is underway across Pakistan, with reports of clashes from some areas of Punjab in which one person has been killed.

The ECP says that there were some complaints of clashes among workers from Gujrat and Rahim Yar Khan reported in the media, adding that the polling process was stopped for some time, but resumed after taking immediate action.

The ECP spokesper-

son said their control room had not yet received any written or telephonic complaints, and the polling process was underway in all 21 constituencies.

The director general of the control room said the polling process remains uninterrupted and peaceful across all constituencies. He emphasized that they are fully prepared to address any issues that may arise.

The spokesperson said control rooms at provincial, divisional, and district levels are operational.



QUETTA: Senator Danesh Kumar visiting different stall at Imaan Pakistan Mela for women.