

# Independent

Member APNS &amp; CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vd XXV No. 244, Shawwal 16, 1445 AH Thursday April 25, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs.15

## 2.4 million gallons of drinking water required daily for Quetta: CM concerned about delay in completion of Mangi dam; directs to complete project within given time by any means

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti chairs emergent meeting on issue of water shortage in Quetta; exhorts concerned high ups to realize public hardships; asserts more delay in project intolerable; constitutes committee for preparations for solarization

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed concern over delay in completion of the Mangi dam project, which is otherwise meant for supplying potable water to Quetta.

The Chief Minister directed to the concerned authorities to complete the Mangi dam project within the prescribed time by any means providing necessary security for the project.

He asserted that no more delay is tolerable in completion of the Mangi dam project.

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti was chairing an emergent meeting he called on the issue of water shortage here at the CM's secretariat on Wednesday.

The Provincial Minister for Public Health Engineering (PHE), Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Provincial Minister for Finance, Mir Shoaib Nosherwani, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan and other concerned high ups attended the meeting.

During briefing, the Chief Minister was informed that around 2.4 million gallons of water is required daily for Quetta.

However, the issue of water would be resolved in Quetta with completion of the Mangi dam project, it was briefed to the Chief Minister.

It was also informed that daily 8.1 million gallons of drinking water would be supplied to Quetta from Mangi dam.

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti presiding over a meeting review progress of Mangi Dam



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a briefing regarding various developmental projects of the Sindh Government.

## Modern vehicles, arms, ammunition to be provided to Levies force, assures Ziaullah Langove

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Ziaullah Langove has assured that modern vehicles, arms and ammunition would be provided to the Levies force on emergent basis enabling it to cope with the security challenges in its areas of jurisdiction.

He urged the Levies force to do their work as their would be no political interference.

The Provincial Minister was on visit to the Directorate of Levies force here on Wednesday.

Upon arrival, the Minister for Home was accorded wel-

come by the Director General Levies, Naseebullah Kakar.

The smartly turned out contingent of Levies presented guard of honour to the Minister.

He was briefed by DG Levies about overall functioning of the force besides its different operations in the province.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister Home maintained that the Levies force is facing new security challenges in the modern era.

He said that personnel would be imparted modern training so that they are able to perform their duties well.

He said that the

Levies jawans were martyred while fighting against the terrorists and criminals.

He directed to send the cases of promotion of the employees after completing within a week time as per the rules and regulations.

He said that peace, political and economic stability is not possible without bringing improvement in the system.

Earlier, the DG Levies said that there is a need to put the force on modern lines and make it disciplined force.

He informed that the Levies force has been operating in 82 percent area of the province.



QUETTA: Provincial Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove being briefed by DG Levies Naseebullah Kakar about departmental affairs

### Mir Saleem Khosa says

## Timely completion of progress projects with standard top priority

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Communications and Work Mir Saleem Ahmad Khosa on Wednesday said that timely completion of development projects in the province and transparency in their quality was the top priority of provincial government.

He expressed these views while reviewing works of ongoing schemes under-construction Committee Rooms and Offices of Chairman Standing Committee and Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Hostel in Balochistan Assembly Quetta.

On this occasion, Technical Advisor of C&W Department Mukhtiar Ahmed Kakar and related engineer officers were also present.

Technical Advisor of

the Department of C&W Mukhtiar Ahmed Kakar briefed the minister regarding the work of ongoing project started in 2022 and would be completed and functional in the same year.

He said in the briefing that the project included an auditorium basement parking with capacity for approximately sixty vehicles, apart from this, there were three floors and two committee rooms in each floor, eight chairman's offices, eight PA offices, two staff offices, secretary's assembly office, kitchen and apart from this, a separate place for prayer, and a library. The project would be completed and made functional this year, he added.

## Six killed by rivals during wedding in Lakki Marwat

PESHAWAR (APP): A wedding ceremony turned into a mayhem in Lakki Marwat, where six individuals were killed and two others injured when a rival party resorted to indiscriminate firing on their opponents attending the celebrations.

Lakki police informed on Wednesday that the incident occurred in village Akri Khanzada Khail, Lakki Marwat where six people fell prey to a longstanding rivalry and were killed by their rivals during a wedding.

The sudden attack by rivals gave little chance to opponents for response, however, a retaliatory fire by the people present at the wedding made the attackers leave the area and escape.

Police said two passers-by were among those who received bullet injuries and died while another man was critically injured.

## President for stronger economic, cultural ties with China

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday said that Pakistan and China enjoyed long-term strategic relations, which need to be further strengthened in the areas of trade, economy, agriculture, people-to-people contacts, and culture.

The president, in a meeting with the visiting Chairman of China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), Luo Zhaohui, who along with his delegation called on him, underlined the need for both countries to continue to work together to take bilateral relations to new heights.

The ambassador of China in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Dr Jahanzeb Khan, and senior officials of the Chinese and Pakistani governments attended the meeting.

Reiterating Pakistan's firm commitment to China

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the president said that Pakistan considered CPEC of immense strategic importance and was fully committed to the timely completion of all CPEC projects.

Highlighting the importance of Gwadar Port, he said that Gwadar Port would not only promote regional connectivity but would also make the transport of goods to China cost-effective.

He also suggested to undertake joint training projects to equip human resources with skills keeping in view the Chinese demand for skilled workforce.

Chairman of China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), Mr Luo Zhaohui, briefed the president about CIDCA's role in Pakistan's socio-economic development as well as its contributions in the health and education sectors.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of China International Development Cooperation Agency, Luo Zhaohui, along with his delegation call on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Presents Rs1 mln cheque to KPC Media playing the role of fourth pillar of democracy: Tarar

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Friday said media in the country was playing the role of fourth pillar of democracy.

In a meeting with a delegation of Karachi Press Club here at the Governor House, he said the government supported the freedom of media in the country.

Tarar said incumbent government soon after assuming office took steps to clear outstanding dues of the media houses with the aim to provide much-needed relief to journalists and media workers.

The meeting discussed various matters pertaining to the welfare of journalists and media workers.



Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mr. Attaullah Tarar handing over a cheque to Karachi Press Club at Governor House Karachi.

Responding to their invitation, the minister assured the KPC office-bearers that he would visit the club soon to address their concerns directly.

KPC President Saeed Sarbazi underscored the Karachi Press Club's significance saying that it was one of the country's largest clubs with a rich history of working for flourishing democracy.

The KPC president and General Secretary Shoaib Khan apprised the minister of the challenges and problems being faced by the workers of both print and electronic media.

The minister handed over the cheque of Rs one million to KPC President Saeed Sarbazi at the Sindh Governor House.

## Federation, provinces to jointly overcome biggest challenge of economic stability: PM

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said the economic stability was a biggest challenge for the country at the moment that could be overcome with the coordinated efforts of the federation and the provinces.

"We should work together to serve the country and for the development of the provinces as with the joint efforts we can solve problems of the people of Pakistan," the PM said in his remarks at meeting with Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and his cabinet here at the CM House.

PM Sharif emphasized that the federation and the provinces could work in collaboration towards the improvement of national economy.

Shehbaz Sharif called upon federal and the provincial governments to keep very close relationship to make our country developed nation. He said development of Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, was in fact the development of Pakistan.

Prime Minister hoped that the big investment opportunities will benefit to all provinces equally.

He stressed the need of forging unity and harmony

among each other so that positive results could be achieved. He said the purpose of his visit to Sindh was to create mutual understanding.

Referring to foreign investment, the Prime Minister made a special mention of recent visits of the delegation of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the president of Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan and hoped that in coming months, many foreign delegations would visit Pakistan.

As a result of February 8 election, the people of Pakistan gave mandate to

Continued on page 2

### Joint statement

## Pakistan, Iran agree on swift FTA finalization, target \$10 b trade over five years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Iran agreed to expeditiously finalize the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and boost their bilateral trade to USD10 billion over the next five years through joint economic projects, setting up of joint border markets, economic free zones, and new border openings.

The bilateral ties and cooperations were discussed during the delegation-level talks between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Iran's President Dr. Seyed Ebrahim Raisi who was on an official visit

to Pakistan from April 22-24, accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising Foreign Minister Amir Abdullahian, as well as other members of the cabinet and senior officials.

Agreeing to turn the common border from a 'border of peace' to a 'border of prosperity', both countries reiterated the importance of cooperation in the energy domain, including trade in electricity, power transmission lines and Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project, according to a joint statement issued by Foreign Office on

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Commander West Pakistan Navy Rear Admiral Adnan Majeed (SI-Military) meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti

## Is any one accountable in agencies: IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has remarked is any one answerable in agencies. "Is any one answerable in agencies. Where is self accountability which could be seen. State courts will not protect any terrorist. Question arises when any ultra vires law step is taken. Whatever action is taken by police we see it if it has been taken correct or incorrect, these remarks were given by Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani during hearing of the missing persons case here Wednesday.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani remarked "whose near and dear one goes missing, he is relative of common man or judge or lawyer this act fomented hatred among them."

The case regarding Baloch missing persons came up for hearing before IHC Wednesday

Attorney General (AG) Mansoor Awan ap-

peared before the court and presented the report about the missing persons who have been recovered.

The court inquired the violations of human rights were identified in this petition. It is clear the state courts will not protect any terrorist. Question arises when any ultra vires law step is taken. Whatever action is taken by police we see it if it has been taken correct or otherwise.

The counsel Emman Mazari told the court the day the caretaker Prime Minister (PM) had appeared in this court, one Baloch student was lifted on that day. On next day this missing student is released from Rawalpindi.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani remarked policemen are suspended easily because whatever they do they do it before all. Is any one accountable in agencies.

Continued on page 2





KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offers foteha at the Mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

### Turkmenistan advances TAPI Energy project with strong commitment to international law

ISLAMABAD (PR): Turkmenistan is making significant progress on the TAPI natural gas pipeline, which aims to supply 33 billion cubic meters annually to South Asia. Speaking at the Turkmen Energy Investment Forum (TEIF 2024) currently being held in Paris, Muhammetmyrat Amanov of TAPI Pipeline Company Limited highlighted that the Turkmenistan section of the pipeline is complete and the ongoing discussions to advance the project beyond Turkmenistan are in strict alignment with international standards.

The project emphasizes environmental sustainability by leveraging natural gas to reduce emissions significantly compared to coal and oil, thereby tackling indoor pollution and enhancing regional air quality.

Importantly, Turkmenistan is implementing the project in strict adherence to international law. Mr. Amanov emphasized, "In light of the ongoing Project developments, Turkmenistan remains committed to upholding international law, fulfilling its obligations, and adhering to international norms and regulations."



This approach reaffirms Turkmenistan's dedication to global cooperation and legal integrity in executing the TAPI project. Looking ahead, the project's focus is shifting to the Herat Offtake Strategy in Afghanistan, which will play a critical role in environmental protection by reducing air pollution, while also contributing to maintaining public safety and further promoting the project. Additionally, it will provide early revenue streams and increase confidence amongst lenders.

Upon completion, TAPI will significantly impact the energy landscape in South Asia, supporting energy security and promoting regional development, all while maintaining the highest standards of international legal practice.

### CM concerned about delay in...

Continued from page 1

Regarding security of the Mangi dam project, it was informed that the services of Frontier Corps (FC) have been hired for the project. Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister exhorted the concerned high ups to make realize the public hardships as no excuses would be accepted in this regard. He asserted that those demonstrating lenience would be sent home.

### Is any one accountable....

Continued from page 1

Where is self- accountability. Where is self- accountability which can be seen. MY opinion against enforced disappearances commission is only for the reason because they are working along side those who are alleged. The institutions which are under law are regulated and what is the regulation of institutions which take action ultra-vires of law. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani remarked if brother of a man in a home is missing then in which situation his mother, sister and daughter is passing through. Police is better than all institutions because it takes action before all, be it wrong or right. Federal government should ask from defence ministry and tell the court if there is any self ac-

countability process in the agencies. It is correct there can be mistake in working. But it does not mean they are not accountable.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani remarked if any one is terrorist then give the report to police and take action but no ultra vires court proceedings be initiated. The role of agencies will be under what law. It will be like FIA and other institutions. Every institution has to work within its ambit. The court has to work within its jurisdiction. There are thousands of issues to solve any problem according to law. A committee was constituted. It included DG ISI, DG IB and DG IB. Tell us about it. AG replied we have resorted to Supreme Court in this connection.

### Federation, provinces...

Continued from page 1

Pakistan People's Party in Sindh while in Punjab, they gave opportunity to Pakistan Muslim League (N). However, he said, "in federation there is a split mandate and we have to respect it." Shehbaz Sharif mentioned his camaraderie developed with CM Murad Ali Shah and said that in case of any problem, they talked and sorted out things immediately. "Due to such relationship, today federal and the provincial ministers are sitting together and discussing ways to face the challenges confronted by our country," he said. He expressed gratitude to the CM Sindh and his cabinet for their warm welcome with great enthusiasm. He said after arrival in Karachi he visited Mazar-e-Quaid and paid rich tribute to the father of the nation. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on assuming office of the prime minister for second term. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarrar, Federal Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Jam Kamal, Qaiser Shaikh and members of the provincial cabinet also attended the meeting.



QUETTA: Members of Balochistan Labour Federation are holding protest demonstration against non-payment of their dues salaries, at Edhi Chowk in Quetta.

### Federal Govt. directs provinces to accelerate wheat procurement, increase targets

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday said that the federal government has sent letters to provincial chief ministers, urging immediate initiation of wheat procurement processes and enhancement of targets. It was stated by him while responding to the queries of lawmakers in National Assembly mainly related to agriculture sector and procurement of wheat. The minister assured improvement in the situation of procuring wheat within the next 4-5 days and noted a rise in rates to 3400 per 40 kilograms despite losses incurred initially. He revealed that, under the Prime Minister's directives, letters have been dis-

patched to chief ministers urging them to initiate wheat procurement and enhance targets accordingly. The minister for National Food Security and Research expressed gratitude to the House for highlighting critical issues within the agriculture sector, particularly the wheat production in Sindh and Punjab. Emphasizing wheat as Pakistan's staple crop, he underscored the importance of determining support prices to bolster producers and growers, ultimately securing food security for the nation. However, he acknowledged fluctuations in prices and lamented the inefficiency in subsidy distribution, citing instances where it fails to reach its intended recipients (farmers) despite allocation.

Regarding wheat imports, he disclosed that due to previous imports, a substantial stockpile of 4.1 million tons remains. He clarified that provincial governments bear the responsibility for procurement, revealing a decline in Punjab province procurement targets from 25% to around 15-16% of total production due to various challenges, including adverse weather conditions. The minister emphasized the superior quality of Pakistani wheat compared to that of Ukraine or any other country. Pakistan Agricultural Storage & Services Corporation Limited (PASSCO) focuses on procuring for strategic reserves and food security, with its own specific targets. The minister said that an inquiry is underway following the directives of the Prime Minister about import of wheat during the interim government setup. He also agreed upon the formation of a house committee to scrutinize the legitimacy of wheat import in previous interim tenure.

He assured that there would be no hindrance in the supply of fertilizers, and their pricing would not pose an issue. He clarified that the implementation of their plan lies within the purview of the provincial government, which maintains contracts with dealers for such provisions. Highlighting the Prime Minister's strong commitment to providing relief to farmers and bolstering the agricultural sector, the minister reiterated the government's dedication to this cause.

### Bracewell looks ahead to Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): New Zealand Captain Michael Bracewell said on Wednesday that he was completely satisfied with the security and hospitality on the tour and looked forward to playing the Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan. "The experience gained by playing on these Pakistani surfaces during the past 10-15 matches played over the past few months will serve us in good stead during the upcoming Champions Trophy in Pakistan," he said responding to a question at a press conference prior to the fourth match of the T20I series against Pakistan on Thursday.

The five-match T20I series between Pakistan and New Zealand is currently tied 1-1 with one match abandoned due to rain in Rawalpindi. New Zealand Captain Bracewell further said he had thoroughly enjoyed stay in Pakistan and they were satisfied with the arrangement put in place by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and looked forward to playing on these surfaces in February next. "The experienced gained from these games will be vital going into the next year's ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan," he added. On the performance of the young side, the all-rounder believed the Black Caps had an exciting opportunity for three debutants to perform during the tour, adding that the tour was part of the plans of the New Zealand Cricket to provide experience of playing on all kind of surfaces.

On claiming Babar Azam's wicket for the fifth time in his career, he said Babar Azam was a quality player and he was happy whenever he got the better of a senior player like Babar. Bracewell said, "We learnt from our loss against Pakistan in the second game as a batting unit and adjusted our game to conditions. We put pressure on the Pakistan team during the last game in Rawalpindi." On series win against Pakistan in their own backyard with a young team, Bracewell said "We are under no illusion that the last two games at the Gaddafi stadium are going to be easy. We will keep focus on making adjustments and not resting on laurels of winning the last game."



QUETTA: Shahzaib Rind who won crucial fight against Indian player meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti

### Pakistan among 9 poor countries producing 90pc cigarettes for world: Study

LONDON (INP): Recently unveiled study of London's Imperial College on smoking titled "Tobacco's global environment footprint" finds major tobacco production in under-developed countries which is matter of grave concern. Citing the study, Dr Afiab Madni, Dean of the Indus University said, "Almost 90% of all tobacco production is concentrated in the developing world". As per study, out of the 10 tobacco producing countries, nine are devel-

oping which include four low-income food deficit countries (LIFDCs). "Pakistan falls in the category of LIFDCs," he said. Dr Afiab Madni said concerning was the fact that easy availability of cigarettes has become a cause for these people to fall deeper in poverty. He said the amount that they spend on buy cigarettes can be spent on food and other essential items. He said Capital Calling has mentioned that there is a need for the country to follow the WHO guidelines taxing tobacco.

The Dean Indus University said similarly PIDE, a government-run research institute, has reported that there are 24 million active smokers in the country. He said the institute has revealed that, "The total costs attributable to all smoking-related diseases and deaths in Pakistan for 2019 are Rs 615.07 billion (\$3.85 billion), and the indirect costs (morbidity and mortality) make up 70 percent of the total cost."



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting

### Pakistan, Iran agree on swift...

Continued from page 1

the culmination of Raisi's visit on Wednesday. Both sides underscored the imperative of a long-term durable economic partnership and collaborative regional economic and connectivity model, particularly for socio-economic development in Iran's Sistan-Balochistan and Pakistan's Balochistan provinces. The two sides reviewed the entire spectrum of Pakistan-Iran bilateral relations, exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual concern, and signed multiple accords. Pakistan and Iran reiterated their commitment and dedication to further strengthening the bilateral fraternal relations by promoting academic, cultural and tourism activities, and enhancing tourism to historic religious sites. Both leaders reiterated the importance of forging regular cooperation and exchange of views between political, military and security officials of the two countries to combat threats such as terrorism, narcotics smuggling, human trafficking, hostage-taking, money-laundering and abduction. For swift finalization of FTA, both sides agreed to hold the next sessions of Annual Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) and Joint Business Trade Committee (JBTC) as well as the 22nd round of the negotiations of the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) soon. They also agreed to facilitate the regular exchange of economic and technical experts, as well as delegations from chambers of commerce from both countries to intensify economic cooperation. The declaration of "Reemdan border point" as an international border crossing point under TIR and the opening of the remaining two border suste-

nance markets was also agreed upon. There was consensus to fully operationalize barter trade mechanisms between the two sides to facilitate economic and commercial activity, particularly under ongoing collaborative endeavours, such as border sustenance markets. Regarding connectivity, two sides expressed satisfaction over the regular shipment of goods under the TIR Convention and agreed to fully operationalize the Convention for further efficient, speedy and barrier-free trade. As members of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the two countries expressed firm resolve to enhance cooperation in connectivity, infrastructure development, and energy sectors and agreed to expand linkages between Gwadar and Chahbahar ports. The two countries condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and agreed to adopt a collaborative approach to confront this menace and to leverage the existing bilateral institutional mechanisms to effectively combat and counter this threat, while fully upholding the principles of the UN Charter, particularly the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states. Taking note of developments at regional and global levels, both sides stressed the importance of peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue and diplomacy to find mutually acceptable solutions to common challenges. The two leaders highlighted the need to resolve the issue of Kashmir through dialogue and peaceful means based on the will of the people of that region, and in accordance with international law. They expressed their strong and unequivocal con-

demnation of the ongoing Israeli regime's aggression and atrocities against the Palestinian people, and called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, unimpeded humanitarian access to the besieged people of Gaza, return of the displaced Palestinians, as well as ensuring accountability of the crimes being committed by the Israeli regime. Both sides expressed satisfaction over close bilateral ties in all mechanisms of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group to coordinate efforts to maintain stability and develop economic ties in the region. They also called for active cooperation among the regional countries within the framework of ECO. Pakistan and Iran reaffirmed their commitment to the development of Afghanistan as a peaceful, united, sovereign and independent state, free from the threats of terrorism and drug trafficking. Noting that the existence of terrorist organizations in Afghanistan posed a serious threat to regional and global security, the two sides reaffirmed their willingness to enhance cooperation on counter-terrorism and security and to develop a united front against terrorism. President Raisi also met President Asif Ali Zardari, Senate Chairman Yusuf Raza Gilani and National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. The two sides expressed their agreement to release each others' prisoners and take measures for their extradition based on the Treaty for the Extradition of Criminals and the Accused between Iran and Pakistan approved by the two countries in 1960 and the Agreement on the Transfer of Convicts between the two countries approved in 2016.

### Envoys call on FM; pledged to further strengthen bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar on Wednesday separately met with Canadian High Commissioner Leslie Scanlon and European Union Ambassador Dr Riina Kionka and discussed the bilateral ties between Pakistan and their respective countries. The Canadian high commissioner paid a courtesy call on the foreign minister. They discussed bilateral relations, FM reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to deepen relations with Canada in political, economic and cultural domains; and encouraged Canadian companies to invest in Pakistan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs posted on its official X account. Separately, the foreign minister received the EU ambassador at the Foreign Office. They discussed different aspects of Pakistan-EU relations and expressed satisfaction over the progress being made through several institutional mechanisms, another X post said. They agreed to further strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation including in trade, migration, and climate action. While Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Kanni Wignaraja also met with the foreign minister.

**TENDER NOTICE**

The Balochistan Public Service Commission invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. TSE-232404399071 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA. GOB Tender Fee Rs. 1000/-

S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	Stationery (Total Item(s) Count: 33)	2%

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules-2014. Eligibility of Bidders: 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 2,000,000 in Previous 3 Years. Turn over of at least 2,000,000 PKR in 3 Subsequent Previous Years. Presence in Active Tax Payer List. Sales Tax Certificate. The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. JV is not permissible. Submission of the required Bid Security in case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as ineligible and non-responsive. Submission of the required Bidding document Fee. Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 1,000 PKR issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 14 May, 2024 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 14 May, 2024 till 11:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00 PM Address: Samugli road quetta Phone no: 3438132319 Email: ddoqa7010salaryslips@gmail.com

Secretary  
Balochistan Public Service Commission Quetta

PRQ No.1974/24-04-2024  
www.bppra.gov.pk @bppra.gob @bppra.gob @bppra.balochistan



## Romina, Ethiopian Envoy for Green Legacy Initiative

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Wednesday launched the "Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity Under Green Legacy" initiative of Ethiopia's Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed at the University of Sialkot. The event was attended by various dignitaries including government officials, religious leaders, businessmen, academics, students, civil society representatives and members of the media. Special Envoy and Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Jemal Beker Abdula, was also present at the launch.

The initiative was launched as part of a collaboration among the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Ministry of Climate Change and the University of Sialkot, a news release said. More than 200 plants of different indigenous species were planted under the "Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity Under Green Legacy" Initiative which was followed by a climate walk participated by a large number of people. Speaking on the occasion, Romina Khurshid lauded Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula for fostering fraternity between the two nations through the Green Legacy Initiative.

The Coordinator to the Prime Minister of Pakistan said she was delighted to make a formal announcement regarding the collaboration between the Embassy of Ethiopia in Islamabad and the Ministry of Climate Change of Pakistan regarding the Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity Under Green Legacy Initiative. She said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had accorded the approval to formalize the collaboration at the bilateral level between the two countries and assured the Government of Pakistan's strong commitment in this regard. Addressing the launching ceremony, Ambassador Jemal Beker expressed gratitude for the Government of Pakistan for joining hands with the Ethiopian Embassy to foster brotherhood and fraternity between the two big nations.



ISLAMABAD: President of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Prof Dr Hathal bin Hamoud Al-Otaibi, and Rector IIUI, Dr Samina Malik, call on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Tarar urges sweeping operation against ETPB encroachments

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar Wednesday emphasized the need for a significant operation to remove encroachments on the land of the Evacuee Trust Property (ETPB) nationwide during his recent address.

Replying to a calling attention notice in the National Assembly, he said that dedicated anti-encroachment teams have been established for this purpose, with full support from the federal government.

Azam Nazeer emphasized the gravity of the situation, noting that district Nankana has grappled with unresolved land disputes spanning back to 1965, affecting 16,931 acres of agricultural land and involving various local stakeholders.

## President lauds IIUI's role in promotion of higher education; assures support

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday lauded the role of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) in the promotion of higher education in the country and assured his all-out support for the institution's uplift.

The president said this in a meeting with IIUI President Professor Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi and Rector Professor Dr. Samina Malik here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.



Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan, Haji Gulbar Khan called on Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan in Islamabad.

## Opposition collaboration vital for overcoming national hurdles: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Faisal Karim Kundi, a senior leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), called upon opposition parties on Wednesday to engage in dialogue to navigate the country through its challenges. Addressing a press conference along with Nadeem Afzal Khan and Syed Sibtal Bukhari, he emphasized that opposition parties must refrain from engaging in the politics of blame and instead focus on improving the lives of the people.

Faisal Kundi remarked that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has divergent views on the by-elections, given that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has accepted the poll outcomes, while the opposition leader has rejected them.

## Pak, Portugal discuss bilateral, regional, global issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Wednesday said that Pakistan and Portugal enjoy a multifaceted and friendly relationship marked by shared interests and a common stance on various regional and international matters.

him, said a news release. In the meeting, the two sides discussed various bilateral, regional, and global issues. They expressed contentment with the current state of bilateral relations and reaffirmed their joint resolve to further expand and diversify mutually beneficial cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Participants busy in picking garbage during "cleanliness drive in honour of mother earth" & Solidarity with sanitation workers joint collaboration of Komatsu Pakistan Soft (KPS) and Directorate of Workers Education (DWE) at G-8 Markaz.

## IHC reserves judgment on petition against registration of cases against Sheikh

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has reserved judgment on the petition against registration of cases in respect of former interior minister Sheikh Rashid on the same charges in Islamabad and other cities.

IHC inquired from investigating officer "Tafishi officer sahb tell us where are the words of Billo Rani. The investigating officer replied there is USB which will be presented by him.

The case against the registration of cases on the same charge against Sheikh Rashid in different cities including Islamabad came up for hearing in IHC Wednesday.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of the state of Palestine to Pakistan Nader K. Alturk during a seminar titled "Role of Diplomacy on Kashmir Conflict" at Kashmir House in the Federal Capital.

## If federation wants to provide roti at cheap rate then what is problem: IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered Additional Attorney General (AAG), Advocate General (AG) and responsible officer from DC office to appear before it on Thursday in connection with petition filed against the rates of roti and Nan fixed by the government in Islamabad.

The petition filed against the rates of roti and nan fixed by the government in Islamabad came up for hearing Wednesday.

## Fear of poisoning Bushra Bibi: IHC orders for medical check up and presentation of test report till Monday

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered for medical check up of Bushra Bibi besides presenting the test report till Monday on apprehension of wife of PTI founder that she was poisoned.

The petition seeking court's permission for medical check up of Bushra Bibi in view of apprehension that she was poisoned came up for hearing before IHC on Wednesday.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors are looking art work of artist Tusif Ahmed during a workshop titled "The Guiding Light" at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), in the Federal Capital.

## Young officers visit PID for briefing on govt principal public relations agency

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of young probationary officers from the Information Service Academy visited the Press Information Department (PID) in Islamabad to receive a briefing on the roles, functions, and operational procedures of the government's principal public relations agency.

Arshad Munir, Executive Director General of the Information Service Academy, led the delegation. Upon their arrival at the PID headquarters, they received a warm welcome from Ms. Tahira Saeda, Director General Advertisement, and Ms. Ambreen Gul Shahid, Director General Administration.

## PML-N's Central Gen Council to meet on May 11

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) Central General Council meeting is scheduled for May 11 (Saturday) at 3pm at 180 H Model Town, Lahore.

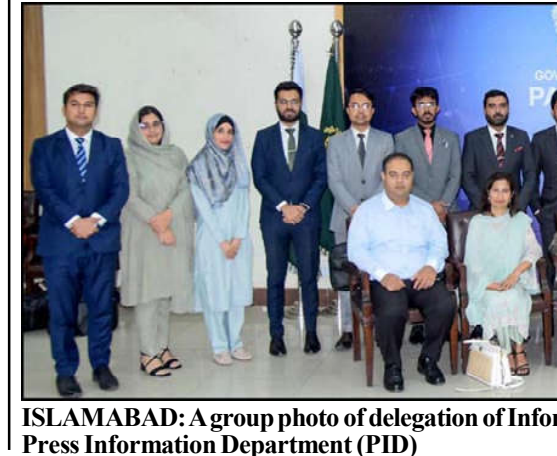
Secretary General of PML-N, Ahsan Iqbal, has extended invitations to all members in accordance with Article 37 of the party's constitution.

The gathering will be attended by central councilors from all four provinces, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

## DWE providing training to 0.3m workers in twin cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director of the Directorate of Workers Education, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Rai Mohammad Akbar on Wednesday said the Worker Education organization was providing training to 0.3 million workers of 350 industries in twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad in different phases. Addressing a ceremony to clean up the land and show solidarity with the sanitary workers in collaboration with the Directorate of Workers Education (DWE) and the Japanese organization KAMATO here at JET Islamabad Park, he said the organization was teaching free off cast in German, Arabic, Japanese and Korean languages and was working on a mandatory online training course, said a press release issued here.

Rai Akbar said, "Cleaning workers are very important members of our society thanks to them who help us enjoy a clean environment and it is the responsibility of every person to take care of cleanliness around him or her."



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of delegation of Information Service Academy (ISA) with senior officers of Press Information Department (PID).

## Vietnam hails Gandhara Corridor project for cultural tourism promotion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Vietnam in Pakistan, Nguyen Tien Phong on Wednesday hailed the proposed Gandhara Corridor Project as a major vehicle of regional connectivity, interfaith harmony and cultural tourism.

While delivering the keynote address on "Envisioning Comprehensive Pakistan-Vietnam Cooperation: Prospects and Opportunities" organized by the NUST Institute of Policy Studies (NIPS), a leading think-tank of NUST, said a press release.

The ambassador said that Gandhara tourism is a symbol of the shared Buddhist heritage, and could attract Vietnam tourists.

He said that several historical archaeological Gandhara sites located in different parts of Pakistan's cities including Taxila, Peshawar, Mardan, and Swat are sacred holy places in the eyes of Buddhists and have potential to attract international tourists from Vietnam and other countries. He emphasized that devising a joint strategy in this regard could generate multiple opportunities for mutual cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of delegation of Information Service Academy (ISA) with senior officers of Press Information Department (PID).

## CM GB calls on Minister for Privatization

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan Wednesday called on Minister for Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan and discussed matters relating to infrastructure development.

Gilgit Baltistan Agriculture Minister Engineer Muhammad Anwar and Education Minister Shahzad Agha were also present on this occasion, said a press release.

The meeting discussed construction of RC bridge, Tatta Pani and Karakoram Highway, opening of Babuser Tunnel and road construction, construction of Shotar, Jaglot and Skardu.

## Hajj permits start for domestic pilgrims in Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Arabia is set to start issuing permits for citizens and Muslim foreign residents who will perform upcoming Hajj pilgrimage, Gulf News reported Wednesday.

The permits for the domestic pilgrimage will be issued via the government platform Absher and the Saudi Ministry of Hajj's website.

In February, Saudi Arabia opened e-registration for its citizens and Muslims expatriates, who wish to perform Hajj due this year in June.

The Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj unveiled four pilgrimage packages with their prices ranging from SR4,099 to SR13,265 depending on accommodation level.

## E&T Deptt checked 2895 vehicles, removed 1066 tinted glasses

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a crackdown against vehicles with tinted windows and unauthorised/fancy number plates, the Excise and Taxation (E&T) Department in the Federal Capital has intensified its operations.

In the past month alone, 2895 vehicles were inspected, resulting in the removal of 1066 tinted glasses and 800 fancy number plates. Talking to APP, Spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory Administration, Dr Abdullah Tabassum said that on the instructions from the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad.



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

Thursday April 25, 2024

## Ties with Tehran

The official visit by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, which ends today, has been marked by mutual praise, and promises to improve ties, particularly in the economic sphere.

The significance of the trip has been enhanced by the prevailing geopolitical tensions in the region, particularly Iran's conflict with Israel, poor ties between Tehran and the Western states, especially over the former's central role in the 'axis of resistance', as well as the unpleasant episode in January when Iran and Pakistan exchanged missile strikes.

Thankfully, whatever bitterness was engendered by the latter incident seems to have been forgotten, as Pakistan rolled out the red carpet for the Iranian leader. In Islamabad, Mr Raisi met the president, prime minister and army chief, and later headed to Lahore and Karachi to meet the respective provincial leaderships. Trade topped the Iranian president's agenda, while security issues were also discussed. Mr Raisi said the current level of bilateral trade was "unacceptable", and desired to see annual trade go up to \$10bn. Foreign sanctions, as well as the lack of proper banking channels, stand as major obstacles in enhancing bilateral commerce. Expanding the number of border markets can help remove these obstacles, and bring socio-economic opportunities to border communities on both sides. Pakistan also seeks to expand foreign trade to improve its economic position. While searching for trade partners across the oceans should continue, we must work to expand regional commerce. As things stand, South Asia is among the world's least integrated regions. While resuming economic ties with India is more complicated, Pakistan should strive to improve trade relations with its western neighbours, Iran and Afghanistan. This can open pathways for Pakistani products to markets in Central Asia and greater Eurasia. Regarding security matters, violent non-state actors operating in the common border areas present challenges to both states' security. Therefore, it is welcome that an accord was signed on security cooperation. Both countries' security forces should cooperate with each other to neutralise malign actors and manage border security.

As for the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, the issue was obliquely referred to in a Pakistani statement, but there has been no major breakthrough. Mr Raisi mentioned that some actors did not want to see Pakistan-Iran relations grow. "It is not important," he said, dismissing critics. The US, meanwhile, has again cautioned that anyone doing business with Iran risks being sanctioned by America. Pakistan must take a long-term view of this problem. While ties with the US are important, should Pakistan seek American approval for all key economic and strategic decisions? Today, the US does not want the Iran pipeline to proceed. Tomorrow, if ties between Washington and Beijing nosedive, and the US asks Pakistan to reconsider CPEC, or our defence cooperation with China, will we comply?

Rafia Zakaria

The structural foundation of the Roman Empire, history tells us, included the roads that were built. With this communication network, the expanding empire was able to connect newly conquered lands. It did not matter how disparate a culture or how unintelligible a language was to the ruling Romans; the road was the connection they needed. Via roads, armies could be sent to help beleaguered governors and consuls. Most importantly, revenue could be transported back to the centre. It was the Romans who constructed the first paved road — the Via Appia. However, Roman roads included everything from small pathways between towns to broad avenues that allowed armies to make their way to encampments and battles.

Centuries after the Romans, the Mughal Empire in India also required a communication network to allow all parts to remain connected and central power to be consolidated.

The road, of course, had already been invented — in fact, Sher Shah Suri, a non-Mughal, built, during his short rule after Babar's death, the Grand Trunk Road connecting the Indian subcontinent and Afghanistan. So the Mughals set about leaving their very own and very particular mark on the means and manner of transportation.

The flair with which the Mughals themselves travelled was inventive and meant to create the sort of aesthetic spectacle of which they were very fond. People have flashy cars even now, but that instinct was not born with the creation of the automobile. If there is any doubt about this, one need only look at how the Mughals got from one place to another.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and even after, ordinary people in India often used bullock carts as the standard mode of transport. However, if you were well off, and most rich people of the time were government officials, administrators, aristocrats and court officials, you could use

horses and camels to get around. There was also occasional travel along waterways using boats. If you were the emperor or part of the royal court or someone else with a high rank, elephants were available for your travel. Nothing proclaimed the pomp and circumstance of an emperor better than when he travelled with 100 or more elephants, even when he was not going to war.

The drama of conquest and the status of the emperor as the conqueror could be emphasised even if he was only travelling from one palace to another. According to records from the era, the elephants were obtained from the forests of Bihar, Orissa and Agra. In some cases, they were brought all the way from places like Golconda on ships that were made specifically to transport elephants.

According to historian Nazer Aziz Anjum's research on transportation in the Mughal era, the covered seats on the elephants were called 'howdah'. There would be proces-

sions of 160-170 elephants, each animal covered with fantastic green and red cloths, all travelling closely together. The howdahs were fastened on top with ropes and served as a kind of sleeping coach which was quite comfortable. These were mostly used by the royal household on long trips to the hunt. The Mughals had even devised a variation of this that was a travelling bathroom that allowed the emperor to have his own facilities while on the move.

The howdah was a square structure that was also placed on an elephant and allowed four to six people to travel inside it while seated. It had a canopy supported by pillars, and it was possible for onlookers to see who was travelling inside and for those inside the howdah to observe the world outside. The most mesmerising account of how to get around in style during the Mughal era is that of the choudoli, descriptions for which have varied from "a sedan with two poles" to an "enor-

The wild and fanciful truck art of Pakistan is well known, but the artistic flair in investing the daily routine with aesthetic complexity and design elements dates back from a time when an empire was shown to making a great show of everything, including getting around. On Pakistan's roads, where our senses are constantly assailed by poisonous fumes as well as tempers, fights and thefts, it helps to take a small pause and think of things as they were a few hundred years ago.

What it must have been to come across a prince's procession of elephants, what great lady could be glimpsed through the crushed velvet curtains of a nobleman's entirely silver-plated palanquin? They could not dash through the land in railway cars or rise into the atmosphere in passenger jets but the Mughals, flashy and flamboyant as they might have been, got around in style even so many centuries ago. -- Courtesy Dawn

## The walk towards development

Atta-ur-Rahman

Pakistan today is sinking into a dark hole, having to borrow money even to pay off the interest on loans taken, rather than the loan itself.

The key areas of focus of a different Pakistan should be the manufacture and export of high-tech, high value-added items, so that we can extricate ourselves from the growing debt snare in which we are trapped. This will require changing tracks and focusing on education, science, technology, and innovation with particular focus on social justice and inclusive socio-economic development.

Pakistan's economic crisis is largely due to the myopic vision of our planners who should have single-mindedly focused on the manufacture and export of high-tech products such as engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, high-value software, automobiles, electronics, etc. Our export in these value-added sectors is a big fat zero. For this, the formulation and dynamic implementation of a farsighted action plan is necessary.

Pakistan undertook

only one foresight-type exercise under my supervision during 2005/2006. The resulting 320-page document covering all important sectors of the national economy laid out 5-, 10- and 15-year strategies and plans for national development. It was approved by the cabinet in August 2007.

An inter-ministerial committee was formed for its implementation, but it has since been gathering dust in government archives.

In today's interconnected world, national development depends on the effective utilization of emerging technologies to address societal challenges, drive economic growth, and enhance global competitiveness.

'Technology foresight' exercises can serve as strategic tools that enable stakeholders to envision the potential trajectories of technological evolution and their ramifications on society and the economy. Technology foresight, a systematic approach to anticipating future technological trends and their implications, plays a pivotal role in guiding strategic decision-making and shaping socio-economic policies.

By enabling nations to

anticipate disruptions, identify opportunities, and formulate proactive strategies, technology foresight can serve as a compass for navigating the complexities of the digital age.

Foresight exercises employ various methodologies to anticipate future trends, identify opportunities, and navigate uncertainties. Each method offers distinct advantages and may be tailored to suit specific objectives, contexts, and stakeholders. Perhaps the most important and widely used method is the Delphi method.

This is a structured approach that involves soliciting input from a panel of experts, belonging to subject specialists, private enterprises, and government officials through iterative rounds of surveys or questionnaires. These experts in specific fields provide qualitative and quantitative assessments of future trends, uncertainties, and potential developments.

The anonymity of responses encourages open participation and consensus-building, while facilitators synthesize and distill insights to identify emerging themes and patterns. By identifying technological

trajectories, nations can strategically invest in research and development (R&D) initiatives, infrastructure, and human capital to capitalize on emerging opportunities and maintain competitiveness in global markets.

Technology foresight guides strategic investments in key sectors and technologies, maximizing the impact of limited resources and fostering economic diversification and resilience. By identifying priority areas for investment, such as digital infrastructure, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing, nations can stimulate innovation ecosystems and create high-quality jobs.

Foresight exercises also facilitate the development of robust innovation ecosystems by fostering collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, industry players, academia, and civil society.

Technology foresight exercises need to be combined with a number of other initiatives to yield optimum results. One of these is scenario planning. This involves developing multiple plausible future scenarios based on differ-

ent assumptions, drivers, and trends.

These scenarios explore a range of possible outcomes and their implications, allowing decision-makers to prepare for diverse eventualities. Scenario planning encourages strategic thinking, fosters creativity, and helps stakeholders anticipate risks and opportunities in dynamic environments.

Another important part of future planning is technology road-mapping. This is a systematic approach to visualizing and planning the development and adoption of technologies over time. Roadmaps typically delineate technology trajectories, key milestones, dependencies, and resource requirements.

By aligning technological capabilities with strategic objectives, roadmapping helps organizations and industries prioritize investments, coordinate research efforts, and anticipate market trends.

These efforts should also involve trend analysis. This requires examining historical data and current developments to identify patterns, discontinuities, and emerging trends. This

method encompasses quantitative analysis, qualitative assessment, and data mining techniques to discern underlying drivers and dynamics shaping future trajectories.

Trend analysis provides valuable insights for anticipating market shifts, technological advancements and societal changes. Environmental scanning can also be important. This entails systematically monitoring and analyzing external factors, such as political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal (PESTEL) trends.

By scanning the external environment, organizations and policymakers can identify potential opportunities, threats, and disruptive forces affecting their operations and strategies. All these efforts can be further greatly facilitated by simulation and modeling. These involve using computational techniques, such as agent-based modeling, system dynamics, and Monte Carlo simulation to simulate complex systems and explore future scenarios. -- Courtesy TheNews

## More 'Moditva'

Mahir Ali

The impressive logistics of India's national elections inspire considerable international coverage. This year, the process initiated last Friday will culminate at the start of June, and the potential electorate includes around a tenth of humanity. In a few cases, election officials trudge for miles through hostile terrain to gather a handful of votes, sometimes just one or two.

Such demonstrations of devotion to democracy are indeed exceptional, even though their contribution to what ultimately counts — the result — may well be negligible. What is arguably even more remarkable is the extent to which the ruling BJP has gone to trample down on challengers ranging from the Congress to the currently imprisoned Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party.

Such actions betray a lack of confidence in achieving the declared goal of 'ab ki baar char sau paar' — the aim of winning more than 400 seats in the 543-strong Lok Sabha this time, a super-majority that could allow the Sangh Parivar to formally replace the liberal/secular/socialist elements of the Ambedkar-drafted constitution with the ideas of Savarkar, Hedgewar and Golwalkar.

The Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS bear testimony to the fact that the concept of Hindutva is hardly a novelty. It might be an exaggeration to claim that it lay dormant during the initial decades of independence, but it went mainstream only in the past three decades or so. Key signposts range from the rath yatra led by Lal Krishna Advani and the consequent demolition of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya to the Godhra incident and the anti-Muslim pogroms in Gujarat in 2002. The state's chief

minister was considered to be complicit in the horrendous bloodletting, and was subsequently barred from travelling to several countries, including the US.

The barriers fell away when he (Narendra Modi) became prime minister a dozen years later. Today, he is valued by the West as the leader of a nation that is construed as a bulwark against China. His government can get away with pursuing pointless vendettas against Sikh proponents of Khalistan in Canada, the US, Britain and Australia, once the initial hoo-ha recedes. And there is precious little Pakistan can do about assassinations on its territory, which the Indian leadership was happy to boast about once the allegations had been publicised. It hardly comes as a surprise that the personnel involved with such operations were impressed by Mossad's activities and the Saudi evisceration of Jamal Khashoggi.

It's the domestic sphere, though, that is more worrying. The days when India could be perceived as an exemplar of democracy in the Global South are long gone. It is not just the BJP and the various longer-standing purveyors of Hindutva that have irrigated its bloodstreams which are to blame. The Congress, lately reduced to a rump, and many of its current allies in the INDIA coalition — the clumsily named Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance — are equally responsible for their failure to guide the nation towards its trust with a less alarming destiny.

Indira Gandhi's Emergency nearly 50 years ago justifiably inspired a great deal of opposition. She suffered the consequences, and returned to power by democratic means. She was assassinated by Sikh body-

guards whom she had refused to sack after the misguided military assault on the Golden Temple. The remaining son who succeeded her was assassinated by a Tamil suicide bomber following India's military intervention in Sri Lanka. The path to globalisation opened up under Manmohan Singh, and its consequences played into the opposition's hands.

Modi had no intention, though, of undermining neoliberalism under his watch. According to the World Inequality Database, inequality "began rising" after the early 1980s, "and has skyrocketed since the early 2000s". Wealth concentration, it says, has been "particularly pronounced" since 2014. By 2022-23, the income share of the top 1pc was "among the highest in the world". As long as the Adanis and Ambanis are happy to fund the BJP, the disparities in wealth will only grow. That helps to explain why young middle-class Indians aspire to the 'donkey route' to the US, and less well-endowed workers seek dangerous jobs in Russia, Ukraine or Israel.

An economic success story would not be exporting so much labour. The impressive growth figures, however, largely rely on what does not trickle down. Far more alarming, mind you, are fascist tendencies that place India in similar categories as Hungary, Italy and arguably Israel. Sure, it could emerge from the hole into which it has fallen — the south in general, and Kerala in particular, has thus far resisted Modi's purported charms. It may do so again, but it won't be enough to dislodge the PM, and five more years of Modi could destroy the dreams to which India's best minds once aspired. - Courtesy Dawn

## Reversal of roles

Rashid Amjad

While the finance minister trudges through the corridors of the IMF and World Bank, engaged in applying for a longer, larger new loan programme even before the current one has ended, the provincial governments back home are flush with funds — to the extent that they never consider raising any revenues on their own or spending prudently what they have.

For this, we have the seventh National Finance Commission (NFC) award to thank, and later the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment, which everyone hoped would spark less contentious, more equitable growth. But these hopes were not realised because the federation kept its old habits — spending this year Rs360 billion on subjects it had devolved to the provinces and running up huge fiscal deficits that led to unsustainable domestic and foreign borrowing, despite the looming threat of default. The provinces lost any incentive to raise revenues on their own or spend their resources wisely.

Both the seventh NFC award and 18<sup>th</sup> Am-c-dm-ent are here to stay — and I strongly believe that the hopes and goals they sparked can still be realised, as empowering the provinces truly strengthens the federation and, with it, Pakistan itself.

While these awards transferred resources and devolved subjects (including agriculture and education) to the provinces, they did not explicitly change the provinces' role in the management of the economy. This oversight must now be urgently rectified.

What we suggest is reversing roles, given our

current dismal economic situation. The federation's primary role should be to restore and maintain macroeconomic stability while that of the provinces should be to serve as the major engine of private sector-led economic growth and job generation.

Let me elaborate. If Pakistan's arzi is approved by the IMF (and all signs are that it will) and the country will enter its fifth programme in the last 25 years), this will greatly ease the chances of covering the country's \$25bn annual external financing gap and help Pakistan avoid defaulting on its external debt. The conditionalities accompanying the IMF programme, however, will stifle economic growth to a 2.5-3.5 per cent growth rate at best over the next three to four years, which the Fund is already projecting. This is far lower than the minimum 7pc required to absorb the increase in the labour force and reduce poverty, which has increased substantially by all accounts post-2020.

Also, implementing the tightly paced economic reforms programmes that the IMF will monitor (with quarterly reviews of efforts to increase the tax-to-GDP ratio from 10pc to 15pc), privatising loss-making state-owned enterprises, and implementing energy sector reforms will be quite a handful for the federal government. Then, there is the task of attracting foreign investment — hopefully, not by selling the family silver at throwaway prices — and using the proceeds to reduce external debt and not for wasteful expenditures.

So, in these circumstances, where will economic growth come from during this period of stabilisation? This will re-

quire the provinces to build their capacity to re-allocate their current resources and adopt policies to achieve this new goal. As a starting point, the province should now set higher economic growth and job generation targets in the forthcoming 2024-25 budgets and annual development plans to help raise the national average. They must also build up their provincial databases to monitor growth, job generation and poverty reduction.

But what concrete steps can the provinces take to fulfil this new role? They could start by concentrating support in more labour-intensive, less import-intensive sectors now under their direct responsibility, namely, agriculture, small and medium enterprises, construction, housing, retail and services, especially IT. The provinces should also reorder their portfolio of development projects and prioritise those with lower capital-output ratios and shorter gestation periods as well as earmark specific projects for public-private partnerships.

Next, the provinces should rapidly expand their education and health services to reduce their very high numbers of out-of-school children and dropouts while improving learning outcomes. Most important, the provinces should direct their policies and support at all levels (municipal and local) towards the facilitation of private sector investment and higher capacity utilisation to generate more employment. Their success in galvanising the private sector will be the key to playing their new role as the major engine of growth and job generation.

That each major political party is running a major province should be incentive enough to prove their mettle to the electorate. -- Courtesy Dawn



## Punjab CM reviews housing project

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday reviewed the 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' [Own Roof, Own Home] project.

Chairing a special meeting on the construction of model low-cost housing units for homeless low-income segments of society, the CM ordered for constructing the best houses at minimum cost near cities. She ordered to consult Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners to get best of the best maps for these houses.

Earlier, the CM was briefed that 519 kanals of state land have been identified in five major cities including Lahore for construction of low-cost housing units for the homeless people.

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Senator Rashid, Information and Culture Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari and MPA Sania Ashiq attended the meeting. Chief Secretary, SMBR, Chairman P&D, Secretary Housing, Secretary Finance, Commissioner Lahore and other relevant officers were also present in the meeting.



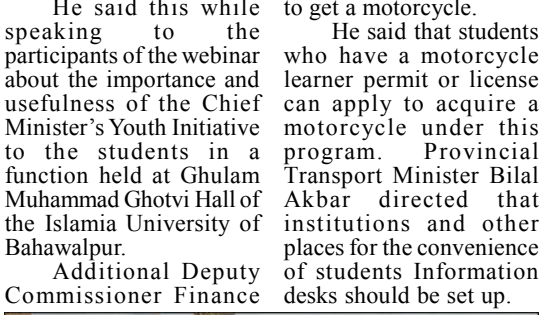
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the meeting to review the 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' [Own Roof, Own Home] project.

## Minister says: Punjab govt allocated Rs 1 bln for providing motorbikes to students

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Provincial Transportation Minister Bilal Akbar has said that the Chief Minister Youth Initiative is an education-friendly initiative for students on behalf of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

The Provincial Minister said that under this program, students will be able to get environment-friendly transport, and students over 18 years of age who are studying in regular degree colleges and universities approved by the Higher Education Commission will be eligible to get a motorcycle.

He said that students who have a motorcycle learner permit or license can apply to acquire a motorcycle under this program. Provincial Transport Minister Bilal Akbar directed that institutions and other places for the convenience of students Information desks should be set up.



LAHORE: Deputy Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Zaheer Iqbal Chahar meeting with Home Secretary Punjab Noor ul Ameen Mengal.

## KP to adopt fixed ST on services for lawyers, customs agent

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has decided to adopt a fixed sales tax on services for lawyers and customs agents instead of a percentage.

The decision was taken in a meeting held on Wednesday between Advisor to KP Chief Minister on Finance Muzammil Aslam and Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority Fouzia Iqbal.

It was decided that KPRA will send recommendations to the Advisor for Finance to switch lawyers and

customs agents from a percentage regime of sales tax on services to fixed rates to make necessary amendments to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sales Tax on Services Act 2022 in the upcoming budget for the next financial year.

The decision has been taken to provide an easy way for the customs agents and lawyers to efficiently pay their sales tax on services.

It was decided that rates for the fixed tax will be adopted as per the recommendations sent by the KPRA team to the finance department for the budget.

## Minister takes notice of Asthma inhaler shortage

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir has taken immediate notice of the shortage of asthma medicines on the direction of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

Presiding over a meeting here on Wednesday, the minister summoned the representatives of the companies and distributors to remove the shortage of Ventolin inhalers on an emergency basis.

The Health Minister directed the Drug Control Wing to immediately crack

down on those responsible for the shortage of medicines and inhalers. Strict action will be taken against the elements causing shortage of medicines across Punjab, added the minister.

Chairing the meeting of Provincial Quality Control Board, Khawaja Imran Nazir said that Punjab Police has been directed to cooperate fully with the Drug Control Wing to remove the shortage of life-saving drugs. He directed that FIRs should be lodged against the hoarding and shortage-causing mafia.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presides over the meeting to review the 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' project.

## KP cabinet takes decisions related to wheat procurement, health, education, power

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cabinet on Wednesday met here under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and took several decisions about energy production, education, food security, procurement of wheat, and sustainable development.

The cabinet approved the rehabilitation and restoration of the 17-megawatt (MW) Ranolia Hydropower Project in Kohistan Lower.

The Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) had already approved the project at a cost of Rs.8.1 billion with the condition that the same will be processed for the approval of the provincial cabinet for inclusion as a non-ADP scheme. The cabinet approved its

inclusion as a non-ADP scheme and financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank.

The cabinet also approved the acquisition of 327 kanal land for the 88 MW Gabral Kalam Hydropower project being financed by the World Bank in District Swat.

On commissioning the project is expected to generate over Rs.7.4 billion incomes per year for the Province.

It also approved the additional compensation in respect of land and built-up property based on an independent valuation study for executing the 300 MW Balakot Hydropower project on Kunhar River Manshera.

The cabinet approved the shifting of manual registration books to automated motor vehicle



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman addressing the opening session of the International Climate Change Conference organized by a private university in Sialkot.

## Zero tolerance against illegal encroachments: RCB Chief

**Independent Report**  
RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Rawalpindi Cantonment Board Ali Irfan Rizvi said that there would be no compromise against illegal encroachments in cantonment areas.

The CEO said this regarding a comprehensive anti-encroachment operation which was carried out in various parts of the cantonment on Wednesday.

All temporary or permanent encroachments outside shops will be removed and strict action will be taken against those obstructing the flow of traffic including pedestrians, he said.

Those creating hurdles for public and traffic will not be tolerated, he added.

Spokesman RCB, Rasheed Saqib informed that encroachments on footpaths and pedestrian areas were being removed for public convenience. He informed that a large number of encroachments were removed from footpaths, roads and bazaars during operation carried out by anti-encroachment cell of RCB.

**EPA organize interactive World Environment Day**  
RAWALPINDI (APP): Environment Protection Agency organized an awareness interactive session with students regarding World Earth Day celebration. The session was aimed to educate students about the need for environmental protection.

During the session themed "Plastic vs Earth," speakers shed light on prevailing environmental issues, causes and their effects on life. Deputy Director Environment Protection Agency, Maria Safer in her address emphasized the individual responsibility to opt for cloth bags over plastic ones and to choose steel or other environmentally friendly alternatives for food consumption. She informed that a comprehensive ban has been imposed by the government not only on the sale of plastic bags less

houses and offices located in Swabi sub-division, Naguman Chowk Peshawar, Nisata District Charsadda, Charsadda Road Peshawar and Battagram, the spokesperson informed.

He said that electricity was being stolen by illegal direct connection, meter tampering and irregular connection at the mentioned places.

In the course of action, he said that PESCO officials disconnected the illegal connections on the spot and Cable and other equipment used for illegal electricity supply were also seized, the official said. He said that the national chequer was losing millions of rupees due to electricity theft.

## FIA Peshawar Zone conducts 14 raid operations against electricity thefts

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Peshawar Zone conducted as many as 14 raids and registered 13 inquiries against the elements involved in electricity theft here on Wednesday.

According to the FIA spokesman, the raids were conducted by Anti-Corruption Circle Peshawar, Composite Circle Mardan and Composite Circle Abbottabad.

According to the preliminary investigation, electricity was being stolen from shops, houses, poultry farms and tube wells directly from the main line and by tampering with meters. Raids were conducted on shops,

Embassy for providing the people of Peshawar with an invaluable opportunity to immerse themselves in Chinese culture. During her visit, Mashal Yousafzai visited various galleries of the cultural center, adding her remarks to the visitor's book and signing the friendship wall. She lauded the CPEC as a testament to the strong ties between the two nations, celebrating the \$29 billion already invested and anticipating further investments in the project's second phase.

Mashal Yousafzai also commended China's successful efforts in lifting millions out of poverty, even amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, citing it as a valuable lesson for Pakistan.

## 70% mapping of Afghans residing in KP completed

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR (APP): The mapping process of Afghan refugees residing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has entered its final phase as according to the Home and Tribal Department KP on Wednesday, 70 percent of the task has been completed.

It said 880,000 Afghan refugees were issued citizen cards of which 320,000 were residing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Since November 2023 till date, 314,000 Afghans have repatriated to their native land.

The mapping of Afghan refugees holding Afghan Citizen Cards would be completed by 30th April, it said, adding that the voluntary repatriation process of Afghan citizens from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was continued.

**Five killed, 1,351 injured in Punjab road accidents**  
**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Five persons were killed and 1,351 others injured in 1,234 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 607 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 744 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

The data analysis showed that 711 drivers, 47 underage drivers, 151 pedestrians, and 494 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 271 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 297 persons, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by 80 accidents in Faisalabad with 84 victims, and at third Multan with 71 accidents and 74 victims.

According to the data, 1,061 motorbikes, 87 auto-rickshaws, 123 motorcars, 30 vans, 12 passenger buses, 29 trucks and 119 other types of vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in the road traffic accidents.

## Japanese cultural counsellor visits Alhamra

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE (APP): Japanese Cultural Counsellor Takana visited Alhamra Arts Centre on The Mall, here on Wednesday.

Alhamra Executive Director Tariq Ali Basra welcomed the guests. The meeting between Alhamra Executive Director and the Japanese cultural counsellor paved the way for discussions on potential collaborations between Alhamra and the Japanese embassy. One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the decision to explore avenues for joint cultural initiatives to foster greater understanding and appreciation of each other's cultural heritage.

During the discussions, Takana expressed fondness and admiration for the Alhamra Arts Council, acknowledging it as a splendid venue for showcasing cultural richness and diversity. He emphasized the importance of such platforms in promoting cross-cultural dialogue and strengthening bilateral ties between nations.

In response, Tariq Basra reiterated Alhamra's commitment to promoting cultural exchange and welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with the Japanese Embassy. He emphasized the significance of embracing diverse cultures and traditions.

## US Institute of Peace delegation meets IGP

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has said that under the 'Police Awam Saath Saath' project of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), measures would continue to be taken for community policing and help, protection and support of vulnerable groups. He expressed these views during a meeting with a USIP delegation, which met him at the Central Police Office here on Wednesday.

The IGP said with the support of the USIP, the establishment of Women Police Council and modern

training of victim support officers were successfully completed. With the USIP support, measures would continue to increase the capacity of women police officers. He said that Punjab police were creating a legal framework for establishment of trust in the name of 'Tahafuz' for effective supervision of community policing projects. The IGP said more steps had been ensured to provide medical facilities and easy medical diagnosis of transgenders in all hospitals; a quota had been allocated for recruitment of transgenders for recruitment.

## Members of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI Women Wing) are holding protest demonstration for release PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his wife, at Hyderabad press club.

**Independent Report**  
HYDERABAD: Members of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI Women Wing) are holding protest demonstration for release PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his wife, at Hyderabad press club.

## Emergent measures under way to control effects of climate change: Governor

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that climate change is the biggest challenge facing the planet. The Punjab government is aware of the serious situation and measures are being taken on an emergency basis to deal with it. He expressed these views while addressing the opening session of the International Climate Change Conference organized by a private university in Sialkot today.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that due to climate change, Pakistan is among the top ten countries most affected by the unexpected increase in temperature, melting of glaciers and deforestation. He said that due to climate change, agriculture sector is suffering which would have adverse effect on economy. He underlined

the need to adopt modern technology in agriculture sector. Governor Punjab said that fully fit vehicles should be allowed to ply on the roads and along with this, modern technology should be adopted in new vehicles. On this occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman also planted a sapling in the university lawn and prayed for the development and stability of the country. Governor Punjab appreciated the efforts of the university administration for holding an international conference on the important issue.

Vice Chancellor Dr. Mujahid Kamran, Chairman Board of Governors Muhammad Islam also addressed the event. A large number of delegates including Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain and teachers were present in the ceremony.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurates Blossom Festa Fun Fair during his visit to Khyber Girls Medical College.

## Governor KP inaugurates Blossom Festa Fun Fair & Pet Show in KGMC

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali Wednesday visited Khyber Girls Medical College and formally inaugurated the Blossom Festa Fun Fair and Pet Show in the college premises. The Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inspected the various stalls set up by the students in the Fun Fair. The Governor encouraged the students to set up stalls containing food and drinks and other items. The Governor inspected the pets of various valuable breeds brought by the students in the pet show at the college.

Haji Ghulam Ali appreciated the interest of the students in the pet show and fun fair and lauded them for more care to the animals. The Governor also distributed medals, appreciation certificates and cash prizes to the first, second and third position holders besides giving away trophies and certificates to the position holders of the pet show. He also invited the students of Khyber Girls Medical College to visit the Governor House.

He said it is a great and happy moment to see students' love for pets. "I'm happy to see female students actively participating in such activities. He also appreciated the college management for organizing the Fun Fair and Pet Show. In any educational institution, extra-curricular activities including art fair, pet shows are useful for students, Haji Ghulam Ali concluded.

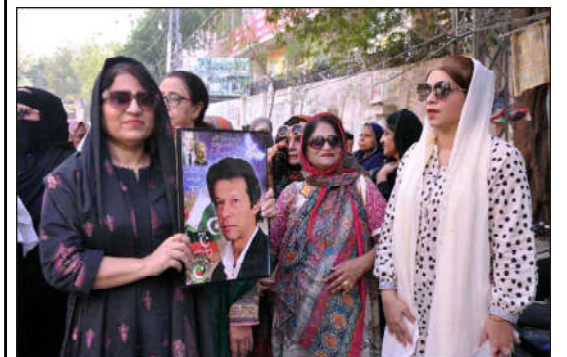


SIALKOT: Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam, Mr. Jemal Beker Abdula Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan are jointly inaugurating a handma exhibition by the Department of Fashion Designing in University of Sialkot.

## US Institute of Peace delegation meets IGP

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has said that under the 'Police Awam Saath Saath' project of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), measures would continue to be taken for community policing and help, protection and support of vulnerable groups. He expressed these views during a meeting with a USIP delegation, which met him at the Central Police Office here on Wednesday.

The IGP said with the support of the USIP, the establishment of Women Police Council and modern



HYDERABAD: Members of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI Women Wing) are holding protest demonstration for release PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his wife, at Hyderabad press club.



## Govt committed to double exports' volume in 5 yrs: PM

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed the confidence that the country's exports volume would be doubled over the next five years with the support of business community.

He said the government, in consultation with the business community, would chalk out a comprehensive policy framework to increase the exports that would ultimately help ensure sustained economic growth.

The export-led growth would also help resolve the country's

foreign exchange reserves' issue, he added.

"You are actually the backbone of the national economy as without your support, the government cannot bring the country out of economic crisis," the prime minister said while addressing the business community.

He asked the business community to sit with the government to resolve their issues and challenges as it was the only way to move forward, and bring development and prosperity to Pakistan.

"We should get together in the larger national interest. The brilliant minds should together find ways to

overcome the challenges and problems hindering the country's development and prosperity."

It was the only way to regain the country's lost glory, the prime minister said. PM Shehbaz highlighted that the government was fully focused on bringing revolution in sectors of agriculture, mines & minerals, information technology and industry.

He also expressed the government's resolve to work for reducing unemployment, poverty and inflation in the country, which, he said, could not be possible without the support of the business community.

As regards the sugar situation in the country, the prime minister said the government might opt for export of the commodity in case its stock was in surplus. He said the government was also focusing on curbing smuggling of the commodity.

PM Shehbaz highlighted that due to the efforts of interim and current governments, positive news were being received about macro economic indicators.

"The current account is in surplus, remittances are increasing, inflation is moving down, and the stock exchange is showing record progress."



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing business community during his visit to Karachi.



ISLAMABAD: Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Sohail Aman deliver closing remarks during the "Leaders in Islamabad Business Summit 2024" Collaborating for Growth.

## Iranian president's visit to help ensure mutual prosperity: State Minister

LAHORE (APP): The signing of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) worth US\$10 billion during the three-day visit of Iranian president to Pakistan for promotion of trade signals a commitment to enhancing economic cooperation and mutual prosperity.

Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman's (FTO) Coordinator Meher Kashif Younis stated this here on Wednesday while sharing his views with the media regarding the recent visit of President of Islamic Republic of Iran Dr Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, along with his entourage.

He was of the view that high-level Iranian delegation's visit to Pakistan marked a significant milestone in the ongoing diplomatic relations between the two neighbouring Muslim countries as the leaders come together to strengthen bilateral ties.

He said the MoUs outlined a framework for increasing bilateral trade volumes and removing barriers to commerce. "By facilitating smoother trade routes, reducing tariffs, and streamlining customs procedures, both countries aim to unlock new opportunities for

## Rupee sheds 02 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday depreciated by 02 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.39 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.37.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.6 and Rs 280.35 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 41 paise to close at Rs 297.57 against the last-day closing of Rs 297.16, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

## Pakistan catching ride on global EV boom

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan, in its timely joining the global trend, is ramping up cooperation with international EV giants to amplify its own competence.

Last month, Automobile brand Huazi Green Energy, a joint Pakistan-China venture, announced the plan to display the first electric car in Islamabad this month, achieving yet another score in Pakistan's EV endeavour.

In May, Chinese vehicle manufacturing company Huaihai in collaboration with its Pakistani partner announced that it is seeking to expand its existing business by investing \$10 million in manufacturing electric vehicles, starting with two-wheeler and four-wheeler vehicles in Punjab.

Among the global players, China's presence in the international EV market has become too prominent to be neglected. Among the global EV sales, 59% are contributed by China, which is also the world's biggest EV producer, with 64% of global volume.

In the first half of this year, China's EV brand BYD witnessed a record-breaking 95.8% increase y-o-y of cumulative sales, snapping global sales champion. Last month, the country rolled the 20 millionth EV vehicle of the assembly line, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday.

Pakistan is not the only country that has set its eye on the biggest automaker in the world as international venerable auto brands are trying to snatch a share of China's EV dividend.

## LCCI for deferment of SROs hurting businesses

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has sought the government's help for deferment of amendments that are bound to bring businesses to a halt.

A LCCI spokesman told media here Wednesday that in a letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, LCCI President Kashif Anwar attracted his attention towards recently introduced SROs 457(I)/2024, SRO 350(I)/2024 and SRO 1842(I)/2023 and said that they were disproportionately affecting the businesses compliant with tax regulations and have brought the whole system

to a halt. The SRO 350 links the buyers' ability to file tax returns to the compliance of their suppliers. Due to this measure, a reaction has been set in motion. The potential chain reaction of non-compliance among suppliers will undoubtedly bring the system to a grinding halt, affecting businesses at every stage of the supply chain.

The LCCI president said that the business community in Pakistan was confronted with multi-dimensional economic challenges, including inflation, devaluation, rising energy price, high interest rate and MDI charges etc.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan Dr. Mehmet Pacaci called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

## PM's interest in tax reforms highly commendable: Mian

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that the business community highly supports the interest of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in improving tax administration and relevant laws.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, he said that the prime minister's efforts to raise tax income were commendable as it was necessary to save the country facing pressing economic issues.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that a correct decision has been made to end tax amnesty schemes, which have served no purpose for decades.

"Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's interest in supervising tax reforms is commendable," he added.

The business leader said that the PM was around the clock to increase the tax revenue, which was necessary in the current situation to put the country back on track.



LAHORE: Farmer busy in harvesting wheat crops in current procurement harvest season in their fields outskirts area of Lahore, in the Provincial Capital.

## Jam Kamal leads efforts to enhance IT Capacity for trade monitoring

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Wednesday chaired a meeting to assess the effectiveness and sufficiency of the Information Technology (IT) infrastructure of the Ministry of Commerce (MOC). The meeting was deliberated the current IT capabilities of the ministry, particularly in monitoring trade activities, enhancement need deliberation. Recognizing the transformative potential of technological advancements, he emphasized the imperative for leveraging digital tools to enhance the efficiency and precision of trade-related data monitoring and analysis. Furthermore, the Minister Kamal stressed the importance of fostering collaboration for exchange of information and data.

Minister underscored the indispensable role of digital solutions in facilitating the acquisition of accurate and comprehensive information and data essential for informed decision-making. It was enacted, but its further utilization and

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where three ships namely, Xpress Salween, Maersk Detroit and Lokojo carrying Container and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal and Gasport Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile four more ships, MSC Sindy, Mara Thapolis, Lila Ace and Loxley with Containers, Chemicals and LPG also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on today morning.

A total of seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, X-Press Salween, MSC Rikku and Navigator Vega left the Port on today morning while three more ships, Maersk Detroit.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman IPO Pakistan Farukh Amil and Shazia Adnan, Director General (IPO) Pakistan addressing a press conference on certain raiser of World Intellectual Property Day is celebrated every year on 26 April at IPO Pakistan Headquarters.

## IPO to celebrate World Intellectual Property day on 26th April

ISLAMABAD (APP): The annual World Intellectual Property Day, observed on April 26, 2024, is set to focus on the theme "IP and SDGs: Building Our Common Future with Innovation and Creativity."

In a press conference, Chairman of the Intellectual Property Organization (IPO), Mr. Farukh Amil, and Director General, Ms. Shazia Adnan, addressed the media to outline the significance of this year's theme and the organization's ongoing efforts to promote intellectual property (IP) in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Speaking to



ISLAMABAD: A labourer on the way pushing a hand cart loaded with melons at Islamabad Fruit and Vegetable Market.

## Agricultural experts stress for timely sowing of cotton

BOREWALA (APP): Department of Agriculture Extension arranged a 'mega farmers gathering' at Gago Mandi here to convince growers to cultivate more cotton in their fields.

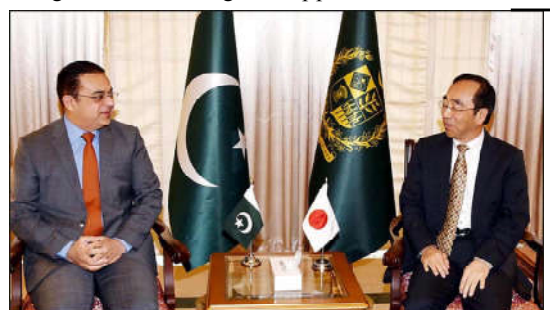
Assistant Director Agriculture Extension Muhammad Shahid while addressing the gathering, informed the participants about the benefits of more cotton sowing in the fields. He urged farmers to cultivate cotton in the maximum area this year, stressing that timely sowing of cotton would yield the best result.

## Machinery import surges by 30% in nine months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of the overall machinery group witnessed an increase of 30 percent during the first three quarters of the current fiscal year (2023-24) compared to the corresponding period of the last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The total imports of the machinery group during July-March (2023-24) stood at \$5,854.931 million against the imports of \$4,493.283 million during the same period of the last year.

The import of agriculture sector machinery and equipment surged by 102.31 percent from \$30.198 million to \$61.095 million; office machinery including data processing equipment 41.28 percent from \$249.167 million to \$352.029 million; electrical machinery and apparatus 68.69 percent from \$1,124.552 million to \$2,105.047 million; computer related equipment 117.90 percent from \$744.971 million to \$1,623.321 million; mobile phone 181.26 percent from \$462.700 million to \$1,301.388 million and other apparatus 14.05 percent.



ISLAMABAD: Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Pakistan pays a courtesy call on the Honorable Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema.

## Pakistan should ignore US threats in trade with Iran: Murtaza Mughal

LAHORE (INP): President Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), Murtaza Mughal has condemned the threat of imposition of sanctions by US on Pakistan in case of trade with Iran, terming it interference in internal matters.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, he said that Pakistan should make decisions according to its interests and ignore what was in the interest of the US.

Dr Murtaza Mughal said that there was no other choice for Pakistan but to purchase gas from Iran or face a fine of twenty billion dollars.

The threat of US sanctions should not be taken very seriously as dozens of countries from the American block were already trading with Iran, he added.

The President PEW said that US has no objection to dozens of countries doing trade with Iran, but when it comes to Pakistan, it starts issuing threats which were condemnable.

He said that the American double standard adopted towards Pakistan was no longer acceptable as it is highly damaging to the economy.

Murtaza Mughal said that Pakistan's Afghan policy was not compatible with American interests.

## PCJCCI keen to boost Peach industry in Swat

LAHORE (APP): Peach of Swat is one of the most famous fruit of Pakistan, the mango may be Pakistan's preferred fruit heavyweight, but the peach is no slouch either, at least in the country's northern and northwestern regions.

Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki, President expressed these views during a think-tank session held here at PCJCCI Secretariat on Wednesday.

Ghurki said that in recent years, Swat had done a great job in boosting tourism. However, the peach industry was not developed as fast. "The benefit that we get from tourism is very little, which is not more than four or five per cent. It will be beneficial if the government gives some packages to the farmers and set up factories etc.," he observed.

## 'Pakistan earns 160m dollars by exporting Kinnow'

SARGODHA (APP): The Pakistani Business community has earned 160 million dollars by exporting 321,490 ton Kinnow across the world during season 2024.

These views were expressed by former president of the Sargodha Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Senior Vice Chairman Fruit and Vegetables Pakistan Shaohab Ahmed Basra while talking to the media here on Tuesday. Basra said the business community faced some losses due to weather conditions and changes.



# Fears grow for Rafah as Gaza crisis rages 200 days on

## Monitoring Desk

GAZA STRIP: The Israeli aggression entered its 200th day as aid groups warned that Israeli plans to invade the southern city of Rafah where most Gazans have taken refuge would create an "apocalyptic situation".

Fears have been rising that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will soon follow through on repeated threats to send troops into Rafah, where 1.5 million people have sought shelter, many in makeshift encampments.

"Everybody seems to be on a countdown to war across the largest displacement camp on Earth, which is Rafah," Norwegian Refugee Council chief Jan Egeland said.

Egeland warned that a ground assault on Rafah would be an "apocalyptic situation" and that humanitarian groups "are completely in the dark on how to mitigate this countdown to a catastrophe".

Also on Tuesday, the United Nations rights office said it was "horrified" at reports of mass graves found at the Gaza Strip's two biggest hospitals after Israeli sieges and raids.

Israel has repeatedly targeted Gazan medical facilities during the war, accusing Hamas of using them as command centres and to hold hostages abducted on October 7. Hamas denies the accusation.

Gaza's Civil Defence agency said nearly 340 bodies were uncovered in the past three days of people killed and buried by Israeli forces at the Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Yunis.

Israel's army responded by saying that claims it had buried Palestinian bodies were "baseless and unfounded", without directly addressing allegations that Israeli troops were behind the killings.

The army said that "corpses buried by Palesti-

tinians" had been examined by Israeli troops searching for hostages and then "returned to their place".

UN rights chief Volker Turk called for an "independent" probe into the deaths at Nasser and Gaza City's Al-Shifa hospitals, noting the "special protection" awarded to medical facilities under international law.

The Israeli army carried out intense shelling overnight of Gaza City, correspondents and witnesses said, with the military saying it also struck Hamas positions in south Gaza.

Shelling and loud explosions were heard in southwest Gaza and Khan Yunis city, while strikes hit the Bureij and Nuseirat refugee camps in central Gaza.

Public pressure has mounted on Netanyahu's government to strike a truce deal that would secure the release of the remaining hostages.



People gather by a destroyed building at the site of a drop of humanitarian aid in the northern Gaza Strip.

# Boat disasters in Africa, Europe leave 43 dead

## Monitoring Desk

NAIROBI/WIMEREUX: Twenty-one migrants died on Tuesday in boat disasters off the coast of the Horn of Africa and trying to cross the English Channel from France to Britain. Bodies of 22 people were found off the coast of the Tunisian port city of Sfax in recent days.

According to the UN's migration agency, at least 16 people are dead and 28 missing in a new migrant boat disaster off the coast of the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti.

It was the second fatal

maritime accident on the perilous so-called Eastern Migration Route from Africa to the Middle East in as many weeks.

Another vessel carrying mainly Ethiopian migrants sank in the same area off the Djibouti coast on April 8, claiming the lives of several dozen people.

"Tragedy as boat capsizes off Djibouti coast with 77 migrants on board including children," the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

# Taiwan happy with US aid package, China objects to arms sales

## Monitoring Desk

TAIPEI: Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen said on Wednesday she was happy the US Congress had passed a sweeping foreign aid package which includes arms support for the island, as China urged Washington to stop selling weapons to Taipei.

The United States is Taiwan's most important international backer and arms supplier even in the absence of formal diplomatic ties.

# North Korea officials visit Iran in a rare public trip

## Monitoring Desk

SEOUL: A North Korean delegation led by the cabinet minister for international trade is visiting Iran, the North's official media said on Wednesday in a rare public report of an exchange between the two countries believed to have secret military ties.

The minister for external economic relations, Yun Jong Ho, left Pyongyang on Tuesday by air leading a ministry delegation to visit Iran, the North's KCNA news agency said. It gave no other detail.

# Gaza protests grow at US colleges, thousands demonstrate in Brooklyn

## Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: Protests against Israel filled streets in Brooklyn and escalated at universities across the United States, some of which included Jewish Passover Seders, as demonstrators demanded an end to civilian casualties in Gaza. The growing protests follow mass arrests of demonstrators at some East Coast universities in recent days, and show a deepening dissatisfaction in the United States, historically Israel's most important ally, with the course of the fighting with Hamas.

Pro-Palestinian protests have followed President Joe Biden, a self-declared "Zionist", for months. At universities, protests have recently grown to encampments that draw students and faculty of various backgrounds, including Jewish and Muslim faiths, that host teach-ins, interfaith prayers, and musical performances. A large Brooklyn street protest reached a standoff on Tuesday when New York police began to arrest people over disorderly conduct, restraining those who refused to move with zip ties.

Pro-Palestinian protests have followed President Joe Biden, a self-declared "Zionist", for months. At universities, protests have recently grown to encampments that draw students and faculty of various backgrounds, including Jewish and Muslim faiths, that host teach-ins, interfaith prayers, and musical performances. A large Brooklyn street protest reached a standoff on Tuesday when New York police began to arrest people over disorderly conduct, restraining those who refused to move with zip ties.



United Arab Emirates announced \$544 million to repair the homes of Emirati families in a cabinet meeting.

# UAE announces \$544m for repairs after record-breaking rains

## Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates announced \$544 million to repair the homes of Emirati families on Wednesday after last week's record-breaking rains caused widespread flooding and brought the oil-rich Gulf state to a standstill.

"We learned great lessons in dealing with severe rains," said Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum after a cabinet meeting, adding that ministers approved "two billion dirhams to deal with damage to the homes of citizens".

Wednesday's announcement comes more than a week after the unprecedented deluge lashed the desert country, where it turned streets into rivers and hobbled Dubai Airport, the world's busiest for international passengers.

"A ministerial committee was assigned to follow up on this file [...] and disburse compensation in cooperation with the rest of the federal and local authorities," said Sheikh Mohammed, who is also the ruler of Dubai, which was one of the worst hit of the UAE's seven sheikhdoms. The rainfall, the UAE's heaviest since records began 75 years ago, killed at least four people, including three Filipino workers and one Emirati. UAE authorities have not released an official toll.

Cabinet ministers also formed a second committee to log infrastructure damage and propose solutions, Sheikh Mohammed said in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

Wednesday's announcement comes more than a week after the unprecedented deluge lashed the desert country, where it turned streets into rivers and hobbled Dubai Airport, the world's busiest for international passengers.

"A ministerial committee was assigned to follow up on this file [...] and disburse compensation in cooperation with the rest of the federal and local authorities," said Sheikh Mohammed, who is also the ruler of Dubai, which was one of the worst hit of the UAE's seven sheikhdoms. The rainfall, the UAE's heaviest since records began 75 years ago, killed at least four people, including three Filipino workers and one Emirati. UAE authorities have not released an official toll.

Cabinet ministers also formed a second committee to log infrastructure damage and propose solutions, Sheikh Mohammed said in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

# Ukrainian officials thank the US for its latest military aid to help stop Russia's onslaught

## Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Ukrainian officials on Wednesday expressed thanks for a fresh batch of U.S. military aid that three Kyiv's armed forces a lifeline in their more than two-year war with Russia, even though the new supplies aren't expected to have an immediate impact on the battlefield.

Ukrainian troops have faced acute shortages of shells and air defense systems as political quarrels in Washington held up the aid for months, allowing the Kremlin's forces to edge forward in some parts of eastern Ukraine by sheer weight of troop numbers and firepower in what has largely become a war of attrition.

The U.S. decision came as the Kremlin's army extended its bombardment of the northeastern Kharkiv region and Ukrainian long-range drones struck more fuel and energy facilities inside Russia.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked the U.S. Senate for approving the \$61 billion aid package late Tuesday.

"Ukraine's long-range capabilities, artillery and air defense are extremely important tools for the quick restoration of a just peace," Zelenskyy said on the social platform X. He urged quick deployment of the hardware that Kyiv expects to receive in the coming weeks and months.

"The key now is speed," he said in a later post.

Two Russian S-300 missiles struck Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city near the border with Russia, during the night, injuring six people, and another two hit the Kharkiv region town of Zolochiv where no casualties were reported, local officials said.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked the U.S. Senate for approving the \$61 billion aid package late Tuesday.

"Ukraine's long-range capabilities, artillery and air defense are extremely important tools for the quick restoration of a just peace," Zelenskyy said on the social platform X. He urged quick deployment of the hardware that Kyiv expects to receive in the coming weeks and months.

"The key now is speed," he said in a later post.

Two Russian S-300 missiles struck Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city near the border with Russia, during the night, injuring six people, and another two hit the Kharkiv region town of Zolochiv where no casualties were reported, local officials said.

# Blinken due in China to exert pressure but also seek stability

## Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was due in China on Wednesday, as the United States ramps up pressure on its rival over its support for Russia while also seeking to manage tensions with Beijing.

The US diplomat will meet China's top brass on Friday in Beijing, where he is also expected to plead for restraint as Taiwan inaugurates a new leader, and to raise US concerns on Chinese trade practices — a vital issue for President Joe Biden in an election year.

But Blinken is also seeking to stabilise ties, with tensions between the world's two largest economies palpably easing since his last visit in June.

At the time, he was the highest-ranking US official to visit China in five

years, and the trip was followed by a meeting between the countries' presidents in November.

At that summit in California, Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed to a US wish list including restoring contact between militaries and cracking down on precursor chemicals to fentanyl, the powerful painkiller behind an addiction epidemic in the United States. Blinken will start his visit on Wednesday in Shanghai.

While in the city, he will meet students and business leaders in what an aide called a bid to highlight warm ties between the American and Chinese peoples.

The friendly side trip — the first visit by a US secretary of state to the bustling metropolis since Hillary Clinton in 2010.

# Bill to ban TikTok in US clears Congress

## Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The United States Senate on Tuesday approved legislation requiring the popular social media app TikTok to divest from its Chinese parent company ByteDance or be shut out of the US market.

The measure was part of a \$95 billion foreign aid package, including military assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, which has now cleared Congress and heads to President Joe Biden's desk.

US and other Western officials have voiced alarm over the popularity of TikTok with young people, alleging it allows Beijing to collect data and spy on users. It has 170 million users in the United States alone.

These critics also say TikTok is subservient to Beijing and a conduit to spread propaganda. China and the company strongly deny these claims.

The bill, which could trigger the rare step of barring a company from operating in the US market.



Columbia University students participate in an ongoing pro-Palestinian encampment on their campus following last week's arrest of more than 100 protesters in New York City.

# Mexico president eyes fresh pension fund ahead of election

## Monitoring Desk

MEXICO CITY: Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he hopes to present a new fund aimed at boosting the lower pensions in the system on May 1, a month ahead of presidential elections.

The creation of the fund, which is part of a pension reform proposed by the president in February, was approved on Monday by the country's lower house. It now needs to be passed by the Senate.

"I hope that on May 1, Labor Day, we can present a report to workers and give them the good

news, that their pensions are guaranteed and that they will also be increased," Lopez Obrador said at a press conference.

The opposition has warned that the move could put workers' savings managed by private companies at risk, a claim denied by the government. The administration hopes to initially pour some 40 billion pesos into the fund, representing the unclaimed savings of workers aged 70 or older. With the resources, it seeks to ensure that workers who earn up to 17,000 pesos (\$1,001.77) a month get 100% of their salary when they retire.

# Musk lashes out at Australian order demanding X remove stabbing videos

## Monitoring Desk

SYDNEY: Elon Musk on Tuesday vowed to challenge Australian demands that his social media platform X take down videos of a recent Sydney church stabbing.

Australia's Federal Court on Monday gave the platform 24 hours to remove videos of an Assyrian bishop being slashed in the head during a recent attack. Australia's eSafety Commission had sought the court injunction saying X ignored earlier removal notices.

# Germany will resume working with UN relief agency for Palestinians after a review

## Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: Germany said Wednesday that it plans to follow several other countries in resuming cooperation with the U.N. relief agency for Palestinians in Gaza after the publication of an independent review of its neutrality.

The head of the Arab League hailed the report, saying it showed that Israel's allegations were baseless and part of a "systematic campaign" meant to end the mandate of the agency.

Israel says that hundreds of UNRWA workers are members of Palestinian militant groups, and claims the report understated the problem.

Its allegations led to the suspension of contributions to UNRWA by the United States and more than a dozen other countries.

Also Wednesday, the Israeli military said it is redeploying two re-

serve brigades from Israel's northern border to Gaza for "defensive and tactical missions," as it prepares for an offensive in Rafah, which Israel describes as Hamas' last stronghold in the territory.

The U.S. Senate passed a \$26 billion aid package late Tuesday that includes around \$9 billion in humanitarian assistance for Gaza, which experts say is on the brink of famine, as well as billions for Israel. President Joe Biden has promised to sign it immediately.

The Israel-Hamas war was sparked by the unprecedented Oct. 7 raid into southern Israel in which the militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250 hostages.

Israel says the militants are still holding around 100 hostages and the remains of more than 30 others.

# Prabowo vows to fight for all Indonesians, calls for unity among political elites

## Monitoring Desk

JAKARTA: Indonesia president-elect Prabowo Subianto on Wednesday vowed to fight for all Indonesians and called for unity among political elites to take the country forward, as he seeks to strengthen his parliamentary clout ahead of taking office in October.

Speaking at a ceremony where he was being confirmed as the winner of the Feb 14 election, Prabowo, who won by a huge margin, said he was talking to elites in the country and it was vital parties could get along together for the common good.

Prabowo, who was tacitly backed by popular incumbent Joko Widodo, is seeking to broaden his coalition in the new parliament and is in talks with parties who backed his election rivals.

"I will prove that I will fight for all Indonesians, including those who did not vote for me," Prabowo said.

"If Indonesia wants to survive, becoming a

prosperous country, all elites must work together. If we dare to leave our differences aside, let's leave our feelings, let's find our love for the country, let's sacrifice together for our people."

The confirmation comes two days after the Constitutional Court rejected challenges from both losing candidates seeking a re-run of the presidential election and the disqualification of Prabowo and his running mate, ending all election disputes.

In his speech, Prabowo vowed to end poverty and corruption, adding he intends to bring improvement to all Indonesians.

He also said a free press was vital in Indonesia, describing it as "the absolute requirement for democracy".

Defence Minister's Prabowo's current alliance comprises 48% of seats in the parliament but his seniors aides have said he aims to expand his coalition to secure a majority of seats.

# Russia to push Ukraine further back if Kyiv gets long range US missiles, says Kremlin

## Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia will need to push Ukrainian forces further back and expand what it regards as a "buffer zone" if Kyiv takes delivery of advanced longer-range ATACM guided missile systems from the United States, the Kremlin said on Wednesday. The White House last October said it had provided Kyiv with a type of ATACMS capable of hitting targets up to 165 kilometres (102 miles) away. But a new U.S. package being prepared now after a long-delayed aid bill was approved by Congress is expected to include a longer 300 km (186-mile) range type.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Monday that Kyiv would be receiving the long-range ATACMS and

thanked Washington. That raises the prospect of Ukraine using those missiles to strike targets deeper inside territory controlled by Russian forces, particularly in Russian-annexed Crimea. The ATACMS (Army Tactical Missile Systems) are mounted on trucks and can travel at speeds of Mach 3, considerably faster than British and French cruise missiles currently in Ukraine's armoury.

When asked on Wednesday about the move, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia's stance, which it has set out several times, had not changed. "Nothing changes in that regard," Peskov said. The Kremlin said last month that the only way to protect Russian territory from Ukrainian attacks - which it says includes four regions Moscow has annexed from Ukraine.

# Ukrainian drones struck two Rosneft oil depots in attack, Kyiv source says

## Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Drones sent by Ukraine's SBU security service struck two Rosneft-owned oil depots in Russia's Smolensk region in an overnight attack on Wednesday, a Ukrainian intelligence source said.

The source said the depots contained 26,000 cubic metres of fuel and that the attack caused major fires and evacuation of personnel.

"The SBU continues to effectively destroy military infrastructure and logistics that provide fuel to the Russian army in Ukraine," the source said.

# Haiti police bolster security around palace ahead of transition

## Monitoring Desk

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Haitian police deployed tear gas to move people back from a security perimeter around the National Palace while soldiers gripping rifles patrolled the international airport's diplomatic entrance ahead of a planned change of government.

The palace has come under repeated fire from gangs that have paralyzed the capital Port-au-Prince. A nine-member presidential transition council is to be sworn in at the palace, and although no date has been

announced, rumors circulated that it could happen this week.

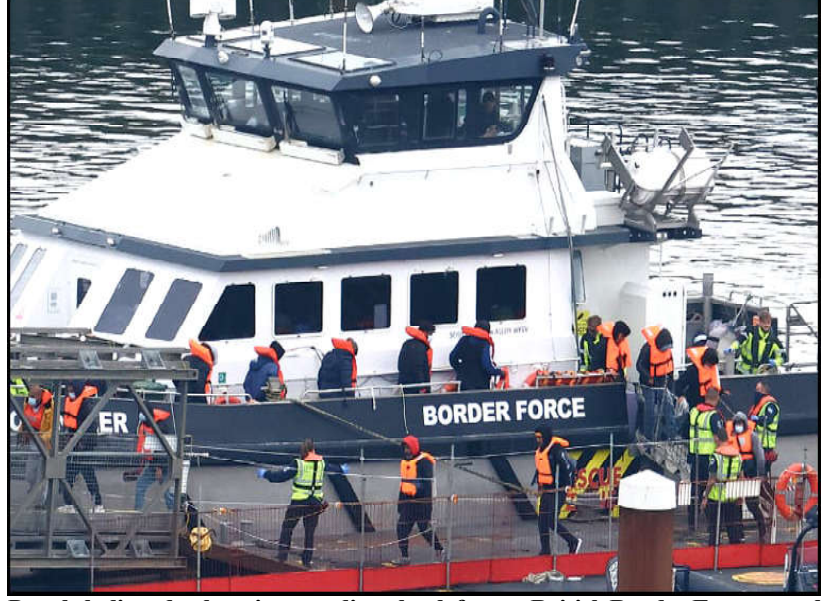
The council is expected to name an interim prime minister and help set up a government that will eventually organize elections in the Caribbean island nation. "Whether or not you're installed, this message is for you: Brace yourselves," gang leader Jimmy "Barbeque" Cherizier ominously warned in a Tuesday video shared on social media. Cherizier has called for toppling the government.

# Myanmar rebel group says it withdraws from key town on Thai border

## Monitoring Desk

MYANMAR: A Myanmar rebel group has withdrawn its troops from a town along the Thai border following a counteroffensive by soldiers of the ruling junta from whom the rebels had this month wrested the key trading post, an official said on Wednesday.

A spokesman for the Karen National Union (KNU) said the "temporary retreat" from the town of Myawaddy came after the return of junta soldiers to the vital strategic area that is a conduit for annual foreign trade of more than \$1 billion.



People believed to be migrants disembark from a British Border Force vessel after arriving at the port of Dover.



## Gillani calls for further promoting parliamentary relations b/w Pakistan, US

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani Wednesday appreciated the US government for its collaboration across various sectors and emphasized the

extended heartfelt congratulations to Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani on being elected as Chairman Senate and conveyed his best wishes for a successful tenure.



need to enhance trade links for mutual benefit.

During the meeting with US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome, the chairman Senate stressed the need for increased co-operation to boost trade volume.

Both sides engaged in detailed deliberations on various aspects of the enduring friendship between Pakistan and the United States, said a news release.

Expressing Pakistan's commitment to nurturing its long-standing friendly ties with the US, the Chairman Senate emphasized the importance of further promoting parliamentary relations between the two nations.

He underscored the pivotal role that parliamentary contacts can play in enhancing public and legislative engagement.

Recognizing the significant economic partner-

ship between the two countries, Chairman Senate Gillani highlighted the US as Pakistan's largest trading partner.

Ambassador Blome commended the new economic team of Pakistan and expressed optimism regarding the ongoing discussions between Pakistan and the IMF.

He praised the efforts of the Pakistan economic team and emphasized the potential for further economic cooperation between Pakistan and the US.

Acknowledging the positive economic indicators of Pakistan, the ambassador noted the downward trend in inflation and high dollar reserves, stating that the IMF's positive feedback would encourage investors.

He also highlighted the flourishing gaming industry in Pakistan and called for enhanced cooperation in the digital sector.

Both discussed the importance of parliamentary contacts.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif reads a pledge to serve the country with the youth of the nation during his visit to Mazar-e-Quaid.

## Businessmen want PM to reconcile with PTI founder, improve ties with India

KARACHI (INP): Business magnate Arif Habib has urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to extend a gesture of reconciliation to his incarcerated political opponent, the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), and improve relations with neighbouring countries, especially India.

Habib's counsel came during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's address to the business community at a ceremony on Wednesday, where the premier expressed confidence that Pakistan's exports would double over the next five years with the support of the business community.

"Having engaged with the Pakistan Peoples Party and other parties, I urge you to engage two more

times: once with our neighbours, including India, and once with the inmates of Adiala Jail," Habib advised the premier during the Q&A session.

The businessman commended PM Shehbaz for elevating the stock market to record levels and securing a bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) during his previous tenure as prime minister.

In his address, PM Shehbaz Sharif reiterated his confidence in Pakistan's export potential, stressing that collaboration with the business community would be pivotal in achieving this goal.

He outlined plans for a comprehensive policy framework, developed in consultation with business

leaders, to boost exports and alleviate foreign exchange reserve challenges.

Acknowledging the business community as the backbone of the economy, the prime minister invited collaboration in addressing economic hurdles and fostering development and prosperity.

He emphasised the importance of collective effort and innovative solutions to overcome challenges and revitalise Pakistan's economy.

PM Shehbaz underscored the government's commitment to revolutionise various sectors, including agriculture, mining, information technology and industry, with a focus on reducing unemployment, poverty and inflation.

## PM visits Mazar-e-Quaid, pays homage to father of nation

KARACHI (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday visited the mausoleum of Father of the Nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, where he paid his respects and offered Fateha.

This is the first visit of Shehbaz Sharif to the Mazar-e-Quaid after he took the oath for the second term as the prime minister on March 4, 2024.

The prime minister laid a wreath at the mausoleum and also penned his comments in the visitors' book. In his remarks, the prime minister said he was there to pay tribute to the great Quaid for his great struggle to create a separate homeland and show his respects to him.

Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Federal Minister for Information and Broad-

casting Attaulah Tarar, Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal, Federal Minister for Professional Training and Education Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui were present on the occasion.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with youth paid rich tributes to the founding fathers of Pakistan.

The Prime Minister took an oath from the youth who performed prominently at Mazar-e-Quaid to serve Pakistan and play their role in the development of the country.

Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived on a day long visit to Karachi and was received by Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori and Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at Karachi Airport.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Communication & Works Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa being briefed about progress on development projects in provincial Assembly

## SC sends appeals regarding 'army courts' to committee for formation of larger bench

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Wednesday referred 'the set of intra court appeals (ICAs) against the termination of civilians' trials in army courts in line of May 9 riots' to the Practice and Procedure Committee for formation of a larger bench to hear the matter.

A six-member bench of the top court headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan heard the petitions filed by the Federal Government, and the ministries of Law & Justice and Defence against the apex courts' ruling of October 23, in which it had annulled the civilians trials in army courts.

During the course of proceedings, the Attorney

General for Pakistan informed the court that 20 people had been released before Eid after they completed sentences.

Justice Hilali remarked that the decisions of the military courts should be brought on the record.

The court said that it would view that what procedure had been adopted for the trials and if the accused were given the opportunity to hire lawyers of their choice.

Justice Amin ud Din Khan said that the court had conditioned the decisions of army courts with the final judgment of the top court but still it could summon the decisions.

The counsel for Justice (ret'd) Jawad S. Khawaja prayed the bench to form a larger bench in the light of the notes of Justice Yahya Afridi and Justice Mansoor Ali Shah.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister Sardar Sarfaraz Chakar Khan Domki, MPAs Mir Barkat Ali Rind, Mir Asghar Ali Rind, Nawabzada Naimatullah Zehri and Naveed Kalmati meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti

### NA told

## Govt. making all-out efforts to enhance energy mix to provide affordable power to consumers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar Wednesday informed the National Assembly that the government was making all-out efforts to enhance the energy mix to provide affordable electricity to the consumers.

Responding to a calling attention notice regarding the production of electricity from expensive sources instead of cheap sources, he said that the government is actively en-

gaged in various projects aimed at providing affordable electricity to the masses. He said that the Prime Minister has established a special committee to promote the generation of electricity through solar power.

The minister said a plant with the help of China will be set up in Pakistan to manufacture solar panels in the country to reduce costs.

Nazeer Tarar informed about the government's ongoing efforts to combat

power theft and address defaulters.

The minister urged lawmakers to educate the people in their respective constituencies about the criminal nature of electricity theft. He emphasized the importance of collective efforts in curbing this illegal activity.

## CM Bugti for taking steps to establish good governance in province

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti on Wednesday said that provincial government would take practical measures to address public issues and establish good governance in consultation with all stakeholders.

He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), High Court Bar (HCB) and Balochistan Bar Council (BBC) led by Muneer Ahmed Kakar Advocate called on him here.

The matters relating

to the problems of Bar Councils came under discussion during the meeting.

The Chief Minister said that provincial government would review the proposals presented within the available resources to solve the genuine issues being faced by the lawyers' community and assured to take measures for the welfare of the lawyers fraternity.

He said that Bar Councils and lawyers would be consulted on legislation related to public interest in the Balochistan Assembly.

## Pakistan wants cordial ties with neighbours: Khawaja Asif

ISLAMABAD (INP): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said Pakistan is willing to enjoy cordial relations with the neighbouring countries including India.

Talking to media on Wednesday, the defence minister said Taliban defeated the colonial powers without modern equipment which was a fact praiseworthy.

"Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan are not ideal this time and we need to work on improving ties with them," he said.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister Finance Mir Shoaib Nausherwani being briefed by DG Afzal Khosti during his visit of Directorate General Treasury & Accounts

## Two coalmine workers suffocated to death in Harnai coalmine

Independent Report QUETTA: Two coalmine workers died of poisonous gas suffocation in a coalmine located in Shahrag area of Harnai on Wednesday.

According to the Chief Mines Inspector, two mine workers were working in a coalmine located in the PMDC coalmine area of Shahrag when they were trapped there and died of suffocation of poisonous gas.

Later, their bodies were taken out from the affected coalmine by the local coalmine workers on self-help basis.

The Chief Minister

## Announces job & Rs. 2mln for karate player: Shahzaib Rind brightens name of Pakistan at international level, maintains Chief Minister

Sarfaraz Bugti announces provincial government to bear expenses of traveling & professional training of Shahzaib for abroad; says talented players to be fully patronised

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti has stated that international karate combat player Shahzaib Rind has brightened the name of Pakistan at international level.

He said that Shahzaib is pride of Balochistan and Pakistan and he has proved that there is talent of world level in Balochistan.

The Chief Minister

was speaking to Shahzaib Rind who called on him here on Wednesday.

He congratulated Shahzaib Rind on winning the crucial fight against Indian player.

He announced the government job and cash reward of Rs. 2 million for Shahzaib Rind.

He also announced to bear the expenses of traveling and professional training of Shahzaib Rind to be done abroad and also directed the Secretary Sports in this regard.

He said that the provincial government acknowledges the talent and capabilities of talented youth and would fully patronise them.

Shahzaib Rind on the occasion thanked the Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti on encouraging him.

He asked youth of the country including Balochistan to work hard.

## WASA employees lodge protest against non-payment of salaries

Independent Report QUETTA: The employees of Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) lodged protest against non-payment of their salaries in the metropolis on Wednesday.

The protest rally was taken out from WASA office which terminated at the Edhi chowk after passing through Double road and Zarghoun road.

The protesters staged sit-in at the Edhi chowk and protested against non-pay-

ment of their salaries for two months. The employees said that they are deprived of the salaries for last two months. They criticized the provincial government in this regard. They demanded of the government to resolve the issue, otherwise they would intensify their protest further.

Meanwhile, traffic jam was occurred due to protest of WASA employees at main intersection of the city.

## Law Minister meets IPC delegation

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the International Parliamentarians Congress (IPC) met with Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazeer Tarar here on Wednesday.

The delegation was led by IPC President Abdel Rahim Maana and included Secretary General Sitara Ayaz, Assistant Secretary General Ijlal Ali Khan and Deputy Speaker Jordan.

The IPC delegation briefed the Law Minister on the organization's work and mission.



QUETTA: Journalists of Islamabad Shahana Tabassum and Shafaqat Hussain meeting with Provincial Advisor Women Development Department Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi

## Secretary directs to take action against absentee medical staff at RHC Kan Mahtarzai

Independent Report QUETTA: The Secretary Health Department, Abdullah Khan has directed to take departmental action against the Incharge Lady Medical Officer and other medical staff found absent from their duties at the Rural Health Center (RHC) Kan Mahtarzai in Killa Saifullah district on Wednesday.

The Secretary issued directives for taking action against the absentee medical staff during his surprise visit to the RHC Kan Mahtarzai.

During his visit, the Secretary Health found the

Incharge Lady Medical Officer and other staff absent from their duties.

He expressed dismay over the absence of Incharge and other medical staff at the RHC.

However, he found the basic healthcare, EPI, MCH and Nutrition Programme fully functional at the EHC.

He on the occasion directed to District Health Officer to make labour room operational at the RHC and appoint local LHVs there.

He also stressed the need to improve the services of vaccination further.



QUETTA: Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani addressing introductory session of female Principals. Secretary Education Salah Muhammad Nassar is also present

## Member CMIT inspects development projects

Independent Report QUETTA: The Member Chief Minister Inspection Team (CMIT) Umeed Ali Khokhar visited Usta Muhammad and Jaffarabad districts on Wednesday.

During the course of visit, Chief Minister inspected different completed and under completion projects in the districts.

Speaking on the occasion, Member CMIT directed to the concerned of-

ficials to mobilize all available resources for completion of the projects in larger public interests. He said that heavy responsibility rests with the engineers to discharge their duties with dedication. He warned that no negligence and carelessness would be tolerated in this regard. He also directed to the Executive Engineers to work on the projects on priority basis removing flaws in them.



QUETTA: Director General (DG) Health Balochistan, Dr. Farooq Hoth along with others addressing during press conference held at Quetta press club.

## Harassment of women serious & culpable offence, says Rubaba

Independent Report QUETTA: The Advisor to Chief Minister for Women Development, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi has stated that harassment of women is serious and culpable offence and there is zero tolerance policy of the government on it.

She asserted that case would be registered under Anti-Harassment Act if any female was harassed.

She said that it is our basic responsibility to provide harassment free and conducive environment to the women at workplace.

She said that comprehensive steps would be taken for providing opportunities to the women to move forward in all sectors.

She said that the remarkable performance of the provincial government would be felt under leader-

ship of Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti.

Dr. Rubaba Buledi was speaking to the Secretary Women Development Department, Sardar Khan Bugti and other officers after assuming the responsibilities of department here on Wednesday.

The Advisor for Women Development, Dr. Rubaba said that the women of Balochistan are talented, however, there's a need to take comprehensive steps for providing ample opportunities to women so that they may progress at national and provincial level. She said that women of province are facing extraordinary hardships. Under the given circumstances, steps would be taken enabling women to defend their rights effectively, she added.