

# Independent

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## We are ready if PTI intends to hold talks: Yousaf Raza Gillani

Affirms support for government's welfare initiatives

ISLAMABAD (INP): Acting President Yousaf Raza Gillani on Sunday said that we are ready if the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) wants to talk with us. "We didn't say at any time, we are not on the side of the government," PPP stalwart Gillani said in a media talk. "We are extending full support to the government and engaged in talks with it for joining the government," he said. "We will take responsibility if joined the government," he further said. "We will support them in all good works," he added. Gillani said that no parliament bill or law will be passed without us. APP adds Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) would continue to support the government's welfare initiatives and also provide suggestions to make the upcoming budget favourable towards people, especially farmers, youths, and labourers. He expressed these views while talking to media after laying the foundation stone of a reverse osmosis (RO) plant here on Sunday. He highlighted that as a member of the United Nations, Pakistan was committed to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, which aimed to ensure "availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" by 2030. He expressed his appreciation for those working to provide clean drinking water, noting that their efforts were also in service to the state.



LAHORE: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani addressing to media after inauguration of the Zaeem ud Din RO plant at Military Accounts Cooperative Housing Society.

## Two Pak Army soldiers embraced martyrdom, five terrorists killed in Peshawar operation

PM lauds security forces for successful operation against terrorists; Nation not to forget sacrifices of martyrs of Pakistan Army: Bilawal

RAWALPINDI (APP): Two soldiers of Pakistan Army on Sunday embraced martyrdom while gallantly fighting against terrorists during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in general area Hassan Khel, Peshawar District during which five terrorists were killed while three got injured. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, during conduct of the operation, the Army troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location. However, during intense exchange of fire, leading his troops from the front, Captain Hussain Jahangir, age 25 years, resident of Rahim Yar Khan District, along with another brave son of the soil, Havildar Shafiq Ullah, age 36 years, resident of District Karak, having fought gallantly, made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat (martyrdom).

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operation against terrorists in the Hassan Khel area of Peshawar, which resulted in killing of five terrorists.

## Sacrifices of soldiers for peace unforgettable: Mir Sarfraz Bugti grieved over martyrdom of Army personnel in Hassan Khel operation

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed sorrow over martyrdom of an Army officer, Captain Hussain Jahangir and Havildar, Shafiqullah in an intelligence based operation conducted in Hassan Khel area of Peshawar district. In a condolence statement issued here on Sunday, the Chief Minister said that the sacrifices of our brave jawans and officers for establishing peace in the country are unforgettable. He said that the brave sons of the motherland have created new history with their blood while fighting gallantly and the entire nation is proud of the sacrifice of martyrs. Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that we equally share the grief with the bereaved families of the martyrs in the moment of grief.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Minister for Food, Noor Muhammad Durrani also expressed sorrow over the martyrdom of Captain Hussain Jahangir and Havildar Shafiqullah in the operation against terrorists in Hassan Khel area.



PESHAWAR: Army officers carrying coffin of Captain Hussain Jahangir who embraced martyrdom during an IBO in Hassan Khel.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kuwait Nassar Abdulrahman Jasser Al-Mutairi and Qatar's envoy to Pakistan Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater presenting the letters of their respective leaders to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif confirming their acceptance of invitation to visit Pakistan

## Pakistan demands Afghanistan to hand over TTP terrorists involved in Besham attack

Interior minister Mohsin Naqvi asks Afghan interim govt to act against terror network on its soil; Says Pakistan wanted good ties with Afghanistan and it was possible when Afghanistan would support Pakistan and not allow its soil to be used against Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said that Pakistan attaches high importance to its ties with China whether they are economic, political, diplomatic or security related. Addressing a press conference here on Sunday, he said that both countries support each other at different forums and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative was a big example in this regard. He said, "We are confirming it with evidence that during an attack on Chinese engineers in Besham, Afghanistan's territory had been used and it was a matter of great concern for Pakistan."

He said that such threats coming from across the borders make regional security more complex. The interior minister said that it was a planned attack and was operated from Afghanistan. He said Pakistan had raised this issue with Afghanistan's Interim government and stressed them to control terrorists operating from there. Mohsin Naqvi said that Pakistan had beefed up its security at borders, adding that the government was well aware of the elements behind such incidents, which wanted to harm relations between Pakistan and China. Support was being provided to TTP-like terrorists in border areas, he said and added that "we have a number of evidence in this regard". He said that after occurrence of terrorist attack on Chinese in Besham, the law-enforcement agencies in the country jointly carried out comprehensive investigation of the incident. Some accused of the incident had been arrested, he said. He said that Chinese security was very important and new standard operating procedures (SOPs) had been made in this regard and were being strictly implemented.



LAHORE: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi addressing a Press conference at FIA regional office.

## Qureshi arrested in eight more cases

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore police on Sunday arrested PTI Senior Vice President incarcerated Shah Mahmood Qureshi in eight more cases.

According to details, a special team of Lahore police reached Adiala Jail, where the former foreign minister is currently incarcerated in May 9 cases, to take him into custody.

The investigation team sought permission from the court to transfer Shah Mahmood Qureshi to Lahore, but the court denied the request due to "security concerns".

However, the court granted a three-day physical remand of the PTI leader on the request of the investigation team.

The police team recorded Shah Mahmood's statement at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi. He will be presented in the Anti-Terrorism Court via video link.

## PM Shahbaz highly appreciates Norway's landmark decision to recognize Palestine

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday during a telephonic conversation with Prime Minister of Norway Jonas Gahr Store conveyed his deep appreciation for Norway's landmark decision to recognize the State of Palestine. "He said that this principled decision by Norway would send a strong message of hope and solidarity to the brave Palestinian people who have been enduring Israel's brutality and suffering over seventy-five years of occupation and oppression," PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister also welcomed the ICJ's recent ruling regarding Rafah and Gaza and called for its full and effective implementation. The prime minister emphasized the importance of the two-state solution as the key to lasting peace in the Middle East.

He hoped that Norway's decision would encourage other countries to follow suit, paving the way for full UN membership of State of Palestine. In this regard, he further said that the international community needed to focus its attention towards the plight of the oppressed people of Kashmir, who had been subjected to brutal occupation and denial of fundamental rights for the past seven and a half decades.

## Process of wheat procurement by Food Department likely to start in Balochistan today

Independent Report QUETTA: The much-delayed process of wheat procurement from the growers is likely to start in Balochistan from today (Monday). The sources of Food Department told that the wheat procurement is going to start in the province with distribution of bardana (wheat bags) among the growers from Monday.

It may be mentioned here that the procurement of wheat was scheduled to start from May 6 as decided in a high level meeting chaired by the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti in start of the current month.

It had been announced to purchase 500,000 bags of wheat from the growers this year. For the purpose, Rs. 5 billion were also approved with the directives to release Rs. 2.5 billion immediately. The required amount for purchase of bardana was also approved in the meeting chaired by the Chief Minister then. The Food Department sources said that the teams of Department are already in Naseerabad and Jaffarabad for purchase of wheat. The Food Department is expected to complete the process of procurement during the month of June.

## Emirs of Kuwait, Qatar accept PM's invitation to visit Pakistan

Ambassadors of both countries present letters to PM in separate meetings

ISLAMABAD (APP): Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah and Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani have accepted Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's invitation to visit Pakistan, marking a major breakthrough in the country's diplomatic efforts. In separate meetings of ambassadors of Kuwait and Qatar with the prime minister on Sunday, they presented the letters of their respective leaders, confirming their acceptance of invitation to visit Pakistan. The delegation included former Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Syed Naveed Qamar, Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, and Sherry Rehman.

During the meeting, the participants exchanged views on the overall political situation of the country. They also discussed the upcoming budget 2024-25. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Advisor to PM on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah, and Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarrar also attended the meeting.

While receiving the letter, the prime minister recalled his recent meeting with the Kuwaiti Emir held on the sidelines of World Economic Forum on April 2028, 2024. Meanwhile Qatar's envoy to Pakistan Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater also called on the prime minister and presented to him the letter from the Emir of Qatar conveying the message to accept the invitation to visit Pakistan on the mutually convenient dates. The prime minister conveying his heartfelt gratitude to the Qatari Emir, emphasized that Pakistan deeply valued its historic brotherly relations with Qatar and reiterated Pakistan's firm determination to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Former MPA Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Shagufta Malik presenting a bouquet to Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti while congratulating him on becoming CM.

## COAS highlights loss of Iranian leaders truly tragic and irreparable

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, had a telephonic call with the Chief of General Staff (CGS) of Iranian Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Bagheri and extended deep condolences over the sad and unfortunate incident of the helicopter crash on May 19 which led to demise of President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian and other important officials.

The COAS expressed that Late President Ebrahim Raisi and Late Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian were exceptional leaders and true friends of Pakistan, an Inter Services Public Relations News release said. The COAS highlighted that the loss of both the leaders and others was truly tragic and irreparable. The Army Chief on behalf of all ranks of Pakistan Army extended prayers for the departed souls and well wishes for the bereaved families. The COAS said that Pakistan has historic, cultural and brotherly ties with Iran and the Armed Forces of Pakistan and Iran have always stood together. General Bagheri thanked the COAS for sharing grief and vowed to continue the cooperation between the two militaries.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Peoples Party calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Levies man shot dead in Duki

DUKI (INP): A Levies man was shot dead by unidentified gunmen during a picnic here on Sunday. Police arrested to friends of the deceased.

According to details, Levies Man Shamasullah/o Nasrullah along with his three friends went to tourist spot Mandy Tak of district Duki of Balochistan for picnic. While saying prayers, unknown culprits opened fire at the four friends which resulted in death of the Levies man while other escaped narrowly. The attackers fled the scene. The police arrested two friends of the deceased including Kamal Khel Nasir and Ameenullah.

## Legend actor Talat Hussain passes away

KARACHI (APP): The acting legend and renowned drama, stage and film actor Talat Hussain passed away at the age of 83 after a prolonged illness in the morning of May 26 and survived by a widow, two daughters and a son.

The funeral prayer of the actor was held at Aisha Masjid, Khayaban e Ittehad, phase 8 attended by actors belonging to Pakistan showbiz industry, relatives, fans and a large number of people. Earlier, the Actress Tazeen Hussain, who is the daughter of, late actor Talat Hussain had confirmed the death of her father on Sunday.



Warsi was laid to rest in a graveyard of DHA phase 8, here on Sunday.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### ICJ rebuke

Matters are not going well for Israel where world opinion regarding its murderous activities in Gaza is concerned.

On Friday, days after the International Criminal Court called for arrest warrants to be issued for the Israeli prime minister and defence minister — as well as three Hamas leaders — the International Court of Justice ordered Tel Aviv to halt its bloodthirsty rampage in Rafah. The Israeli response to the world court has not been surprising, with the Zionist state calling the order “morally repugnant and disgusting”.

Furthermore, Israel has continued its campaign of genocidal violence in Gaza after the court order. While Hamas has called for a cessation of hostilities across Gaza, the South African foreign minister — whose country has been instrumental in the legal campaign against Tel Aviv’s atrocities — while welcoming the ICJ ruling observed that Israel doesn’t “care what the global community says”.

The reason for Israel’s criminal behaviour is that it is protected by its powerful Western friends, primarily the US and some European states. The Zionist state knows that it can literally get away with murder. Moreover, while ICJ orders are binding, it cannot enforce them. This requires cooperation of the global community, particularly its most powerful members. But the US and some others have defeated every attempt in the UN to censure Israel, which means that Tel Aviv can effectively thumb its nose at their lordships in the ICJ and ICC.

Nearly two decades after the majority of the international community agreed to the ‘responsibility to protect’ principle to shield vulnerable populations across the globe from violence and persecution, it appears that Palestine’s people are not worthy — in the eyes of powerful global actors — of this protection.

While the efforts of South Africa and other states need to be lauded for trying to bring Israel to justice for its ongoing crimes in Gaza, more practical measures are required to stop the slaughter.

For example, all those states that have supported the bid for Palestinian statehood in the UN — over 140 countries — need to back up these symbolic gestures of solidarity with practical steps to stop Israel’s genocidal campaign. One way to do this could be for these states to suspend all commercial links and arms shipments until Israel promises to respect ICJ rulings and UN resolutions.

As mentioned before in these columns, history has witnessed such a successful global movement in the international campaign against South Africa’s apartheid. The OIC and Arab League, as well as friends of Palestine in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia must come together to enforce such a blockade against Israel if they are serious about ending the Gaza nightmare.

Otherwise, finely worded legal treatise, and eloquently drafted resolutions will do little to save Palestinians from the Israeli war machine.

## Nuclear deterrence

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Fifty years ago, in May 1974, India detonated its first nuclear device, calling it Operation Smiling Buddha. While the world remained largely silent, Pakistan’s foreign minister declared Pakistan would “never submit to nuclear blackmail” or “accept Indian hegemony over the subcontinent”. Earlier, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had expressed the resolve that if India ever built a nuclear weapon, Pakistan would “eat grass”, but build one of its own. Given India’s role in dismembering the country in 1971, the Pakistani leadership found it imperative to restore the power equilibrium by nuclear capability to deter further Indian aggression.

In 1998, South Asia became overtly nuclearised. On May 11, 1998, India tested its nuclear devices. Given the significant conventional asymmetry, Pakistan followed suit on May 28 as it could not remain vulnerable. Its nuclear tests restored the strategic balance and re-established nuclear deterrence, which essentially means deterring an adversary from conventional or nuclear aggression due to concerns that there would be retaliation that could eventually lead to mutual assured destruction.

Nuclear weapons are political weapons, ideally not intended for war-fighting. Their main purpose is to deter wars. Since 1998, South Asia has not seen a major war, primarily due to nuclear deterrence. However, nuclear deterrence could not prevent confrontations below the nuclear overhang — for instance, clashes in Kargil in 1999, troops mobilisation in 2001-2, and Indian aggression in Balakot in 2019. While none of these confrontations as-

sumed the proportions of a major war, owing to nuclear deterrence, the risk of kinetic confrontations escalating into the nuclear dimension could not be ignored. With India’s aggressive doctrines like Cold Start, Pakistan opted for a full-spectrum deterrence posture, while remaining within the ambit of credible minimum deterrence to deter all aggression — from tactical to strategic level.

That said, nuclear deterrence is not a panacea to deter all forms of aggression and resolve our conflict with India. Pakistan has to rely on other instruments of national power, including conventional capabilities, to tackle threats on its borders. Political stability, economic strength, and public support for defence also enhance deterrence. Diplomacy, too, has an important role. Both countries agreed in 1988 not to attack each other’s nuclear facilities. There is also an agreement to prevent airspace violations (1991).

The Vajpayee-Sharif meeting in Lahore in 1999 introduced several confidence-building measures to reduce the danger of nuclear warfare. An agreement was reached on advance notification of missile testing in 2005. In 2006, both sides agreed to reduce the risk of nuclear accidents or the unauthorised use of nuclear weapons.

Given the dangers of a nuclear conflagration, both countries have, directly or indirectly, engaged in discussions on how to maintain strategic stability in South Asia. In nuclear parlance, strategic stability is often defined as removing incentives for the use of nuclear weapons or for engaging in a nuclear arms race.

Another view of strategic stability, to which Pakistan subscribes, is that the nuclear discourse cannot be segregated from regional geopolitics. US-India nuclear cooperation has created an environment of discrimination and imbalance in South Asia, which can be destabilising. Strategic stability requires that there should be no armed conflict or unresolved dispute or even grave mutual grievances, which could lead to instability or a wider war.

The need for regional adversaries to show nuclear restraint and responsibility, nuclear safety and security, and effective command and control cannot be over-emphasised. India’s accidental firing of a BrahMos missile into Pakistan and its failure to inform Pakistan well in time could have easily escalated matters. Nuclear arms must never fall into unauthorised or the wrong hands. Equally important, the leadership must eschew irresponsible rhetoric and brandishing of nuclear weapons (Diwali fireworks, ‘qatal ki raat’).

Emerging technologies, particularly AI, multirole drones, hypersonic missiles, and cyberspace, could also adversely affect nuclear deterrence and strategic stability. Of particular danger are lethal autonomous weapons that can search and engage targets without human intervention.

International negotiations have made little progress towards evolving an international regime that could minimise the dangers of emerging technologies. It is of utmost importance that India and Pakistan engage in meaningful dialogue to avert risks of escalation in crisis situations, enhance understanding of each other’s nuclear postures, and address mutual threat perceptions. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Reality bites

Muna Khan

One of my high school teachers, an American middle-aged man, used to poke fun at us for being clueless. He would often reference student protests in the 1960s as great examples of attempts to disrupt the system. Students were unafraid of consequences, he’d say and after any example from that time, he’d add “I know, I was there”. Because he worried about our disconnect with the world, he talked to us about apartheid in South Africa — how boycotts can make a difference on all levels and why it should matter to all of us. I remember him making me feel proud of my passport for not recognising South Africa and Israel. We celebrated years later when Nelson Mandela was released in 1990. We were there, now he’d go on to witness the country move to post-apartheid reconciliation.

I’m witnessing something similar, which I can’t yet put a name on for fear I’ll be woefully wrong. So, I’m calling it a shift from ‘don’t care about the world’ to ‘I’m not drinking X because it supports Israel’s war on Gaza’. It’s inspiring.

Generation Z is relentless. They recently upped the ante last month with Blockout 2024, a digital boycott of celebrities for their silence on Gaza.

This began on May 6 on the day of the Met Gala in New York, an annual fashion fundraiser where a ticket costs \$75,000, and garners a lot of media attention. Social media was filled with images of the red carpet amid the violence in Gaza.

It was a strange juxtaposition and did not go down well. Influencer Haley Kalil’s TikTok video received a lot of backlash as she posted

images from the gala lip-synched to ‘let them eat cake’, a reference to Marie Antoinette’s phrase which demonstrates an insensitivity to the challenges faced by the poor, or in this case, the Palestinians. It was tone deaf.

Social media users responded by calling for a digital guillotine of celebrities and influencers for their silence on Gaza. The distinction must be made between simply unfollowing and blocking; the latter has an impact as the audience blocks seeing any content from the celebrity. It threatens their brand and potential to earn more.

This year’s Met Gala occurred against a backdrop of genocide and famine in Palestine, and global unrest and food insecurity. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, between the third quarters of 2020 and 2022, median global inflation soared from 1.9 per cent to 8.8pc. To watch singer Camilla Cabello walk the red carpet carrying a \$22,000 purse made of ice is mind-boggling. That is a little over six million Pakistani rupees — for a block of ice with some flowers in it.

Celebrities and influencers are, to borrow from Karl Marx, today’s opiate of the masses. He was criticising religion in the 19th century when he held it responsible for distracting people from reality. Celebrities don’t just distract, they control. It is materialism at its grossest.

In the West, celebrities have been successful in promoting a pro-Israel narrative, one that is so firmly cemented that Pakistani artists trying to make it big in Hollywood, for example, have been tight-lipped since Oct 7. This includes award recipients of the Oscar, Grammy’s, as well as big Marvel

success. And Malala Yousafzai too, who despite many clarifications and statements on X denouncing Israel and calling for a ceasefire, was not spared the ‘digitine’.

We’ve all gone down a celebrity-induced rabbit hole but in our defence, we can’t escape it. News about celebrities — actors, sports people, influencers, Prince Harry, Heeramandi — takes up too much space.

The real problem, of course, is the system that continues to separate the haves and have nots. Celebrities join the ranks of Big Tech, Big Banks, Big Money, Big Real Estate, Big Armies, Big Mafias at the top of a tier that controls wealth and power. Generation Z sees how this plays out in Palestine and wants to break this unjust system that allows for internet personalities to succeed by virtue of living on the internet.

Young people have understood the power they hold in their hands that enables celebrities to profit. And they’re reclaiming it with this Blockout.

It is wrong to disparage this moment as internet activism with no impact. We should be supporting our children boycotting brands instead of saying X is not on the BDS list so it has no meaning. Every action counts — fundraising, lobbying, blocking, boycotting — because they are all attempts to reclaim power. Clicks and likes and engagement feed the news and celebrity machinery. Depriving them of their oxygen is a powerful action.

I was there and saw a post-apartheid world and am hopeful I will witness a shift in how Palestine is seen and dealt with — by people and policies. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Pakistan’s regional exports increase 20.61% in 10 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan’s exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 20.61 per cent in the first ten months of the financial year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding months of last year.

“The country’s exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$3,655.483 million, which is 14.24 per cent of Pakistan’s overall exports of \$25,669.182 million during July-April (2023-24),” State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan’s exports to its neighbouring, leaving

behind other countries such as Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Pakistan carried out its border trade with the farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives. Pakistan’s exports to China witnessed an increase of 37.68 per cent to \$2,341.089 million in ten months of this year from \$1,700.303 million last year while exports to Afghanistan witnessed a nominal decline of 0.54 per cent from \$435.954 million to \$433.567 million.

The country’s exports to Bangladesh also decreased by 15.82 per cent to \$542.165 million this year from \$644.104 million whereas exports to Sri Lanka rose by 35.83 per cent to \$326.995 million from \$240.732. The

exports to India increased to \$1,376 million from \$0.250 million in the previous year.

Exports to Nepal decreased by 1.38 per cent to \$2,420 million from 2,454 million while to Maldives increased by 13.90 per cent to \$7,671 million from 6,783 million, it added. On the other hand, the imports from seven regional countries were recorded at \$10,925.280 million during the period under review as compared to \$8,617.786 million during last year, showing an increase of 26.77 per cent. The imports from China during July-April 2023-24 were recorded at \$10,648.334 million against the \$8,343.937 million during July-April 2022-23, showing an increase of 26.61 per cent during the period.

### PFC to participate in London Tech Week expo

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Furniture Council CEO Mian Kashif Ashfaq said on Sunday that PFC would participate in the five-day international London Tech Week expo, commencing on June 10, 2024.

Chairing the PFC Board of Directors meeting here, he said the event offers a significant platform to showcase the diverse and high-quality range of Pakistani furniture products to a global audience. By presenting at London Tech Week, he added, the PFC aims to highlight the craftsmanship and innovation inherent in Pakistan’s furniture industry, seeking to captivate potential buyers and partners from around the world.

The expo serves as an opportunity for PFC to explore new export markets, forge international business relationships, and enhance the visibility of Pakistani furniture on a global scale.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Food Bilal Yaseen presides over the meeting of stakeholders regarding reduction in Bakery items.

### Kirmani discusses farmers issues with Federal minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani on Sunday met Federal Minister for Water and Power Awais Leghari.

According to a handout issued here, during the meeting provision of uninterrupted electricity to farmers of Punjab and other facilities came under discussion.

Federal Minister assured the Punjab agriculture minister that his ministry would extend all possible support to Punjab

Agriculture department in this regard.

Kirmani also apprised the federal minister about the progress on Punjab Chief Minister’s Transforming Punjab Agriculture Plan under which tube-wells were being shifted to solar power.

He said that hefty amount of Rs 12 billion had been allocated for shifting tube-wells to solar energy and this would help in saving electricity expenses.

### Call for promoting new hi-tech hybrid seeds

LAHORE (APP): Former caretaker federal minister for National Food Security Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik said on Sunday that promotion of new and hi-tech hybrid seed varieties of various crops under public-private partnership could revolutionise the agriculture sector of Pakistan. He added that industry-academia synergy was also need of the hour to achieve this goal, citing that Guard Agricultural Research and Services (GARS) was a best platform in the private sector for industry-academia linkages to promote high quality hi-tech hybrid seeds of rice and other crops.

He expressed these views in a meeting with Pakistan Hi-Tech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Chairman Shahzad Ali

Malik here. Dr Kasur, who is also a former dean of postgraduate studies at Forman Christian College University, appreciated their research efforts and emphasized for industry-academia linkage arrangements with the GARS such as collaboration in research and development of new seed varieties; internship programmes and employment opportunities for young talented graduates of school of life sciences, FCC. He added that the GARS was also good platform for exploring disease resistant high yield new seed varieties. Later, Dr Kasur, along with other leading researchers also visited the rice production facilities and rice quality laboratory and lauded state of the art technology employed for ultra modern research.

### Govt to ensure affordable, quality food to public: Bilal

Says bakery product prices set to fall after bread reduction in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin has said that all possible measures are being taken to provide affordable and quality food items to the public.

Presiding over an important meeting to reduce the prices of bakery items here on Sunday, he said that the government will ensure the reduction in the prices of bakery products.

Secretary Food Punjab, DG Food Authority, DG Industries and Deputy Commissioner Lahore participated in the meeting. Bakery Association and

representatives of 21 famous bakery brands also participated in the meeting.

The food minister said that the prices of wheat, flour and fine have decreased by 30 to 48 per cent in 2 months.

“The prices of roti and naan have been reduced and we’ll ensure that the prices of bakery products are also reduced.”

Bilal Yasin took suggestions for an immediate reduction in the prices of bakery products in the stakeholders’ meeting. He said that on the request of bakery owners, they have been

given time to voluntarily reduce prices till Monday, May 27.

Bilal Yasin asked the bakery owners to voluntarily reduce the prices of their products and biscuit brands. On Monday, May 27, the final reduction of prices in bakery items will be determined in a meeting with the administration.

The food minister said that the administration will ensure the availability of bakery products at low prices across Punjab. He added that the prices of 60 products made from wheat should be reduced systematically.

### Oil, Gas Conference Pakistan-2024 set for May 29

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Oil and Gas Conference Pakistan (OGCP-2024), aimed at showcasing Pakistan’s potential in the energy sector, focusing on advancements in domestic production, exploration, and sustainable practices, is set to take place here on May 29. The event, organized by Energy Update in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) and the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA).

### Agriculture backbone of country, says Saqib Ali

KHANEWAL (APP): Secretary Agriculture South Punjab, Saqib Ali Ateel, said that agriculture was the backbone of our economy and Pakistan’s future is linked with agriculture. He expressed these views during his visit to the early cotton MNH 75 Sultan fields at Chaudhry Intiaz Farm at Adhivala on Sunday.

He added that Punjab holds special importance as approximately 70 per cent of the country’s total cotton production comes from Punjab. He said that the

cotton not only kept the wheel of the national textile industry running but also generates foreign exchange through its export. Mr Saqib further said that the agricultural staff was always present in the field to guide farmers. He advised farmers to irrigate crops according to the needs and weather conditions. On this occasion, Deputy District Officer Agriculture Extension Rana Habib-ur-Rehman, Assistant Director Agriculture Dr. Khalid, Inspector Khuram Nawazish Raza, Muhammad Ramzan.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani meeting with Federal Minister for Water and Power Sardar Awais Leghari.

### Pakistan to export female nursing staff to Malaysia

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), an attached department of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, would export around 100 female nursing staff to a health firm in Malaysia.

According to an official, the demand for female nursing staff in Malaysia was increasing with the passage of time due to the highly qualified and expert staff of health

already working in the different hospitals in Malaysia.

He said that OEC had already announced the application for job seekers to apply for Malaysia and prescribed qualifications and experience.

He informed me that 100 nurses were required for ICU with a diploma in nursing, a bachelor of science in nursing, or a post-RN from a recognized institution.

## Consultation with all stakeholders on Defamation Bill is important: Governor

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: A Joint Action Committee of Journalist Organizations called on Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House, Lahore today. The delegation comprised representatives of CPNE, PBA, PFUJ, APNS, Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AEMAND), Tariq Mehmood, General Secretary Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors, Naveed Kashif Pakistan Broad Casters' Association, Muhammad Usman Vice President AEMAND were present in the meeting. General Secretary PPP Central Punjab, Hasan Murtaza, former MPA Makhdoom Shehzad Saeed Cheema Information Secretary Central Punjab were also present. The representatives of journalistic organizations informed the Governor Punjab about their reservations on defamation bill. Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that consultation with all stakeholders on the Defamation Bill is very important. He said that he would try his best to bring together all the stakeholders for consultation on the defamation bill in the next



LAHORE: A delegation of Joint Action Committee of Journalist Organizations called on Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

## PML-N govt to make country prosperous

**SARGODHA (APP):** Pakistan Muslim League-N MPA and Chairman District Committee for Chief Minister's initiatives, Rana Munawar Ghous, said that PML-N federal and Punjab governments would make the country prosperous as they were taking public-friendly steps. Talking to APP on Sunday, he said as per the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the provincial cabinet had approved a Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) in Sargodha, which is a proof of public welfare initiatives

of the government. He said funds for the Kidney Center in Sargodha would be allocated in the upcoming budget after which better provision of medical facilities to people of Sargodha district would be ensured. He said that as Sargodha was deprived of funds during the previous government, now the government was releasing funds for the development of the district, which would provide water and sewage facilities to the people in addition to medical facilities, so that people could get relief in the real sense.

## ANF recovers 324 kg drugs in nine operations

**RAWALPINDI (APP):** Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover 324 kg drugs and arrested 15 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman. He informed that 27 kg ice was recovered from a parcel sent to Japan at a courier office in Karachi while an accused was arrested. 900 grams ice was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Islamabad Airport. In two separate operations in Balochistan,

## KP Food Authority conducts major operation against adulteration mafia

**PESHAWAR (APP):** The officials of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food safety teams conducted raids in Swabi, Nowshera, Malakand and Mardan, spokesperson Food Authority told media men here on Sunday. The inspection team seized 800 liters of fake drinks from a vehicle at the blockade on Swabi's Jehangira Road, Spokesman said. On receiving secret information, 1200 liters of fake drinks were recovered from a vehicle in Nowshera and taken into official custody, spokesperson said. Heavy fines imposed on owners of fake drinks, further action under the Food Safety Act initiated, the spokesman said. He said that on inspection of food items businesses in Sakhatok Bazaar of Malakand Division, 200 liters of milk was destroyed as it was found to be substandard. Mardan Food Safety Team checked in Takhtbhai Bazar, inspected samples of different food items from a mobile food testing lab, the spokesperson informed. Bad Oil was destroyed on the spot, 80 kg of prohibited and expired items were seized, fines were also imposed, spokesperson said.



KARACHI: National Trade Union Federation of Pakistan protesting for the arrest of the killers of Nasrullah Gadani.

## Syed Fakhar expresses commitment to promotion of sports in the province

**ABBOTTABAD (APP):** Advisor to the Chief Minister KP on Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jihan Sunday expressed his commitment to promoting sports in the province and providing facilities and infrastructure to support athletes in every sport. He expressed these views while addressing as the chief guest at the final match of the Inter-Departmental Cricket Tournament organized by the Sports Department. The Advisor announced that more sports competitions and events would be held in the Hazara

region, including shooting competitions for police and other departments. He emphasized that the provincial government is dedicated to providing sports facilities and infrastructure across the province and is committed to supporting athletes, whom he described as the assets of the province. The Advisor praised the tournament as a great initiative for promoting sports and providing a healthy recreational activity for government officials. He expressed his hope to bring international cricket to the province soon.

## CM pays tribute to martyred military personnel

**LAHORE (APP):** Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif paid tribute to the great sacrifice of martyred Captain Hussain Jahangir and martyred Havaldar Shafique Ullah in an operation against terrorists in Peshawar's suburban area Hassan Khel. The chief minister offered condolences and expressed her heartfelt sympathies with the martyred family members. She said, "Martyred Captain Hussain Jahangir and martyred Havaldar Shafique Ullah laid down their precious lives for the sake of their dear homeland.

## South Punjab - a treasure trove of culture, heritage

**MULTAN (APP):** Standing out as a land of fine quality cotton, aromatic and tasty mangoes, exquisite monuments and craftsmanship, the South Punjab region also enjoys rich cultural heritage that the people cherish and keep close to their hearts. Dubbed as the treasure trove of cultural and historic heritage in Pakistan, South Punjab had been the cradle of Indus Valley Civilization and a home to remains of ancient Buddhist site at Mound Dillu Roy in Dera Ghazi Khan. Under the influence of Islamic empires, Islamic architecture and the way of life, the monuments depicting

architecture were aplenty in this area. Remaining off the human eye for a long time, remains of Indus Valley Civilization in Cholistan desert of Bahawalpur at Ganweriwala were discovered by country's eminent archaeologist Dr. Rafiq Mughal during a survey spanning over four years from 1974 to 1977. According to archaeologist and Director (Retd) Punjab Archaeology Department Saleem ul Haq, the site is being excavated these days by a team led by Dr. Rafiq Mughal and comprising Saleem ul Haq and other experts. Excavations at Ganweriwala resumed in March 2024 after a gap of

four decades since its discovery as archaeologists attribute this delay to unavailability of water, lack of funding, road access and manpower at Ganweriwala to dig out remains of settlements - believed to be the third largest of Indus Valley Civilization between Harappa and Mohenjodaro, belonging to an era of 2600 BC. "Dr. Rafiq Mughal had discovered 414 sites including Ganweriwala during survey conducted in 1976 on 400-450 kilometer area from Fort Abbas to Sindh boundary along the bed of now dried-up ancient Hakra river," informed Saleem ul Haq. He said some remains of ancient civilizations

exist around 200-300 kilometer from each other while another site at Kundwala was at least 100 kilometres away from Ganweriwala, having ruins from mature and late Harappan periods. "Remains from two sites denote mature Harappan period and early Harappan period." The archaeologist said that Mature Harappan period was an era when the civilization was at the zenith of its evolutionary development in 2600 BC, some 4600 years ago that later started declining - a process that culminated in 1950 BC and is described as late Harappan period. "The surface finds from Ganweriwala in 1975 showed it was a mature

Harappan site and we cannot rule out possibility of finding remains of early period in case of deeper excavation," Saleem ul Haq said and hoped the report on excavation at Ganweriwala would be finalized by the end June 2024. Mound Dillu Roy, another site excavated at the boundary of Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan districts by Director Archaeology South Muhammad Hassan a few years back revealed that it was Buddhists site and among 1370 small artifacts was a masterpiece of typical Gandharan style small figure of lion, a clay female statue and seals with one having a Hellenistic figure embossed on it.



SKARDU: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan presiding over the meeting of Religious Scholars during his visit.

## International News

## 30 more Gazans killed as Israeli strikes continue

**Monitoring Desk**  
**RAFAH:** Israeli forces bombed the Gaza Strip, including Rafah, on Saturday, killing at least 30 more Palestinians a day after judges at the top United Nation's court ordered Israel to "immediately halt" its offensive. Although Israel pressed on with its offensive against Hamas, mediated negotiations between the two sides are due to restart next week, an official with knowledge of the matter said. The decision on talks was taken after the head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency met the head of the CIA and the prime minister of Qatar, said the source. "At the end of the meeting, it was decided that

in the coming week negotiations will open based on new proposals led by the mediators, Egypt and Qatar, and with active US involvement," the source said. Hamas did not immediately comment on the status of talks. Since the crisis in Gaza unfolded more than seven months ago, mediators have struggled to secure a breakthrough, with Israel seeking the release of prisoners held by Hamas and the latter seeking the release of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel and an end to the bombardment. Bombings have continued in Gaza despite the mediation and despite judges at the top United

Nations court ordering Israel on Friday to immediately halt its military assault on Rafah, where it says it is trying to root out Hamas fighters. The International Court of Justice, or World Court, has no means to enforce its emergency ruling in a case brought by South Africa, which accused Israel of genocide. But the case was a stark sign of Israel's global isolation, particularly since it began its offensive against Rafah this month against the pleas of its closest ally, the United States. Israeli bombings have left a total of 35,903 Palestinians dead in Gaza and 80,420 injured.



Chinese Premier Li Qiang arrives to attend the trilateral summit with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts in Seoul, South Korea.

## Taiwan's president says wants to work with China

**Monitoring Desk**  
**TAIPEI:** Taiwan's new president said on Sunday he was still ready to work with China, despite this week's military drills around the self-ruled island. The drills began around Taiwan on Thursday, just three days after Lai Ching-te was sworn in, part of an escalating campaign of intimidation by China which views the island as part of its territory. "I also look forward to enhancing mutual understanding and reconciliation through exchanges and cooperation with China [...] and moving towards a position of peace and common prosperity," he said at an event in Taipei.

pendence forces" would be left "with their heads broken and blood flowing". Lai told reporters on Sunday that he wanted Taiwan and China to "jointly shoulder the important responsibility of regional stability". "I also look forward to enhancing mutual understanding and reconciliation through exchanges and cooperation with China [...] and moving towards a position of peace and common prosperity," he said at an event in Taipei.

## US lawmakers visiting Taiwan this week

**Monitoring Desk**  
**TAIPEI:** A delegation of US lawmakers led by Michael McCaul, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, is visiting Taiwan this week, the de facto U.S. embassy said on Sunday. The delegation is in Taiwan from Sunday to Thursday, the American Institute in Taiwan said in a statement, a trip that comes shortly after China ended two days of war games around the island.

## Four US vessels run aground near Gaza pier

**Monitoring Desk**  
**TAMPA:** Heavy seas battered the US maritime humanitarian mission to Gaza on Saturday, US Central Command (Centcom) said, with four vessels serving a floating aid delivery pier breaking free from their moorings. No injuries were reported and the aid pier remained fully functional, Centcom said in a statement, adding that no US personnel would enter Gaza. Two of the affected vessels were now anchored on the beach near the pier and the other two were beached on the coast of Israel near Ashkelon.

## Spanish minister says Gaza aggression is 'real genocide'

**Monitoring Desk**  
**MADRID:** The Spanish defence minister said on Saturday that the conflict in Gaza is a "real genocide", as relations between Israel and Spain worsen following Madrid's decision to recognise a Palestinian state. Israel has strongly rejected accusations made against it by South Africa at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that it is committing a genocide against Palestinians, saying it is waging war on the Hamas group. The remark by Spanish Defence Minister Margarita Robles in an interview with TVE state television echoed a comment by Spanish Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Diaz who earlier this week

also described the Gaza conflict as a genocide. "We cannot ignore what is happening in Gaza, which is a real genocide," Robles said in the interview, during which she also discussed the Russian invasion of Ukraine and conflicts in Africa. She also said Madrid's recognition of Palestine was not a move against Israel, adding that it was designed to help "end violence in Gaza". "This is not against anyone, this is not against the Israeli state, this is not against the Israelis, who are people we respect," she said. Spain, along with Ireland and Norway, declared this week it would recognise a Palestinian state on May 28.

## Death toll in Kharkiv attack rises to 14 as Zelenskyy warns of Russian troop movements

**Monitoring Desk**  
**KYIV:** President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned Sunday that Russia is preparing to intensify its offensive along Ukraine's northern border, as the death toll rose to 14 in an aerial bomb attack on a large construction supplies store in the city of Kharkiv. The bombing of Kharkiv on Saturday afternoon also left 43 injured and 16 missing, Kharkiv Gov. Oleh Synyehubov said initially after the attack. In a video statement from Kharkiv, Zelenskyy said that Russia is preparing offensive actions 90 kilometers (55 miles) north-west of Ukraine's second largest city. He said that Russians "gather another group of troops near our border." He did not specify where the troops are being assembled, but Ukrainian officials have expressed strong concern about the Sumsy region. Both Kharkiv city and Sumsy with about 250,000 people are within about 25 kilometers (15 miles) of the Russian border. Moscow's troops have in recent weeks captured villages in the Kharkiv area as part of a broad push, and analysts say they may be trying to get within artillery range of the city. Ukrainian authorities have evacuated more than 11,000 people from the region since the start of the offensive on May 10. Russia launched wide missile and drone attacks on much of Ukraine during the night. Ukrainian officials said air defense units intercepted 31 Shahed drones and 12 cruise missiles launched by Russia in the Mykolaiv, Odessa, Dnipropetrovsk, Poltava, Zaporizhzhia, K h m e l n y t s k y i, K i r o v o h r a d, V i n n y t s i a and Chernihiv regions.



Britain's Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Rishi Sunak lays a brick during a bricklaying workshop at Cannock College, in Cannock, Staffordshire, Britain.

## At least 9 dead in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas after severe weather roars

**Monitoring Desk**  
**AUSTIN:** Powerful storms killed at least nine people and left a wide trail of destruction Sunday across Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas after obliterating homes and destroying a truck stop where drivers took shelter during the latest deadly weather to strike the central U.S. Five of the deaths were in Texas, near the Oklahoma border, where a tornado Saturday night plowed through a rural area near a mobile home park, officials said. Storms also caused damage in Okla-

homa, where guests at an outdoor wedding were injured. Tens of thousands of residents were without power across the region. "It's just a trail of debris left. The devastation is pretty severe," Cooke County Sheriff Ray Sappington told The Associated Press. Officials said multiple people were transported to hospitals by ambulance and helicopter in the Texas county of Denton, but they did not immediately know the full extent of the injuries.

## 6 newborns killed in fire at children's hospital in Delhi: police

**Monitoring Desk**  
**NEW DELHI:** Six newborn babies have died after a fire tore through a children's hospital in the Indian capital, with people charging into the blaze to rescue the infants, police said on Sunday. "All the 12 newborn babies were rescued from the hospital with the help of other people," senior police officer Surendra Choudhary said in a statement, but adding that when they reached medical attention, six were dead. "Legal action is being taken against the owner of the hospital," Choudhary said. He did not give further details on how the children died. In addition to the six who died, another baby among the 12 brought out of the suffocating fumes was dead before the fire began, Choudhary said, without elaborating further. The fire broke out late Saturday in the New Born Baby Care hospital in Delhi's Vivek Vihar area. Delhi Fire Department Director Atul Garg said 14 fire trucks were sent to battle the blaze, he told the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency.

## US expected to lift ban on sale of offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia, FT reports

**Monitoring Desk**  
**WASHINGTON:** The United States is expected to lift a ban on the sale of offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia, potentially in the coming weeks, The Financial Times reported on Sunday. The newspaper reported that Washington has already signalled to Saudi Arabia that it was prepared to lift the ban, citing a person familiar with the matter. Soon after taking office in 2021, Biden adopted

a tougher stance over Saudi Arabia's campaign against the Houthis in Yemen, which has inflicted heavy civilian casualties, and over Riyadh's human rights record, in particular the 2018 killing of Washington Post journalist and political opponent Jamal Khashoggi. Saudi Arabia, the biggest US arms customer, has chafed under those restrictions, which froze the kind of weapons sales that previous US administrations had provided for decades.

## CM Gandapur calls on Interior Minister to discuss KP situation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur held a meeting with Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi and Minister for Energy Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Laghari in Islamabad.

During the meeting, they deliberated on the current situation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, focusing particularly on load shedding and electricity-related issues.

The Federal Ministers and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister reached a consensus to collectively address these issues.

They decided to schedule another meeting tomorrow for further discussions.

Yesterday, the Chief Minister attended the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) meeting in Islamabad.

Speaking to journalists after SIFC's meeting, he asserted that he has put forward KP demands in Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) meeting, asking the federal government to clear its dues to the province.

The KP chief minister said that his government will not compromise on province rights and will not allow anyone to take "undue advantage".

During the apex committee's meeting, CM Gandapur said that he opposed imposition of tax on Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA). "The deadline regarding electricity dues also came under discussion," he said.

It is pertinent to mention here that on March 13 KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur held his first meeting with Prime Minister (PM), Shehbaz Sharif belonging to rival Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).



QUETTA: Provincial Advisor for Women Development Department Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi inspecting a class room during her visit to Women Technical Training Center Institute.

## JI announces national movement to uphold supremacy of constitution

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz Naem ur Rehman has announced a national movement following Eid to uphold the supremacy of the constitution and law. Speaking at a press conference in Mansoorah, following the conclusion of a two-day session of the JI Majlis Shura, he outlined a comprehensive national agenda for the movement, crafted in consultation with the Shura.

Rehman emphasized the necessity of wide-ranging electoral reforms and the timely completion of the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project. He underscored the importance of electoral transparency, demanding that election results be com-

based on Form 45. He categorically stated that JI would never recognize a government formed through fraudulent elections, advocating for the restoration of the people's true mandate as reflected in Form 45. There is no need for the fresh election, he said.

Regarding government attempts to control social media, Rehman issued a stern warning, condemning measures such as the Punjab Defamation Act aimed at stifling freedom of expression. He asserted that the JI's movement seeks to liberate people from oppressive systems, emphasizing the need for all individuals, including politicians, judges, generals, and bureaucrats,

## Wings of Faith: 55% Pakistani Hajj pilgrims arrive in Saudi

MAKKAH AL-MUKARRAMAH (APP): A month-long pre-Hajj flight operation, started on May 9 to transport around 70,105 intending Pakistani pilgrims to the holy cities of Saudi Arabia to perform the religious obligation of Hajj under the government scheme, is continuing as per the smooth pace and announced schedule.

"By Sunday, collectively as many as 38,150 Pakistani pilgrims, which constitutes almost 54.35 per cent of the total, have reached Madinah and Makkah," official sources at the Pakistan Hajj Mission told APP.

By May 23, they said, 146 flights of different airlines operated from major cities of Pakistan to the Prince Mohammed Bin Abdulaziz International Airport in Madinah, airlifting 34,407 intending pilgrims.



QUETTA: Deputy Registrar Federal Ombudsman Regional Office Quetta Amir Muhammad Rind inspecting One-Window Facilitation Desk set up at Quetta International Airport.

## Secretary Health for ensuring facilities to maternal, new born

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Health Balochistan Saleh Muhammad Baloch emphasized that efforts should be made to ensure the provision of facilities to maternal and new born in the province and no negligence would be tolerated in this regard. He said that the medical superintendents in the districts hospitals should ensure that women give birth in the presence of expert lady doctors, attendants and provide adequate pre and postnatal health care of the mother and new born.

Provincial Coordinator Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (MNCH) Dr. Gul Sabeen Azam briefed the secretary about the program, said a news release issued here Sunday.

Deputy Director MNCH Dr. Samina Bugti, Finance Officer Kamil Baloch, Staff Officer Secretary Health Shaikat Baloch and IT Incharge Sikandar Zeb were present in the briefing. Dr. Gul Sabeen Azam said that the MNCH program with the support of WHO was providing training to the lady doctors, midwives and LHV's working in labor rooms, RMNH centers and gynecological departments of different districts of Balochistan, in pregnancy, postnatal and newborn care. He said that through the MNCH program, despite the limited resources, doctors, nurses, lady health workers, community midwives have been deployed in the maternity and child departments.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Laghari in a meeting with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur.

## Kashmir settlement according to UN resolutions stressed

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): Kashmiri refugees have taken out a massive rally in Muzaffarabad, today, and appealed to the United Nations to organize a referendum in Jammu and Kashmir according to its approved resolutions.

Thousands of people, including children, elderly and women, participated in the rally and shouted slogans against India and in favour of freedom and Pakistan. The participants of the rally appealed to the International Court of Justice to take immediate steps to stop Indian war crimes in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. They marched from Shaheed Burhan Wani Chowk to the United Nations Observer Office.

The participants of the rally were raising slogans like "Indian usurpers leave Jammu and Kashmir", "Kashmir is ours", "Indian usurpers leave Jammu and Kashmir" and "We will take away freedom from India". The participants carried banners and placards appealing to the United Nations to resolve the Kashmir dispute immediately. The slogans of "Go India Go Back" were also written on the banners.

Addressing the rally, the speakers said this gathering of refugees from occupied Jammu and Kashmir and citizens of Muzaffarabad rejects the Indian military occupation of Kashmir. The speakers de-

manded of the United Nations to take immediate steps for a just solution to the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the approved resolutions of the Security Council. They rejected the Indian aggression of October 27, 1947, the illegal and unilateral actions of August 5, 2019 and the unilateral decision of the Indian Supreme Court of December 11, 2023. The speakers appealed to the international organizations including the United Nations to play their role for the immediate release of All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders, journalists, human rights activists, leaders and activists of political and religious parties languishing in different jails of India.

promptly addressing the situation is commendable," Salik said emphasizing that reacting impulsively to rumours is contrary to the teachings of religion, which advocate for patience and due process.

He reminded the citizens that Pakistan has established legal procedures to handle accusations of blasphemy and acts of hatred. He issued a stern warning against taking the law into one's own hands, noting that such actions will be met with legal consequences.

In a statement, he condemned the allegations and the subsequent disorder, underscoring the importance of adhering to the rule of law and maintaining peace.

"The reaction of Punjab Police and other law enforcement agencies in

## Tarar grieved over demise of senior artist Talat Hussain

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Culture Attullah Tarar on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of Talat Hussain, a great actor of television, film, theatre and radio.

In a message, the Federal Minister expressed his heartfelt condolence and sympathy to the family of the deceased.

He said he was deeply grieved to hear the news of the death of Talat Hussain who was a unique artist who brought life to every character with his voice and acting.

## Minister Salik flays blasphemy allegation

**Praises law enforcement response in Sargodha**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Sunday expressed regret over the recent unrest in Sargodha following an alleged blasphemy incident.

In a statement, he condemned the allegations and the subsequent disorder, underscoring the importance of adhering to the rule of law and maintaining peace.

"The reaction of Punjab Police and other law enforcement agencies in



LAHORE: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naemur Rehman addressing a Press conference.

## Pakistan-led UN panel urges more help to developing countries in improving communications systems

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The United Nations Committee on Information (COI) has concluded its 46th session after approving two resolutions calling for boosting aid to developing countries in building communications infrastructures, and for reaffirming the "crucial role" of the UN Department of Global Communication (DGC) in addressing the spread of misinformation in the era of artificial intelligence.

The session was presided over by Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN.

The COI, a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly, addresses public information issues, overseeing the DGC and guiding its policies, programmes, and activities to ensure alignment with 193-member Assembly's objectives.

By one draft resolution, titled "Information in the service of humanity", the General Assembly would urge countries and the UN to reduce existing

disparities in information flows by increasing assistance for the development of communications infrastructures in developing countries. It would also condemn resolutely all attacks against journalists; provide support for the strengthening of practical training programmes for broadcasters and journalists in developing countries; and enhance regional cooperation among developing countries, as well as between developed and developing countries.

## WEF lists best countries for tourism in 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Economic Forum (WEF) has unveiled its much-anticipated list of the best countries for tourism in 2024, highlighting the top destinations travelers should consider for their next adventure.

The list evaluates several aspects, including infrastructure, natural resources, and environment-friendly policies. The United States has been named the best country for tourism in 2024, while Spain follows closely as the second-best country for tourism.

The US stands out for its excellent infrastructure catering to the tourism market, providing a wealth of facilities for visitors.

Spain's rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and lively atmosphere make it a favorite among tourists seeking a mix of history and modernity. The third place is Japan, the only Asian country to make it into the top five.

## ACC decides to start drive to establish peace

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Awami Action Committee has decided to start a mass public movement for establishing peace and securing rights of the people.

The Awami Action Committee also decided to make contacts with all segments of the society including Ulemas, lawyers, traders, transporters, Tribal elders and political parties for having full public support.

The Committee was presided over by Abdul Mateen Akhonzada and participated by political leaders belonging to different parties and other concerned. The participants discussed the protest dharna going on in Chaman besides the law and order situation in the province.

They expressed concern about the issues of law and order in different areas of the province.

They were of the view that the border should remain open at Mir Jawa, Taftan, Gabd and Raimdan so that the people may benefit from the border trade.



QUETTA: Nomadic families are moving to cooler areas after the heat wave has increased in Sindh, at Western Bypass in Quetta.

## Ahsan Iqbal says Govt committed to empower youth through education, skills

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister's Laptop Scheme, Professor Iqbal criticized the 2018 elections, labeling them as fraudulent and responsible for imposing an incompetent government on Pakistan.

This government, he said wreaked havoc on the economy, causing immense suffering for the 240 million citizens.

"The present government has realigned the country's direction, bringing stability and improvement across various sectors," Ahsan Iqbal said.

Economic ties with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar, and China are being restored, and the stock market is reaching new heights, reflecting the confidence of both domestic and international investors in the government's policies.

Professor Iqbal highlighted the government's vision to provide a digital platform to the youth, enabling them to propel Pakistan into the world's top ten economies by its 100th anniversary.

He said record funds have been allocated for higher education, with plans to establish universities in every district and institutions for technical education.

Laptops are being distributed on merit, with options for students to purchase on easy installments if they do not qualify on merit. The initiative aims to equip the youth with digital technology for employment, he said.

While addressing the issue of intolerance and unrest in Pakistan, a country founded in the name of Islam, he stressed that Islam signifies peace and brotherhood.

The organization and harmony in the universe exemplify these principles. By adopting these principles of organization and mutual cooperation, society can achieve peace and progress, he added.



MUZAFFARABAD: Refugees protesting against Indian atrocities in Occupied Kashmir for the sake of independence by raising the flags of Pakistan and Kashmir at Azadi Chowk.

## CM grieved over death of actor Talat; pays rich tributes

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed grief and sorrow over the death of renowned artist, Talat Hussain.

In a condolence message issued here on Sunday, the Chief Minister paid tributes to the late Talat Hussain and said that he was very talented artist. He said that Talat Hussain promoted reformatory process through his positive characters in the TV dramas.

The Chief Minister also said that Talat Hussain was a worthy of love artist among the Pakistani people, who would always be remembered.

He expressed heartfelt empathy and condolence with the bereaved family members.

## DC visits cooling stations

**Independent Report**  
SIBI: Deputy Commissioner Jahanzeb Sheikh visited various cooling stations set up by the Bright Star Development Society in different areas of the city.

The cooling stations provide citizens with cold water facilities to beat the heat and avoid heatstroke.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of awareness and precautions to avoid heatstroke and directed officials to ensure the provision of facilities to the public without any negligence.

## Mercury soars to 50 celsius in five districts of Sindh, Punjab

ISLAMABAD (INP): Temperatures in some districts of Sindh and Southern Punjab reached to as high as 50 Celsius (122 Fahrenheit) on Sunday.

Maximum temperatures in Dadu, Qambar Shahdadkot and Jacobabad districts of Sindh and Rojhan and Rajanpur in southern Punjab soared to 50 degree Celsius. While maximum temperature recorded 49 Celsius in Sindh's Nawabshah, Sukkur, Shikarpur, Ghotki and Kashmore districts and Punjab's Rahim Yar Khan and Liaquatpur. Moreover, mercury reached to 45 Celsius in Faisalabad and 44 Celsius in Lahore. Most of the districts in Sindh experiencing extremely hot weather while coastal districts of the province remain hot and humid.

## Empowerment of women crucial for national progress, maintains Dr. Rubaba

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Advisor to the Chief Minister for Women Development Department, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, has emphasized the importance of empowering women, saying that it is essential for national progress and development.

She expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of a training program organized by the Women Technical Training Centre (WTTTC) in collaboration with Mercy Corps for Afghan refugee girls.

Dr. Buledi said that women's empowerment is crucial for the country's social and economic development, and that it is our national responsibility to provide them with their due place and protection in society. She added that without the active role of women, the dream of a Bright and prosperous Pakistan cannot be fulfilled.

Women's empowerment is necessary for the social and economic development of any country, and their role is vital in ensuring the stability and prosperity of a nation.

Dr. Buledi commended WTTTC not only empowering young women through skills training but also raising awareness about important economic and social issues. She expressed hope that the government, non-governmental organizations, and social personalities will work together to achieve this goal. At the end of the ceremony, Dr. Buledi distributed certificates among the trainees who completed the training program.

## SESA district Quetta elections: "Ilam Dost" panel emerges victorious

**Dr. Naseer elected President, Qudratullah General Secretary**

QUETTA (6AM Report): The Senior Educational Staff Association (SESA) District Quetta conducted its elections for the 2024-2026 term on Saturday. The electoral battle unfolded between two panels: "Ilam Dost," symbolized by a book, and "Taleem Dost," symbolized by an inkpot. A total of 1705 votes were cast, with the "Ilam Dost" panel securing 995 votes, while the "Taleem Dost" panel received 710 votes.

The newly elected officials from the "Ilam Dost" panel are: President: Dr. Syed Naseer Ali Shah, General Secretary: Qudratullah Rind, Chairman: Naseeb Ur Rahman Kakar, Organizer: Zainullah Khan, Senior Vice President: Syed Siraj Agha, Junior Vice President: Muhammad Sadiq, Deputy Organizer: Munir Ahmad

Bazai, Joint Secretary: Miss Naila, Deputy General Secretary (Female): Miss Ruma Pal, Office Secretary: Muhammad Anwar. The election committee, comprising SESA's Central Chairman Nizamuddin Mengal, Haji Muhammad Hanif Bangulzai, and Haji Feroze, successfully conducted the elections and announced the results. They subsequently handed over the notification of success to Dr. Syed Naseeruddin Shah, President of the "Ilam Dost" panel.

