

# Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Hub

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ISLAMABAD: A delegation of international beverages manufacturing companies met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

## Govt's business-friendly policies coming to fruition: PM Shahbaz

Directs preparing tariff rationalization for export sector industries

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the business-friendly policies pursued by the incumbent government were coming to fruition.

The prime minister, talking to a delegation of international beverages companies which called on him here, said that the government was extending its maximum support to the foreign investors and business community to make them create employment opportunities, boost exports and contribute to the national economic development.

The delegation members appreciated the prime minister for his government's pro-business policies.

They told the prime minister that 25 plants of international beverages firms were operating in Pakistan and had employed around 130,000 workers.

Apprising the prime minister of their largest recycling system, the delegation told that the beverage firms were contributing to the national exchequer through huge amount of taxes.

Prime Minister Shehbaz urged the companies to play their productive role under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). He also instructed the relevant au-

thorities to hold consultations on the companies' proposals and resolve their issues at the earliest.

The delegation was led by Vice President of Coca Cola for Pakistan and Afghanistan Volkan Onguc and CEO of Pepsi Co Pakistan and Afghanistan Muhammad Khosa.

Federal ministers Jam Kamal Khan, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Abdul Aleem Khan and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the authorities concerned to immediately prepare a strategy regarding tariff rationalization for the export sector industries.

Chairing an important meeting here to discuss the provision of facilities to the industrial sector, the prime minister emphasized the importance of industrial development and export growth. He said the government would ensure the supply of electricity and gas to the industries at affordable rates.

The prime minister also directed the relevant authorities to prioritize addressing the issues facing the industrial sector.

## CM Bugti vows to revoke 'illegal recruitments' in Education Department

Says I will not allow anyone to sale jobs in Balochistan and deprive a child who fulfills merit and criteria; Reiterates government's resolve to uphold the policy of merit and good governance

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Friday reaffirmed the revoke all the 'illegal appointments' in the Provincial Education Department after a thorough probe and investigations.

The decision comes in response to the widespread public outcry and the reported evidence of corruption in the recruitment process carried out by the Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University.

"I will not allow anyone to sale jobs in

Balochistan and deprive a child who fulfills merit and criteria," Chief Minister Bugti said while talking to the newsmen.

"We have received serious complaints about the corrupt mafia who had sold jobs and deprived the deserving poor candidates."

The chief minister, reiterating the government's resolve to uphold the policy of merit and good governance, said the matter would be fully probed and he would not hesitate to revoke the appointments if the same were found

against the merit. In light of the Supreme Court's order, such appointments could be revoked at any time, he added.

The chief minister said that he had directed the Chief Secretary to hold an inquiry into the issue and "after consultations with the Education Minister, the final decision will be made".

CM Bugti said the entire Balochistan "knows how these jobs were sold and the deserving candidates were deprived of their right".

## SC serves show-cause notices to Faisal Vawda, Mustafa on anti-judiciary remarks

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Friday served show-cause notice to Senator Faisal Vawda and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM)'s leader Mustafa Kamal and summoned them in person on the next hearing in a suo-moto case about remarks against judiciary.

The court directed the politicians to clarify that why a contempt of court proceedings shouldn't be initiated against them on controversial remarks about judiciary. A three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Naem Afghan and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan, heard the suo-moto case on a press conference of Senator Faisal Vawda and remarks by Mustafa Kamal.

During the hearing, the chief justice sought the details of the press conference of Faisal Vawda and also inquired from the additional attorney general whether the content of media talks did come under contempt. The AAG said that the words were muted in the

press conference transcript which he had witnessed.

The Chief Justice said that there had been some remarks against him but he just ignored, and apparently this emboldened them to make comments in public.

The CJ said: "We will not allow to target the institution and if someone has done wrong, then point out it by naming the person."

He further remarked that the institutions belonged to the people and any act defaming was not a service to the country.

He said: "If someone has some way out for improvement, then he should write to him or to the Registrar office and we wouldn't allow targeting the institution as it affects public's trust in judiciary."

He said the Constitution and laws related to freedom of speech and contempt of court were clear and there was no ambiguity in this regard. The politician held a conference, instead he could have expressed these views in the parliament, he added.

## Tarar gets additional portfolio of National Heritage & Culture

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday assigned the additional portfolio of National Heritage and Culture to Attaullah Tarar who already holds the portfolio of Information and Broadcasting.

"The prime minister, in terms of rule 3 (4) of the Rules of Business, 1973, has been pleased to allocate the additional portfolio (business of Government) of National Heritage and Culture, in addition to his own responsibilities, to Mr Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, with immediate effect," said a notification.

## Our narrative should not be linked with PTI: Fazal

BHAKKAR (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Friday said that JUI-F and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) are two different political parties and have their own narrative. This he stated while talking to media persons in Bhakkar. Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that our narrative should not be linked with PTI.

Fazlur Rehman was of the view that responsibility to conduct the elections solely lies with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and there was no role of governments in it.

The JUI-F chief said that those who had a role in holding the elections did nothing and the ones who have nothing to do with the polls played a key role in the February 8 general elections.

## Bugti greets newly elected body of AEMEND

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti on Friday congratulated the newly elected body of Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AEMEND) including newly elected its President Azhar Abbas and General Secretary Tariq Mehmood.

He hoped that the newly elected body would take measures for uniform coverage time of all provinces including Balochistan on national media.

"In spite of social media, the status and quality of electronic media remains intact", he said and added that fake and unverified reports were discouraged due to effective checks of editors and news directors in national media.

He said that majority of people still depended on electronic media more than social media for positive news, adding that Balochistan issues and positive government initiatives were given limited time in the national media.

It is hoped that the association would take measures for consistent coverage of all four provinces, he maintained.

## Pakistan's hockey team brought immense pride to nation: COAS



RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir on Friday, commending the Pakistan Hockey team over outstanding performance, on Friday said the hockey team had brought immense pride to the nation.

The Army Chief received the Pakistan Hockey team at General Headquarters whereas the meeting was also attended by President Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Tariq Hussain and other PHF officials, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

During the interaction, the COAS said: "We are committed to providing them with comprehensive support to ensure their continued success." He also extended his best wishes to the players for their future endeavors.

The President of PHF expressed gratitude to the COAS for the opportunity to meet and interact with the team.

## Maritime Affairs Minister visits Naval HQ

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ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Friday visited Naval Headquarters, Islamabad and called on Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf. During the meeting, professional matters of mutual interest and Pakistan Navy's role in regional maritime security and Indian Ocean region came under discussion, said a press release.



Both the dignitaries also dilated upon prospects of maritime economy and its importance for overall economic growth of the country.

Later on, a detailed briefing was given to the Minister regarding Pakistan's maritime challenges, opportunities and steps taken by Pak Navy to facilitate awareness and development of this crucial sector for future economic progress of Pakistan.

## Pakistan is ready to counter any threat to its security, regional integrity: FO

Unending sufferings of Kashmiri families with over 22,000 women widowed, 107000 children orphaned

ISLAMABAD (Online): Foreign Office (FO) Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said on Friday that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar visit to China and meeting with Chinese authorities remained useful.

Both countries agreed on peace in the region and investment, this was said by Mumtaz Zahra Baloch during weekly press briefing here in Foreign Office Friday.

There are solid brotherly relations with Iran, she said adding we support pleasant relations with Afghanistan.

She said India was involved in human rights violations in occupied Kashmir and Indian forces were continuing their aggression in the occupied valley. The international community should take notice of the ongoing Indian atrocities in held Kashmir.

## Supreme Court bans cell phones in court rooms

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ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) has banned carrying cell phones in courtrooms, following the leaked picture of the PTI founder during a video link hearing of the NAB amendments case.

The SC staff has barred the law clerks and lawyers from carrying their cell phones in the courtroom and asked them to leave them outside the courtroom. The staff is also checking the attendants in the SC courtroom. The journalists are already barred from carrying their cell phones in the SC courtroom.

## USIP warns of terrorist threats from Afghanistan targeting Pakistan

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has issued a warning that Afghan territory is being used by terrorist groups to target Pakistan.

The report highlights the growing regional threat posed by these organizations, which operate with apparent support from the Afghan Taliban. According to the USIP, despite repeated warnings, the Afghan Taliban has not cut ties with terrorist groups like the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which conducts attacks on Pakistani soil.

The report indicates that the Taliban provides these groups with financial support, arms, weapons, and secret hideouts.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti chairing a review meeting about the Quetta Solid Waste Management

## Process of collection & disposal of solid waste to be outsourced from August in Quetta city

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has directed to the concerned high ups to make process of tendering of collection of solid waste from Quetta city transparent under the Public-Private Partnership.

He directed to ensure the whole process transparent and on merit under the Public-Private Partnership.

He also directed to Finance Department to pay outstanding salaries and pensions of the employees of Quetta Metropolitan Corporation.

The Chief Minister was chairing the review meeting about the Quetta Solid Waste Management here on Friday.

The Chief Minister was briefed about the functioning of Corporation and solid waste management in Quetta.

It was informed that 150,000 tons of garbage has been lifted from Quetta city.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Haji Noor Muhammad Dummer, Parliamentary Secretary Mir Barkat Ali Rind and MPs Asghar Ali Tareen holding negotiations with BDA protesting employees



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Dangerous law**

Our political leaders never seem to learn from their mistakes. The Punjab Assembly is due to vote on a new defamation law for the province, which, its government says, has been designed to 'stop fake news'. Speaking at a press conference on Wednesday, the provincial information minister sought to assure the media's growing apprehensions regarding the proposed law in the following words: "[Only] a person who lies under the guise of a journalist with a specific agenda will face the music under this proposed law."

Her choice of words is telling. The PML-N, which leads the government in Punjab, has had a rough few years as far as its image-building efforts are concerned. Even though it has returned to power at the centre and Punjab, its public image has proven extremely difficult to rehabilitate. The minister's words merely reflect the frustration her party feels at those who have been making the job more difficult.

The PML-N's first attempt at putting a muzzle on this new class of 'influencers', which set the narrative on social media platforms like X, Facebook, TikTok and others, took the form of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 — a law that was widely criticised for placing draconian limitations on Pakistanis' digital rights. Later, the PTI, too, tried to build on Peca to make its worst aspects more 'effective' in silencing critics. Thankfully, both efforts were largely neutralised, owing to the efforts of journalists and rights activists who identified the severe consequences for freedom of speech and expression that such legislation would entail. Unfortunately, the PML-N has now returned with what seems to be an even sharper weapon to silence criticism.

Much more detailed than the Defamation Ordinance, 2002, it will replace, the new Punjab Defamation Bill, 2024 goes even further than the dictatorship-era regulations laid out in the original law. With a dangerously loose definition of defamation, much higher financial penalties and blanket restrictions on commenting on ongoing cases, it seems to have been drafted with the sole purpose of striking fear in anyone who may be contemplating criticising or expressing their frustrations at those currently in power.

Worst still, the law has been finalised without seeking input from civil society, journalists' unions or even the political opposition. Already, several media organisations and journalists' representative bodies have denounced the proposed law and intend to fight it. The Punjab government would be well-advised to put the brakes on this bill till it can get key stakeholders on board. It must remember that the same law can be weaponised against it one day, just as Peca was when the PTI took power. Online defamation is a growing problem, but one cannot cut off the nose to spite one's face. This issue must be handled with utmost care.

**April enigma**

Naseer Memon

The country is in the grip of an enigmatic weather cycle. Snowfall drifted its way from December-January to February-April. A startlingly wet April baffled weather oracles. Upcountry mountains were enveloped in snowfall, and westerly systems brought frequent and heavy rain spells. Torrential rains in southern Balochistan during February-April avoided the previous trajectory. Gwadar, located on the shore, experienced nightmarish urban flooding. Standing and harvested wheat in the fields of Potohar was battered by untimely downpours.

Regional countries were also pummeled by cloudbursts. The UAE, dwarfing a 75-year record, received almost two years' rainfall in a single day, leaving Dubai's drainage system crippled and the city under waist-deep water. Just before, Oman had been lashed by an abnormal downpour, leading to fatalities.

Moving eastward, in April, southern China experienced over double the normal precipitation for the month, the second-highest level since 1961. Guangdong's provincial emergency department had to relocate over 100,000 residents amid a massive surge in the Beijiing river. The El Niño-stricken East and South Asian countries, including the Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh and India, endured blistering heatwaves. Half the districts in the Philippines experiencing a drought and heatwave, compelled the government to suspend in-person classes.

In Bangkok, muggy weather pushed the heat index to 52 degrees Celsius amid real temperatures of over 40°C. Bangladesh also had to close schools as temperatures soared to 42°C

in some areas. In India, an intense heatwave has affected the voter turnout in the ongoing elections. India's election commission has constituted a task force to monitor the impact of heatwaves before each round of voting. Inclement weather attacked East Africa where at least 155 people lost their life in Tanzania and more than 100 in Kenya in the flooding generated by the rainfall in April.

Bewildering bouts of rain and snowfall in April could be the precursor of a wet monsoon. In April, the weather took a sharp turn in Pakistan. In early April, the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) predicted a 30 per cent water shortage in the early Kharif season. (This was subsequently reversed after improved Kabul river flows.) Sluggish flows in the Indus river forced Hyderabad's water and sanitation authority to stop the consumption of drinking water from the Kotri Barrage canals due to contaminated flows from Manchar lake. Additional water had to be released to lessen the intense pollution at Kotri Barrage.

However, soon Pakistan was struck by a series of westerly weather systems that brought substantial rain, hailstorm and snowfall. A flood of over 110,000 cusecs in the Kabul river augmented flows in the Indus zone. Within a fortnight, an abrupt climate twist nullified Irsa's calculations regarding the early Kharif flows. By the end of April, the country received rainfall which was more than 150pc of the usual for the month. Balochistan received an astound-ding 500pc excessive rainfall. In KP and Sindh, the amount of rainfall was almost double that usually observed in the month.

This portentous behaviour of climate can lead to a dangerous situation during the next

monsoon. The climate outlook for the 2024 southwest monsoon season was finalised during the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the South Asian Climate Outlook Forum held on April 29 in Pune, India. The outlook anticipates above-normal rainfall during 2024 in most parts of South Asia except some areas in the northern, eastern and north-eastern parts.

This forbidding monsoon scenario should be taken seriously by the authorities. Sindh and Balochistan, the two worst-affected provinces in the 2022 floods, have not yet recovered from that apocalyptic disaster. Although breaches in dykes and cuts in roads have been plugged, the root causes of the disaster remain unaddressed. The Sindh High Court's Sukkur bench, in its verdict on a petition filed by several flood affecteds, ordered the revival of natural waterways and storm drains.

The court order reads "there is also utmost necessity to improve the drainage of storm water from both sides of Indus river by reviving the natural water ways including constructing new surface / storm drains in the left over area. Simultaneously, there is need to accelerate the work of RBOD (Right Bank Outfall Drain Project)". Sadly, neither have the encroached waterways been unclogged nor the two major drains, namely, the Left Bank Outfall Drain and RBOD, improved to transport flows of a similar scale. Inadequacy of flood prevention measures is a cause of consternation. Trepidation is mounting as the monsoon approaches. The fact is that, just as in 2022, this year, too, we are not prepared to manage a freshet. -- Courtesy Dawn

**New way to learn**

Zubeida Mustafa

Pakistan is not famous for its reading culture. Few people read books and the publishing industry has never flourished here as in other countries where books sell by the millions. But we shouldn't be surprised. After all, education is also in the doldrums in Pakistan and the co-relationship between the two is obvious.

An ideal solution would be to combine the two by prioritising books, with teaching literacy following much later. This may sound ridiculous and untenable. But it is not and those who have experienced the joy of reading from an early age would testify to the feasibility of this approach.

Here is how books, libraries and education can be integrated systematically, not randomly, to make an impact. My friend of long-standing with whom I have shared an interest in books, education and language, actually outlines a plan. Considering that "reading is the first and vital step for all gain in knowledge", my friend (she prefers anonymity) says our focus should be on the library. On the contrary, very few schools have a functioning library with a full-time librarian. Even in the public discourse on education, the library hardly ever finds a mention.

To "kindle children's interest in reading", it is important to introduce them to books as early as possible. My friend, a children's book writer of merit herself, describes her "dream library" as one that is spacious, "airy and well-lit". It should be comfortably furnished — even if sparsely — and ideally with mats, cushions and rugs and appropriately designed tables and chairs. It must have writ-

ing and drawing material, including a white board, markers, pencils and paper, and electronic equipment as is suitable for promoting storytelling.

Books, mostly in a language familiar to children, should be attractively arranged in open-access shelves. The most essential component should be a child-friendly librarian who has a passion for books. The walls should be adorned with colourful pictures with some wall space for the students to hang the pictures they draw. The aim should be to help the child relax by allowing her to browse and draw, without compulsion.

What will a child learn in this library? She will acquire confidence, agency and the love of books. In the process, she will also pick up library etiquette which will come naturally to her if the librarian gently demonstrates to the children what is expected of the library user. The librarian should encourage children to discuss the books they read. She should also facilitate book-related activities such as famous people being invited to tell their own life stories. Essay writing, illustrating a text and reviewing books would draw children to the library.

Another feature of her plan pertains to the importance of nourishment for the child. She strongly suggests that all children in a school should be provided some nourishment, such as milk and a boiled egg every day. Children are known to have fainted in school as they get no breakfast at home and come to school hungry. Given the fact that nearly 50pc of Pakistan's children are malnourished and stunted, the idea of feeding them is an excellent one.

The dream library

could have a snack bar attached where the school could offer edibles to the students before they entered the library.

The plan outlined here could be tried on an experimental basis in one school in each province. The primary classes should have a library period every day that should be free of the rigours of 'normal' schooling. The results can be assessed a year later to decide the future of school libraries. I am confident that if tested in its true spirit this plan should be a great success. Here are the reasons why I believe it would show promising results.

Maria Montessori, whose philosophy on early childhood learning has revolutionised education in many countries, places emphasis on the first six years of a child's life. This phase is marked by the mind's capacity to absorb. She talks of the unconscious mind acquiring consciousness and memory. What the child experiences in this period remains in her psyche. The child's book experience — if she has had one — would shape her passion for reading. This should spur on the self-directed learning drive every child possesses. It will stimulate her creativity and self-discovery instinct as well as her curiosity. Montessori talks of some children learning to read without the teacher's guidance if she has been given the right exposure.

Here is food for thought for the readers. A child enticed by a kindly librarian to come to the library she had hitherto shunned, remarked excitedly, "What lovely books. I had always believed all books are like my textbooks and I am bored stiff of them." -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**Govt taking steps on priority basis to increase foreign investment in country: PM**

Invites Chinese firm to invest in mining; assures maximum facilitation

ISLAMABAD (Online): A Chinese Company MCC Tongsin Resources has expressed deep interest in increasing its investment in the mineral and mining sector of Pakistan.

The interest was expressed by Chairman of MCC Tongsin Resources Wang Jicheng during a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. The company gave a detailed briefing to the Prime Minister regarding the construction

of a mineral park in Pakistan and informed about the further investment plan. Welcoming the Chinese company, the Prime Minister said the government is taking steps on priority basis to increase foreign investment in the country. The Prime Minister invited the Chinese company to invest in the mineral sector in Pakistan from mining to the production of export goods. He said the investment will be extended

full facilitation for extraction of minerals, their processing and export of their products in order to enhance the country's exports. The Prime Minister directed the concerned federal ministers and officers to consult with the Chinese company. He also directed to include the Chief Minister of Balochistan and relevant departments and stakeholders of the province in the consultation process.

Shehbaz Sharif said China is Pakistan's long-standing friend and important partner in development. He said China helped Pakistan in difficult times, for which the entire Pakistan nation, is grateful to the Chinese leadership and people.

He said that being a time-tested friend, China supported Pakistan in every difficult hour for which the Pakistani nation was grateful to Chinese leadership and people.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman MCC Tongsin Resources Mr. Wang Jicheng calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhary Shafay Hussain witnessing the MoU ceremony between TEVTA and Pakistan Coating Association.

**PIC directs FBR to disclose information on tax evasion**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) has directed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to disclose detailed information regarding tax evasion investigations involving prominent enterprises.

The order comes in response to an appeal filed after the FBR failed to provide requested information under the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017 to the applicant, said a press release.

The appellant, Azmat Khan, filed a request seeking details on an inquiry conducted by the FBR into the tax practices of three companies: M/s. AKK Enterprises (SMC-PVT.) Limited, M/s. Perfect Craft (SMC-PVT.) Limited, and M/s. Zayyan Trading Co., Karachi. The request specifically sought information regarding the inquiry's findings, any actions taken against the companies or individuals involved, and the rationale behind any inaction.

**SBP injects Rs 809.7 billion into market**

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan, Friday, injected Rs 809.7 billion in the market through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO) cumulatively. According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on May 17, 2024 for tenors of 7 and 28 days.

The central bank received two quotes for 7-day tenor amounting to Rs 89 billion offered at the rate of return ranging between 22.09 to 22.10 percent and 13 quotes for 28-day tenor amounting to Rs 827.7 billion at the rate of return ranging between 22.05 to 22.10%.

**German Consul General assured to prioritize visas to businessmen: Atif Ikram**

**Independent Report**  
KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has said that the German Consul General in Karachi, H. E. Rüdiger Lotz, has apprised the business, industry and trade community from the apex platform of FPCCI that the business visas will be given priority in the visa issuance to Pakistani citizens as economic relations top the agenda. It is pertinent to

country. He put forward the top areas of B2B cooperation as startups, research & development, women empowerment, vocational training and facilitation of business tourism. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon expressed his pleasure that the German Consulate has appointed a prominent woman member of FPCCI, Ms. Sahibzadi Mahin Khan, as their focal person on trade and



note that top German diplomats visited FPCCI Head Office in Karachi to attend a high-profile, interactive session with the business community. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, invited the business community and chambers of Germany to be their partner in growth and development of Pakistan; whereas, he outlined the principle objective of FPCCI's Vision 2030 as achieving \$100 billion in annual exports for the investment for Sindh and Balochistan region. Mr. Shabbir Mansha, former VP FPCCI, requested that the German consulate should issue long-term visas to the business community after due diligence of their papers as it can result in enhanced collaborative partnerships between the private-sectors of two countries. Additionally, he proposed that Pakistan has a large, young and skilled pool of human resources; which can be employed across various industries.

**FBR holds meeting with trade unions**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Friday convened a meeting with representatives from various trade unions of the country aimed to address concerns raised by the trade and business community over implementation of the "Tajir Dost Scheme".

The meeting was attended by Chief coordinator of the Tajir Dost Scheme Naem Mir and other senior officials to foster a collaborative approach towards the success of scheme, said a press release issued by the FBR. During the meeting, representatives of the trade unions emphasized the

need for clear guidelines on taxation for newly registered traders under the Tajir Dost Scheme. They were of the view that retailers' reluctance to register stemmed from ambiguity surrounding the taxation regime, potentially hindering the scheme's effectiveness in enrolling traders.

Additionally, the representatives highlighted the absence of facilitation, tax exemptions or incentives to convince retailers to register under the scheme. FBR officials and the Chief coordinator of the Tajir Dost Scheme agreed to consider the trade community's reservations and recommendations.

**Rupee gains 20 paise against Dollar**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday gained 20 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.20 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.40.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.50 and Rs 280.20 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 86 paise to close at Rs 301.84 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.70, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

**KUST & KKKUK sign MoU with OGDCL**

KARAK (APP): Vice Chancellor of Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, and the Vice Chancellor of Kohat University of Science & Technology (KUST), Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naseer Ud Din, recently held productive meetings with representatives of Oil and Gas Development Corporation Limited (OGDCL) in Islamabad.

The Vice Chancellor was accompanied by a delegation from KUST and Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak.

Manager Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Abdur Raziq Khattak, and other senior officers of the company. The OGDCL authorities expressed their willingness to extend assistance to both universities in plantation initiatives and other projects aimed at benefiting students and the local populace.

Memorandum of understanding (MoU's) were also signed between KUST and OGDCL as well as KKKUK and OGDCL showing the commitment between the universities and OGDCL.



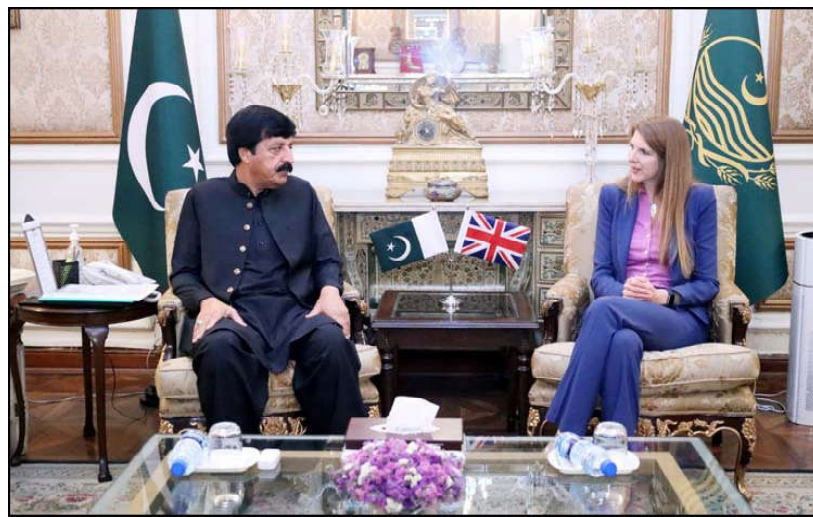
## British HC calls on Punjab governor, discusses promotion of bilateral relations

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore, today. In the meeting, issues of mutual interest, ways to strengthen bilateral relations, climate change and important issues including wheat crisis were discussed in detail. Head of Lahore Office, Clara Strandhoj was also present during the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that Pakistan attaches

great importance to its relations with Britain. He said that Britain has supported Pakistan in every difficult time including floods, earthquake, which is duly acknowledged by the Government of Pakistan. Governor Punjab further said that Pakistan has suffered a colossal loss in the form of flash floods due to climate change. He said that climate change was also having adverse effect on the agricultural sector of Pakistan. Governor Punjab expressed hope that Britain would highlight the issue of Pakistan being affected by climate change in

international forums. He said that Pakistan is an agricultural country and it is very important to support farmers for the development of the agriculture sector. He said that Pakistan People's Party has always taken steps for the welfare of farmers and labour class. He said that the government was trying to resolve wheat crisis issue on priority and the situation had already improved. Governor Punjab said that as a representative of the federation in Punjab, he would play a positive role in the improvement of Punjab.



LAHORE: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

## LHC gives 3-week time to Punjab govt to appoint special court judges

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE (Online): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday granted the provincial government three-week time to appoint judges to special courts, including anti-terrorism courts.

LHC Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan issued the orders while hearing a petition, filed by the provincial government, seeking the transfer of certain cases from Anti-Terrorism Court-1 Rawalpindi to another court.

At the start of proceedings, members of the provincial committee tasked with finalising the appointments of judges, including Marriyum

Aurangzeb and Mujtaba Shujaur Rehman, appeared in court, following directions issued at the previous proceedings.

Advocate General Punjab Khalid Ishaq informed the court about the steps taken so far for appointment of judges. Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb highlighted the government's commitment to making transparent appointments, while Provincial Law Minister Sohaib Ahmad assured that appointments would comply with the legal standards.

However, the chief justice expressed dissatisfaction over the

## Health minister lauds new air ambulance service as 'gift from CM'

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Health and Emergency Services Khawaja Salman Rafique has appreciated the introduction of the air ambulance service as a gift from Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif for the people of the province.

Presiding over a meeting at the Emergency Head Office on Friday, he underscored the government's commitment to enhancing welfare of Punjab's citizens through improved emergency services.

"Emergency Services is the department dedicated to welfare of the people of Punjab," the minister added. "We are focusing on our

field staff to ensure they can meet the demands of emergency situations effectively."

The minister highlighted ongoing efforts to review and enhance emergency services on motorways and improve the existing motorbike service. He also emphasised that public projects under the Department of Emergency Services Punjab will undergo weekly reviews to ensure their efficacy and progress.

Punjab Emergency Services Department Secretary Dr. Rizwan Naser, aligning with the minister's vision, detailed the department's capacity building for our



PESHAWAR: Mayor Peshawar, Zubair Ali addresses to media persons during press conference, at Peshawar press club.

## LHC links distribution of motorcycle to students scheme to NOC

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has linked Distribution of motorcycle to students scheme to NOC.

LHC has sought detailed report regarding bikes distribution scheme from Punjab government till May 27. The petitions regarding elimination of smog came up for hearing before LHC Friday.

Justice Shahid Karim of LHC took up for hearing petitions filed by citizen Haroon Farooq and others Friday. Justice Shahid Karim remarked the issue

of pollution is grave which cannot be ignored.

During the hearing of the case related to distribution of motorcycles to students scheme the court said in its remarks non-obtaining environmental NOC before project is criminal case.

The court made the motorcycle distribution to students scheme conditional to NOC.

The court ordered to submit report regarding restoration of 7 sports complex of LDA and cutting of tree.



FAISALABAD: Participants hold a banner during awareness walk on the eve of World Mental Health at Allied Hospital in the city.

## Punjab Finance Minister announces interest-free loans for farmers

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Finance Minister Mujtabi Shujaur Rehman has announced the provision of interest-free loans to farmers during the crucial crop sowing season for bolstering agricultural endeavors. This financial assistance seeks to empower farmers and facilitate their agricultural activities. Furthermore, Minister Rehman emphasized the need to ensure swift financial support, within a timeframe of three months, to the wives and children of employees who tragically lost their lives during their

tenure of service. This measure reflects the government's commitment to providing comprehensive support to the families of deceased employees. These announcements were made during the fourth session of the Standing Committee on Legislation and Privatization of the Cabinet, presided over by Minister Rehman. The meeting was attended by notable figures including Provincial Minister for Law and Communications Malik Sohail Bharat, Provincial Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Malik, and key officials from related departments.

## ANF recovers 133 kg drugs in five operations

**Independent Report**  
RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 133 kg drugs and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that 65 kg hashish was recovered from Pinni Gwadar while 36 kg hashish and 2.2 kg opium were recovered from Khushab and two accused were arrested.

## Jinnah House attack: ATC issue warrants for 11 PTI workers over non-appearance

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday issued bailable arrest warrants for 11 workers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), who were out on bail, due to their non-appearance in a trial related to Jinnah House attack. The court issued bailable arrest warrants of accused, Abdul Razzaq, Qasim Liaqat, Majid Rais, Aman Ullah, Maqbool Murad.

## KPRA continues crackdown against non-compliant hotels

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) Friday continued raids on the business premises of non-compliant taxpayers in Peshawar to improve tax compliance and discourage tax evasion.

A team of KPRA Peshawar including Assistant Collector Khalid Mansoor, Assistant Collector Roohullah Khan, Assistant Collector Shah Nawaz Khan,

## Governor administers oath to Chairman PPSC

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Friday administered oath to the new Chairman Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) Lieutenant General (R) Muhammad Abdul Aziz during a ceremony at the Governor's House.

The Governor Punjab congratulated Lieutenant General (R) Muhammad Abdul Aziz on assuming the post of Chairman PPSC and expressed his best wishes.

# International News

## Putin says Russia wants a buffer zone in Ukraine's Kharkiv but has no plans to capture the city

*Putin says oil pipeline could run alongside planned new gas link to China*

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that Moscow's offensive in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region aims to create a buffer zone but has no plans to capture the city.

Putin's comments on a trip to China were his first on the offensive launched on May 10, which opened a new front in the war and displaced thousands of Ukrainians within few days. It came hours after a massive Ukrainian drone attack on Russian-occupied Crimea early Friday caused power cutoffs in the city of Sevastopol while damaging aircraft and fuel storage at an airbase. In southern Russia, Russian authorities said the attack also

set a refinery ablaze.

Speaking to reporters Friday on a visit to Harbin, China, Putin said that Moscow launched attacks in the Kharkiv region in response to the Ukrainian shelling of Russia's Belgorod region.

"I have said publicly that if it continues we will be forced to create a security zone, a sanitary zone," he said.

Putin said that Russian troops were "advancing daily according to plan" and said that there were no plans to capture Kharkiv, for now.

Ukrainian troops were fighting Friday to halt Russian advances in Kharkiv region that began late last week.

The town of

Vovchansk, located just 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the Russian border, has been a hot spot in the fighting in recent days. Ukrainian authorities have evacuated some 8,000 civilians from the town. The Russian army's usual tactic is to reduce towns and villages to ruins with aerial strikes before its units move in.

By starting a new offensive in the north of Kharkiv region on May 10, Russian troops "expanded the zone of active hostilities by almost 70 kilometers," in an effort to force Ukraine spread its forces and use the reserve troops, Ukraine's military chief Oleksandr Syrskiy said Friday.



Russian President Vladimir Putin delivers a speech during the 8th Russian-Chinese EXPO and the 4th Russian-Chinese Forum on Interregional Cooperation in Harbin, China.

## Fierce fighting in northern Gaza, as aid starts to roll off US-built pier

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Israeli forces battled Hamas fighters in the narrow alleyways of Jabalia in northern Gaza on Friday in some of the fiercest engagements since they returned to the area a week ago, while in the south militants attacked tanks massing around Rafah.

Residents said Israeli armour had thrust as far as the market at the heart of Jabalia, the largest of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps, and that bulldozers were demolishing

## Russia says US 'playing with fire' in 'indirect war' with Moscow

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: A top Russian diplomat said on Friday the United States had long since entered into a state of indirect war with Moscow and was playing with fire over Ukraine by behaving in such a way that the situation could spin out of control.

The comments by deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov in an interview with state TASS news agency reflect growing Russian concern over what Moscow casts as dangerous Western escalation in Ukraine.

## Iran arrests over 250 in raid on 'satanist network'

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: Iranian police announced on Friday they arrested more than 250 people, including three foreigners, over promoting "satanism" west of the capital Tehran, state media reported.

"The Police Information Centre announced the identification, dismantling, and widespread arrest of members of the satanist network," the IRNA state news agency reported, citing a police statement. Police arrested "146 men and 115 women

## Slovakia's PM Fico still in intensive care after assassination bid, govt says

**Monitoring Desk**  
BANSKA BYSTRICA: Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico remains in intensive care, the government said on Friday, two days after he was shot at close range in an assassination attempt that stunned the small Central European nation and drew international condemnation.

Earlier, local media reported that Slovak doctors would meet on Monday to assess whether Fico, who underwent hours of surgery,

## 'Our supplies will not last', warns doctor at Gaza trauma centre

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: At a field hospital that has become one of Gaza's main trauma centres, a doctor who has worked in a dozen war zones described the situation as the most "catastrophic" he had ever seen. "It is devastating," said Javed Ali, International Medical Corps's head of emergency response in Gaza.

Speaking to this news agency from a field hospital northwest of the areas of Rafah ordered evacuated by Israel, he said the situation around the far-southern city was "dire".

The hospital, in the coastal area of Al-Mawasi which Israel has designated a "humanitarian zone", has swelled in a matter of months into a more than

150-bed facility made up of numerous white tents and shipping containers.

Since the first evacuation orders for Rafah were issued on May 6, ahead of a long-feared ground invasion of the southernmost part of Gaza, nearly half of the 1.4 million people who had been sheltering there have left, according to UN agencies.

"There has been a massive movement of population," Ali said, adding that most had avoided Al-Mawasi, which was already dramatically overcrowded, heading instead for the war-scarred city of Khan Yunis, which was a battleground until just last month.

Those arriving were "exhausted, they are scared, they don't have resources".

## Ukraine allows some convicts to join armed forces in manpower push

**Monitoring Desk**  
UKRAINE: President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed a law allowing some convicts to join the armed forces as it battles to hold the line against Russian offensives in Ukraine's northeast, east and south, the parliamentary database showed on Friday.

Manpower has long been an issue for Kyiv's military as it fights a much larger and better-equipped foe. The problem has grown more acute in recent months, prompting authorities to introduce stricter measures for draft evaders.

The new law offers parole to convicts who sign a contract to join the army, a move that some officials have said could generate a maximum of 20,000 soldiers for the Ukrainian war effort.

Those convicted of the most serious crimes, such as the premeditated murder of two or more people, rape and crimes against

national security, would still not be allowed to enlist.

Separately, Zelenskyy signed a law increasing fines for draft dodgers to up to 8,500 hryvnias (\$218), according to the parliament's website. The average monthly wage in Ukraine is about \$560.

The lack of manpower is seen by some military analysts as Ukraine's biggest problem. Weapons supplies that have been significantly delayed, particularly from Washington, are expected to reach the frontline soon. Ukraine has already lowered the draft mobilisation age from 27 to 25. The upper limit is 60. In tandem, the government has also temporarily suspended consular services for men of military age who reside abroad, complaining they were not helping the Ukrainian state fight for its survival.



Taiwan lawmakers argue and exchange blows during a parliamentary session in Taipei, Taiwan.

## North Korea fires multiple short-range ballistic missiles, Seoul says

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missile towards the sea off its east coast on Friday, South Korea's military said, the latest in series of weapon tests carried out by Pyongyang in recent months.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the projectiles were fired from the east coast town

of Wonsan, while Japan's public broadcaster NHK reported a short-range missile appeared to have been launched and had already fallen, citing a government official.

North Korea has launched ballistic and cruise missiles as well as tactical rockets in recent months, describing them as part of a programme to upgrade its defensive capabilities.

## Rescue efforts halted after South African building collapse where 33 died

**Monitoring Desk**  
JOHANNESBURG: Officials in the South African city of George halted the search for survivors and more bodies on Friday at the site of a collapsed building where 33 people died.

Rescue personnel and volunteers have been combing through the rubble for 11 days, after the five-storey residential building under construction in the city east of Cape Town crumbled, leaving a cloud of dust in its wake.

The Western Cape government said it now believed 62 people were at the site at the time of the disaster. Twenty-nine people survived after being rescued. At one stage municipal officials believed 81 people were on site when the building came down. "The site is empty. We have done our job," Anton Bredell, a Western Cape provincial official, told reporters.





President Asif Ali Zardari administering the oath of office to Mr. Ali Pervaiz as the Minister of State, during an oath-taking ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Mining a top priority under CPEC Phase-2: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal said Friday that mining sector was the priority area of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase-2.

During a meeting with a MRDL Saindak, a Chinese mining company working in Chaghi Balochistan, he commended the company's decades long efforts to promote mining sector in the resource rich area of Balochistan.

In response to the company's request to seek inclusion of their latest project in CPEC, the minister directed them to prepare their proposal, according to press release issued by the Planning Ministry.

It was discussed during the meeting that if their energy needs are met by establishing a national power grid, the operational cost of all mining projects in the province will be reduced.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Saindak Copper-Gold Project in Balochistan is operated by MCCT Resources Development Company Pvt Ltd (MRDL).

MCCT has submitted a proposal of establishing a mineral industrial park in Pakistan which consists of copper/lead/zinc refining and deep processing, giving more value addition to the mineral products.

With the development of more mining projects, establishing such an industrial park will become feasible.

The mineral industrial park will also attract investors to invest in metal refineries and processing plant which produces wires, rods, plate and other products.

Meanwhile, power supply, water supply, transportation and other industries can also develop to facilitate the industrial park, the statement added.

## BISP announces new installment schedule for union councils

QALAT (INP): The office of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) in Qalat has released the schedule for the new installment distribution. Councilors from all relevant Union Councils are requested to inform their communities about the updated payment schedule.

According to the schedule, payments will be made based on Union Council zones. The distribution in Qalat city area will take place over two days, every Monday and Tuesday.

On Wednesday, payments will be distributed in Chhapar, Nimurg, Maliki, and Gazar. Thursday will see distributions in Nichara, Pindran, Kaputu, and Muhammad Tawah. On Friday, the schedule covers Skulko, Shekhari, Bencha, and Dastaguran.

Special provisions have been made for widows, disabled individuals, the sick, and elderly women.

These groups are encouraged to visit the BISP office on Saturdays to avoid difficulties, ensuring they visit on their designated Union Council days for efficient service.

Political and social figures are urged to assist in spreading this information to ensure smooth and organized distribution of the BISP funds.

## Ali Pervaiz sworn in as Minister of State

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member of the National Assembly Ali Pervaiz took the oath of the office of Minister of State here on Friday. President Asif Ali Zardari administered the oath to Ali Pervaiz in a ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, parliamentarians, and notables from different walks of life. Ali Pervaiz was elected as MNA from NA-119 constituency of Lahore on the ticket of the Pakistan Muslim League-N in the recently held by-election.



MADINAH: Federal Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain meeting with Pakistani pilgrims.

## Govt not stopped from blocking SIMs of non-filers: IHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday clarified that it had not stopped the government to block the SIMs (Subscriber Identity Modules) tax non-filers.

Its previous order had only stopped the action against the mobile company, Chief Justice Aamer Farooq observed while hearing the appeal of Federation against stay order against blockage of SIM cards.

Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan appeared before the court.

During the hearing, the chief justice asked that what action would be taken against a child if he was using a SIM card issued in his father's name who was not a taxpayer. Similarly, what a poor working man, who was not a taxpayer, would do if his SIM card was blocked, he added.

The AGP responded that no notice would be issued to any poor person. Notices were being issued to the tax non-filers since November 2023.

"If the person concerned satisfies the Federal Board of Revenue about his tax status, his/her SIM card will be restored," he added.

The AGP prayed the court to withdraw its stay order regarding the blockage of SIMs.

The court served notices to the respondents and adjourned the hearing till May 22.

## CM Gandapur gives Centre 15-day ultimatum to fix KP electricity issues

PESHAWAR (INP): Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) had been victimised and oppressed but the people gave the party mandate despite their symbol was snatched.

"The federal government's attitude is intolerable. We will not be silent. We are demanding our rights," he stated, adding that numerous requests were made to the centre but to no avail.

He was addressing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly on Friday.

The KP CM said the



DOHA: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari witnessing MoU between Red Crescent Qatar and Red Crescent Pakistan during his visit to the Qatar Red Crescent Society headquarters.

## UN projects Pakistan's economy to grow by 2% in 2024 as global economic prospects improve

NEW YORK (APP): Pakistan, which faces significant economic challenges, is expected to have "modest growth", with its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) projected to expand by 2 per cent in 2024, according to a major United Nations report.

Noting that Pakistan had entered into a Stand-by Arrangement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) worth \$3 billion, the mid-year World Economic Situation and Prospects report said that the programme was expected to help stabilise the economy, increase the country's foreign exchange reserves, and facilitate fiscal adjustment while also protecting crucial social spending.

At the same time, it said that in South Asia tight financial conditions and fiscal and external imbalances will continue to weigh on growth in the near term.

"In addition, geopolitical tensions - including the ongoing war in Ukraine and the conflict in Western Asia - will expose net-oil-importing countries in the region, including India, to the risk of sudden oil price spikes."

Most countries in South Asia, according to the report, experienced currency depreciation pressures during the second half of 2023. Between July and October, the United States dollar climbed by around 6.5 per cent against a basket of global currencies, reaching its highest level in 11 months, mainly supported by the strong performance of the American economy and high interest rates.

"Thus," it said, "between July and October, the Sri Lanka rupee depreciated by 3.2 per cent against the U.S. dollar, while the Indian rupee depreciated by 1.2 per cent. After raising policy rates in 2022, most central banks in South Asia paused monetary tightening or started lowering their key policy rates in 2023, with a few exceptions."

In this regard, the report noted that the State Bank of Pakistan has kept its policy rate unchanged at a record high of 22 per cent since June 2023.

In 2023, it said, the number of people facing acute food insecurity increased in Bangladesh and Pakistan and decreased in Sri Lanka. Afghanistan continued to be the country most affected by the food crisis in the region, with around 46 per cent of the population facing acute levels of food insecurity.

Ever-worsening climate shocks are also a challenge, threatening decades of development gains, especially for the world's Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS), the report said.

"Droughts intensified considerably during July and August (2023), affecting most of India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, while Pakistan recorded above-average rainfall," it said.

As far as the global economy is concerned, it is now forecast to grow by 2.7 per cent in 2024 (an increase of 0.3 percentage points from the forecast in January) and 2.8 per cent in 2025 (an increase of 0.1 percentage points).



QUETTA: A delegation of National Party led by its President MPA Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti during Assembly session.

## Nasimur Rehman says Disposal of hazardous waste of public, private hospitals in scientific manner top priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah Friday asked Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazal Ur Rehman that he must come to the 'negotiation table' if he believed in democracy and the supremacy of the law.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that any attempt to create chaos and anarchy through agitation would be resisted, adding that the government would neither permit anyone to cross the limits of democratic freedom nor allow misuse of democratic rights to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere of the country.

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## Rana urges All political parties to play constructive role for democracy in parliament

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QUETTA: Advisor for Women Development Department Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi addressing Balochistan Women Lawyers Conference.

## Japan important development partner of Pakistan: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Friday that Japan was an important development partner of Pakistan and Tokyo's support in difficult times has always been valuable for the people of Pakistan. During a meeting with Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Wada Mitsuhiro here, he said Pakistan and Japan enjoyed a long-standing relationship of friendship and cooperation. In the meeting, bilateral diplomatic relations, cooperation in media sectors, fake news, economic initiatives of the government, and other important issues of mutual interest were discussed.

The two countries agreed to further expand the scope of cooperation in various sectors. The minister appreciated Japan International Cooperation Agency for its support for the development of Pakistan.

Apprising the ambas-

## Salik interacts with Pakistani Hujjaj to get feedback on arrangements

MADINAH al-MUNAWWARAH (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhry Salik Hussain made surprise visits to different hotels and interacted with Pakistani Hujjaj staying there to get their feedback on the arrangements made by Pakistan for their facilitation in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

The minister's humble gesture resonated deeply with the Hujjaj, who expressed their delight and appreciation for this rare opportunity to connect with their leader in such a spiritually significant setting. He was accompanied by Additional Secretary Dr. Ata-ur-Rehman and Director Hajj Madinah. Some pilgrims complained about non-activation of the mobile sim cards provided by the government for Hajj days in Saudi Arabia, upon which, Chaudhry Salik directed the Moudavneen (Hajj supporting staff) to provide technical assistance.



QUETTA: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango talking with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti during Assembly session.

## Khawaja asks for enhanced security measures within premises of NA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defense Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Friday stressed to ensure elaborate security measures within the premises of National Assembly building and its lobbies.

Speaking in the National Assembly, the minister said that a large number of unidentified individuals are often present at the building's entrance.

Khawaja Asif noted that people congregate outside the hall, in front of the elevators, and in the corridors, posing significant security risks.

The minister said there was a system for issuing notices to the Members of National Assembly in the past, which should be implemented strictly to maintain security in the Parliament.

Khawaja Asif said that enhanced security measures

## PDMA DMC approves establishment of DMV in Zhob Division

QUETTA: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Disaster Management Commission approved in principle establishment of Disaster Management Villages in the Zhob Division and directed to present working paper about the project.

The PDMA Disaster Management Commission also decided to allocate separate budget for PDMA to carry out the relief and rehabilitation activities.

Besides, the Commission directed to PDMA to send summary on the proposal of handing over of the silos under the arrangements of Food Department.

The PDMA Commission met with the Chief Minister and Chairman Provincial Disaster Management Commission, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti here on Friday.

The Provincial Minister for Finance, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani, leader of opposition in provincial assembly, Mir Younas Aziz Zehri, Member provincial assembly, Mir Zafar Zehri, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Secretary Livestock, Muhammad Tayyab Lehri, Director General PDMA, Jahanzaib Khan and members of the board of Commission.

The Director General of PDMA, Jahanzaib Khan briefed the meeting about agenda points.

The PDMA Disaster Management Commission decided to conduct audit of the budget to be allocated for relief and rehabilitation activities.

## FC seizes contraband worth Rs123 million

QUETTA (INP): In a crackdown on smuggling operations across various regions of Balochistan, the Frontier Corps (FC) Balochistan has successfully intercepted illegal goods valued at over Rs123 million during operations conducted from April 17 to May 17, 2024.

The operations, carried out in areas including Dera Allah Yar, Barkhan, Pishin, Chaman, and Mastung, saw the confiscation of a substantial quantity of smuggled items. Among the seized goods were 76 metric tons of sugar, 671 tires, 159 cartons of cigarettes, and 82,900 liters of Iranian diesel.

In addition to these items, authorities also recovered other contraband such as fertilizers, solar panels, and non-customs paid vehicles. These seized goods were promptly handed over to customs authorities for further action. The smugglers had been attempting to transport these illicit items through various means including trucks, passenger buses, and clandestine routes.

However, the timely intervention of FC Balochistan foiled their attempts, preventing the illegal flow of goods across the region.



QUETTA: Provincial Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Nausherwani presenting a resolution in the Balochistan Assembly.

## DC Kaleemullah reviews works of Duki to Chamalang road

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Duki Kaleemullah Kakar on Friday reviewed works of Duki to Chamalang road and directed to complete the project soon with standard for facilitating people in the area. The Deputy Commissioner was briefed about progress works of the road. The DC Kaleemullah Kakar said that Duki to Chamalang road was the biggest project of the district and this road was very important because of Chamalang coal.

Roads are also the basic need of the people and the construction of roads will bring development and prosperity because the agricultural products of the area also reach the markets in time with the construction of roads and travel facilities will be available to the public, he said.

He said that the speed of work on the under-construction road should be completed in a fast and standard manner within the stipulated time so that the public could benefit from it.

Substandard work and delaying will not be tolerated, he warned adding that non-standard materials would not be allowed to be used in the development works and action to be taken against the contractor and the officers of the relevant department for sub-standard constructions.