

# Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

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## SC expresses annoyance over Faizabad commission report If Faizabad sit-in order was implemented, May 9 would not have happened: CJP

*Says what did the commission do? It just wasted time, Probe body not even aware of its responsibility, wonders "what level of mindset" compiled the report*

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has summoned report from federal government till next hearing with reference to Faizabad Dharna.

The SC while seeking written reply on court's observation from Dharna commission has said commission can appear in person if it wants so.

The court said in its written order after hearing on Monday that commission filed on March 6 report containing 149 pages and 7 volumes. To our opin-

ion report is not according to terms of reference. It is strange that statement of not a single member of Tehreek-e-Labbaik was recorded. Commission assumed that journey to Islamabad for protest was not in line with the constitution. While SC had written in its order that peaceful protest is right. Provincialism glimpses from the commission report.

The hearing of the case was adjourned for two weeks.

The Chief Justice of

Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa while expressing annoyance over report remarked It is the will of government. Report has been filed in the court. Report has been commented upon already.

It is not known how it came out. We come to one relevant question. Why did the government not legislate in the light of our decision. Is another May 9 being waited. Had you been alert earlier for legislation then May 9 would have not occurred.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses a banquet organized in honor of the delegation of businessmen and investors led by the Saudi Deputy Investment Minister Ibrahim Al-Mubarak, in Islamabad

## PM assures all out support to Saudi investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday assured his government's blanket support to the Saudi investment, enabling the investors and businessmen to accomplish their future projects in Pakistan expeditiously with joint ventures and replicate them within short time for the mutual benefits of the people of both countries.

Addressing a dinner gathering hosted in the honour of visiting delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the prime minister said that time waited for none and stressed that they should overcome the challenges if they really wanted to make use of this opportunity as the Saudi leadership and their leading investors and business people wanted to help Pa-

kistan.

The prime minister reiterated that it was not the government's job to do businesses but it had to offer policy frameworks, act like a catalysts and remove all the hurdles for speedy achievement of economic targets.

He said that the government had resolved and was committed to remove all the bureaucratic hurdles and red tape in the way of foreign investment.

Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, federal ministers, Saudi ambassador in Pakistan, members of the delegation and senior officials were present during the event. The prime minister said that

Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was the very robust and all encompassing vehicle to attain all those projects in the interest of people of Pakistan and the Saudi investors, leading to further strengthening of mutual cooperation and partnership.

The SIFC was a model acceptable to the Saudi delegation and they were fully satisfied over the existing opportunities, he observed.

The prime minister said that from diverse projects, the Saudi investors could earn profits and if they provided them a mechanism free of troubles, bureaucratic hurdles and red tape, then the sky would be the limit.

The prime minister expressed his satisfaction over the solid and tangible progress achieved during the delegation's interaction with the Pakistani counterparts.

## President, Balochistan CM, ministers discuss issues of national, provincial interests

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, acting Speaker Provincial Assembly, Ms Ghazala Gola, senior leader of PPP and former Chief Minister, Nawab Sanaullah Zehri and the provincial Ministers called on the President Asif Ali Zardari here at the CM House on Monday.

The Provincial Ministers meeting the President Zardari were included: Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani, Ali Madad Jatak, Mir Zahoor Buledi, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Mir Saleem Khosa, Sardarzada Faisal Jamali and Advisor to Chief Minister, Ali Hassan Zehri.

During the course of meeting, matters regarding development of the province and different others were discussed.

Earlier the President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday reached Quetta on two-day official visit. Upon his arrival, the President Zardari was accorded warm welcome at the Quetta airport.

Among those who received the President were included: Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, provincial ministers, members of provincial assembly and leaders of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) including its president and Senator, Mir Changez Jamali, former Chief Minister Nawab Sanaullah Zehri besides other provincial high ups.



QUETTA: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing the banquet hosted by the Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail is also present

## Government's facilitation approach builds investor's confidence: Jam Kamal

*Govt. committed to ending red tape: Dr. Musadiq*

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan said Monday that government's fresh approach of focusing solely on facilitation has successfully bolstered the confidence of investors and businessmen in its commitments, paving the way for a new era of economic growth and cooperation.

Addressing a press conference on the sidelines of two-day Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Investment Conference, the minister said, unlike in the past, the incumbent government has limited its role to facilitation and promotion of businesses to build a robust economy, which he said was imperative in shaping foreign policies and fulfilling commitments respectfully.

The minister was flanked by Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musadiq Masood Malik.

This new approach had already yielded positive results, with Saudi investors expressing confidence in the government's commitments, the minister added.

The minister attributed this trust to the government's consistent follow-through on its promises, demonstrated by the frequent meetings between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud and meetings of ministers of both the countries during past two months.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, Information & Broadcasting Minister Attaullah Tarar and Minister for Petroleum Musadiq Masood Malik addressing the media regarding the Saudi Arabia-Pakistan Investment Forum 2024.

## SC suspends PHC verdict regarding NA's reserved seats

*PTI foresees return to power after favourable Supreme Court's verdict*

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday suspended the verdict of Peshawar High Court (PHC) regarding allocation of reserved seats in the National Assembly.

The three-member bench headed by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and comprising Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, which heard the appeal of 'Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), referred the matter to the judges committee for forming a larger bench.

The Supreme Court, in its order, said that the court decision would apply to the political parties to the extent of additional reserved seats only.

It declared that it would hear the case on a daily basis from June 3.

On the occasion, the Federal Government requested the court to form a larger bench to which the matter was sent to the judges committee.

The court said that the members of the reserved seats allotted in the second phase would not be able to vote until the final decision.



GAMBIA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar briefed the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir, on the sidelines of the 15th OIC Islamic Summit Conference, in Banjul, the Gambia.

## KSA, Pakistan economic partners, share common vision: Al Mubarakon

*KSA wants to see Pakistan as one of our leading international partners; Saudi gov, companies consider Pakistan high priority economic opportunity*

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Assistant Minister for Investment, Ibrahim Al Mubarak said that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan were major economic partners and both countries have always supported each other with a common economic vision.

He said that 'Pakistan's

tries, which are enhancing, day by day, he said and added that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had always provided support to each other for bilateral economic development.

Currently, 2 million Pakistanis are working in Saudi Arabia, including doctors, engineers and profes-

## Saudi Crown Prince likely to visit Pakistan this month

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud is likely to visit Pakistan in the current month.

Sources said the Saudi crown prince would be accompanied by a delegation. Both countries are working to finalise dates for the visit.

Sources further said this would be the first visit of Mohammed bin Salman to Pakistan after 2019.

Sources said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would personally oversee the administrative affairs relating to the tour. The prime minister would not undertake any foreign tour till arrival of the Saudi crown prince, they added.

The Saudi crown prince is expected to sign memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to implement the \$5 billion investment during his Pakistan visit which is likely next week.

According to sources, the final date will be decided this week.

US Ambassador Blome calls on opposition leader Omar

ISLAMABAD (INP) - The United States (US) ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome on Monday called on leader of the opposition in National Assembly Omar Ayub.

The supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law in Pakistan was discussed during the meeting held in the opposition's chamber in National Assembly.

Works Organization (FWO) to ensure an extensive survey of these highways with heavy machinery to take immediate steps. He said that in case of any untoward incident, maximum relief may be given in the minimum possible time with adequate measures.

Abdul Aleem Khan was briefed by FWO Director General Maj. General Abdul Sami and Federal Secretary Communications Ali Sher Mehsud and assured that they will continue efforts for the restoration of highways in the shortest possible time in the Northern Areas. Similarly, maximum machinery and manpower will be deployed in typical areas of land sliding so that masses should not face any kind of difficulty.



SIALKOT: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi and Federal Minister for Defence and Aviation Khawaja Muhammad Asif visiting the Sialkot International Airport.

## OIC Contact Group on Jammu & Kashmir calls for early resolution of J&K dispute

ISLAMABAD (Online): OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir has called for an early and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Its meeting was held in Banjul, The Gambia on the sidelines of the 15th Islamic Summit of the OIC.

The participating delegations from different member states expressed support for the legitimate struggle of the Kashmiri people for realization of their inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar, who led the Pakistan delegation briefed the Con-

tact Group on India's ongoing efforts to transform Kashmiris into a disempowered community in their own land.

He apprised the meeting that India was systematically denying the Kashmiri people their fundamental rights and freedoms. Ishaq Dar said the Indian authorities have created an environment of fear and intimidation in the IIOJK to crush dissent.

He urged the international community to take cognizance of the Indian leaders' provocative statements and unwarranted claims about Azad Jammu and Kashmir, which constitute a serious threat to regional peace.

## Bilawal forms committee for talks with govt on privatisation matters

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhatto Zardari has constituted a committee to engage with government over privatisation issues. According to a notification issued by the PPP chairman's secretariat, the members of the committee included Sherry Rehman, Syed Naveed Qamar and Saleem Mandviwalla. The high-level PPP panel will hold talks with the government on the affairs relating to the privatization.

## PTI nominates Sheikh Waqas as chairman PAC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Political committee of PTI has nominated Sheikh Waqas Akram Chairman Public Accounts Committee (PAC) instead of Sher Afzal.

PTI looked confused over the selection of chairman PAC. First Sher Afzal Marwat was nominated then Sahibzada Hamid Raza and now the political committee has nominated Sheikh Waqas Akram who is MNA from Jhang.

Umar Ayub, opposition leader in National Assembly (NA) will inform speaker NA Ayyaz Sadiq in writing. Earlier PTI founder had directed Shibli Faraz to resolve the matter of PAC chairman.



Diaspora including many professional and skilled workers in Saudi Arabia were playing a major role in the economic development of Saudi Arabia.

He said this while addressing at the Pakistan-Saudi Arab Investment Forum, 2024 held here on Monday.

Similarly, there are historical economic, trade and unprecedented diplomatic ties between the two coun-

sors, Ibrahim Al Mubarak said and added that currently, most of Pakistanis are working very hard on Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and economic development. He said Saudi companies are always ready to invest in Pakistan and contribute to its economic development. Pakistan has resources and full of potential and Saudi investors will help in the economic development of Pakistan.

## Aleem Khan reviews Skardu-Gilgit highway situation after landslide

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization & Investment Board Abdul Aleem Khan on Monday reached Skardu and inspected the damage caused by landslides on the main highway connecting Gilgit and Skardu.

He reviewed the current situation along with Director General of Frontier Works Organization Major General Abdul Sami and Federal Secretary Communications Ali Sher Mehsud.

He directed that more attention should be given to the main highway connecting Gilgit and Skardu. Aleem Khan further said that all possible measures should be taken to prevent the fall of rocks and mud and to protect lives and properties.

He asked Frontier

Works Organization (FWO) to ensure an extensive survey of these highways with heavy machinery to take immediate steps. He said that in case of any untoward incident, maximum relief may be given in the minimum possible time with adequate measures.

Abdul Aleem Khan was briefed by FWO Director General Maj. General Abdul Sami and Federal Secretary Communications Ali Sher Mehsud and assured that they will continue efforts for the restoration of highways in the shortest possible time in the Northern Areas. Similarly, maximum machinery and manpower will be deployed in typical areas of land sliding so that masses should not face any kind of difficulty.



SKARDU: Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization & Board of Investment, Abdul Aleem Khan inspecting land slide in Skardu.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Plugging the gap**

In Pakistan, bias begins at birth for the girl child as discriminatory norms, orthodox attitudes and poverty impede progress. However, Unicef Pakistan recently presented a National Gender Strategy (2024-2027) to generate a transformative shift for multitudes of girls between 10 to 19 years. It believes that effective implementation of the policy in rural and urban areas can tackle inequalities and improve female lives, including those defined by disability. A significant component of the plan is to engage leaders, clerics, boys and men so that existing narratives change and all women have agency. Unicef also highlights the lamentable fact that Pakistan has nearly 19m child brides, 54pc were pregnant before the age of 18, and 88pc of underage girls live in poverty. The UN's 2023 Gender Social Norms Index was not a cheerful read either. It stated that improvement in prejudices against women had been static for a decade. In this scenario, the UN agenda to attain gender equality by 2030 for all countries is a long shot.

There is no denying that several social mores propel gender inequality and deal a blow to women's freedoms. As more people are pushed below the poverty line in a moribund economy, indigence is set to widen the gender gap with reduced access to healthcare, education and profitable opportunities. In these circumstances, perhaps Unicef Pakistan's gender equitable programming ought to start with areas where the honour of men depends on making women invisible, as in parts of Balochistan and KP. Females in hyper-conservative areas are entirely disenfranchised, trapped in the culture of bride price, the sale of girls for monetary gain or to resolve disputes, and the absence of reproductive rights and socio-economic liberties. All this must change with schooling, healthcare and employment and cultivating empathy and awareness among men. Closing gender gaps matters because it promises social justice and prosperity. It is a long road but we cannot finish last.

**Improving skills**

Neda Mulji

Many teachers complain about the lack of continuous professional development opportunities or resources to update their teaching and learning skills. Like any other profession, teaching calls for creating opportunities on the job, taking initiative to learn new techniques and to continually revise teaching methods for greater efficiency. Churning the same wheel has never been gratifying — at best, it may help teachers keep their jobs and continue on the same path for decades.

The world is evolving rapidly and those in employment today are being referred to as Generation Transition for they have had to keep abreast of massive changes to stay relevant in their professions. AI may not be taking up teachers' jobs — at least yet — but it has done enough to show teachers what they don't know and how much there is to learn. It has shown more efficient ways of working in a minimal amount of time. From strategy to projected outcomes, from planning to design and execution, it has a quicker solution for work that would otherwise take days if not months to accomplish.

With new developments in technology, creating opportunities for oneself has never been easier. Learning new skills or upgrading old ones no longer requires huge effort. Most teaching programmes are free and can be accessed anywhere, anytime. The doors to teaching and learning from successful trends in other societies are no longer closed. There is a treasure trove of research for teachers to dip into. It is now possible for teachers to learn from the professional experi-

ences of individuals far and wide and to stay abreast of global developments, without relying on colleagues and managers to fill their coffers with knowledge and expertise.

A teacher who has taught successfully for decades wrote to me recently, worrying that he is no longer relevant, not motivated enough and that his managers don't value him the way they did before. The question that may need to be answered is, 'what is he doing differently to upgrade his teaching and to enable or empower his students?' Motivation can come from external factors, and appreciation or approval from colleagues may be temporarily beneficial, but external factors are never sustainable. Reliance on the external environment means we change when our environment changes and we no longer feel worthwhile when our colleagues don't pump up the gas to help us feel valued.

Instead of relying on external factors, the more successful teachers find motivation within themselves to upgrade their skills and contribute to reshaping their external environment. Often teachers feel demotivated as they procrastinate, delay grading or reuse lesson plans knowing well that new, upgraded ones are required. They wait to be called out on that, wait to be told what to do, wait for an opportunity to feel better and to do better. Yet, a lot can change with an individual's willingness to take initiative — to start with doing a few things differently and watch the outcomes closely.

A small example is that of a teacher who complains through the term about a couple of students who do not study, don't complete

their homework and don't show interest in class. A good place to start would be to do something differently for those students — perhaps start with active 'inclusion' techniques that develop a sense of comfort and well-being for the child.

Many teachers choose to stick to tried and tested methods that have worked for them, but, unfortunately, are a thing of the past, such as teacher-led explanations and note-taking. Hundreds of schools still follow this strategy in a bid to 'cover' the syllabus. If they were to venture into learning more effective ways of student-centred teaching, they would find it works so much better in our world of massive 'transition'.

Not only do the students benefit from upgraded teaching methods, teachers themselves would find it gratifying and motivating. There are virtual conferences, webinars and massive open online courses that can enable teachers to bring technology into the classrooms.

According to a McKinsey 2023 report, The Skills Revolution and the Future of Earning and Learning, a skills-first approach transforming the learning paradigm is critical for the students' readiness for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The same report states that "high-performing teachers can raise the performance of students by 53 percentage points in PISA scores, on average, over that of similar students with low-performing teachers".

Given the critical role of teachers, keeping up with technological changes and focusing on upgrading skills can yield lifelong returns for students and teachers. - Courtesy Dawn

**Leaky buckets**

Zarrar Khuhro

It's IMF time. Which means it's time to trot out the clichés and platitudes that we have grown old listening to: reforms must be undertaken: radical, structural, painful reforms that will shift the paradigm, synergise the grassroots and unleash Pakistan's geo-economic potential. The game will change, memoranda will be understood; all windows bar one will be sealed shut and all pages save one will be burned. Under our collective weight the adamantine begging bowl will shatter. This time it'll happen. Seriously, For Real.

Leave aside the fact that if we had a single dollar for every time we've heard all this we wouldn't need an IMF programme, and let's take a realistic look at just how many leaks in our bucket need to be fixed and how we've gone about fixing them.

Our tax sector has been called 'ineffective, unfair and fragmented', and that's a charitable description; massive tax evasion thanks to smuggling and illegal trade can also be seen in tea, tyres and auto lubricants, pharmaceuticals and, of course, the infamous real estate sector. Put together, according to a 2022 report by IPSOS, annual tax evasion in these sectors is estimated to be Rs956 billion, with the lion's share in real estate.

Burden is placed on the already burdened while whole sectors get away without paying — at best they pay only indirect taxes. And because policies are formulated by officials as far removed from reality as we are from ancient Assyria, they backfire spectacularly.

For example: we increase taxes on products and with a stroke of a pen our policymakers calcu-

late that this will result in X amount of revenue which in turn would balance out the resulting reduction in consumption. In some cases, like cigarettes, this would even be a good thing if it were to result in people smoking less. But no one bothers to understand that without curbing illicit production or smuggling all this means is that consumption switches to smuggled brands; see how many smokers are now puffing on smuggled milanos without even a paisa being added to government coffers. Sure, every now and then such smuggled goods are intercepted but this seems to have no real effect on their supply.

Another sector which should arguably be taxed in order to reduce consumption is carbonated drinks. In a country with one of the highest rates of diabetes incidence in the world, sweet fizzy sugar-laden drinks should be priced out of the market. But here we see that arguably healthier fruit juices have been placed in the same tax category as carbonated drinks, which will, of course, lead to an increase in their retail prices. Again, this burden is placed only on the documented (and thus tax-paying) sector while undocumented trade flourishes unchecked, and in fact, emerges as a more attractive option for consumers. When (not if) that happens, the price will be paid by farmers who supply the fruit from which the legally produced juices are made as a reduction in demand for juices will mean a reduction in fruit procurement. Speaking of farmers, look at the current wheat scandal where growers are in a crisis due to the government's inability or unwillingness to purchase wheat in sufficient quantities. This fiasco

can be traced to the decision of the caretaker government to import over 3.5 million tons of wheat when it was already clear that wheat had been planted on a record amount of land and there were expectations of a bumper crop. Best of all, record wheat plantation had been done in response to a government drive asking farmers to plant more wheat. This crisis will birth more crises as farmers struggle with the next crop and plant less wheat next year.

No wonder, then, that the same farmers are keen to sell their land to housing societies, since real estate seems to be the only viable business left in Pak-istan. Highly profitable and almost completely unregulated and untaxed, it provides the perfect haven for all your grey, and often black money. You pay no overheads, employ no one and generate no real economic growth, and yet your profit is assured. The same authorities that enable this also shout about the need for exports. But that requires industrial growth and exportable surpluses, while we're in an advanced state of de-industrialisation. In part, this is because our growth figures are fuelled by consumption, and that too of largely imported goods. Governments have found it easier to collect duties on such goods rather than promote local industrial growth.

So why would we not be de-industrialising? Why would anyone set up an industry or be compliant with regulations when there is such an attractive option available? Why suffer the slings and arrows of an uneven tax regime and pay exorbitant utility costs and navigate spools of red tape and extractive authorities when you can buy a plot or 12? -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**Pakistan wants 'larger, longer' IMF bailout, PIA privatization by early July: Minister**

ISLAMABAD (INP): Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Monday Islamabad was seeking a "larger and longer" bailout program from the International Monetary Fund, whose mission would arrive in Islamabad within the next ten days to start discussing a new loan deal.

helped stave off sovereign default, but the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stressed the need for a fresh, longer term program. Pakistan's financial year runs from July to June and its budget for fiscal year 2025, the first by Sharif's new government, has to be presented before June 30.

The IMF has not specified the dates of its Islamabad visit, nor the size or duration of any new program. "We have requested the IMF ... that we want to go into a larger and longer program with the fund and they have acceded that request, and we are expecting the mission to arrive here within a week to 10 days, where we will start discussing the contours of the next program," Aurangzeb said while

addressing a conference in Islamabad. He said Pakistan needed a new IMF program to bring "permanence" to macroeconomic stability and continue to carry out "structural reforms."



ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Finance addressing the Saudi Arabia-Pakistan Investment Forum 2024.

**The launching of the projects Jinnah Twin Tower and eighty three Edge in Bahria Town**

**Independent Report** KARACHI: The launching event of the projects Jinnah Twin Tower and Eighteen Edge in Bahria Town was held. Many people from the city par-

rooms. The project is expected to be completed in five years, and fifty percent of bookings by overseas Pakistanis have already been completed. Bahria Town is the

Ahmed and Sardar Sajjad Ahmed further stated that despite the increase in prices of materials like steel, cement, and bricks, they are cooperating with consumers in every pos-



participated in the ceremony, where directors Sardar Iftikhar Ahmed and Sardar Sajjad Ahmed conversed.

They mentioned that Jinnah Twin Tower is a unique project spanning 2500 square yards with 18 floors. These houses have 2, 3, and 4 bedrooms along with drawing and dining

largest developer in Asia and is providing modern residential facilities to the citizens. They elaborated that Eighty Three Edge, situated on Ground Plus 18, is a prime location and an ultra-modern project with 17 residential floors. The project will be completed in 35 months. Directors Sardar Iftikhar

**Jam directs to consult all stakeholders to solve problems of industrial zones**

**Independent Report** KARACHI: A meeting was held in the Sindh Secretariat under the chairmanship of Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Ikrumullah Dharejo. Provincial Secretary Industries and Commerce Muhammad Yasin Shar Baloch, MD SITE Ghazanfar Qadri and other officers also attended the meeting. Addressing the meeting, Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Ikrumullah Dharejo directed to solve

the problems of SITE employees on priority basis. He further said that strict action should be taken against incompetent and absent employees. Biometric systems should be activated to ensure attendance and coordination with concerned departments should be improved for completion of SITE development projects. Jam Ikrumullah Dharejo said that meetings would be started with the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce across the province.

**Musadik urges Private sectors of Pakistan, SA to collaborate towards economic diversification, value addition**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik Monday urged the private sectors of both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (SA) to collaborate towards economic diversification and value addition. Addressing a Two-Day Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Investment Conference, he said, "We invite the private sectors of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to participate in building critical infrastructure to

unlock the assets and wealth potential of both countries." "We are already exporting food products, but unfortunately, around 35% of Pakistani perishable food products go to waste. We aim to connect our agricultural assets to the food security needs of the GCC," he said. The Minister said that Saudi Arabia wanted to become a food corridor for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and called for

joint efforts to address challenges such as food wastage, proposed that Pakistan's agricultural assets be leveraged to enhance food security not only in Saudi Arabia but across the GCC and beyond. He underscored the conference's focus on private sector engagement, particularly in food and agriculture, urging investments in downstream activities like food processing and value-added industries such as fruit, juice, cheese.

**Enhance investment opportunities Dawood Hercules Corporation, Engro Corporation approve restructuring plan**

**Independent Report** KARACHI: The Boards of Dawood Hercules Corporation Limited (DH Corp) and Engro Corporation Limited (Engro Corp) have, in principle, approved a proposal to restructure the shareholding between the two companies, aiming to enhance investment opportunities of the enterprise. The restructuring proposal is subject to final Board and shareholder approvals.

The proposed restructuring would enhance investment opportunities by harmonizing the investment efforts of both companies. DH Corp is a capital allocation firm that has experience in deploying funds to a broad range of sectors and assets, while Engro Corp has a successful track record of developing and managing large-scale industrial projects in 5 business verticals. Both companies

have clear investment strategies and have delivered healthy returns to shareholders; however, a testing external environment necessitates a wider and more agile investing approach at a time when large-scale investments are challenging to make. The proposed restructuring aims to enable such an approach. Following a two-step process, it would result in DH Corp being rebranded as Engro Holdings Limited,

and Engro Corp becoming a wholly owned subsidiary of Engro Holdings. As a part of this process, Engro Corp's minority shareholders. Would become shareholders of Engro Holdings in a ratio that preserves their economic ownership of Engro Corp. This exercise would synergise investment efforts at the Engro Holdings level, enabling capital from Engro's

businesses to be efficiently deployed to a wider set of opportunities, which is advantageous to shareholders of both companies. Engro Holdings' [DH Corp's] current shareholders would benefit from frictionless capital movement between the two entities and Engro Corp's current shareholders would benefit from a wider investment mandate, as well from Engro Holdings' investment expertise.

## 5th Meeting of the Provincial Cabinet KP cabinet approves essential expenditures of the Province

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet approved essential expenditures of the Province for the month of May while directing all departments to finalize their budget proposals for the next financial year. The approval of the essential expenditure was necessitated by the fact that in the absence of the Assembly, budget for the current Financial Year was approved by the caretaker cabinet at different intervals. It also resolved to timely convene the budget session of the Provincial Assembly for approving budget for the next Financial Year.

Explaining the details of the decisions of the cabinet meeting, Adviser to the Chief Minister on Information and Public Relations Barrister Dr. Saif said that the provincial cabinet has taken important decisions in its fifth meeting. He said that the provincial cabinet has decided that such ministers who do not belong to Peshawar and do not have an official residence will be given Rs. 200,000. If taken, rent will be paid by the government and the utility bills of the house

will also be included in the same rupees. Barrister Dr. Saif said that since 2014, the ministers who had the facility of official residence were deducted Rs. 70,000. Barrister Dr. Saif said that house rents have increased in 2024 and a suitable house can be found on this amount. It is merit to mention here that the Cabinet approved amendment in the "NWFP Ministers Salaries, Allowances and Privileges Act 1975" as well as revision of the terms and conditions of the Adviser and Special Assistants to Chief Minister. The amendments have been carried out to facilitate residential accommodation of the Ministers due to shortage of government residences and non-availability of rented homes as per rates fixed in

Presided by Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur the meeting was held in



**LAHORE:** Clara Strandhoj - Head of Lahore Office, British High Commission meeting with Provincial Minister for Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Sohail Shoukat Butt.

### Three persons die in road mishap as truck rammed into fodder shop

**MULTAN (APP):** Three persons were killed and one seriously injured when a truck ran into a fodder shop due to a burst tyre near Model Town here on Monday.

According to Rescue 1122, the truck was on its way to its destination when suddenly its tyre burst and rammed into the fodder shop. Resultantly, a man in a fodder shop and another customer who was sitting in a car died. An unknown kid who was passing from the site was also crushed to death. In this mishap, one motorcyclist sustained injuries. Rescue 1122 completed the operation by recovering the dead body of a person who was stuck in the car. Local police are investigating the incident.

### Police operation in Larkana, 11 suspects involved in various incidents were arrested

**LARKANA:** According to the instructions of Inspector General Sindh Police and orders issued by SSP Larkana, Mr. Mir Rohal Khan Khoso SSP Larkana police cracked down on criminals during successful operations in different areas (11) arrested, alcohol, two stolen motorcycles, two valuable mobile phones and a buffalo worth lakhs of rupees were recovered. And the accused Mudassar Zangjui has been arrested along with pistol and bullets. While the Warris Dino Machhi police foiled the drug

supply attempt and arrested the accused Iqar Anad along with two and a half kilos of hashish, on the other hand, the Warris Dino Machhi police also recovered the stolen buffalo belonging to Ahmed Ali Brohi. Ratodero police have arrested two accused Akram Siyanach and Azhar Siyanach along with pistol and cannabis and registered separate cases. along with a pistol and a large quantity of bullets and the accused Muhammad Ali Shah was arrested with four bottles of liquor and registered separate cases. has been entered.



**PESHAWAR:** Deputy Chief of Mission U.S Embassy Islamabad Mr. Andrew Shofar and U.S Consul General Mr. Shante Moore called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House.

### Commissioner, Chairman BISE Sukkur visit exams centers, reviewed arrangements

**SUKKUR (APP):** The Divisional Commissioner Sukkur Fayyaz Hussain Abbasi along with Chairman, Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), Sukkur, Rafique Ahmed Palh and Controller of Examinations on Monday visited annual examinations of IXth and Xth on examination centers and reviewed all the arrangements. They conducted a surprise visit to Government Islamia College, Government Girls High school, Government SMA High School, Government Municipal Secondary School for Girls, Government Comprehensive High School and other centers. During the visit, thoroughly reviewed the arrangements made by the Education Board, Sukkur and expressed satisfaction. The Chairman BISE briefed the Divisional Commissioner and informed that effective and comprehensive monitoring of all examination centers was being conducted with the help of CCTV cameras. Section 144 had been imposed around all examination centers and strict legal action is being taken against cheating mafia. Reports of all examination centers are being sent to the board on daily basis by District Vigilance Committee, mobile Inspector and District Administration Officers. Chairman BISE Palh stated that no compromise was being made on merit and transparency.

### Minister Sohail stresses collective efforts to uplift underprivileged class

**LAHORE (APP):** A delegation of the British High Commission, British Council and UNICEF led by Clara Strandhoj, head of the British High Commission Lahore, visited the Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal office here on Monday. The delegation held a meeting with Punjab Minister for Social Welfare Sohail Shaukat Butt and explored potential collaboration in several social welfare projects. The meeting was attended by Secretary of Social Welfare Iqbal Hussain, Director General of Social Welfare Aamna Munir, Ali Naqvi from FCDO, Deputy Head of the British High Commission Saeed U1 Hassan, Tanya Durani from UNFPA, Yasmin Zaidi and Arshad Mahmood from Aawaz II, and Zahida Manzoor and Azlan Butt from UNICEF. During the session, the secretary of social welfare provided an orientation on potential collaboration in several social welfare projects with partners. Social Welfare Minister Sohail Shaukat Butt expressed gratitude to Clara Strandhoj and the delegation, emphasizing the importance of uplifting underprivileged classes through mutual cooperation with the British High Commission and other stakeholders.

### 2 plots sealed over illegal construction

**FAISALABAD (APP):** The Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) sealed two residential plots on a charge of illegal construction in addition to removing encroachments from Satiana Road. A FDA spokesman said on Monday that Estate Officer FDA Aneeb Aslam Randhawa received complaints that owners of Plot No143 and 144 in Chuhar Majra had started illegal construction on his plots without approval of the map and permission of the concerned authority. The FDA enforcement team sealed the plots and warned their owners to get their construction maps and plans approved.

### Chief Secretary GB chairs meeting of DCs

**GILGIT (APP):** Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan Abrar Ahmed Mirza chaired deputy commissioners meeting at the Chief Secretary Secretariat Gilgit. The conference was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary Development, Administrative Secretaries, Divisional Commissioners and all Deputy Commissioners of respective districts via video link. On this occasion, all Deputy Commissioners briefed about the performance of their respective districts, progress on developmental projects, and the law and order situation. The chief secretary issued directives for concrete steps to improve governance, enhance public service delivery, strengthen the functioning of local administrations, and activate the system of punishment and mentoring. He emphasized on implementing biometric attendance and task management systems in government offices to improve the quality of work and performance. He directed to ensure the timely completion of development projects within approved budgets and take actions on a priority basis.



**GILGIT:** Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan addressing the One Day Conference on Quality Assurance of Secondary & Post Secondary Education and Role of Boards at KIU.

### KP Govt to start 3 lac MT wheat procurement from May 7: Minister

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government would start procurement of three lac metric tons (MT) of wheat from May 7 at a cost of about 29 billion rupees, said Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru. In a statement issued here, he said that wheat would be purchased from local farmers at the rate of Rs 3900 hundred per 40 kg sack. He said committees have been formed at the district level to check the quality and quantity of wheat. The committee would consist of the district food controller, assistant food controller, district administration, agriculture, revenue department, representative members of the flour mills association, and officials of NAB and anti-corruption department as observers. The food department had set up 22 procurement centres in Peshawar, DI Khan, Bannu, Malakand, Dargai, Dir Lower, Hangu, Lakki Marwat, Mardan, Haripur, Mansehra, Kark, Battagram, Kohat, Abbottabad, Nowshera, Charsadda, Chitral Upper, Chitral Lower, Buner, Swabi, Azakhel,

## International News

### Putin orders tactical nuclear weapon drills to deter the West

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russia said on Monday it would practice the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons as part of a military exercise, after what Moscow said were threats from France, Britain and the United States. Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, Russia has repeatedly warned of rising nuclear risks - warnings which the US says it has to take seriously, though US officials say they have seen no change in Russia's nuclear posture. Russia says the US and its European allies are pushing the world to the brink of confrontation between nuclear powers by supporting Ukraine with tens of billions of dollars of weapons, some of which

are being used against Russian territory. Russia's defence ministry said it would hold military drills, including practicing the preparation and deployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons. President Vladimir Putin ordered the exercises, the ministry added. "During the exercise, a set of measures will be carried out to practice the issues of preparation and use of non-strategic nuclear weapons," the ministry said. It added that missile forces in the Southern Military District, aviation and the navy will take part. The exercise aims to ensure Russia's territorial integrity and sovereignty "in response to provocative statements and threats by certain Western officials

against the Russian Federation", it said. Russia and the US are by far the world's biggest nuclear powers, holding more than 10,600 of the world's 12,100 nuclear warheads. China has the third-largest nuclear arsenal, followed by France and Britain. Russia has about 1,558 non-strategic nuclear warheads, according to the Federation of American Scientists, though there is uncertainty about exact figures for such weapons due to a lack of transparency. No power has used nuclear weapons in war since the United States unleashed the first atomic bomb attacks on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.



**People grab flour bags from a truck after the Israeli military began evacuating Palestinian civilians ahead of a threatened assault on Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.**

### France sends envoy to Putin inauguration as Berlin boycotts

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: France will send its ambassador to the inauguration of Russian President Vladimir Putin for his next six-year term in office on Tuesday, a French diplomatic source said on Monday, in contrast with Germany which said it would not be represented. Paris' decision suggests a potential split in the Western camp with several countries, including the Baltic states, vehemently opposed to giving Putin any form of legitimacy and potentially undermining Ukraine in its war with Russia after Moscow launched an invasion more than two years ago. Putin won a record post-Soviet landslide, cementing his already tight grip on power, in Russia's presidential election, held in March just weeks after Putin's most prominent opponent Alexei Navalny died in jail.

### Taiwan must invest in building its own 'strengths', vice president-elect says

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: Taiwan is grateful for continued US security assistance but must invest in building its own "strengths" first and show the world its support for the island is worth it, Vice President-elect Hsiao Bi-khim said on Monday. Hsiao, who takes office with President-elect Lai Ching-te on May 20,

is Taiwan's former de facto ambassador to Washington, and is expected to play a key role in further strengthening ties with the United States given her fluent English and deep ties in the US capital. The United States is Chinese's most important supporter and arms supplier, despite the lack of diplomatic ties.



**French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron welcome China's President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan as they arrive at the Elysee Palace in Paris as part of their two-day state visit in France.**

### Israel strikes Gazan city of Rafah

**Monitoring Desk**  
RAFAH: Israel's military carried out airstrikes in Rafah on Monday, residents said, hours after Israel told Palestinians to evacuate parts of the southern Gaza city where more than a million people uprooted by the war have been sheltering. Fears are growing of a full-blown assault in Rafah, long threatened by Israel, against holdouts of the Palestinian militant group Hamas as ceasefire talks in Cairo stall. There was no immediate comment from Israel, which Hamas-affiliated Al-Aqsa TV said had targeted areas in eastern Rafah near neighbourhoods given evacuation orders. Instructed by Arabic text messages, phone calls, and flyers to move to what the Israeli military called an "expanded humanitarian zone" 20 km (7 miles) away, some Palestinian families began trundling away under chilly spring rain. Some piled children and possessions onto donkey carts, while others left by pick-up or on foot through muddy streets.

### Afghan diplomat in India quits after smuggling allegations

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Afghanistan's top diplomat in India resigned days after she was reportedly caught by airport authorities smuggling nearly \$2 million worth of gold into the country. Zakia Wardak, the Afghan consul-general in India's financial capital Mumbai, posted a statement on social media platform X announcing her resignation. Afghanistan's embassy in New Delhi shut down in November, more than two years after the Taliban returned to power in Kabul following the collapse of the Western-backed government, leaving Wardak as the country's most senior representative in India. Manila: Philippines says won't raise South China Sea tensions, won't use water cannons

### Germany recalls its ambassador in Russia for a week in protest over a hacker attack

**Monitoring Desk**  
BERLIN: Germany said Monday it recalled its ambassador to Russia for a week of consultations in Berlin following an alleged hacker attack on Chancellor Olaf Scholz's party. Germany last week accused Russian military agents of hacking into the top echelons of Scholz's Social Democrats' party and other sensitive government and industrial targets. Berlin has joined NATO and fellow European countries in warning that Russia's cyberespionage would have consequences. The Foreign Office in Berlin said Monday that the government is taking the latest incident "seriously" and that Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock had decided to call back German Ambassador Alexander Lambsdorff. He would return to Moscow after a week, it said. "The German government takes this event very seriously as behavior against our liberal democracy and the institutions that support it," Foreign Office spokeswoman Kathrin

### UN nuclear watchdog chief travels to Iran as its monitoring remains hampered

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: The head of the United Nations' atomic watchdog traveled Monday to Iran, where his agency faces increasing difficulty in monitoring the Islamic Republic's rapidly advancing nuclear program as tensions remain high in the wider Middle East over the Israel-Hamas war. Rafael Mariano Grossi already has warned Tehran has enough uranium enriched to near-weapons-grade levels to make "several" nuclear bombs if it chose to do so. He has acknowledged the agency can't guarantee that none of Iran's centrifuges may have been peeled away for clandestine enrichment. Those challenges now find themselves entangled in attacks between Israel and Iran, with the city of Isfahan apparently coming under

Israeli fire in recent weeks despite it being surrounded by sensitive nuclear sites. Grossi is likely to attend an Iranian nuclear conference there while on his two-day trip to Iran. "Problems will not disappear," Grossi told an International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors' meeting in March. "They will only get worse. So, we need to address this in a serious way." In Tehran, Grossi and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian shook hands in front of journalists before going into a meeting. Authorities offered no immediate comment on their discussions. Tensions have grown between Iran and the IAEA since then-President Donald Trump in 2018 unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

### Macron, von der Leyen press China's Xi on trade in Paris talks

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron and EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen urged China to ensure more balanced trade at the start of President Xi Jinping's visit to Paris, during which Macron was also set to press him on Ukraine. Xi was in Europe for the first time in five years, at a time of growing business tensions that include the European Union investigating Chinese industries such as electric vehicle exports, while Beijing probes mostly French-made brandy imports. Macron said Europe and China needed to resolve structural difficulties, in particular on trade. "The future of our continent will also very clearly depend on our capacity to further develop in a balanced way our re-

lationship with China," he said as the three sat at a round table under the gilded ceilings of the Elysee Palace. Von der Leyen was more blunt, saying the relationship was hurt by unequal market access and Chinese state subsidies. After the meeting, she told reporters that the EU "cannot absorb massive over-production of Chinese industrial goods flooding its market." "Europe will not waver from making tough decisions needed to protect its market," she said. The EU's most robust stance on trade with China dovetails with Washington's approach. U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has warned China that Washington would not accept new industries being "decimated" by Chinese imports.

### Pakistan highly values its multifaceted ties with Italy: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that Pakistan deeply valued its multifaceted relations with Italy spanning over many decades, which had always been marked by goodwill and trust. The prime minister expressed the views during a meeting with Ambassador of Italy Marilina Armellini who paid a courtesy call on him at the Prime Minister's House, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister said that the two sides also shared similar views on a number of important regional and global issues. Expressing satisfaction

over the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Italy bilateral relations, the prime minister urged the two sides to enhance cooperation in the fields of education, trade and investment, legal migration, as well as cultural exchanges. Thanking the Italian leadership for the congratulatory message that he received on his re-election, the prime minister conveyed his sincere commitment to work closely with Italy to further cement bilateral ties in the days ahead. Emphasizing the importance of high-level exchanges, the prime minister extended a cordial invitation to Prime Minister of Italy Giorgia Meloni to undertake an official visit to

Pakistan. He conveyed his appreciation for Prime Minister Meloni's policies at home and abroad that had made Italy an important member of the EU. He thanked Italy for hosting a large population of Pakistani diaspora who were acting as a bridge between both countries while also contributing to their economic growth. The ambassador thanked the prime minister for receiving her and assured him that Italy was keen to further enhance its ties with Pakistan. She said she would strive to promote stronger relations between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan H.E. Marilina Armellini calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

### Sustainable development not possible without peace: Ahsan

NAROWAL (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said on Monday that it was the duty of every individual, especially the youth, to fight against the miscreants who spread intolerance and misinformation in the society, saying that sustainable development was not possible without peace. Talking to the participants of Peace, Education and Development Conference held under the auspices of the University of Narowal, at Narowal Sports Gymnasium, he said the biggest challenge faced by Pakistan was propa-

ganda stemmed from misinformation fracturing the very basic ethics and value set of our society. Ahsan Iqbal said that without peace there would be no sustainable progress and development, adding that the foundation basis of Islam was 'peace and peace' only. The Federal Minister said that in the past, unfortunately our politics had become a victim of intolerance and bigotry and even some have used religion to victimize their opponents but salute to the people who rejected such elements with the power of their vote. He said the purpose of

today's conference was that we had to make this country a citadel of peace as progress and prosperity depend on peace. Ahsan Iqbal said that today youngsters should dive deep into the reason behind Pakistan's creation, it was struggle for peace which then was not possible as Muslims felt vulnerable as a minority - Thus, today, it was the duty of every Pakistani to protect it's minorities and their rights.

### Operations coordinator, ICRC Asia Pacific Region calls on Chairman PRCS

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Operations Coordinator of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Asia Pacific Region, Yoann Davison, affiliated in a courtesy meeting with Chairman Pakistan Red Cross Society (PRCS) Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari at the PRCS National Headquarters here on Monday. The primary objective of the meeting was to strengthen cooperation between PRCS and ICRC on various humanitarian programs and initiatives. Head of ICRC Delegation, Nicolas Lambert and ICRC Movement Coordinator in Pakistan, Wasif Jan accompanied Mr Davison. During the meeting, Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari pro-

vided a comprehensive overview of the various PRCS programs supported by ICRC, highlighting the Red Crescent's crucial role in assisting in natural disasters and emergencies. He shared insights into the 2022 monsoon flood response and the ongoing recovery efforts in affected areas and outlined PRCS's plans aimed at strengthening its humanitarian outreach. Chairman Laghari emphasised the importance of enhancing collaboration between PRCS and ICRC to advance ICRC-supported programs like National Society Development, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Restoring Family Links, First Aid, Media and Communication, as well as Risk Awareness and Safer Behavior initiatives.

### Islamabad Police committed to resolve public issues on priority; DIG Operations



Independent report ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Ali Rizvi, the DIG Operations Islamabad Syed Shahzad Nadeem Bukhari said that the Islamabad Police is committed to resolve public issues on priority, a public relations officer said. He said this while listening to the complaints and issues of the public as well as police officials during the Khuli Kachehri held at his office. Senior police officers were also present on this occasion.

During the Khuli Kachehri, he listened to the complaints of the citizens and marked their applications to the concerned officers for timely action on merit. He also directed them to send reports to his offices in the given time frame. He further said that strict action will be taken against officials involved in bribery or corruption and a zero tolerance policy will be adopted in this regard. He emphasized that Islamabad Police would not leave any stone unturned to secure the lives and property of the citizens.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif addressing the newly appointed Assistant Commissioners.

### Court extends Swati interim bail in controversial tweet case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Special Judge Central Islamabad has extended interim bail of PTI leader Azam Swati till May 15 in controversial tweet case. The controversial tweet case against Azam Swati came up for hearing before Special Judge Central Islamabad Humayun Dilwar Monday. Counsel Ali Bukhari took the plea Azam Swati was bailed out on merit. Prosecutor Rizwan Abbasi said court's concession was misused.

### Facilitation center to be operational from 9 am to 9 pm: CDA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Monday directed that the operational hours of the authority's Facilitation Center to be extended from 9 am to 9 pm for the convenience of residents of the federal capital. During his visit to the Facilitation Center, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali directed the relevant staff to ensure their presence at the counters to provide maximum assistance to the public. He stressed the urgent need to digitize all records and expedite the ongoing development work at all facilitation centers of the authority.



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf awarding medal to an officer during Pakistan Navy Investiture Ceremony held in Karachi.

### Naval officers, civilians conferred Awards

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf on Monday conferred Military Awards to Navy Officers, CPOs, Sailors and Civilians as the chief guest of the investiture ceremony. In the ceremony, 4 officers were awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military) and 4 officers were awarded with Tagha-i-Imtiaz (Military). 104 Chief Petty Officers and Sailors were

awarded Tagha-e-Khidmat (Military) Class-I, II and III, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. Some 44 Officers, Chief Petty Officers/Sailors and Civilians were also awarded Letters of Commendation by the Chief of the Naval Staff. A large number of serving and retired officers of Pakistan Navy participated in the ceremony.

### DPM Ishaq interacts with Pak community

BANJUL (GAMBIA) (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar held an interaction with the Pakistani community based in The Gambia, during his visit to the country for the 15th OIC Summit. Deputy prime minister and foreign minister apprised the Pakistani community about the activities of the Pakistan delegation led by him at the 15th OIC Summit, said a press release on Monday. Ishaq Dar highlighted his meetings and activities during the summit to highlight the issues of Kashmir and Islamophobia. French envoy lauds akistan's role in regional stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of France, Nicolas Galeky called on Minister for Defence and Defence Production Khawaja Muhammad Asif and appreciated Pakistan's role in regional stability here on Monday. On the occasion, the Defence Minister highlighted that Pakistan attaches great importance to its bilateral relations with France, a news release said. He emphasized enhanced collaboration between the Armed Forces of the two countries. The Defence Minister expressed that Pak-France bilateral relations are based on principles of mutual respect.

### Wafaqi Mohtasib's inspection team visits traffic police office

ISLAMABAD: A Wafaqi Mohtasib's Inspection Team today visited the Islamabad Traffic Police Office (ITP) under the instructions of the Federal Ombudsman, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, to ascertain difficulties being faced by the general public and the quality of services being extended by the ITP. Headed by a Senior Advisor, the Inspection Team listened to the complaints of the general public and gave on the spot instructions to the ITP administration for their prompt redressal. The Team directed that One-Window facilities may be provided at the Traffic Office expeditiously so that the general public may benefit themselves from such facilities

Earlier, the Inspection Team was informed that the Online facilities are available for issuance and renewal of the driving licenses and the ITP is also providing these facilities at the doorsteps of the people, in addition to the educational institutions and public places through its mobile teams. The SSP, Traffic, in a briefing, informed that the population of the Federal Capital has now risen to 2.4 million with a phenomenal increase in the number of vehicles plying on the road, which rose to 1,986,810 at the end of the year 2023 and there is a need for corresponding increase in the number of officials working at the ITP Office to handle the additional workload. He further informed that they are setting up a new ITP Office at Faizabad on self-help basis. He said that the office deposited a revenue of Rs.22,081,450/- in the national exchequer during the year 2021, which rose to Rs.294,444,400/- during the year 2023.

under one roof. The Team also directed to develop a mechanism for keeping the motorcycle and heavy duty vehicles on extreme left side of the road. It also instructed that necessary facilities may be provided for seating the customers under the shade along with provision of cool drinking water there.

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### Iran, Pakistan committed to completing gas pipeline project: Iranian CG

KARACHI (APP): Iranian Consul General (CG) to Karachi, Hassan Nourian on Monday lauding the foolproof security efforts of Pakistan during the Iranian President's visit, said that Iran and Pakistan were committed and fighting tooth and nail to complete the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project. He said that the project was to be completed in 2024 but delayed due to political and technical reasons. Speaking in Karachi Press Club (KPC)'s Meet the Press Programme, Hassan Nourian said that Pakistan and Iran were one soul in two bodies. He said that Iran wanted to help resolve energy crises of Pakistan and ready to assist in its devel-

opment. The Consul General said that Iran was self-sufficient in crude oil and other resources and wanted to meet the needs of the region. He said that Pakistan-Indian gas pipeline project but owing to a few reasons India pulled herself out of the project. Later, Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline came into existence and commenced work on the project in 2012. The time period of the project was extended to ten years, which was expected to be completed in 2024 and could not meet its deadline, he said adding that the political leadership of Pakistan had tendency to complete the project.

### PM loan scheme distributes Rs 83.6 billion to young entrepreneurs: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth's Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood has underscored the success of the Prime Minister's (PM) Youth Business Loan Scheme under which Rs 83.6 billion has been disbursed to young entrepreneurs, including 16,000 female entrepreneurs, since its launch by Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on January 24, 2023. While inaugurating the launching report of the "State of Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Pakistan" at a local hotel on Monday, he said that the scheme has provided loans to 140,000 youths, including those engaged in agriculture, microfinance, and interest-free ventures enabling them to turn their innovative ideas into thriving businesses. In his keynote, the Chairman PMYP commended the collaborative efforts behind the report and emphasized the government's unwavering commitment to supporting youth entrepreneurship in Pakistan. He also highlighted the transformative initiatives undertaken by the Prime Minister's Youth Programme to promote entrepreneurship across Pakistan. "The Prime Minister's Youth Programme remains committed to empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs, and we call upon our development partners and the private sector to join us in implementing the recommendations outlined in the report." Additionally, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan emphasized the impact of the National Innovation Award, which provides financial support, mentorship, and incubation resources to help young entrepreneurs realize their full potential and foster a culture of innovation and creativity in Pakistan. "I am delighted to witness the launch of the 'State of Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Pakistan' report, which provides invaluable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing young entrepreneurs in our country," he added. The Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with UNDP Pakistan and the Islamic Development Bank, launched the highly anticipated report titled "State of Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Pakistan."

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ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja addressing the launching ceremony of "State of Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Pakistan" Report.

### BISP, NADRA mobile van service registers persons with disabilities in capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has started the process of registration of persons with disabilities and their families and issuance of smart cards through the Mobile Registration Vans (MRV) in the federal capital, like other parts. The process of registration with BISP and issuance of smart cards is being carried out through these MRV's launched with joint efforts of BISP and NADRA. According to an official source, the vans are visiting different spots to facilitate the persons with disabilities in the registration process with BISP as well as obtaining the smart cards from NADRA. The objective behind the idea of launching MRV was to facilitate the "special persons" who are living below poverty line and intend to register with the BISP for availing its different schemes. While the facility of issuance of smart card will also be given to them. BISP is the largest social protection program launched in the history of this country which is serving the needy people through its multi-faceted schemes including Benazir Kafalat, Benazir Undergraduate Scholarship Program.

### ACs pay surprise visits to ICT's hospitals

ISLAMABAD (APP): All the Assistant Commissioners (ACs) of the Federal Capital have inspected hospitals and dispensaries across the city following orders from Chief Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa. According to the Spokesman of Chief Commissioner Office, Nouman Nazim, the aim was to assess the state of healthcare services and ensure proper functioning in various medical facilities. During their visits, the ACs checked the availability of doctors and the overall level of care provided to patients. They also took stock of medicine and vaccine supplies to ensure hospitals had adequate resources to meet patient needs.

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