

# Independent

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

## Judges letter suo motu notice: Government not doing anything about interference in judicial matters: SC judge

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has adjourned for indefinite time hearing of Judges letter suo motu notice till the availability of bench.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked if any judge can do nothing then he should sit in home. Such judges should not be judge who do nothing on seeing interference. It is obligation of us judges to work for independence of judiciary. You did not take oath. I have taken oath. There can be several pressures. We are paid salary for this job. We should appreciate our heroes who faced martial law dictators. Those who have not taken oath under martial law are our heroes.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah remarked I have been chief justice of Lahore High Court. If some one hurls shoes on any civil judge then it is said go for compromise.

Justice Jamal Mandokhail said we had

called Prime Minister (PM) that he would ask who had made interference. Did he do something.

During the hearing of the petitions filed in SC seeking investigation into the allegations leveled by six judges of Islamabad High Court in connection with interference in the affairs of judiciary, Justice Athar Minallah remarked there is interference in the judiciary at present too. The letter from six judges is fact. See it.

In this situation what will be the concept of fear. Government including attorney general is accepting interference. 6 Judges wrote joint letter. The final responsibility rests with federal government.

Sentences would have been awarded so far in any civilized society. We lied for 76 years and concealed the truth. We should now end fear and speak the truth. The biggest question before us is that is the country run-

ning under constitution or otherwise.

During previous hearing it was asked intelligence agencies are running under what law. Why the interference is being made. Political parties don't want to end interference. Due to interference in 2018 one party was benefited. At present benefit is being provided to some one other.

A 6-member larger bench of SC presided over by the CJP Qazi Faez Isa took up the case for hearing Tuesday.

Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) filed its proposals. It was said therein that SCBA will not compromise on independence of judiciary. Investigations should be conducted against those interfering in affairs of judiciary.

The court while adjourning hearing of case for indefinite period remarked this case will be fixed for hearing in the event of availability of bench.

## May 9 perpetrators, facilitators will have to be punished as per Constitution, law: DG ISPR

May 9 riots not limited to army, concerns whole nation: No talks will be held with any political leader, or group which attacks its own army and indulges in propaganda; Terrorists trying to disrupt peace in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

RAWALPINDI (Online): Director General Inter-Services Public Relations, Major General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has disclosed that plot to kill Chinese engineers in Besham was hatched in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Addressing a news conference in Rawalpindi Tuesday, he said the suicide bomber was the Afghan national and the vehicle used in the attack was also prepared in Afghanistan. He said four other key culprits have been arrested by the law enforcement agencies.

The DG ISPR pointed out that there are twenty-nine thousand Chinese nationals in Pakistan. Of them, twenty-five hundred Chinese are engaged with CPEC-related projects and 5500 others are working on other development projects.

Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said it is our priority to ensure security of

all Chinese nationals and all possible steps are being taken in this regard.

The DG ISPR said the attack on Chinese engineers was aimed at sabotaging Pakistan-China friendship and hurt the CPEC project.

He expressed firm commitment to completely dismantle terrorist groups and ensure protection of the people.

Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said security forces conducted thirteen thousand one hundred and thirty-five intelligence based operations against terrorists and their facilitators.

He said about one hundred operations are carried out on daily basis.

The DG ISPR categorically said nobody will be allowed to disturb law and order situation in the country. He said the Army Chief has stated that there is no place for terrorists inside Pakistan.



He said it is because of sacrifices of the security forces personnel and the people that the country is fast heading towards peace.

He said those involved in terrorist activities have no links with the state of Pakistan and Islam.

Referring to the situation on the eastern border, the DG ISPR said Pakistan's civil and military leadership is fully cognizant of the planning being made in India to divert attention from its internal anarchy.

Alluding to the Indian ceasefire violations, the DG ISPR said Pakistan Army has responded in a

befitting manner and it will continue to do so in future. He said Pakistan is fully prepared for the defence of its integrity and sovereignty.

The DG ISPR said Pakistan stands by their Kashmiri brothers and sisters and will continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to them for their right to self-determination.

He said India is also involved in extra territorial killings of Sikhs. He said there are also evidences of the involvement of India in assassination of people inside Pakistan.

When asked about May 9 incident, the DG ISPR said it is not the case of Pakistan Army, but of the whole Pakistani nation.

Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry emphasized that those involved in the attacks on military installations and disgrace of martyrs' memorials should be

brought to justice at the earliest in accordance with the law of the land and the constitution.

He said doing so is also important to ensure that the people have faith in the justice system.

The DG ISPR said there are irrefutable evidences of the involvement of a particular party in the May 9 events. He said the narrative based on falsehood cannot sustain.

The DG ISPR said they have no objection on the formation of a Judicial Commission for investigation into May 9 incidents. He, however, said this Commission then should also probe into the objectives of 2014 sit-in and the attacks on the PTV and parliament.

He stressed it should also be seen as to how the resources of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were utilized for another onslaught on the federal capital.

## Saudi investment delegation's visit significant headway in bilateral ties: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the visit of Saudi investment delegation to Islamabad was a significant headway in the relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting of the Federal Cabinet, appreciated the federal ministers, government officers and staffers for their efforts to ensure the success of the Saudi delegation's visit, a PM Office press release said.

The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Aviation, accorded

approval to Air Sial to launch its flight operations for China, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Kuwait. The approval was granted under the National Aviation Policy 2023 and Air Services Agreement.

It also gave a nod to the signing of Memorandum of Understanding for formation of the Joint Trade Committee between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Columbia.

The cabinet approved to transfer the control of Directorate General of Special Education from the Human Rights Ministry to the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training.

## Govt. to take decisions in national interests to meet energy needs: Deputy PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday said that Pakistan was a sovereign country and the present government would take decisions in the best national interests to meet its energy requirements and fulfill international obligations.

Addressing a press conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the deputy prime minister and foreign minister, to a query regarding Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, said that the government would take the decisions in the national interests and would not allow interference into its international obligations.

He also termed the Iranian President's visit to Pakistan as very productive.

To another query, he replied that Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman would undertake a bilateral visit to Pakistan soon and they would receive a date in this regard, in the

current month. Earlier, initial and business to business meetings had taken place which helped in finalizing the groundwork for the top Saudi leadership's visit to Pakistan, he added.

The recent Saudi delegation comprising private sector companies had termed their meetings with the Pakistani counterparts as very productive and they were very impressed with the progress made in this regard, he said, adding that the present government would facilitate such like processes in the economic sector. The deputy PM and foreign minister further said that Pakistan wanted stability and peace in the region and was desirous to have good friendly relations with all including the neighbouring country Afghanistan.

He said that in recent terrorism incidents including an attack on Chinese nationals, reports confirmed that the 'masterminding, planning and triggering took place from the Afghan soil'.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Interior Minister & Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi and Senator Anwaarul Haq Kakar addressing a Press conference

## Interior Minister calls on CM Balochistan: Naqvi assures every possible cooperation for improving law, order situation in Balochistan

Mir Sarfraz Bugti says protection of life and property of masses being ensured while establishing writ of State

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Federal Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi has assured every possible cooperation for improving law and order situation in Balochistan.

He categorically stated that there is very important role of Balochistan in development of the country, as such all kinds of resources are ready for the province.

The Federal Interior Minister was speaking to

the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti to whom he called here at the Chief Minister's secretariat on Tuesday.

Also present in the meeting were included the Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove and Federal Secretary Interior, Khurram Agha besides other concerned high ups.

During the course of meeting, different matters

including law and order situation were discussed beside the matters of mutual interest.

Mohsin Naqvi said that the federal government would extend every possible support to the provincial government for improving law and order in the province.

On this, the Chief Minister thanked the Federal Interior Minister for cooperation in law and order in the province.

He said that all available resources are being mobilized for restoration of peace in the province.

He said that all the security institutions are determined to ensure peace through better coordination.

He said that the protection of life and property of the masses is being ensured while maintaining writ of the state.

## South Punjab province imperative for better public service delivery: Gillani

MULTAN (APP): Senate Chairman Yusuf Raza Gillani on Tuesday stressed that the establishment of South Punjab province was imperative for better public service delivery in the region.

The new province was all the more important to safeguard the food security not only for the region but the entire country as well, he added.

He expressed these views during his visit to the South Punjab Secretariat. Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Fuad Hashim Rabbani was also present on the occasion.

The Senate chairman said with the new province, institutions such as high court and Public Ser-

vice Commission would be set up which would benefit the local people.

Recalling 'earlier efforts' as the prime minister for the new province, he said he had allocated land in Multan for the construction of Chief Minister House, which was now replaced with that of the Commissioner House.

ACM Rabbani, while briefing the Senate chairman, highlighted various initiatives taken for the upgradation of the region.

He said many mega projects had been completed in the region since the establishment of the Secretariat. Setting up of schools for the transgender community was one of the main initiatives.



MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with members from different Housing Association at Circuit House.



President Asif Ali Zardari being briefed about the law and order situation and the ongoing development projects in Balochistan, Quetta.

## Some forces are against stability in Balochistan, Pakistan: President

QUETTA (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday said that certain quarters did not want stability in Balochistan and in the country and for the future of the province, they would talk to all the political forces in the province.

The president was given a briefing on the law and order and the progress on different ongoing development projects in the province.

The meeting was attended by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Governor Balochistan Shaikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhel, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz

Bugti, provincial ministers and senior federal and provincial authorities, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the president underscored the need to eliminate smuggling which was causing damage to the national economy and observed that there was a deep link between terrorism and narcotics smuggling. He also stressed upon an effective mechanism for provision of job opportunities to the people living at the border areas. In the meeting, it was decided to commence consultations regarding adopting a joint national

narrative against terrorism. The president directed the law enforcement agencies to continue their efforts against terrorists. He said that they were fully cognizant of the backwardness and the frail economic situation of the residents of the province, adding that the province lacked health facilities when compared with other provinces. President Zardari also suggested that for the training of youth in the nursing and other sectors, system of Sindh government could be emulated, besides seeking its services in the health sector as well.

## PM, UAE President reaffirm resolve to enhance bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a telephonic conversation with President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The Prime Minister conveyed heartfelt condolences to the UAE President on the sad demise of his beloved uncle Sheikh Tahnoon bin Mohamed Al Nahyan and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul as well as patience for the Royal Family to bear this irreparable loss.

The Prime Minister said that the people of Pakistan have always held the UAE Royal Family in high esteem and respect, particularly lauding the leadership of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who was a great friend of Pakistan.

## Nawaz files acquittal plea in Toshakhana reference

ISLAMABAD (Online): PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif has filed acquittal plea in Toshakhana reference against President Asif Ali Zardari, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Yousuf Raza Gillani took place in Accountability Court (AC) Islamabad Tuesday.

## Reforms being introduced in multiple sectors to transform Pak: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday that the country standing at the crossroads was going through transformation and various reforms were being introduced in multiple sectors.



Addressing a press conference along with Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb and Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar here he said that the country's economy was on the right track and all the indicators were positive.

The minister said that international organizations including financial journals had confirmed that the figures about the economic stability were correct.

## PTI demands judicial commission on May 9 incidents

ISLAMABAD (INP) - The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday demanded the establishment of a judicial commission to investigate the events of May 9.

Talking to media, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, along with the party's central leaders including Shoaib Shaheen, said peaceful protest is fundamental right any party. They also raised questions about the whereabouts of

CCTV footage of the May 9 incidents.

Barrister Gohar underscored the party's stance on the matter of the Public Accounts Committee chairman, stating that it is an internal issue to be resolved upon issuance of the notification.

Regarding a recent press conference by the DG ISPR, Barrister Gohar said, "I will read the DG ISPR's statement and then comment."

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### President Zardari's crucial visit to Quetta

President Asif Ali Zardari arrived in Quetta on a three-day visit to Balochistan on Monday. The newly sworn-in Governor Balochistan Shaikh Jaffar Mandokhail, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, provincial ministers and parliamentarians received the president at the airport.

Needless to mention here is that it is the maiden visit of President Zardari to Balochistan after taking over his office.

During the visit, the President was briefed about overall law and order situation in Balochistan. In addition to this, he was also apprised of development projects in the province.

On first leg of his visit, the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and provincial ministers called on President Zardari at the CM House. The provincial ministers included Mir Sadiq Umrani, Ali Madad Jattak, Mir Zahoor Buledi, Sardar Abdur Rehman Kethran, Mir Saleem Khosa, Sardarzada Faisal Jamali, Gazala Gola and Nawab Sanaullah Zehri, a member of the provincial assembly and senior PPP leader. At the dinner hosted at the CM House, flanked by CM Bugti and Governor Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, President Zardari reaffirmed the government's commitment to Balochistan's prosperity terming it as a "priority". Accentuating the province's "special importance" due to its mineral resources and coastline, the president reassured that Balochistan's barren lands will be made capable of increased agricultural production. The President Zardari stated the federal government was committed to prioritize development and prosperity in Balochistan. He said that the province was important to the country due to its abundant mineral resources and extensive coastline. The President pledged efforts to increase agricultural production by irrigating barren lands in Balochistan. He also mentioned the 18th amendment in the country's constitution that empowered provinces and its importance in promoting national development.

Zardari also talked about Balochistan's untapped potential in the oil and gas sector. He stated that modern extraction methods were needed to harness the resources for economic growth.

The President pledged support for low-income families through programmes like the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) for the country's least developed and sparsely populated province. He vowed to expand such initiatives to ensure "broader coverage".

Zardari also assured the attendees that maximum efforts would be undertaken for the province's development. He pledged support to the Balochistan government in "creating" development opportunities for its people.

The President also echoed Bugti's statement on the importance of political dialogue in resolving Balochistan's issues.

It may be mentioned here that CM Bugti detailed the significance of Balochistan for the country. Addressing the President, the CM noted that it was the first visit by a President in a long time.

The CM mentioned issues plaguing Zardari's first term as the country's president. He also talked about how granting political autonomy to all four provinces was important in resolving interprovincial issues, especially of Balochistan.

### Extra baggage

Naeem Sadiq

Undisputedly, the most important, most versatile and most indispensable person in a government office is the naib qasid, often the only moving component of an inert piece of machinery. He is the critical hub, an integral element of a governance system designed for a colonial era. He not only knows the location but also the contents of files and papers that drive and define a government. Naib qasids carry files from one office to another, perform house-keeping, ask visitors to wait, serve tea to their masters, and search, shelve, lose, find, misplace or retrieve files and records — depending upon their mood and motivation.

Using the 'right to information' law, our research, which is spread over a sample of 15 well-known and highly esteemed government organisations, such as National Savings, the Benazir Income Support Programme, the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI), the Supreme Court and the Wafaqi Mohtasib, yields startling results. First, 23 per cent of the entire government of Pakistan consists of just one category of individuals — often called 'qasids', 'naib qasids' or 'daftaris'. As per the data provided under the right to information law, the Supreme Court (SC) tops this list with 283 (34pc) qasids and naib qasids, out of a total of 833 regular and contingent employees. Another prominent mention is BISP, that employs 473 qasids out of a total of 2,356 employees. Such governance through naib qasids would be inconceivable in any developed country, where officials must perform their own chores.

The study gets yet more overwhelming as it reveals that the employees designated as upper division clerks, lower division clerks or stenotypists constitute 26.8pc of the entire government of Pakistan. Although most offices have acquired computers and most senior officers have obtained laptops (at taxpayers' expense), there is no let-up in the demand or number of UDCs and LDCs. One wonders why emails, used by the rest of the world for the last 30 years, are still not an accepted form of official correspondence. Have low skills and high status become our biggest hindrance to progress? Should the conditions of employment not specify that every bureaucrat must carry his own briefcase, drive his own (private) car, clean his own table, receive, respond and file his own mail electronically, make his own tea, etc?

The next mind-boggling segment of employees — 22.7pc of government — sadly comprises chowkidars and private security guards. National Savings, with 1,270 security guards, champions this class, followed by Pakistan Post's 754 guards and BISP's 386 chowkidars. There is also no guilt for cruelty on the part of our esteemed organisations who engage guards through private security companies, not registering them with the EOBI and paying them less than half the minimum legal wage for performing 12-hour duty each day. From this, we can conclude that 72.5pc of the entire government of Pakistan consists of three categories of employees: qasids/ naib qasids, UDCs/ LDCs, and guards/ chowkidars. Like ministers, many are inducted on consider-

ations of 'relative', 'friend', 'party', 'clan', etc. Must we not ponder why Pakistan Railways operates with 315 employees per train, as opposed to the Indian Railways' 53, and Japan Railway's 5.9? Why does the SC operate with 833 employees and its British counterpart with 64 employees for around the same number of judges? It is time to admit that only by shedding 70pc of our government workforce will Pakistan see progress.

There are at least two main approaches to reducing the size of this mountain — firstly, by using technology to perform all those functions that can enhance efficiency and convenience. National Savings' latest software, which req-uis-tes no citizen to visit a savings centre and to automatically re-ceive profits in a designated bank, is a brilliant example. Resultantly, National Savings can potentially cut down 70pc of its employees and branches. The other approach is to eliminate all that is redundant or ceremonial. Almost all commissions and bureaus (NCHR, NCRC, NCSW, etc.) can be closed and their functions performed by their parent ministries.

Numerous ministries such as health, human rights, religious affairs and overseas Pakistanis could be merged and renamed the 'Ministry for Health & Population'. In this manner, Pakistan could reduce the total number of ministries (and logically the ministers) from 32 to 10. These two approaches ought to be identically emulated by the defence services as well as the provincial governments. Our governance system is dysfunctional and bloated. It exists only to preserve the luxuries of an extractive class. Its dismantling is a prerequisite for the progress of Pakistan.

### The Iranian story

Tasneem Noorani

A few days after the triumphant arrival of Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran in February 1979, four Pakistani students were having a meal in a suburban restaurant when they were surrounded by Kalashnikov-bearing Iranian Revolutionary Guards, who were inexperienced and more nervous than the students. They were like this because the Shah's ruthless regime had ensured that no one, other than state functionaries, possessed a weapon.

As one of the four students, I recalled the incident at the time of the visit of the Iranian president to Pakistan recently. I was studying in an institution set up by the Harvard Business School, on the request of the Shah, to give Iranians a modern business education in their own country.

The public was so happy when the Shah fled that shops selling sweets ran empty. People, delirious with joy, were out on the streets displaying currency notes with the Shah's picture torn out. Young people were shouting "Shah raft" (the Shah's left). APCs and tanks, looted from abandoned cantonments, were being driven on the streets of Tehran by euphoric teenagers.

The four of us, all raised in a Western-oriented, English-medium environment, were confused. We felt sympathy for the citizens of Iran, who had been taken over by the mullahs. We felt fortunate to be citizens of Pakistan, where despite all our democratic shenanigans (Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was on trial but had not been hanged yet), we still had a tolerant government. There was nothing equivalent to Iran's secret service Savak, which had its fleet of 'Vigors' to 'fix' and eliminate dissidents.

Khomeini's arrival heralded the curbing of civil liberties. For instance, women, many of whom were used to wearing tight jeans and short skirts in public, could now no longer leave their homes without hijab. Our sympathies were with our Western-oriented class fellows, most of whom had to flee the country. We felt Iran was in for the long grind at the hands of an inexperienced and dogmatic clergy.

Forty-five years later, after watching the Iranian armed forces take on the biggest bully in the region, Israel, and scaring it into backing off through guts, technology and a very well thought-out military manoeuvre, I am compelled to change my mind.

The Iranians have shown that they value their self-respect and beliefs more than their worldly comforts. They have not blinked in 45 years against the most dominant country in the world — the US — and its allies, despite having undergone isolation and economic deprivation, and the harassment of Iranian citizens.

Because of their grit and national pride, they have become a self-reliant and proud nation with their own, indigenous industry, both commercial and military. Their military prowess, despite facing sanctions, is credible. A photo in the media showing their military high command sitting at the feet of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, when he congratulated them on the Israeli operation, felt unreal to a Pakistani.

Despite a domineering Islamic regime, the Iranians' pride in their culture and history is supreme. The Iranian new year, Nowruz, which is basically a Zoroastrian festival, is still the most important event in the Iranian calendar. The country closes down for three weeks to celebrate it. The celebration of two Eids is hardly notable in this context.

The Islamic government greatly respects citizens' privacy (chador and chardiwari) and believes in the principle that what you do inside your home is your business. I asked an Iranian friend about this contradiction in the perceived harshness of the regime. He said that during the Shah's time, "we used to drink publicly and pray privately; now we pray publicly and drink privately".

People who have travelled to Iran recently talk about a clean and developed country, with good roads, an efficient and modern railway system and huge modern shopping malls. Their literacy level is 89 per cent compared to our 58pc; their expenditure on education is 23pc of the budget, while we spend 11.5pc; on health, they spend 23pc, while we spend 4.3pc. These figures indicate that they prioritise human development. True, Iran has its problems, including corruption, but it still ranks 24 on the Global Corruption Index, while we are at 133rd position.

It is depressing to compare ourselves with our other neighbours too. India and Bangladesh are way ahead of us, economically and in human development indices. Even Afghanistan seems to be better than us in the context of law and order. On the economic front, their currency is stronger and stabler than ours. Four Pakistan rupees is equal to one Afghani. The reasons for the continued decline of Pakistan are many, but the primary one for me is that the people who control power are not made accountable. While I felt proud as a Pakistani 45 years ago, I am not sure I do anymore.

## Commerce News

### PM assures resolution of issues facing Japanese businessmen within week



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Japanese businessmen and investors led by Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday, while calling for enhanced Pakistan-Japan trade and investment cooperation, assured that the government would resolve the issues facing Japanese businessmen within a week through mutual collaboration.

The prime minister, in the meeting with a delegation of Japanese companies and business figures in Pakistan led by Japanese Ambassador

Wada Mitsuhiro, said a committee had been formed to resolve the issues confronting the Japanese firms to promote their business activities in the country.

He told the delegation that the Japanese companies should exploit Pakistan's existing immense potential for investment in the industry of electric vehicles.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that being time-tested friends, the trade relations between

Pakistan and Japan spanned over decades. He said it was high time both countries promoted trade and investment ties in multiple sectors, reiterating the resolution of problems facing Japanese industrialists and traders.

The delegation members expressed confidence in the Government of Pakistan's pro-business policies and measures to promote investment.

The Japanese ambassador apprised the prime minister of the upcoming visit of a 20-member delegation of renowned Japanese firms which would prove to be a milestone in enhancing the bilateral trade and investment.

The delegation members viewed that a special focus on investment and pro-business policies of Prime Minister Shehbaz-led government would help enhance the confidence of foreign investors.

### Finance Minister says: Prudent economic governance boosts investor's confidence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday said that the country's economic indicators were going in the right direction and had increased the confidence of foreign investors in the economic governance of Pakistan. Investors from the European Union and America, including Saudi Arabia, had reached Pakistan and they were meeting us and the talks were going on, the minister said.

He said this while addressing the press conference along with

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Federal Minister for Law, Azam Nazeer Tarar. Aurangzeb said the recent visit of a delegation of Saudi's investors to Pakistan was also a part of pave way for this economic cooperation.

The minister said that export-led growth, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and excess to capital were the priority of the government. The senator said that due to the prudent economic policies of the government and the progress in the economic indicators, foreign

investors were ready to invest in Pakistan.

The minister said that all the economic indicators were going positive in the country's economy, which was the proof of progress of the country's economy.

He said that current account surplus was going on in macroeconomic indicators positive.

The minister said that the foreign reserve was stable at \$15 billion and it would increase further, adding that the current tax to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio was 9% which would be increased to 13%.

### Pakistan, Kazakhstan discuss collaboration in IT sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin on Tuesday discussed collaboration in the field of IT and Telecommunication between the two countries. During the meeting, the minister expressed Pakistan's interest in strengthening ties with Kazakhstan in the IT and telecom sector.

She proposed the formation of a joint working group between the two countries to facilitate

connections between tech companies from both sides, said a news release.

Shaza Fatima also suggested initiating technology transfer and IT experts' exchange programs between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. Highlighting the investment opportunities in Pakistan's IT and Telecommunication sector, she invited Kazakhstan tech companies to consider investing in this promising sector. Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin affirmed his country's commitment to increasing cooperation with Pakistan in the IT and Telecom sector.



ISLAMABAD: Head of Pakistan for Onic, Omer Bin Tariq and Muntaqa Peracha, CEO Foodpanda sign an agreement for the integration of Foodpanda on Onic's digital platform to jointly develop a comprehensive ecosystem for enhancing the digital lifestyle of customers during ceremony held in Islamabad on Tuesday. President and Group CEO PTCL and Ufone 4G, Hatem Bamatraf and Fahad Sheikh, Head of Partnership and Acquisition Foodpanda also witnessed the signing ceremony.

### SECP proposes enhanced disclosures for Shariah Stock Screening of listed companies

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has proposed amendments to the Fourth Schedule of the Companies Act, 2017.

These amendments enhance the list of disclosures made in financial statements of listed companies for Shariah stock screening shares, according to a press release issued here on Tuesday. Listed companies will be required to provide crucial information about their subsidiary companies for Shariah stock screening purposes to align the regulatory framework with market needs for a fair trading environment.

Additionally, the language of the Fourth Schedule has been simplified to bring clarity to the Shariah stock screening of shares to include in Islamic indices maintained by the Pakistan Stock Exchange. The proposed revisions have resulted from SECP's engagements with stakeholders during a series of Islamic finance sessions. The changes are aimed at enhancing transparency, fostering investor confidence and aiding in informed decision-making.

### Pak dairy, beef sectors need to be transformed through precision farming

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan's dairy and beef sectors need to be transformed through precision farming to bring the country at par with the other developed nations of the world.

This was the upshot of the industry experts' input shared at an event that marked the partnership between Cloud Agri Pakistan, with NASNA, an Australian livestock company, one of the leading exporters in live animals, and Denkavit Netherlands, the Dutch global leader in feed for young animals with over 90 years of knowledge and

experience in the field of young animals' feed solutions.

The experts were of the view that Pakistan being the 4th largest milk producer in the world and major sub-sectors of agriculture, contributing, along with livestock, over 60 percent of value-added agriculture and 11.7 percent of the total GDP, the country's dairy sector faces persistent challenges that hinders its optimal potential. With a population of 240 million people to meet their protein and dairy needs, Pakistan's dairy and beef industry is largely under-

performing, which requires huge efforts to improve it, they added.

Dr. Rana Shaukat Hussain, CEO of Cloud Agri Pakistan & Global Business Director of Cloud Agri Group, said, "By joining forces with NASNA and Denkavit, we are not only facilitating the introduction of superior livestock and nutrition solutions but also fostering a platform for knowledge exchange and the implementation of international best practices to Pakistan dairy and beef farmers." The collaboration, he said, is poised to bring

unprecedented benefits to the Pakistani dairy and beef sector. NASNA will serve as the exclusive provider of high-quality Australian dairy and beef animals, while Denkavit will supply state-of-the-art calf rearing solutions to meet the diverse needs of Pakistani livestock farmers. By supplying superior cattle breeds from Australia and introducing advanced calf nutrition solutions, the partnership aims to elevate Pakistan's dairy and livestock sectors to global standards going forward. This strategic alignment is set to empower local farmers and

stakeholders with the tools and knowledge necessary to enhance the production, improve animal health, and drive overall industry advancement, he maintained. Ms. Henny Fokel de Vries, Dutch Ambassador to Pakistan, hoped that partnership between Dutch and Pakistani company Cloud Agri will lead to developing the Pakistani livestock sector on modern lines. She said over 50 Dutch companies are operating in Pakistan, including in the dairy and agriculture sectors.

She assured her full support for Pakistani and

## Maryam chairs P&D meeting, reviews development projects

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a comprehensive meeting of Planning and Development Board to review special development projects and health related initiatives, here on Tuesday.

The CM directed to complete 33 development projects on time. "We should work day in and day out for the timely completion of these projects, especially those related to health" she remarked.

The CM directed to complete the first phase of Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Lahore within one

year, besides opening the OPD of Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology in Sargodha by December 2025.

Earlier, the CM was briefed that seven mega projects in the health sector are under completion in the province at a cost of Rs 145 billion. She was also apprised that the first phase of construction and rehabilitation of rural and primary health centers will be completed in October, while revamping of major hospitals will be done by June.

The meeting was briefed by the authorities

concerned that five expressways on important routes in Punjab will be constructed at a cost of Rs 176 billion.

The construction and expansion of Multan-Vehari Road, Chicha Watani-Chowk Azam, Sahiwal-Samandari, Bahawalpur-Jhangra, and Faisalabad-Chinot-Sargodha Road were also reviewed.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed to designate a single complaint number for all departments. She was briefed that the construction of a 204-bed three-storey Safe City.

LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique presides over the first meeting of Health Insurance Working Group Sub-Committee.

## LHC seeks reply from govt on petition seeking fixation of new price of wheat

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought reply from federal government on miscellaneous petition seeking fixation of new price of wheat.

A two members bench of LHC presided over by Justice Baqar Ali Najafi took up the petition filed by advocate Bilal Ahmad for hearing Tuesday.

Advocate Bilal Ahmad has taken plea in the petition that government imported 35 lac tons wheat despite availability of 40 lac metric tons wheat in the country.

The step of importing wheat by federal government caused loss to the tune of 1 billion dollars to national kitty.

It has been further

said in the petition Punjab government has maintained the same price which was fixed last year. The inflation has surged by 20 percent but rate for farmers was not increased.

Advocate Bilal Ahmad requested the court to order government to fix new price of wheat. Court should summon report from federal government with reference to wheat crisis.

It is pertinent to mention here that the court had called reports from government of Punjab and agriculture department Punjab in its order dated April 30. LHC while seeking reply from federal government till May 14 adjourned the hearing of the case.

## ATC grants post-arrest bail to 10 accused in Jinnah House attack case

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday granted post-arrest bail to 10 accused involved in the Jinnah House attack case of May 9 riots.

The court ordered the accused to furnish surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each to avail the relief of bail.

ATC Judge Arshad Javed heard the post-arrest bail petitions of the accused and announced the verdict upon completion of arguments by the parties.

## FIA arrests two on visa fraud

LAHORE (APP): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Tuesday arrested two individuals involved in human smuggling and visa fraud, here from the city.

According to a spokesman, Human Smuggling Circle Lahore during the ongoing crackdown arrested Syed Akbar Ali Shah and Syed Ali Jan Shah from General Bus Stand.

The suspects were found to be involved in defrauding innocent citizens by offering them employment abroad and extorting millions of rupees. As many as 35 Pakistani passports were recovered from their possession and the suspects failed to provide satisfactory explanations regarding the passports. The investigation has been initiated.

## Minister reviews health insurance program

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique chaired a first working group meeting of Punjab Health Initiative Management Company (PHIMC) on health insurance, here on Tuesday.

The meeting took place at the Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department (SH&ME) and brought together key stakeholders to discuss reforms and improvements in the health insurance program.

Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique reviewed the health insurance program's progress and discussed necessary reforms. Experts shared valuable insights and recommendations, emphasizing the program's

potential for significant improvement.

Khawaja Salman Rafique expressed optimism about enhancing the health insurance program. He acknowledged past challenges faced by health insurance initiatives but reaffirmed the government's commitment to addressing these issues.

The minister stressed the need to rectify any shortcomings in the health insurance program and hold accountable those who exploit it for political gains. He also highlighted the importance of strengthening government hospitals' capacity and ensuring financial sustainability for the health insurance program.



HYDERABAD: Children patients of Thalassemia being blood transfusions at Fatimid Foundation Center in connection with International Thalassemia Day.

## PoG provided historic relief by reducing flour, roti prices: Bilal

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Food Minister Bilal Yasin said on Tuesday the Punjab government successfully provided a historical relief to people in 'flour and roti' prices in the province.

Presiding over a cabinet committee meeting at the Civil Secretariat, he said the price of a 20 kg bag of flour was reduced by Rs 1000 within a month and a bag of 20 kg flour was available in the market for Rs 1700 to 1800 while a bag of 10 kg for Rs 900.

Bilal Yasin claimed that 'Naan and Roti' were available across Punjab at notified prices. He said that government's full attention was focused on the relief for common man and reduced the price of Roti with a strong strategy. He said that 50 percent of population of the province lived in cities and the poor people were happy about the reduction in the flour price.

The provincial food minister said that there was a carry-forward stock of 23 lakh metric tonnes of wheat in Punjab which was enough for the next year. The provincial food minister said that during the caretaker period,

## Team Europe launches youth-centric program for green jobs creation in KP

Through this programme, the European Union (EU) and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with essential skills demanded by the job market. The launch event held at the Vocational Training Centre of Excellence in Hayatabad established with previous European Union support, marked a significant milestone of the Team Europe Initiative on building back better to support creation of green jobs in KP province.



LAHORE: Provincial Local Government Minister, Zeeshan Rafique giving the keys of vehicles purchased for Anti-encroachment drive in the Metropolitan Corporation of the provincial capital to Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider.

## KPEC: A game-changer project delayed for two years despite tall promises of PTI leadership

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Being a gateway to the Central Asia Republic (CARs) and landlocked Afghanistan, Peshawar is a unique strategic city of Pakistan where kings, invaders and monarchs had constructed roads and highways for speedy transportation and promotion of trade in a bid to prolong their rule in the subcontinent. These invaders used the famous Khyber Pass, which is the major trade and business route connecting Pakistan and Afghanistan via Torkham border, and onward the gas rich CARs. Witnessed the

## Minister for completion of development schemes on priority basis

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Minister for Communications and Works, Malik Sohaib Ahmed Bherth Tuesday directed to take the public representatives on board in district's ongoing development projects for removal of obstruction. He also directed for completion of schemes on priority basis which were hampered due to minor hurdles. He said this while presiding over a review meeting on development schemes of Rawalpindi

district, held here. Commissioner Rawalpindi Engineer Amir Khattak also accompanied the minister.

Bherth asked public representatives to compile the details of schemes which were stopped even having major work done, in their respective constituencies.

He said the means of transportation and road network played vital role in ensuring economic development of any country.

## International News

## Amid Rafah evacuation order, Hamas accepts truce proposal

**Monitoring Desk**  
RAFAH: Hamas said it had accepted a proposal for a truce in the seven-month-old war in Gaza, after Israel told Palestinians in Rafah to evacuate ahead of a long-threatened invasion of the city. The Hamas announcement brought cheering crowds onto the street amid tears of happiness, chants of "Allahu Akbar" (God is greatest) and celebratory shooting in the air. There was no immediate official response from Israel, and its ally the United States said it was "reviewing" Hamas's response. Hamas in a statement said that its leader Ismail Haniyeh had informed mediators Qatar and Egypt "of Hamas's approval of their proposal regarding a ceasefire agreement".

A senior Hamas official said Israel must now decide whether it accepts or

"obstructs" a truce in the Palestinian territory after seven months of war.

"The ball is now in the court of Israeli occupation, whether it will agree to the ceasefire agreement or obstruct it," the official told AFP, requesting anonymity to discuss the negotiations.

Earlier in the day, Israel called on Palestinians to leave eastern Rafah, amid increasing global alarm about the consequences of an Israeli ground invasion of the southern Gaza city bordering Egypt. Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, condemned the order and said it would be "impossible to carry out safely". The evacuation call followed disagreement between Israel and Hamas over the Palestinian group's demands to end the war, during weekend negotiations in Cairo. Egypt-

tian state-linked media said the talks stalled after a rocket attack claimed by Hamas's armed wing killed four Israeli soldiers on Sunday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to send ground troops into Rafah regardless of any truce, defying international concerns. Cairo's foreign ministry warned in a statement of "grave humanitarian risks" for more than one million Gazans sheltering there and urged Israel to "exercise the utmost restraint". US President Joe Biden and Netanyahu spoke and Biden restated "his clear position" against an invasion of Rafah, the White House said. It also said the Israeli premier "agreed to ensure the Kerem Shalom crossing is open for humanitarian assistance for those in need".



Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, president of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority and CEO of flag carrier Emirates, kicks off the mega travel and tourism exhibition event, Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2024, in Dubai.

## Emirates' CEO kicks off mega travel, tourism exhibition in Dubai

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, president of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority and CEO of flag carrier Emirates, has kicked off the mega travel and tourism exhibition event, Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2024, in Dubai.

A press release from the Dubai government's media office said the "leading global travel and tourism event" is being held at the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from May 6-9, hosting 2,300 exhibitors from 165 countries in its "largest edition to date" and welcoming some 41,000 attendees.

"Policymakers, industry leaders, and travel professionals will gather at the event to explore the theme 'Empowering Innovation: Transforming Travel Through En-

trepreneurship". "The four-day conference agenda of ATM 2024 through May 9 will feature 200 speakers across more than 50 sessions at the DWTC," the press release said.

It added that ATM was launched in 1994 with 300 exhibitors and 7,000 trade visitors and had now established itself as a "globally renowned event integrating multiple travel sectors and verticals from leisure and luxury hospitality to corporate travel."

"Exhibitor participation has increased by 26 per cent this year, with growth recorded across all event verticals," the press release said. At the inaugural event, Sheikh Ahmed said that the "massive interest" generated amongst ATM 2024 attendees reaffirmed Dubai's standing as a "major destination".

## Taliban say order restored after Afghan opium poppy protests

**Monitoring Desk**  
KABUL: The Afghan Taliban said on Tuesday they have quelled protests in a northern province over security forces' attempts to eradicate opium poppy cultivation which generates income for many impoverished farmers.

Taliban authorities were holding meetings in Badakhshan, spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a WhatsApp message, after several days of protests, in which two people were

killed. Mujahid said in a separate statement that a delegation from Kabul, led by the defence chief of staff, would this week travel to Badakhshan to investigate, a rare official acknowledgement of civil disturbance since the Taliban returned to power in 2021.

Since then, they have vowed to restore control over the entire war-torn nation and have at times forcefully broken up protests in urban areas.

## IAEA chief in Iran as concern grows in West over nuclear plan

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: UN atomic watchdog chief Rafael Grossi arrived in Iran on Monday, where he is expected to speak at a conference and meet officials for talks on Tehran's nuclear programme. The visit comes at a time of heightened regional tensions and with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) criticising Iran for lack of cooperation on inspections and other outstanding issues. News agencies reported Grossi's arrival "at the head of a delegation to participate in the

nuclear conference and negotiate with top nuclear and political officials of the country". He met with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and is scheduled to meet Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran chief Mohammad Eslami.

Grossi later said in a post on X, formerly Twitter, that at his meeting with the foreign minister he proposed "concrete practical measures" with the "aim of restoring process of confidence building and increasing transparency".

## Seven killed in attack on Russia's Belgorod region

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Seven people were killed and at least 35 injured in an air attack on Russia's Belgorod region, on the border with Ukraine, on Monday. A Ukrainian drone attack hit vehicles carrying workers in Russia's frontier region, killing six people and injuring 35, the governor said. "Unfortunately, as a result of an explosion, six people died at the scene from their wounds," Vyacheslav Gladkov said. He added that "35 people were wounded" in the attack near the village of Berezovka. Gladkov said the attack hit two vans transporting employees of a nearby factory as well as a passenger vehicle.

## Hindutva goons ruthlessly beat up Muslim trader in Karnataka state

**BANGALORE (INP):** In yet another hate crime against followers of Islam in India, a group of goons associated with the Hindutva outfit Bajrang Dal brutally thrashed a Muslim cattle trader in Karnataka state. According to Kashmir Media Service, the victim identified as Bande Nawaz was transporting two bulls.



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian meets UN atomic watchdog chief Rafael Grossi.

## Media organisations launch criticism as Israeli cabinet shuts down Al Jazeera's local offices

**Monitoring Desk**  
DOHA: International media organisations and journalists Monday condemned the decision of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet to shut down the local operations of Qatari-owned TV station Al Jazeera.

The Israeli cabinet shut down the network a day ago for as long as its

military offensive bombardment in Gaza continues, saying the outlet threatened national security.

Al Jazeera said the move was a "criminal action" and the accusation that the network threatened Israeli security was a "dangerous and ridiculous lie" that put its journalists at risk.

## Indian gov't-owned company exporting ordinance to Israel amid ongoing genocide in Palestine

**NEW DELHI (INP):** In yet another example of New Delhi's complicity in the Israel's ongoing genocidal war against Palestinians, an Indian state owned defence company exported ammunition and explosives to Tel Aviv as recently as January 2024. Indian news website The Wire citing publicly available records said that Munitions India Ltd (MIL) – a public sector enterprise under the Indian Ministry of Defence – has also been permitted to ship its products to Israel as recently as January 2024.

According to a company brochure, MIL is engaged in the "production, testing, R&D and marketing of a comprehensive range of ammunition and explosives for the army, navy, air force and paramilitary forces".



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding FBR's Track and Trace System.

### PM for strict departmental proceedings against negligent officials over T&T system

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for initiation of strict departmental proceedings against the officials held responsible in an inquiry report for showing negligence in the enforcement of Track and Trace System (T&T) with flawed planning and inflicting losses to the national economy.

The prime minister chaired a high level meeting over Track and Trace System of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The system was introduced to monitor production at cigarette manufacturing, fertilizer, sugar and cement industries, identification of counterfeit products and ending of smuggling.

The prime minister observed that due to faulty planning in the system and negligence in its enforcement of the system caused the national economy to suffer.

A report of the inquiry committee formed to probe the issue was presented before the prime minister.

The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers including Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahad Khan Cheema,

Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jahanzaib Khan, Chairman FBR Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana and other relevant officials. The members of the inquiry committee Secretary Finance Imdad Bosal, Awais Kundi, Nauman Khalid and Babar Majid Bhatti also attended the meeting.

The prime minister questioned why certain important provisions were neglected with a haste over the enforcement of the significant national project?

According to inquiry report, project director and member operations in-land that period were found guilty of neglect whereas the report also fixed the main responsibility on the subsequent officials working on those posts.

The FBR chairman working during that tenure was also held responsible for the poor administrative supervision.

The prime minister directed for reviewing the license along with the agreement besides inclusion of provisions with regard to third party audit and alternate system for solution of disputes.

The prime minister also appreciated the inquiry committee for submission of a comprehensive report.

### Naqvi orders crackdown against electricity theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday ordered to speed up crackdown to stop over-billing and electricity theft.

He ordered an indiscriminate action should be continued against the officers who burden the citizens through over billing.

Zero tolerance policy on over billing will continue, said Mohsin Naqvi adding that it is absolutely unacceptable to punish citizens for the incompetence and negligence of DISCOs.

He said, it is a priority to give relief to electricity consumers in over-billing.

He also ordered an action to be taken against government personnel involved in electricity theft.

The Minister was chairing a meeting at FIA Lahore Zonal Office to review the progress on action against over-billing and electricity thieves.

Mohsin Naqvi reviewed the progress on the instructions given during the last visit.

Director FIA Lahore Sarfraz Vark gave the briefing.

DG FIA Ishaq Jahangir attended the meeting through video link.

### PUC launches nationwide reconciliation drive for political stability, national unity: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Tuesday announced the initiation of a comprehensive nationwide reconciliation drive in a bid to foster political stability and national unity.

The PUC Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, unveiled the decision in a press conference underscoring the critical importance of bridging differences among political and religious factions to propel Pakistan towards progress and prosperity.

Emphasizing the need for concerted efforts, he disclosed that the PUC was initiating a mass contact campaign to mitigate the adverse effects of current polarization and foster a culture of harmony and understanding through dialogue and constructive engagement across the nation.

Ashrafi expressed hope that this initiative would promote peace, tolerance, and national cohesion, transcending ideological and political divides.

By facilitating dialogue and reconciliation, he said the council intended to create a conducive environment for constructive engagement and cooperation among diverse stakeholders.

Ashrafi, issuing a resolute call for justice and unity, said the tragic events of May 9, shook the nation with unrest and violence.

He underscored the necessity of swift trials for the perpetrators to prevent such incidents from recurring in the future.

Ashrafi emphasized the paramount duty of leaders to educate their followers responsibly stressing that no one should be allowed to sow seeds of division between the Pakistan Army and the populace, regardless of the costs involved.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi addressing a Press conference at Maaz bin Jabal (Markazi Jamia Masjid) 1-8/3.

### SRO for wheat procurement issued during PTI Govt: Kakar

QUETTA (APP): Former caretaker prime minister and Senator Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said the allegations of corruption against the caretaker government regarding wheat procurement were baseless and contrary to the facts.

"The procurement was conducted in accordance with prevailing laws and SROs (Statutory Regulatory Orders). The SRO for wheat procurement was issued during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, and no additional permits were given by the caretaker setup," he clarified.

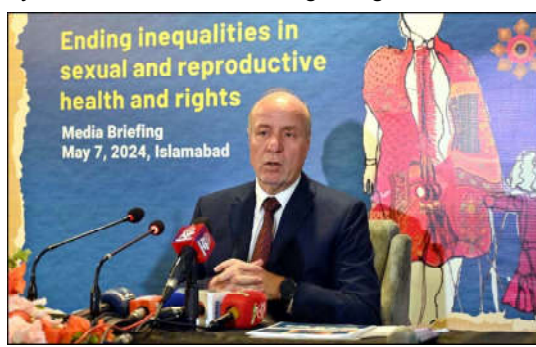
Senator Kakar, while talking to the media, noted that speculations in the media arose due to ignorance of national import policies and prevailing laws. Wheat procurement was conducted through a legal process where not even a single penny of corruption could be committed.

He regretted the media trial of the caretaker government on the basis of misinformation, which, he said, was due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of laws and procedures pertaining to government affairs. Regarding the procedure for wheat procurement from abroad, the former prime minister said, "It is carried out under wheat import policies and national laws. The relevant authority issues notifications and holds deliberations on taxation and other matters before final approval."

Pakistan, he said, "produces around 27 million metric tons of wheat annually, with a shortfall of three to four million metric tons, which is addressed through its procurement following a formal legal process".

After the 18th Constitutional Amendment, he said, all the provinces sent their wheat requirement details to the Food Security and Research Department.

He said the Federal Government, based on the recommendations of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and the provinces' needs, "takes a decision regarding wheat procurement". In line with the recommendations of ECC during the PDM (Pakistan Democratic Movement) government, the caretaker government, under his command, facilitated the private sector to meet the requirement of ordinary citizens and mitigate the possibility of wheat shortfall in the country, he said while clarifying the "misconception about the wheat import".



ISLAMABAD: UNFPA Representative, Dr. Luay Shabaneh addressing to Media briefing on the State of the World Population 2024 under the theme Interwoven Lives, Threads of Hope: Ending Inequalities in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

### FIA, NAB, Islamabad police file details of cases against Ali Amin Gandapur in IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): FIA, NAB and Islamabad Police have filed report in Islamabad High Court (IHC) in the matter of provision of details of cases against KP Chief Minister (CM) Ali Amin Gandapur.

It has been told in the report filed on Tuesday that only one inquiry is running against Ali Amin Gandapur in FIA.

Report has been called from interior ministry on how many cases are registered against Ali Amin Gandapur in other provinces.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani took up the case for hearing Tuesday.

Assistant Attorney General (AAG) Usman Ghuman, NAB prosecutor Raja Zulqarnain and Raja Zahoor ul Hassan counsel for Ali Amin Gandapur appeared in the court.

The court while calling report from interior ministry adjourned the hearing of the case till May 29.

The court directed interior ministry to present details of cases registered against Ali Amin Gandapur till May 29.

In the report filed by Islamabad police in the court, it has been told that 18 cases were registered with Islamabad Police and 14 out of these 18 cases have been decided. Only four cases of Islamabad police against Ali Amin Gandapur are pending hearing. The court adjourned the hearing of the case till May 29.

### Mechanical sweeping operations to be shifted at night: CDA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Randhawa directed on Tuesday that mechanical sweeping operations for cleanliness in the federal capital should be shifted to nighttime instead of the morning.

During a meeting focused on measures to enhance the cleanliness and beautification of the city, he emphasized the simultaneous washing of roads with water during mechanical sweeping to ensure that cleanliness tasks are completed before the city wakes up. The Environment Wing of the CDA provided detailed briefings to the Chairman during the meeting. Chairman CDA directed that waste transport to dumping sites with trucks should be adequately covered, and clearly defined schedules for all garbage trucks must be implemented.

### IGP Islamabad visits Poly Clinic hospital to inquire about injured officer

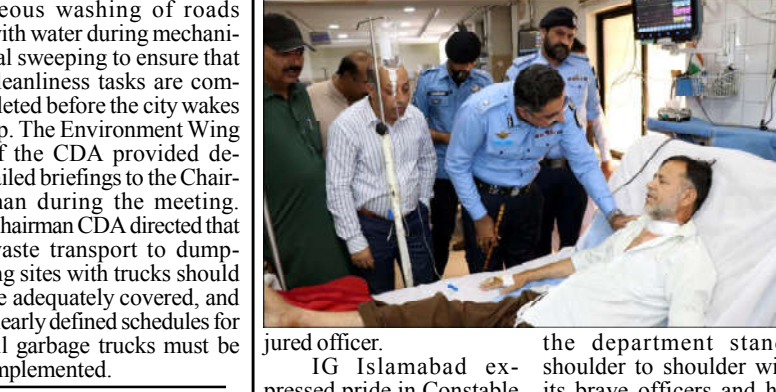
ISLAMABAD (APP): According to the details, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, visited Poly Clinic hospital and met with Constable Nasir, who was injured in the firing by dacoits, a public relations officer said.

He said that, IG Islamabad met with doctors and received a briefing on the injured officer's health. He issued directives for the better treatment of the injured officer.

IG Islamabad expressed pride in Constable Nasir, calling him a hero and emphasizing that he is a lion of ours. He praised the officer for his dedication to protecting the lives and property of citizens without concern for his own safety.

He further said that these officers are like family to us, and all police officers will be equally cared for. He highlighted the sacrifices made by the young officers of Islamabad Police for the protection of the city and its residents, expressing admiration for their bravery and dedication to the nation.

He emphasized that the department stands shoulder to shoulder with its brave officers and has issued directives to senior police officers for the best possible treatment for Constable Nasir.



### PNCA starts registration in music, arts classes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) has started registration in music and arts classes to be arranged under the supervision of professional musicians and artists.

According to an official of PNCA, the music and art classes are being arranged to provide an opportunity to the art and music loves of all ages to discover their hidden talent and creativity with the help of expert instructors.

The aspiring learners will get a new skill, nurture their passion and become a part of PNCA's vibrant arts community, the official said. The music and art classes will be arranged in different categories including Guitar, Keyboard, Singing, Harmonium, Violin, Drawing and Painting, Calligraphy and Acting.

The music and art classes have been designed for the learners of all ages including for beginners as well professionals.

### Notification on conversion of dismissal of Justice Aziz to retirement issued

ISLAMABAD (Online): Law ministry has issued notification on conversion of dismissal of former judge of Islamabad High Court (IHC) Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui into retirement.

According to notification issued on Tuesday, Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui will be deemed to have retired from June 30, 2021.

Law ministry has withdrawn its October 11, 2018 notification regarding dismissal of Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui.

It is pertinent to mention here on May 03, president Asif Ali Zardari had accorded approval to issue notification of retirement of Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui.

President gave approval for issuance of notification under article 195 of the constitution. Under this approval, the retirement notification will apply from date of completion of retirement age of Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui on June 30, 2021.

### ISSI holds second round of dialogue with ASEAN Committee in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) held the second round of dialogue with ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI) comprising heads of missions of ASEAN member states here on Tuesday.

The ASEAN delegation was led by the current ACE Chair, Ambassador Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, Ambassador of the Philippines to Pakistan, Ambassador Sohaih Mahmood, Director General ISSI, led the ISSI side, a news release said. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Sohaih Mahmood highlighted the special significance Pakistan attaches to ASEAN as part of its "Vision East Asia." While noting ASEAN's standing as a global economic powerhouse and a successful model of regional cooperation, he underscored Pakistan's growing engagement with ASEAN member states, both bilaterally and on the institutional plane. Among other things, he noted that the two-way trade volume between Pakistan and ASEAN had reached \$11.8 billion, highlighting the potential for further growth with the \$3 trillion economy of the region. Tracing the history of Pakistan's Sectoral Dialogue with ASEAN, he emphasized the efforts being made for its elevation to Full Dialogue Partnership status. Ambassador Sohaih Mahmood also highlighted the initiatives taken by the ISSI for promoting Pakistan-ASEAN relations, which include establishing a first-of-its-kind "ASEAN Corner" in the ISSI Library last year.

### Randhawa directs to complete construction work of Islamabad Expressway by end of July

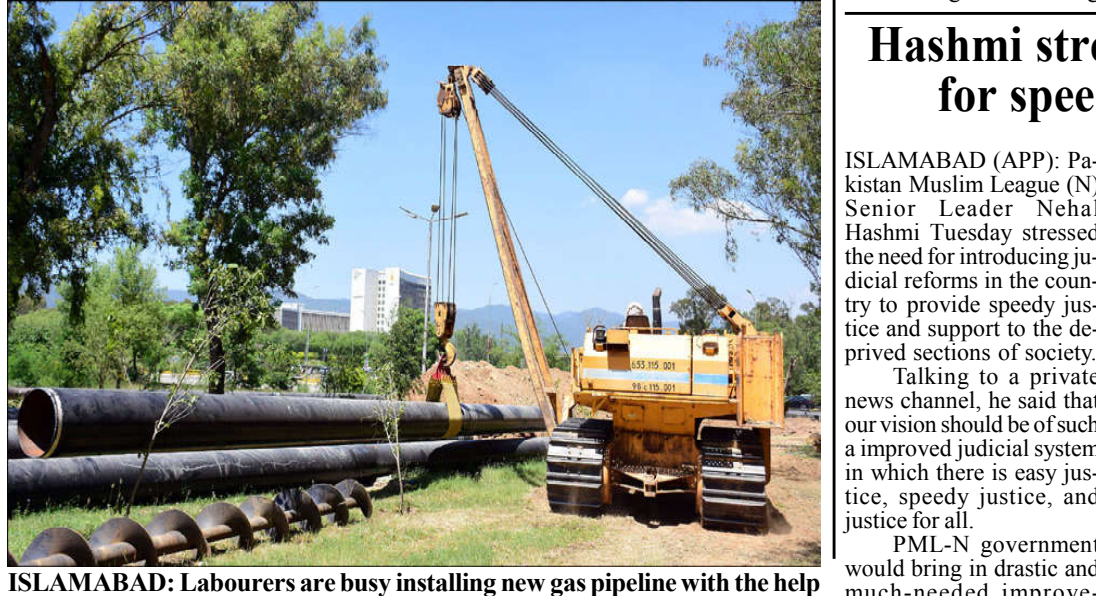
ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Randhawa Tuesday directed that the ongoing development and construction work on the Islamabad Expressway should be completed by the end of July without any further delay.

During his visit to the Islamabad Expressway, he said that the construction work on the Islamabad Expressway project should be expedited.

Chairman CDA was briefed that 75 percent of the work on package one, from Korang Bridge, of the Islamabad Expressway project has been completed.

The briefing also included information about the inclusion of the construction of a railway bridge in package one of the project. Muhammad Ali directed that package one of the Islamabad Expressway must be finalized by July 15. The briefing to Chairman CDA covered the components of the Islamabad Expressway project, including the T-Chowk intersection with two major bridges and an underpass.

Chairman CDA emphasized that any further delay in the Islamabad Expressway project will not be tolerated at any cost.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers are busy installing new gas pipeline with the help of heavy machinery at Zero point area during development work.

### Hashmi stresses reforms for speedy justice

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League (N) Senior Leader Nehal Hashmi Tuesday stressed the need for introducing judicial reforms in the country to provide speedy justice and support to the deprived sections of society.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that his vision should be of such an improved judicial system in which there is easy justice, speedy justice, and justice for all.

PML-N government would bring in drastic and much-needed improvements in the judicial system, he added.

He further emphasized that the country was facing economic challenges and collective efforts were needed to steer the country out of current challenging situation.

He also called for taking positive steps, saying harmony among state institutions is the need of the hour to pave the way for the development of the country.

Replying to a question, he said that his leadership always believes in rule of law and supremacy of the constitution, adding,

### Rank Pinning ceremony of newly promoted Head Constables held at Safe City



ISLAMABAD (APP): World Thalassaemia Day will be celebrated on Wednesday to spread awareness about thalassaemia, a genetic blood disorder characterized by abnormal hemoglobin production, encouraging people to seek treatment and live healthy, fulfilling lives.

The 2024 theme for World Thalassaemia Day, "Empowering Lives, Empowering Progress: Ensuring Equitable and Accessible Thalassaemia Treatment for All," underscores the significance of providing equal and accessible treatment options to enhance their quality of life.

World Thalassaemia Day underscores the condition's manifestation, which occurs when the body doesn't produce enough hemoglobin, an essential component of red blood cells.

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, a distinguished ceremony was held at Safe City Islamabad to honor the promotion of 10 officers from Constables to Head Constables.

The event was organized by the CPO Safe City/Traffic in recognition of their exemplary dedication and commitment to their duties. The newly promoted officers were acknowledged and congratulated by CPO Safe City/Traffic and DSP Safe City.

Following the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the process of departmental promotions is currently underway within the Islamabad Police.

The CPO Safe City/Traffic, in line with this initiative, organized the prestigious ceremony to honor the promotion of 10 officers from Constables to Head Constables. The promoted officers belong from wireless staff. Addressing the officers during the ceremony, the CPO Safe City/Traffic emphasized the increased responsibilities that accompany their new ranks. He highlighted the clear directives issued by the IG Islamabad to ensure that promotions continue to be granted for all vacant positions.