

# Independent

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

Ambassadors of both countries present letters to PM Shahbaz Sharif in separate meetings

ISLAMABAD (APP): Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah and Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani have accepted Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's invitation to visit Pakistan, marking a major breakthrough in the country's diplomatic efforts.

Abdulrahman Jasser Al-Mutairi handed over the letter of the Emir of Kuwait to the prime minister which conveyed a message to accept the invitation of the prime minister to visit Pakistan on the mutually agreed dates.

While receiving the letter, the prime minister recalled his recent meeting with the Kuwaiti Emir held on the sidelines of World Economic Forum on April 2028, 2024.

In separate meetings of ambassadors of Kuwait and Qatar with the prime minister on Sunday, they presented the letters of their respective leaders, confirming their acceptance of invitation to visit Pakistan.

He said that both sides should start preparations for the visit with an exchange of delegations between the two capitals to ensure that the high-level visit was productive and successful and results were beneficial for both the countries.

Meanwhile Qatar's envoy to Pakistan Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater also called on the prime minister and presented to him the letter from the Emir of Qatar conveying the message to accept the invitation to visit Pakistan on the mutually convenient dates.

The prime minister conveying his heartfelt gratitude to the Qatari Emir, emphasized that Pakistan deeply valued its historic brotherly relations with Qatar and reiterated Pakistan's firm determination to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

In a meeting, Ambassador of Kuwait Nassar



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

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

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

LAHORE (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said that Pakistan attaches high importance to its ties with China whether they are economic, political, diplomatic or security related.

He said that such threats coming from across the borders make regional security more complex. The interior minister said that it was a planned attack and was operated from Afghanistan. He said Pakistan had raised this issue with Afghanistan's Interim government and stressed them to control terrorists operating from there.

Support was being provided to TTP-like terrorists in border areas, he said and added that "we have a number of evidence in this regard". He said that after occurrence of terrorist attack on Chinese in Besham, the law-enforcement agencies in the country jointly carried out comprehensive investigation of the incident. Some accused of the incident had been arrested, he said. He said that Chinese security was very important and new standard operating procedures (SOPs) had been made in this regard and were being strictly implemented.

Mohsin Naqvi said that the Pakistan government had requested the interim Afghan government to arrest Bakhtiar Shah, Qari Asadullah and Khan Lala and especially TTP Ameer Noor Wali Mehsud, TTP Malakand Commander

security to Chinese and Prime Minister's visit to China during next month was also very important. He said that China's cooperation for strengthening Pakistan's economy was crucial. He said that in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the Counter-Terrorism Department was doing great work and they had developed themselves in very short span of time. He said that Pakistan wanted good ties with Afghanistan and it was possible when Afghanistan would support Pakistan and not allow its soil to be used against Pakistan. National Counter-Terrorism Authority Coordinator Muhammad Tahir Rai gave detailed briefing about the investigation done related to Besham (Shangla) terrorist attack on March 26. He said entire incident was planned in Afghanistan and objective was to harm Pakistan and China relations.



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

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

Affirms support for government's welfare initiatives

ISLAMABAD (INP): Acting President Yousaf Raza Gillani on Sunday said that we are ready if the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) wants to talk with us. "We didn't say at any time, we are not on the side of the government," PPP stalwart Gillani said in a media talk. "We are extending full support to the government and engaged in talks with it for joining the government," he said. "We will take responsibility if joined the government," he further said. "We will support them in all good works," he added.

He expressed these views while talking to media after laying the foundation stone of a reverse osmosis (RO) plant here on Sunday. He highlighted that as a member of the United Nations, Pakistan was committed to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, which aimed to ensure "availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" by 2030. He expressed his appreciation for those working to provide clean drinking water, noting that their efforts

would continue to support the government's welfare initiatives and also provide suggestions to make the upcoming budget favourable towards people, especially farmers, youths, and labourers. He said that the provision of clean water was a global issue, which needed to be addressed on a priority basis with global support. Responding to a question, he highlighted that Pakistan has the capability to address threats on the eastern and western borders, as well as terrorism and extremism with national unity. The Acting President said his party believed in public welfare and political dialogue and had always preferred to adopt a conciliatory approach to address national issues. He further stated that his party had been supporting the government to provide relief to the people.

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

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

RAWALPINDI (APP): Two soldiers of Pakistan Army on Sunday embraced martyrdom while gallantly fighting against terrorists during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in general area Hassan Khel, Peshawar District during which five terrorists were killed while three got injured. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, during conduct of the operation, the Army troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location.

However, during intense exchange of fire, leading his troops from the front, Captain Hussain Jahangir, age 25 years, resident of Rahim Yar Khan District, along with another brave son of the soil, Havildar Shafiq Ullah, age: 36 years, resident of District Karak, having fought gallantly, made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat (martyrdom). Meanwhile Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operation against terrorists in the Hassan Khel area of Peshawar, which resulted in killing of five terrorists. The prime minister also offered his heartfelt condolence to the family members of Pakistan Army's Captain Hussain Jahangir and Havildar Shafiqullah, who embraced martyrdom during the operation.



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

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

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

The COAS expressed that Late President Ebrahim Raisi and Late Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian were exceptional leaders and true friends of Pakistan. He said that such threats coming from across the borders make regional security more complex. The interior minister said that it was a planned attack and was operated from Afghanistan. He said Pakistan had raised this issue with Afghanistan's Interim government and stressed them to control terrorists operating from there.

The COAS said that Pakistan has historic, cultural and brotherly ties with Iran and the Armed Forces of Pakistan and Iran have always stood together. General Bagheri thanked the COAS for sharing grief and vowed to continue the cooperation between the two militaries.

He said that such threats coming from across the borders make regional security more complex. The interior minister said that it was a planned attack and was operated from Afghanistan. He said Pakistan had raised this issue with Afghanistan's Interim government and stressed them to control terrorists operating from there.



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

## Media suffocation, not intended: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said on Sunday that the government was not inclined towards suffocating the media, asserting that there were no such attempts from their side.

Regarding Pakistan's Youm-e-Takbir, observed on May 28 to commemorate the country's emergence as a nuclear power, he credited Nawaz Sharif for defying international pressure in the interest of Pakistan's sovereignty and freedom.

He also acknowledged the foundational role played by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan's nuclear program. He said that the general council meeting of PML-N would be held in Lahore on the historic May 28, where the election for the party's presidency, to be contested by Nawaz Sharif, would take place. He expressed the party's collective sentiment to address the perceived injustice done to Nawaz Sharif.

He said that the government was not inclined towards suffocating the media, asserting that there were no such attempts from their side. Talking to a private news channel, he said that while social media platforms offers vast benefits, it also carries risks, notably in spreading misinformation that can sow chaos in society. He said the government's aim to mitigate these risks and ensure that social media was used responsibly.

He further noted the importance of consulting stakeholders to formulate laws aimed at addressing the challenges posed by social media. He stressed that such laws must be in the interest of all to safeguard



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

## PPP delegation calls on PM Shehbaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Sunday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed matters of mutual concern.

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

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

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

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

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

## Aleem to attend two-day int'l conference in Tajikistan from May 29

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications, Privatisation and Investment Board Abdul Aleem Khan will visit Tajikistan to represent Pakistan in a Two-Day International Regional Conference under "Road to Tien Shan". Besides Pakistan, China, India, Armenia, Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan are included in this international conference on May 29 and 30, while the heads of important international financial and investment institutions will also participate, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

## Legend actor Talat Hussain passes away

KARACHI (APP): The acting legend and renowned drama, stage and film actor Talat Hussain

May 26 and survived by a widow, two daughters and a son. The funeral prayer of the actor was held at Aisha Masjid, Khayaban e Ittehad, phase 8 attended by actors belonging to Pakistan showbiz industry, relatives, fans and a large number of people. Earlier, the Actress Tazeen Hussain, who is the daughter of, late actor Talat Hussain had confirmed the death of her father on Sunday. Late Talat Hussain had worked in various drama and stage plays as well as in films including Indian movie 'Souten Ki Beti' and Norwegian movie 'Importeksport'.



Warsi was laid to rest in a graveyard of DHA phase 8, here on Sunday. The legendary actor passed away at the age of 83 after a prolonged illness in the morning of



Daily Voice of Masses Independent

ICJ rebuke

Matters are not going well for Israel where world opinion regarding its murderous activities in Gaza is concerned. On Friday, days after the International Criminal Court called for arrest warrants to be issued for the Israeli prime minister and defence minister... as well as three Hamas leaders...

Nuclear deterrence

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Fifty years ago, in May 1974, India detonated its first nuclear device, calling it Operation Smiling Buddha. While the world remained largely silent, Pakistan's foreign minister declared Pakistan would "never submit to nuclear blackmail" or "accept Indian hegemony over the subcontinent"...

Reality bites

Muna Khan

One of my high school teachers, an American middle-aged man, used to poke fun at us for being clueless. He would often reference student protests in the 1960s as great examples of attempts to disrupt the system...

images from the gala lip-synched to 'let them eat cake', a reference to Marie Antoinette's phrase which demonstrates an insensitivity to the challenges faced by the poor... Success. And Malala Yousafzai too, who despite many clarifications and statements on X denouncing Israel and calling for a ceasefire...

Commerce News

Pakistan's regional exports increase 20.61% in 10 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 20.61 per cent in the first ten months of the financial year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding months of last year. The country's exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$3,655.483 million...

exports to India increased to \$1.376 billion from \$0.250 billion in the previous year. Exports to Nepal decreased by 1.38 per cent to \$2.420 million from 2.454 million while to Maldives increased by 13.90 per cent to \$7.671 million from 6.783 million...



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

Kirmani discusses farmers issues with Federal minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani on Sunday met Federal Minister for Water and Power Awaiz Leghari. According to a handout issued here, during the meeting provision of uninterrupted electricity to farmers of Punjab and other facilities came under discussion.

Govt to ensure affordable, quality food to public: Bilal

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

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin has said that all possible measures are being taken to provide affordable and quality food items to the public. Presiding over an important meeting to reduce the prices of bakery items here on Sunday, he said that the government will ensure the reduction in the prices of bakery products...



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

PFC to participate in London Tech Week expo

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council CEO Mian Kashif Ashfaq said on Sunday that PFC would participate in the five-day international London Tech Week expo, commencing on June 10, 2024. Chairing the PFC Board of Directors meeting here, he said the event offers a significant platform to showcase the diverse and high-quality range of Pakistani furniture products...

Call for promoting new hi-tech hybrid seeds

LAHORE (APP): Former caretaker federal minister for National Food Security Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik said on Sunday that promotion of new and hi-tech hybrid seed varieties of various crops under public-private partnership could revolutionize the agriculture sector of Pakistan. He added that industry-academia synergy was also need of the hour to achieve this goal...

Oil, Gas Conference Pakistan-2024 set for May 29

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

Agriculture backbone of country, says Saqib Ali

KHANEWAL (APP): Secretary Agriculture South Punjab, Saqib Ali Ateel, said that agriculture was the backbone of our economy and Pakistan's future is linked with agriculture. He expressed these views during his visit to the early cotton MNH 75 Sultan fields at Chaudhry Intiaz Farm at Adhiwala on Sunday. He added that Punjab holds special importance as approximately 70 per cent of the country's total cotton production comes from Punjab. He said that the cotton not only kept the wheel of the national textile industry running but also generates foreign exchange through its export...

Pakistan to export female nursing staff to Malaysia

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), an attached department of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, would export around 100 female nursing staff to a health firm in Malaysia. He informed me that 100 nurses were required for ICU with a diploma in nursing, a bachelor of science in nursing, or a post-RN from a recognized institution.



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

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



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

## PML-N govt to make country prosperous

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

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

## ANF recovers 324 kg drugs in nine operations

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

## KP Food Authority conducts major operation against adulteration mafia

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



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

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

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

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

## CM pays tribute to martyred military personnel

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

## International News

## 30 more Gazans killed as Israeli strikes continue

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

## US lawmakers visiting Taiwan this week

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

## Four US vessels run aground near Gaza pier

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



Ahsan Iqbal says

## Govt committed to empower youth through education, skills

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning and Development Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Sunday announced that the government was committed to providing the youth with advanced education, digital training and equal employment opportunities to prepare them for future challenges.

He emphasized that nations with fewer resources have surpassed Pakistan because of their political stability and continuity of policies, said a news release.

In contrast, Pakistan has suffered from internal discord and extremism due to political instability and lack of policy continuity.

The minister highlighted that visionary long-term plans like Vision 2010 and Vision 2025 were never fully implemented.

Addressing a ceremony at University of Narowal where laptops were distributed to students under the Prime

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

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

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

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

Professor Iqbal highlighted the government's vision to provide a digital platform to the youth, enabling them to propel Paki-

stan into the world's top ten economies by its 100th anniversary.

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

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

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

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



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

## Muqam lauds IOM services for Afghan refugees in Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Engr. Amir Muqam Sunday said that Pakistan continued to bear the world's largest refugee burden for the past 40 years and also urged the international community to acknowledge our efforts in that regard.

Talking to a delegation led by Chief of Mission for the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Pakistan, Ms. Mio Sato, the federal minister commended the International Organization for Migration

(IOM) for its services to Afghan citizen card holders and the host community.

Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees Mohammad Abbas Khan, Joint Secretary of SAFRON and other senior officials were also present on the occasion.

The federal minister expressed the desire for Afghan refugees to return their country with dignity, noting that there had been no incidents of forced expulsion or harassment. He emphasized the need for screening to determine their locations and activities.

He said that Pakistan

was aware of the business activities, education, and relationships of Afghan refugees within the country. He highlighted that many Afghans were involved in businesses that are beneficial to both Pakistan and its citizens.

"I will travel to Geneva in June at the invitation of the High Commissioner of UNHCR, and also planned to meet with the DG of IOM," he added.

Chief of Mission Mio Sato expressed gratitude to the minister for meeting despite the holiday and stated her intention to maintain close contact with the Ministry.

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

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

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

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

They decided to schedule another meeting tomorrow for further discussions.

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

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

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

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

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

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Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi calls on MNA Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah in Islamabad.

## 'India using sham elections in IIOJK to perpetuate its military occupation'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Elections in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) under military siege are nothing but a façade.

A report released by Kashmir Media Service, Sunday, said India is using sham elections in the occupied territory to perpetuate its military occupation as polls in IIOJK are meant to give a democratic veneer to India's military occupation.

It lamented that India was frequently holding election dramas in the occupied territory to mislead the international community. Elections in IIOJK are aimed at diverting people's attention from the freedom movement, it added.

The report said that polls in occupied Jammu and Kashmir were intended to give an impression that

the Kashmiris were fed up with the resistance movement but they would continue their struggle till taking it to its logical conclusion.

It maintained that the people of Kashmir offered sacrifices not for elections but for a United Nations-sanctioned plebiscite.

The report said the August 5, 2019, illegal actions by the Modi regime show how little India cares for Kashmiris' aspirations.

It said India's sole aim to hold elections is to fortify its illegal occupation of IIOJK but staging polls in IIOJK can't change the disputed nature of Kashmir.

Polls in IIOJK can in no way be a substitute to Kashmiris' right to self-determination and Kashmiri people want plebiscite and not election dramas.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by Ms. Mio Sato, Chief of Mission, UN - IOM, called on Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions Engr. Amir Muqam at the Ministry of SAFRON.

## Sensitising public about heatwave coping measures key, climate change ministry official

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan has been experiencing a rise in deadly heatwaves due to global warming in recent years and the increasing heat during the summer months poses a significant risk to people's health.

A media spokesperson for the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Muhammad Saleem Shaikh emphasised the importance of avoiding unnecessary heat exposure to minimize

the toll on people's health. He warned that the situation could be more problematic and serious for children, elderly men and women that weak immune systems. However, individuals have to constantly protect themselves from annoying health problems by all possible means, particularly by avoiding unnecessary outdoor activities during peak hot hours from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm, the senior official said.

The official

emphasised that while anyone could be affected by heatwaves, pregnant women seem to be more at risk. He said that it is important that pregnant women avoid going out during high temperatures. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study findings, pregnant women are more likely to develop heat exhaustion, heat stroke or other heat-related ailments sooner than non-pregnant women, he explained.

## Minister Salik flays blasphemy allegation

Praises law enforcement response in Sargodha

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

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

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

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

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

## Madinah health centers serve 12,000 pilgrims in early Dhu Al-Qadah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Over 12,000 hajj pilgrims received medical care at seasonal facilities and health centers in Madinah between the 1st and 17th of Dhu Al-Qadah, as part of the Saudi Ministry of Health's efforts to support and care for pilgrims during their stay in the city.

According to the Saudi Press Agency, the Madinah Health Cluster reported that 10,748 pilgrims received healthcare services at seasonal health centers near the Prophet's Mosque and the central area.

## Raja Farooq says: Pakistan, AJK share unbreakable bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider Khan Sunday said that the people of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir share an unbreakable bond, and any attempts to sow discord between them will fail.

Talking to the media in Bakot Sharif, Abbottabad, he emphasized that some miscreants, under the pretense of rights movements, have tried to spread negative propaganda driven by foreign agendas to create hatred between the people of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. However, the residents

of Azad Kashmir recognize that they are united by an indissoluble bond through the Kalima Tayyiba, adding he said. Haider underscored that the people of Circle Bakot, the mountainous region, Murree Hills, Galyat, and Azad Kashmir support each other in times of joy and sorrow. "Both Pakistan and Kashmir are ours," he declared. During his visit to Bakot Sharif, Haider paid respects at the shrine of Pir Mian Fakirullah Bakoti (RA) by offering Fatcha. He was accompanied by Sajjada Nashin Bakot Sharif Pir Sahibzada Hussain.

## CDA chief orders swift completion of IT work for 93 civil courts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, directed that all the IT work, including the video conference room for 93 Civil Courts, should be completed at earliest.

An official source told APP, Muhammad Ali also instructed that the IT work and other repairs be commenced promptly.

The CDA chief said that third-party validation of the 93 civil courts should be carried out by NESPAK while the payments should be made after the satisfaction of the judges.

The official briefed that the construction expenses of the 93 Civil Courts were borne by the CDA and courts have been operational for the past one and a half years.

The 93 Civil Courts were made operational only after the completion of the civil work, he said adding that the courts were constructed at a cost of Rs 2 billion.



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

## CDA announces six month paid internship to fresh graduates

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has announced a six-month 'CDA Internship Program-2024' to fresh graduates for paid internships in various departments of the organization. "The internship program will start from June 2024 to provide an opportunity to young graduates to gain experience and start their professional careers in the different fields," an official in the CDA told APP.

He said, "The successful candidates will receive a monthly stipend of Rs. 40,000 during their stay of six-month internship

period in various departments of CDA. The eligible candidates must have completed a bachelor's degree (04 years) in the last three years from a government recognized institution in the disciplines including Business Administration/Management, Marketing and Computer Sciences," he added. "The candidates awaiting results are ineligible for the internship program," the official said. He said, "The applications submitted in person will not be entertained and applications devoid of requisite information will not be shortlisted."

## Tarar grieved over demise of senior artist Talat Hussain

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

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

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

## Police determined to address public issues on priority; says SDPO Industrial Area

Independent Report  
ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the SDPO Industrial Area holds a Khuli Kachehri at Faizabad masjid, a public relations

SDPO Industrial Area issued orders on the spot to address the issues of the participants and assured them that their suggestions will be taken into account.

He highlighted that police were determined to resolve the issues faced by the citizens. However, Khuli Kachehri was helpful in maintaining direct relationships with the public.

He asserted that better strategy on part of the police led to reduction in crime in the city. Islamabad Police are taking steps to control crime further. He asked the participants to cooperate with the police in controlling the crime in the city.



ISLAMABAD: A deserted view of Sri Nagar Highway due to extreme heat wave in Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: People taking drinking water at a filtration plant installed at Sector H-9 in the Federal Capital.

## Capital women embrace E-scooter, redefine travel norms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Electric-scooters are revolutionizing urban mobility in Islamabad, particularly for women, by offering a sustainable solution to traffic congestion with zero emissions and low costs. This trend reflects a broader global shift towards environmentally friendly and economically viable e-vehicles. As the city embraces this transformative trend, it moves closer to a cleaner, more inclusive future.

E-scooters are dismantling barriers for women in the federal capital, providing them with the means to commute to classes, offices, and other engagements without relying on time-consuming public transport or costly ride-hailing services.

According to data from the Excise and Taxation Department, from May 2023 to May 2024, a total of 62,397 motorbikes were registered, with 780 under the names of women. This surge in registrations among women marks a notable shift in transportation trends, reflecting growing interest and participation in motorbike ownership.

The Statista, which gathers statistics and market data on Pakistan, in its recent figures about country's growing E-Scooter-sharing market shows that Pakistan is expected to experience substantial growth in the coming years. It is projected that by 2024, the revenue for this market will reach US\$507.60k.

This growth is expected to continue, with a 24.36% annual growth rate (CAGR 2024-2028), resulting in a projected market volume of US\$1,214,00k by 2028. Zainab, a student at Riphah University, shared her experience with APP, expressing satisfaction with her new electric scooter. She highlighted the convenience of charging at home and the ease of reaching destinations on time without waiting at bus stops. This newfound independence has brought her a sense of freedom and relief.

Similarly, working journalist Farah Naz emphasized the practical solution e-scooters provide for daily commutes, particularly for women, by

passing long waits at bus stops and congested traffic, saving time and money.

Kashif Javed, Business Development Manager of Metro E-Vehicles, highlighted the rapid transition from petrol bikes to e-vehicles, noting a growing interest among people, particularly students and professionals. The conversion of traditional fuel bikes to electric scooters is also growing, he remarked.

Dr. Ejaz Ahmed, a former Director of WWF, appreciated this change, noting the contribution of e-scooters to Islamabad's efforts towards a cleaner, more sustainable future, as they emit zero tailpipe emissions.

Dr. Khalid Walid, Head of the Energy Unit at the Sustainable Devel-

opment Program (SDP), along with Tuaha Adil, Research Economist at the Policy Research Institute of Market Economy (PRIME), collectively emphasized the economic and environmentally friendly advantages of electric vehicles (EVs). They pointed out the immense pressure on foreign exchange reserves due to the transportation sector's oil consumption, highlighting the potential savings and environmental benefits of adopting e-scooters. E-scooters are changing how we navigate cities, empowering women, saving money, and promoting eco-friendliness. With more adopting this electric trend, the capital's transportation future looks brighter and cleaner.



ISLAMABAD: A deserted view of Sri Nagar Highway due to extreme heat wave in Federal Capital.