

# Independent

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## President, PM felicitate nation, scientists Pakistan launches first lunar orbit mission ICUBE-Q

WENCHANG, (China) (APP): Pakistan's historic lunar mission (ICUBE-Q) was launched on board China's Chang'e 6 from Hainan, China.

Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, Prof. Qamar Ul Islam of Institute of Space Technology (ICT) and other senior officials witnessed the launch.

While congratulating nation on this historic achievement, Ambassador Hashmi said that the launch signifies yet another milestone and a good example of Pakistan-China bilateral cooperation in space exploration and research.

Prof Qamar Ul Islam informed that the satellite ICUBE-Q has been designed and developed by IST in collaboration with China's Shanghai University SJTU and Pakistan's national space agency SUPARCO.

ICUBE-Q orbiter carries two optical cameras to

image the lunar surface. Following successful qualification and testing, ICUBE-Q was integrated with the Chang'e 6 mission. Chang'e 6 is the sixth in a series of China's lunar exploration missions, he added.

Chang'e 6, China's Lunar Mission will touch down on the Moon's far side to collect samples from the surface and return to Earth for research.

The mission holds significance for Pakistan as it also took a Pakistan CubeSat Satellite iCube-Q, developed by IST.

According to IST, CubeSats are miniature satellites typically characterized by their small size and standardized design. They are constructed in a cubic shape, consisting of modular components that adhere to specific size constraints.

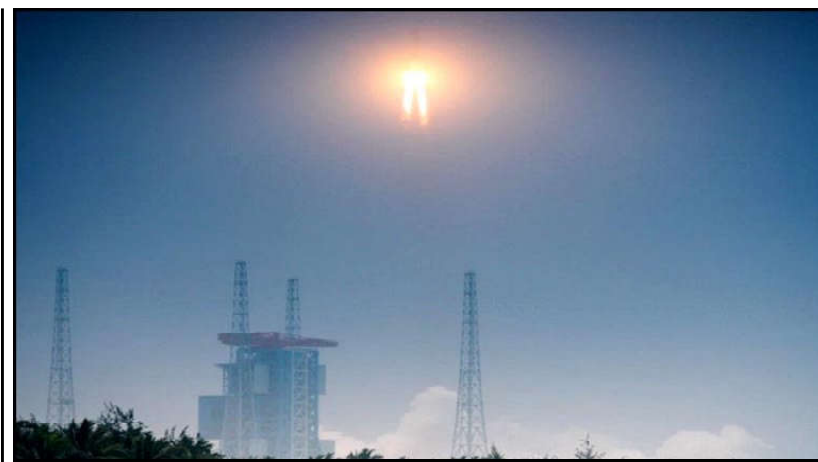
These satellites often weigh no more than a few kilograms and are deployed in space for various purposes.

The primary purpose of cubesats is to facilitate scientific research, technology development, and educational initiatives in space exploration.

These satellites are utilized for a wide range of missions, including Earth observations, remote sensing, atmospheric research, communications, astronomy, and technology demonstration.

Due to their compact size and relatively low cost compared to traditional satellites, CubeSats offer opportunities for universities, research institutions, and commercial entities to participate in space missions and gather valuable data for scientific advancement and innovation.

They serve as platforms for testing new technologies and concepts, enabling access to space for a broader range of users and promoting collaboration within the space community.



WENCHANG (China): Pakistan's historic lunar mission (ICUBE-Q) was launched on board China's Chang'e 6 from Hainan, China.

## CM Sindh Murad says: Sindh govt taking measures to eliminate malnutrition

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that his government is committed to taking concerted action to eradicate all forms of malnutrition, including stunting, to safeguard the future of our children.

This he said while speaking at a workshop on "multi-sectoral convergence strategy on stunting & malnutrition in Sindh" organised by the Planning & Development Department in collaboration with the World Bank at a local hotel.

The program was attended by Minister P&D Syed Nasir Shah, Minister Health Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, World Bank (WB) Country Director Mr Najy Benhassine, World Bank Regional Director Mrs. Nicole Klingens, and others.

Mr Shah stated that his government is dedicated to reducing the current stunting rate in the province. He mentioned that when he assumed the office

of Chief Minister, he initiated an Accelerated Action Plan to reduce stunting. In 2017, with the assistance of the WB, Sindh govt adopted a multi-sectoral approach to reduce stunting and other forms of malnutrition.

The nutrition-sensitive sectors such as livestock, fisheries, and agriculture were included in the program.

Several health facilities now have Outpatient Therapeutic Program (OTP) sites that are specifically designed for malnourished children. The Sindh government and its development partners have made every effort to handle this crucial issue effectively.

Mr Shah mentioned that the unprecedented floods in Sindh in 2022 caused havoc for the people of Sindh. The calamity affected every sector of society, including education, health, agriculture, and livestock. Large swaths of land were under water for many weeks. Sindh government

had only priority to save human lives and give them shelter with its meagre resources available for such a catastrophe, the CM said and added 20,000 schools were either partially or fully damaged and hundreds of health facilities came under water, however, our government stood by the people in that moment of trial and tribulation.

Murad Shah stated that poverty, income, and social protection have a direct impact on stunting in children under 5 years of age. The Sindh government has established a dedicated department for social protection and, with the assistance of the World Bank, has launched a social protection strategy unit that includes direct cash transfers to beneficiaries.

Additionally, the government has initiated a health project called '1000 Days' to provide adequate nutrition to pregnant and lactating women, reducing the likelihood of malnutrition in newborns.

## President stresses measures to ensure safety, security of journalists

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari has emphasized the need to initiate measures for the safety and security of the journalists enabling them to freely report on important issues, without fear.

"The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees the freedom of the press; however, it is also the responsibility of the media to abide by journalistic ethics and report responsibly and accurately, keeping in view the national interest," the president said in his message on the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day.

President Zardari also stressed the need to provide an enabling environment free of intimidation or harassment to journalists so that they could freely express their opinions.

"Today, we also recognize the commendable

role played by the media in promoting democratic values in the world, as well as raising awareness about issues of social and economic significance, especially climate change and global warming," he said.

"I am hopeful that the media would continue to contribute constructively in raising awareness about issues of global concern. I am sure that media advocacy of these issues would spur international action to save our planet from the threat of climate change."

President Zardari maintained that the World Press Freedom Day was commemorated every year on May 3 to affirm the commitment to cultivating an environment where "the media is independent and diverse and enjoys freedoms with responsibility as enshrined in our Constitution".

## Bilawal calls on Prime Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan People's Party and MNA Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Friday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed matters related to mutual interests. In the meeting, the two leaders also discussed the overall political situation of the country, a PM Office news release said.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party and MNA Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Naqvi, Tessori hail media's role for uplifting democracy

KARACHI (INP): Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori hailed on Friday the role of media for uplifting the democracy in the country.

Expressing his thoughts in line with the World Press Freedom Day, Naqvi said: "I extend heartfelt congratulations to the journalistic fraternity of Pakistan and around the globe. The role of a free press in promoting progress, democracy, and accountability cannot be overstated."

"The journalistic community carries a significant responsibility as the fourth pillar of the state. Through-

out my career, I have upheld journalistic principles," he said.

"The journalistic fraternity has rendered invaluable services by highlighting various issues, including social injustices," Naqvi said.

Naqvi praised the journalists who had sacrificed for truth and press freedom.

Meanwhile, underscoring the importance of press freedom, Tessori said: "The press freedom is an integral part of democracy's strength. We cannot overlook the role of journalists in promoting and maintaining democratic values and continuity."



ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Raja Pervaiz Ashraf addressing the World Press Freedom Day 2024 seminar on "Freedom of Expression & Challenges in Pakistan" at National Press Club.

## 20 passengers killed, 22 injured in GB bus accident

GUNAR (INP): At least 20 people have been killed in a tragic accident when a bus travelling from Rawalpindi to Hunza fell into a ditch early this morning near Gunar Farm in the Diamer area of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Rescue officials said the accident has also left at least 22 people injured. According to reports from the region, the passenger bus veered off the road while taking a turn near Yashkul Das and fell into a ditch around 5am on the Karakoram Highway.

Rescue operations were swiftly initiated, with teams rushing to the accident site to assist the injured and retrieve the deceased. The Gilgit-Baltistan

chief minister's spokesman said the injured were rushed to the Chilas Regional Headquarters Hospital for medical treatment. Emergency measures were implemented in hospitals in Chilas to ensure prompt care for the victims.

Diamer Deputy Commissioner Fayaz Ahmed confirmed the death toll, saying that among the deceased were 17 men and three women.

He said three bodies and 21 injured were shifted to the Regional Headquarters Hospital. Three of the injured were referred to Gilgit by road, while those critically injured will be transferred to Gilgit by helicopter.



KARACHI: Newly appointed Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan Marilia Armellini meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori. Consul General Italy Danilo Giurdanella is also present.

## At OIC CFM

## Pakistan calls for immediate Gaza ceasefire, humanitarian corridor, Israel's accountability

BANJUL (Gambia), (APP): As the foreign ministers of the OIC countries gathered ahead of the Islamic Summit here, Pakistan called for the declaration of an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza, the lifting of the inhuman siege, and the opening of a humanitarian corridor, besides urging the international community to hold Israel accountable for its war crimes in Gaza.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, in his address at the Preparatory Meeting of Foreign Ministers for the 15th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference held here on Thurs-

day, also called for an end to the indiscriminate use of force and the return of the displaced people.

Ishaq Dar, who arrived in the Gambian capital city of Banjul on Wednesday for the OIC Islamic Summit, also emphasized the UN Security Council's role in implementing its resolution 2728 for cessation of hostilities, asking Israel to halt all settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and relinquish all usurped Palestinian properties.

The theme of this year's summit is "Enhancing Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue for Sustainable Development."



BANJUL: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar participated in the preparatory Meeting of Foreign Ministers to the Islamic Summit of the OIC.

## Commissioner for adopting measures during predicted heatwave in city

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi has directed all Deputy Commissioners to adopt measures to protect citizens from the heatwave as predicted by the Meteorological Department. He issued such directives during a meeting held at the Commissioner's office to review steps being taken to face the upcoming heatwave in the Metropolitan city.

Given the expected heat wave, it was decided to establish cold water fountains (Sabeels) across the city and activate Heat Stroke centers. The Commissioner said that the administration will have to adopt emergency measures to protect people from the heatwave spell as per reports issued by the Met office.

Given the 2015 heatwave tragedy, it was decided that all required measures must be adopted to face any emergency. The Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarifzad briefed the meeting regarding the expected heatwave in the city and informed that the weather will turn very hot from May 6 to 8 and people should avoid moving outside while the administration must operationalize Heat Stroke centers to protect citizens from such harsh weather condition.

The meeting decided that the Meteorological Department should issue a heatwave alert with preventive advisory three days before the expected date while all city hospitals to take measures to provide treatment facilities to heatwave victims.

## President approves Justice Siddiqui's retirement

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari, in light of the Supreme Court's March 22, 2024 judgement, on Friday approved the issuance of retirement notification of Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui, on attaining the age of superannuation, i.e., with effect from June 30, 2021.

The president approved the issuance of retirement notification under Article 195 of the Constitution of Pakistan.

He also approved the withdrawal of the Law and Justice Division's notification, dated October 11, 2018, regarding Justice Siddiqui's removal as Judge, Islamabad High Court.

Earlier, Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui had been removed as IHC Judge, vide notification dated 11.10.2018, upon the recommendations of the Supreme Judicial Council of Pakistan, under Article 209(6) of the Constitution.

## PM grieved over death of Khuzdar Press Club president in blast

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed grief over the martyrdom of Khuzdar Press Club President Maulana Siddiq Mengal in a bomb blast.

The prime minister prayed to Allah Almighty for forgiveness of the departed soul and strength for the bereaved family to bear the loss.

He also prayed for the swift recovery of those injured in the incident.

## Imran accuses CJP of being 'biased' against PTI

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Friday urged the courts to expedite hearings of his cases, accusing Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa of being "biased" against his party.

"I urge all judges presiding over my cases to expedite the hearings and refrain from unjustified delays," he said in a message from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail. Saying that delaying the decisions was unjust, he said that all cases against him were false, baseless, and concocted. Khan referred to CJP Isa's statement, saying, "He stated that there is no pressure on him, but pressure comes to those who refuse to indulge in wrongdoing. You are behaving like [government's] B-team against PTI." "You snatched electoral symbol from PTI, denied a level playing field, and violated our fundamental human rights in the guise of the May 9 incidents.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi and Federal Minister for Aviation and Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif reviewing the facilities for passengers at Allama Iqbal International Airport.

## Government taking measures to curtail school drop out ratio: Sardar Shah

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah Friday said that School Education Department initiated concerted measures to prevent school dropouts, particularly for upgrading schools and providing transport to girls to facilitate them in continuing their education.

The minister, in a meeting with the delegation of Asian Development Bank, hoped that these measures would help more than 0.8 million girls in Sindh completing their high school education in the coming years, said a statement issued here.

Sardar Ali Shah said that model schools will be established at Taluka (Tahseel) level in Sindh and ensuring access of girls to those schools will be the first priority.

Seeking Asian Development Bank's support for promotion of girls' educa-

tion in the province, he said that the Sindh government intended to arrange transport under the public private partnership mode to bring girls to schools by ensuring provision of quality commuting facilities.

The minister underscored the need of rehabilitation of 1600 flood-affected schools in Sindh and outlined that schools with high enrollment ratio will be given priority in the rehabilitation process.

Highlighting measures for preparation of curriculum in Sindh, the education minister informed that for the first time in Sindh, Middle Tech curriculum has been developed under which students would be imparted technical education along with formal education so that they could be able to get livelihood support based on their learned skills while continuing their further education.



KARACHI: Journalists hold placards during protest against Khuzdar Press Club President Maulana Siddiq Mengal and Palestinian journalists killed on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day in the Provincial Capital.

## CM Murad blames PTI-led govt for 'targeting' journalists

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah blamed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder-led government on Friday for "targeting" the journalists.

Expressing his thoughts in line with Press Freedom Day, CM Murad hailed the Sindh government for "ensuring the rights" of journalists. "Press freedom hinges on social responsibility," he said.

He maintained: "The quality of responsible journalism is to remain within social boundaries. Anti-democratic forces are looking to contain the media."

## US supports Pakistan's plan for fresh IMF loan programme

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has again declared that it steadfastly supports Pakistan's efforts to bolster its economy, including its engagements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to seek new loan programme.

During daily news briefing in Washington on Thursday, State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller emphasized Washington's unwavering commitment to aiding Pakistan's economic recovery. Miller affirmed the US backing for Pakistan's economic stabilization endeavours, explicitly mentioning the importance of reaching agreements with the IMF.



## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Under siege

Journalists across the world are facing unprecedented threats — from legal and economic pressure to outright threats of violence — hindering their ability to report freely. The war in Gaza highlights the perils faced by journalists in conflict zones. Since Oct 7, at least 97 journalists and media workers have been killed.

In India, press freedom has seen a marked decline, driven by a political climate that increasingly stifles dissent. Media ownership is concentrated among a few aligning closely with the BJP — slated to win a third straight term in power — narrowing the diversity of voices in the media. Journalists face harassment and legal actions, and purse strings dictate media narratives. Meanwhile, Bangladesh, ranked lowest for press freedom in South Asia, faces its own challenges. The Cyber Security Act approved last year threatens to deepen the state's control over media, limiting journalistic freedom and leaving room for the arbitrary interpretation and application of the law. Such developments, alongside violence and judicial harassment of journalists, underscore a growing hostility towards independent journalism. A similar climate prevails in Pakistan, where the media has always been under siege. The battle is dual-fronted: the government and security establishment both assert control, looking to influence editorial policy. This suppression continues regardless of which party holds power. A notable example is the implicit 'ban' on media channels from naming PTI founder Imran Khan. This policy, initiated during Shehbaz Sharif's last tenure as PM, persisted through the caretaker rule and remains sporadically enforced.

Opposition parties, despite their cries for media freedom, often employ similarly suppressive tactics once in power. Whether through direct censorship, withholding advertising, or sinister measures such as harassment, legal intimidation and violence, the press in Pakistan navigates a hazardous terrain. Making matters worse is a troubling shift within segments of the media landscape, where the lofty ideals of journalism have been sidelined in favour of compliance. Many media houses, once bastions of fearless reporting, now capitulate under the aforementioned twin pressures.

This surrender is often motivated by financial incentives or coercive force, leading to journalism that panders rather than probes. Powerful corporate entities are an additional pressure, some of whom throw money at media houses to campaign against specific outlets. Most recently, four leading publications published an ad in response to an investigative report by Dawn, disgracefully attempting to run it as news.

The need for unity in Pakistan's media has never been stronger, to navigate pressures more effectively, maintain journalistic integrity and push back against attempts to influence editorial content.

# The Army knows its constitutional limits

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



The army chief said that while the army understands its constitutional limits, those who criticize the army should also be aware of the constitutional boundaries set by Article 19 of the constitution which subjects all citizens to reasonable restrictions imposed by law which inter alia include the integrity, security, or defense of Pakistan, public order, decency and morality.

The army chief's speech at the passing-out parade of cadets at Pakistan Air Force (PAF) in Risalpur on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 was seen as a calculated and well-timed response to politicians, media personnel, and social media activists who have been unjustly criticizing the army and called for the army to uphold its oath, which includes respecting the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and refraining from engaging in any political activities.

The army chief's words can be interpreted as a rebuke to those who are using traditional and social media to condemn the army. He seems to be

implying that the army knows its responsibilities and no one has the right to dictate its actions. Instead, individuals should be mindful of their own actions and avoid crossing the boundaries set by Article 19 of the constitution.

Interestingly, the abuse and condemnation of the army on social media platforms are not unique to Pakistan. For example, in countries like the United States, United Kingdom, India, and others, the military has been subjected to criticism and abuse on social media on account of political differences, human rights concerns, and accountability issues. These countries have also implemented various remedial actions.

In the United States, the Communications Decency Act of 1996 includes provisions related to online harassment and obscenity. Additionally, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) includes provisions that address disrespectful behavior towards the military.

The Malicious Communications Act 1988 in the United Kingdom criminalizes the sending of electronic communications with the intent to cause distress or anxiety. Similarly, the Communications Act 2003 includes provi-

sions related to offensive and menacing messages sent over electronic communications networks.

In India, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, require intermediaries to take down certain types of content, including those that threaten public order or national security. Additionally, the Indian Penal Code includes provisions related to defamation, hate speech, and incitement to violence that can be applied to online behavior.

In Pakistan, there are 52 media laws, rules, regulations, and codes of conduct primarily aimed at imposing reasonable restrictions on the freedom of the press and social media. These can be used against any person found disseminating biased, baseless, false, and venomous propaganda against the armed forces of Pakistan. However, if there is a need to enact new laws, it should be done only after conducting a nationwide debate and benchmarking the best practices globally, involving all stakeholders to ensure their complete buy-in.

Additionally, social media platforms should be engaged proactively to imple-

ment policies, refine the existing tools and invent new ones to combat abusive behavior on these platforms to combat hate speech and harassment and holding accountable those who violate these policies.

Conscious efforts should be made to strengthen support for and promote traditional media, operated by seasoned, experienced, and highly refined professionals. These individuals are adept at the art and science of making difficult, sensitive, and critical communications in the best interests of our institutions, the people of Pakistan, and the country as a whole. This will enhance credibility in traditional media and discourage the spread of misinformation that often occurs in the unregulated jungle of social media. In social media, facts and reality are distorted with total impunity, often driven by the prime objective of increasing views, which translates to higher revenue. This creates added incentive for social media activists to create sensationalism, anarchy, and chaos in society. Therefore, the public should be incentivized to turn to traditional media by weaning them off social media.

However, the most important inter-

vention which will address this issue comprehensively lies in correcting the misconceived perception about the Pakistan army and its alleged involvement in non-traditional roles such as anti-narcotic duties, anti-smuggling duties, and engaging in commercial activities like housing schemes, construction, large scale manufacturing and banking and serving general are appointed against civilian posts which lead to the perceptions of overreach and a deviation from army core mandate of national defense.

Secondly, a misconceived perception which needs correction is the army's alleged involvement in politics, victimizing disfavored politicians and rewarding favored ones, including raising and eliminating political parties, influencing election results, and intimidating judges and election commissions, while the army time and again has assured that it has no role to play in the politics maneuvering.

Thirdly, misplaced perception is that army and institution under it are involved in human rights abuses, including abductions, torture, and intimidation of citizens, journalists and political activists to suppress free speech and dissent.

While it is para-

mount that the false and malicious propaganda against Pakistan's most important and vital institution must stop, equally important is to take steps to improve Pakistan's ranking on the Freedom of Press Index which currently rests at 150 out of 180 countries.

To dispel misperceptions about the Pakistan Army, an immediate and comprehensive strategic communication plan must be put into action. This plan should start by identifying the key misperceptions. Messaging should be crisp, clear, and consistent, emphasizing the Pakistan Army's core mandate of national defense, its contributions to security, and its unwavering commitment to democratic values.

Engaging with stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, and the general public, and forging partnerships with credible allies such as respected public figures and scholars, are crucial steps. Continuous monitoring and evaluation, coupled with transparency and sustained engagement, are fundamental elements for successfully dispelling misperceptions and fostering positive relationships with the public in Pakistan.

## Commerce News



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level meeting regarding Saudi investments.

### PM hopeful for productive engagement with upcoming Saudi business delegation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed the hope that the interaction with the delegation of Saudi businessmen expected to visit Pakistan in the next few days would prove productive.

The prime minister, who chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress on Saudi investment and projects in

the country, directed the authorities concerned to accord warm hospitality to the delegation.

The participants were briefed about the upcoming visit of Saudi businessmen and their expected investment in different sectors.

The prime minister thanked the Saudi leadership for promoting investment in Pakistan and taking measures for the

country's progress and prosperity.

Apprising the meeting of his recent Saudi visit, Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated the relevant ministers and officers for their well-preparedness.

He told the participants that the Saudi leadership had assured their all-out support for Pakistan's prosperity which was welcoming.

Referring to the bilateral cordial ties with Saudi Arabia that spanned over decades, he said Pakistan was fortunate to have a well-wisher friend like the Kingdom.

Prime Minister Shehbaz told the meeting that Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman were keenly interested in promoting investment in Pakistan.

### World Bank sees brighter future for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Bank Group (South Asia) Regional Director, Mathew Verghis noted here Friday that Pakistan has the potential for a brighter future, leveraging its youth, natural resources, and strategic location to achieve 7-8% annual GDP growth.

Speaking at PIDE and World Bank Debate on Fiscal and Governance Reforms, Mathew emphasized the need to

prioritize reforms addressing the current economic crisis.

The WB Regional Director said Pakistan's existing economic model was unsustainable due to its reliance on borrowing to finance its fiscal and current account deficits, leading to a growing debt level, which has reached 80% of GDP.

He further added that Pakistan's spending exceeds its revenue, and it

imports more than it exports, resulting in increased domestic and external borrowing.

On the occasion, the Vice Chancellor of Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Dr. Nadeem ul Haque spearheaded a pivotal economic reform initiative titled "ISLAAH: Immediate Reform Agenda - IMF and Beyond, beginning with his opening remarks at this significant event.

### Finance Minister for measures to enhance tax to GDP ratio

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday highlighted the importance of devising strategies to enhance the tax-to-GDP ratio and broaden the tax base to maximize revenue collection.

The minister visited the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)

Headquarters and during a meeting with the Chairman FBR and Members of the Board called for making all-out efforts to achieve the ongoing year's revenue collection target.

Attorney General, Mansoor Usman Awan was also present on the occasion, according to press statement issued by FBR.



Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan is being briefed on the matters pertaining to Pakistan Post.

### Farmers' look for Govt helps for better wheat prices

PESHAWAR (APP): Jalal Khan, a progressive farmer, who achieved bumper wheat crop this season seemed upset after hearing news on print and social media about looming wheat prices crisis and started visiting different bazaars to know about actual prices of the commodity as well as makeshift godowns for its storage to avert possible financial loss this season.

"I came to Firdus wheat storage market to know about prices of wheat which was very low this season compared to last year in KP and the only viable option left with me these days to purchase five makeshift wheat godowns to store my 100 KG surplus wheat, hoping to sell it

once prices of the commodity soar in open market," said Nowshera born graduate farmer Jalal wearing in traditional turban.

"The farmers of KP require prices of wheat to be well in excess of Rs 4,000 per 40 kilograms bag to make a reasonable profit. However, the local and international prices were recently recorded as low as Rs 2,500 per bag meaning by

Rs 1500 loss to wheat growers per 40 kilogram bag which added to the worries of thousands of farmers in KP," he claimed.

"I had invested all my money in wheat harvesting this season and will wait to sell my surplus stock once its

prices increase in the local market of Peshawar and Nowshera," he said and expressed the hope that central and KP governments would help assist thousands of farmers in this difficult situation.

Zilakat Malik, former Chairman Economics Department, University of Peshawar told APP on Friday that the wheat prices crisis was looking more likely because of the poor decisions taken by the caretaker governments and bumper crop this year mostly in Punjab besides gaps in demand-supply chains in international markets.

He said that low international wheat supply means this season that exports would face

possible decrease, leaving farmers and relevant government agencies including food departments in provinces to absorb the wheat surplus margin to facilitate its farmers.

Dr Zilakat linked wheat prices crises due to Russian invasion of wheat rich Ukraine, adding the blockage of Ukrainian ports has resulted in global food shortage as Ukraine supplied about 10 percent the world grain supply at the time of attack.

He said Pakistan in the past was arguably most reliant on Ukrainian wheat as it represented about 59 percent of our grain imports and was cost effective for our country.

"The major reason of wheat prices issue in

Pakistan was Russia-Ukraine war, which has not only caused wheat prices to rise in our country but also affected supply chain among regional countries."

However, some of the increase has been offset by the grain export deal between Russia and Ukraine. He said when this deal was on the verge of expiring last year, Pakistan and other regional importers started building up stocks in advance due to poor decision of the caretakers setup, and that the last year also saw a record amount of land in our country was dedicated to growing of wheat keeping in view of high profit margin compared to other seasonal crops.

### KP Food Minister inspects wheat godown in Mardan

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Minister for Food Zahir Shah conducted a thorough inspection of the wheat godown in Mardan, on Friday. During the visit, the minister was accompanied by deputy director and district officials, meticulously reviewed all arrangements related to wheat procurement at the godown.

According to the briefing received by the provincial minister, the wheat godown in Mardan has a storage capacity of

approximately 28,000 metric tons, with an existing stock of around 6,000 metric tons from previous seasons.

Zahir Shah instructed to ensure all necessary measures for wheat procurement during the ongoing season, including the installation of additional surveillance cameras for strict monitoring.

Shah emphasized the KP government's commitment to transparency and quality control in the wheat procurement process.

### Gold rates decrease by Rs 1,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1,400 and was sold at Rs 239,600 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs 241,000 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1,201 to Rs 205,418 from Rs 206,619 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 188,300 from Rs 189,400, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,620 and Rs 2,254.80 respectively.



## Free press imperative for strengthening democracy, democratic values: KP CM

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur on Friday said that the role of free press for the strengthening of democracy and democratic values in any society was imperative.

In his message in connection with the World Press Freedom Day, the CM said that the purpose of celebrating this day was to highlight the importance of free press for democracy.

He paid tribute to journalists across the country, especially in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, for the freedom of journalism. The role of journalist community is worthy of praise, he said adding that the journalists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are performing their duties with great dedication despite the extremely unfavorable conditions.

In the war against terrorism, the people and forces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well as the journalists here have made great sacrifices, he remarked.

"I salute the sacrifices of journalists who lost

their lives in line of duty." He said that the provincial government believes in freedom of speech and will always welcome the positive criticism of the media and will take steps for improvement accordingly.

The chief minister said that the welfare of journalists and the solution of their problems are among the priorities of KP government, adding the present provincial government would play its role with journalists to ensure freedom of the press.



PESHAWAR: A delegation led by Patron-in-Chief of Khyber Eye Foundation Professor Dr. Dawood meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

## Punjab plays role of big brother for all other provinces: Azma Bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari said on Friday that relief goods consisting of 25,000 ration bags had been dispatched for the flood and rain hit people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as per the direction of Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz.

According to a press release issued here, she said that recent flood and rain had badly hit the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

She said that she wanted to express solidarity with the people over the Gilgit-Baltistan bus incident.

Azma Bukhari said, "We are sending 6 trucks carrying food items to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." She further said that Punjab had always played a role of big brother for all other provinces.

The minister said that it was very unfortunate that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was paying no attention towards welfare of the people. Regarding wheat procurement, Azma Bukhari said that inquiry was underway as per the direction of the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and soon findings would come in front of people.

## LHC CJ visits Rawalpindi Bench

RAWALPINDI (APP): Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan of Friday visited the Rawalpindi Bench, where he was briefed on professional matters.

Upon his arrival at the Bench, the chief justice was warmly received by Justice Shujaat Ali Khan, Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan, Justice Mirza Waqas Rauf and Justice Chaudhry Abdul Aziz.

During the briefing, various administrative issues were also discussed. The chief justice also took round of various sections of the bench, and appreciated the staff for their professionalism.

## 15 dead, 1406 injured in 1280 road accidents in Punjab

LAHORE: At least 15 persons were dead and 1406 injured in 1280 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of these, 638 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 768 victims with minor injuries were treated at the site by rescue medical teams, thus reducing the burden of hospitals. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 767 drivers, 60 underage drivers.

## US envoy Blome for bilateral collaboration in IT, health with Punjab

LAHORE (APP): US ambassador Donald Blome has attended multiple meetings with political and business leadership in Punjab to promote collaboration in the Information Technology (IT), health and education sectors. During his three-day sojourn in the provincial capital between May 1 and 3, the US envoy held meetings with Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, Speaker Punjab Assembly (Acting Governor Punjab) Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan and Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly Malik

Ahmed Khan Bhachar. US Consul General to Lahore Kristin Hawkins was also present during the meetings. During the meetings Ambassador Donald Blome explored opportunities to strengthen US - Pakistan partnership in the Punjab province. He also held meetings and attended events focused on bilateral collaboration in the fields of IT, health, and culture.

Besides exploring more areas for future collaboration, Blome underlines the positive impact of initiatives under the US - Pakistan 'Green Alliance' framework.



LAHORE: Students crossing a busy road after the attending their class at a local school, in the Provincial Capital, which may cause any incident any time as needs to attention for concern authority.

## Matric exams Action will be taken against those violating Section 144: DC Ghotki

By Tanveer Ahmed MIRPUR MATHELO: Decision to take action against copy culture during matric exams in district Ghotki, action will be taken against those violating Section 144, assistant commissioners will visit the centers on daily basis to provide reports. According to the details, Deputy Commissioner Ghotki Dr. Syed Mohammad Ali has instructed all the Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates of the district to visit the examination centers in their areas on a daily basis and take

effective measures against the copy culture of Section 144. Legal action should be taken against the violators. The Deputy Commissioner says that the copy culture is no less than a pest for our education, the youth will realize in the future that they have wasted their precious time due to copying, so today the youth should abandon the trend of copying. Go ahead with hard work so that they don't have to face difficulties tomorrow because development is impossible without better education.



HYDERABAD: People are enjoying pleasant evening and cooling themselves during the hot weather, at River Indus in Jamshoro.

## Over 35000 complaints handled in year 2023, says Ombudsman Punjab

RAWALPINDI (APP): Ombudsman Punjab, Major @ Azam Suleman Khan said that 35202 complaints were handled during the year 2023 whereas the number of complaints handled is greater than that of previous years' along with financial relief of Rs 22,504 billion.

He said that the 26229 kanals of public and private land worth Rs.15.834 billion were recovered while the total value of the financial relief received by the complainants was Rs.6.669 billion rupees. The ombudsman said

this while addressing an event regarding the annual report of the Office of Provincial Ombudsman Punjab 2023, which held here on Friday. He presented a comparative review of the annual report and presented data related to the performance of his department, especially in redressal of complaints related to the Police, Local Government and Education departments. He highlighted that an improved data driven result of increased number of resolved complaints was a proof of the growing confidence of the public in the office of the Ombudsman Punjab.

## CM orders to ensure sale of 100gm Roti at Rs 15

MULTAN (APP): In compliance with instructions from Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, district administration has started Geo-Tagging hotels and Tandoors in Multan to ensure no one could fleece the people and they get 100 gram Roti at Rs 15 per piece.

## Delegation of KEF calls on Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): A representative delegation of Khyber Eye Foundation (KEF) called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali and informed him about the performance of the foundation.

The delegation was led by Patron-in-Chief of the foundation Professor Dr. Dawood comprised Adnan Jalil, Khawaja Khalid Sultan, Yawar Nasir and Ubaid Amjad. The delegation informed the Governor about the achievements of eye foundation and discussed with him the establishment of a hospital in Lower Dir.

## Qasim inaugurates District Health Info System-2

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah Friday inaugurated the District Health Information System-2 which would help in improving health reporting mechanisms.

Talking to media men during inauguration, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah said that District Health Information System 2 would further improve the health reporting.

Implementation of DHIS 2 was inevitable for advanced reporting and initially, the S system is being implemented in five districts, Syed Qasim Ali Shah said.

The training of DHIS 2 in other districts will also continue and the upgraded system will be extended to the entire province soon, Syed Qasim Ali Shah added. With this system, it will be possible to better monitor the provision of resources and services of the health department, he confirmed.

## International News

## UN says rebuilding in Gaza post-war at scale unseen since WWII

Monitoring Desk GAZA STRIP: The United Nations said on Thursday that the post-war reconstruction of Gaza would require an international effort unseen since the aftermath of World War II, estimating it could cost up to \$40 billion.

It came as Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh struck an optimistic tone over a possible truce and hostage release deal for Gaza, after weeks of largely stalled negotiations.

There have been reports of sticking points between the militant group and Israel nearly seven months into the war that has devastated the Palestinian territory. But Haniyeh, head of

the group's Qatar-based political bureau, said in calls to Egyptian and Qatari mediators that Hamas was studying the latest proposal with a "positive spirit".

Much of Gaza has been reduced to a grey landscape of rubble and the United Nations estimated the cost of reconstruction at between \$30bn and \$40bn.

"The scale of the destruction is huge and unprecedented... this is a mission that the global community has not dealt with since World War II," UN assistant secretary-general Abdallah al-Dardari told a briefing in the Jordanian capital Amman. The UN official said

"72 per cent of all residential buildings have been completely or partially destroyed". Reconstruction is made more difficult by the presence of large quantities of unexploded ordnance in the debris that Gaza's Civil Defence agency says triggers "more than 10 explosions every week".

Mediators have proposed a deal that would halt fighting for 40 days and exchange Israeli hostages for potentially thousands of Palestinian prisoners, according to details released by Britain.

An Israeli official not authorised to speak publicly said Israel was still waiting for Hamas's formal response to the latest proposal.



People stand next to a house damaged in an Israeli strike, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip.

## Russia says it has driven Ukrainian army from 211 square miles of territory this year

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said his troops had taken control of 547 square kilometres (211 square miles) of territory this year in what he called Russia's "new regions," a reference to four Ukrainian regions that Moscow says it has annexed.

Shoigu, in remarks on Friday to senior military commanders, said Ukrainian forces were retreating all along the front line and that Russian troops were

breaking what he called a network of Ukrainian strongholds.

"The Ukrainian army units are trying to cling on to individual lines, but under our onslaught they are forced to abandon their positions and retreat," said Shoigu.

"Over the past two weeks, the Russian Armed Forces have liberated the settlements of Novobakhmutivka, Semenivka and Berdychi in the Donetsk People's Republic."

## NATO members 'deeply concerned' by activities such as sabotage on alliance soil

Monitoring Desk BRUSSELS: NATO countries say they are deeply concerned by a campaign of hybrid activities on the military alliance's soil they attribute to Russia, and which they say constitute a threat to their security. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday in a message posted on the social media platform X that actions including disinformation, sabotage, acts of violence and cyber and electronic interference "will not deter us from supporting Ukraine." There was no immediate response

to a request for comment from the Russian Foreign Ministry to Stoltenberg's statement. Earlier this year, a U.K.-based think tank said Russia was rebuilding its capacity to destabilize European countries, posing a strategic threat to NATO as its members focus on the war in Ukraine. "NATO Allies are deeply concerned about recent malign activities on Allied territory, including those resulting in the investigation and charging of multiple individuals in connection with hostile state activity affecting Czechia.

## Swinney set to be Scotland's new leader

Monitoring Desk LONDON: Scotland's likely next leader John Swinney is a political veteran who will have to unify his fractured separatist party and revitalise its flagging independence movement.

The 60-year-old belongs to the Scottish National Party's (SNP) old guard, and is an ally of tarnished ex-first minister Nicola Sturgeon, whom he loyally served as deputy for a record nine years.

Swinney is viewed as a calm head capable of stabilising Scotland's ruling party following 39-year-old Humza Yousaf's turbulent leadership and repairing its broken relationship with former power-sharing partners the Greens.

## Georgian NGO worker says she's fighting for her country's future

Monitoring Desk TBILISI: Mariam Tsertsvadze, the co-founder of an animal charity in the Georgian capital, has managed only three or four hours of sleep a night in the past few weeks, but says she is full of energy. Tsertsvadze has joined thousands of other Georgians in nightly protests in the centre of Tbilisi to voice their opposition to a government bill on "foreign agents".

## Turkiye halts all trade with Israel, cites worsening Palestinian situation

Monitoring Desk ANKARA: Turkiye stopped all exports and imports to and from Israel, the Turkish trade ministry said, citing "worsening humanitarian tragedy" in the Palestinian territories.

"Export and import transactions related to Israel have been stopped, covering all products," Turkiye's trade ministry said in a statement.

"Turkiye will strictly and decisively implement these new measures until the Israeli Government allows an uninterrupted and sufficient flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza."

The two countries had a trade volume of \$6.8 billion in 2023. Turkiye last month imposed trade restrictions on Israel over what

it said was Israel's refusal to allow Ankara to take part in aid air-drop operations for Gaza and its offensive on the enclave.

Earlier on Thursday, Israel's foreign minister said that Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan was breaking agreements by blocking ports for Israeli imports and exports.

"This is how a dictator behaves, disregarding the interests of the Turkish people and businessmen, and ignoring international trade agreements," Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz posted on social media platform X.

Katz said he instructed the foreign ministry to work to create alternatives for trade with Turkey, focusing on local production and imports from other countries.

## Students erect pro-Palestinian encampments across major Canadian universities

Monitoring Desk TORONTO: Quebec Premier Francois Legault said on Thursday the encampment at Montreal's McGill University should be dismantled as more students erected pro-Palestinian camps across some of Canada's largest universities, demanding they divest from groups with ties to Israel.

The Canadian protests come as police have been arresting hundreds on U.S. campuses and the death toll in Gaza has been mounting.

While McGill had requested police intervention, law enforcement had not stepped in Thursday to clear the encampment and said in a statement Thursday evening it was monitoring the situation.

Students also set up encampments at Canadian schools including the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia and the University of Ottawa.

"We want the camp to be dismantled. We trust the police, let them do their job," a spokesperson for Legault said.

There was also a pro-Israel counter-protest in Montreal Thursday. The two sides were kept separate. On Thursday morning, students at the University of Toronto set up an encampment in a fenced-off grassy space at the school's downtown campus where some 100 protesters gathered with dozens of tents.

According to a statement from organizers the encampment will stay until the university discloses its investments, divests from any that "sustain Israeli apartheid, occupation and illegal settlement of Palestine" and ends partnerships with some Israeli academic institutions.



Britain's opposition Labour Party leader Keir Starmer, Shadow Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner and Labour Party MP for Blackpool South Chris Webb meet with activist after Labour won a Parliamentary by-election in Blackpool, Britain.

## Russia can't match a Western asset seizure, but it can inflict pain

Monitoring Desk LONDON: Russia's ability to mete out like-for-like retaliation if Western leaders seize its frozen assets has been eroded by dwindling foreign investment, but officials and economists say there are still ways it can strike back. The United States wants to seize immobilised Russian reserves - around \$300 billion globally - and hand

them to Ukraine, while EU leaders favour ringfencing profits from the assets, estimating they will total 15-20 billion euros by 2027. Much of that money is centrally held, meaning it is accessible if the West decides to go after it. Russia says any attempt to take its capital or interest would be "banditry" and has warned of catastrophic consequences.

## Pro-China leader elected as Solomon Islands PM

Monitoring Desk HONIARA: Solomon Islands lawmakers elected China-friendly former foreign minister Jeremiah Manele as prime minister on Thursday, choosing him over an opposition leader intent on curbing Beijing's reach in the Pacific nation.

Manele won 31 votes in a secret ballot of 50 MPs, said Governor-General David Vunagi, the climax of a national election that will resonate in Beijing, Washington and across the South Pacific. His opponent, democratic reformer and long-time opposition leader Matthew Wale, got 18 votes.

Squads of police patrolled the parliamentary grounds as MPs voted inside, warding off unrest that has plagued past elections. "The people have spoken," Manele said, praising the fact that there was no violence. "We have shown the world today that we are better than that."



## Thar coal, energy board approves COD stage tariff, financial terms in review contract stage of Block-II

KARACHI (APP): The Thar Coal & Energy Board (TCEB) unanimously approved the Commercial Operations Date (COD) Stage tariff for the Thar coal Block-II mine and also approved revised financing terms in the review Contract Stage tariff for the Thar coal Block-II mine.

The Board meeting was chaired by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah (Chairman of the board), and was attended by Federal Energy Minister Sardar Awaiz Leghari (through video link), MNA Shazia Marri, Minister Energy Syed Nasir Shah, Education Minister Syed Sardar Shah, Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Kami Singh, Federal Energy Secretary Rashid Langrial (video link), Secretary Energy Dr Kazim Jatoi, MD Thar Coal Energy Board

Tariq Ali Shah, and representative of Planning Commission, Law and Finance Division (video link), a CM House communicate said.

The Board discussed and considered the Commercial Operations Date (COD) Stage tariff of Thar coal Block-II mine of 7.6 Mtpa capacity (Phase-II) and the decision on the Limited Scope Petition regarding Financing Terms of Phase-III Mine of Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC).

TCEB took the following decisions after getting an elaborate presentation from Mr. Tariq Ali Shah, Managing Director, TCEB.

The Board unanimously approved the Commercial Operations Date (COD) Stage tariff of Thar coal Block-II mine of 7.6 Mtpa capacity (Phase-II) SECMC which stood

levelized at \$36.70 per tonne against the Petition Tariff sought at USD 45.80 per tonne.

The Board also unanimously approved revised financing terms in review Contract Stage tariff for Thar coal Block-II mine of 11.2 Mtpa capacity (Phase-III) SECMC by increasing lending spread up to 1.85 per cent over the benchmark interest rate, which was earlier allowed up to 1.5 per cent.

The Board appreciated the efforts made by the Sindh government for achieving the objectives of Thar Coalfield through Block-I and Block-II and directed to expedite Phase-III of Block-II maintained by SECMC so that the objectives of Thar Coalfield could be achieved to bring down the prices of energy tariff in the country.



KARACHI: A delegation of MQM-P meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at governor house.

## PM Shahbaz optimistic for a polio-free Pakistan very soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed the hope that the government, in collaboration with the global partners and national institutions, would be able to eliminate polio from the country very soon.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) led by Dr Christopher Elias, Chair of Polio Oversight Board and President of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Development Division, said the government was fully resolved to purge the country of this fatal disease.

The prime minister directed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to launch a joint awareness drive, in collaboration with the GPEI.

He told the delegation that the government would carry out the accountability of the institutions involved in the polio eradication to ensure transparency in the process.

He also assured to provide full security cover to the vaccination teams.

Prime Minister Shehbaz lauded the \$500 million donation by Saudi Arabia during the World Economic Forum for polio eradication.

## Sindh govt approves 1.7 mln for minor girl's medication

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, along with the Sindh government, has sanctioned funds for the medication of minor girl Haya.

According to a private news channel, the Sindh government approved the 1.7 million rupees for the medical needs of five-month-old Haya, who suffers from Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA).

Sindh government swiftly approved the necessary funds, which will be disbursed to the concerned company in the coming days.

## Bilawal reiterates unwavering support for press freedom

KARACHI (APP): Chairman, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Friday extended sincere solidarity to journalists and media professionals worldwide on the World Press Freedom Day.

Emphasizing the paramount importance of press freedom, he reaffirmed his party's staunch support for the invaluable role of a free and independent press in fostering democracy.

The PPP Chairman, in his message, underscored that press freedom was not merely a cornerstone of democracy, but also vital for nurturing transparency, accountability, and the proliferation of diverse ideas within society.

He urged that safeguarding and upholding this fundamental right should be the responsibility of every democratic government and party. Bilawal said that historically, the press in Paki-

stan had served as a watchdog, uncovering injustices, exposing corruption, and amplifying the voices of the marginalized.

Expressing concern over challenges such as censorship, fake news, and violence faced by journalists, he urged media organizations to uphold journalistic integrity, impartiality, and professionalism in their reporting.

The PPP Chairman reiterated the party's unwavering support for press freedom, grounded in democracy and liberty principles.

He underscored the 1973 Constitution's guaranteed freedom of expression, including press freedom, a legacy of Quaid-e-Azam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

"Under his leadership, reforms liberalized media policies, fostering greater independence," he noted.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative led by Dr Christopher Elias, Chair of Polio Oversight Board and president of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Development Division called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Former PM Raja Parvez Ashraf raises concerns over IMF bailout conditions

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former prime minister Raja Parvez Ashraf has raised concerns about the potential conditions of the new IMF bailout package for Pakistan.

In a statement issued on Friday, the PPP Central Punjab President suggested that the government should brief parliament on the IMF package, with the finance minister providing lawmakers with details on new taxes and approved austerity measures during

an in-camera session.

Ashraf underscored that instead of privatising Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and other vital institutions, state-owned enterprises should be managed through public-private partnerships.

The former PM strongly opposed the idea of imposing taxes on pensioners, deeming it unacceptable.

He urged the Finance Ministry to seek an alternative solution.

## Sindh Culture Minister calls on Indonesian Consul General

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister of Culture, Tourism, Antiquities and Archives Sindh Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah held a meeting with Indonesian Consul General Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat in his office here Friday.

In the meeting, the cultural and tourism affairs of Pakistan and Indonesia and the organization of a three-day cultural program in Karachi under the Indonesian Consulate were discussed.

Speaking at the meeting, Indonesian Consul General Dr. June said that they wanted to highlight the cultural values of Indonesia and Pakistan, especially of Sindh through a three-day cultural program, for which the cooperation of Sindh Culture Department was very important.

He said that Sindh had its own special importance in terms of history, culture and tourism, while the Sindh government was doing a great job in protecting and preserving the historical heritage of Sindh.

Minister Zulfikar Ali Shah assured the Indonesian CG of full cooperation in organizing the cultural program and offered a tourism program for the guests from Indonesia participating in the program.

Minister Zulfikar Ali Shah assured the Indonesian CG of full cooperation in organizing the cultural program and offered a tourism program for the guests from Indonesia participating in the program.



HYDERABAD: Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Hyderabad Chairman, Dr. Ahmed Ali Brohi along with Dr. Masroor Ahmedzai, Controller addressing a press conference, in Hyderabad.

## Burj Solar install Pakistan's first distributed generation Wind Power project

KARACHI (APP): Burj Solar and Power Cement Ltd here on Friday signed a contract to install Pakistan's first distributed generation Wind Power project of 9.6 MW. Burj Solar shall develop and finance the 9.6 MW wind power project at PCL's premises under the 20 years Build-Own-Operate-Transfer structure.

Both the organizations have proudly announced the collaboration for the development and financing of 9.6 MW wind power project, which marks a major milestone in Pakistan's renewable energy sector. This collaboration highlights the collective efforts of Burj and PCL toward fostering private-sector partnerships towards sustainable development in Pakistan. In

2022, Burj had already developed and financed a 7 MW solar power project for PCL under the same BOOT model, which has been successfully operating and dispatching electricity to PCL.

The wind project involves the installation of 2 x 4.8 MW wind turbines at PCL's premises under the 20 years BOOT structure. The project demonstrates substantial commercial viability as it offers significant savings to PCL's energy cost, reduce reliance on fossil fuel, thus helping in import substitution for the Country. The collaboration further aims at reducing approximately 15,000 metric tons of carbon emissions annually and generating around 30 GWh of clean energy on yearly basis.



ISLAMABAD: Senator of Jamaat-e-Islami Mushtaq Ahmed Khan, Leader of PML-N Raja Zafar-Ul-Haq, Spokesperson of Hamas Dr Khalid Qaddumi, and others raising hands showing solidarity with the People of Palestine during Palestine Youth Conference at Jinnah Convention Center, in the Federal Capital.

## CNS visits headquarters of China's People's Liberation Army Navy in Qingdao

RAWALPINDI (Online): Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf visited headquarters of China's People's Liberation Army Navy at Qingdao, China.

The Naval Chief met Chinese Navy Commander Admiral Hu Zhongming to discuss bilateral naval cooperation and regional maritime security issues.

He highlighted the role of Pakistan Navy for regional maritime peace and stability

through Maritime Security Patrol. The Commander People's Liberation Army Navy appreciated the role of Pakistan Navy in joint maritime security in the region and emphasized the importance of strong bilateral maritime cooperation.

The visit of the Naval Chief will further expand the defence relations between the two countries in general and between the armed forces in particular.

## Press freedom imperative for just society: Murtaza

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi and spokesperson for Sindh Government Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Friday said that press freedom was essential for a just society and People's Party has always supported the press freedom.

Our struggle for press freedom and the betterment of journalists will continue, this he said in his message on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that the Day provides an opportunity for us to remember the sacrifices of brave journalists and to renew our commitment for

making all possible efforts for press freedom in the country.

He paid tribute to the journalist community for their valuable services for the survival of democracy in the country and said that journalists who while raising the voice of one's right have never bowed down have in fact nurtured the high values of journalism and their struggle will always be remembered.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said, free press has a fundamental role to play in building the best society and this fact is recognized all over the world.



KARACHI: Fisherman Co-Operative Society Former Director, Salim addresses to media persons during press conference, at Karachi press club.

## SBCA reinforces vigilance to check illegal construction, sets complaint cells

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA), strengthened vigilance and enforcement to check illegal and unauthorized construction activities while complaint cells have been set up to receive and redress public grievances as well.

Director General SBCA, Abdul Rasheed Solangi has directed all Building Inspectors, Senior Building Inspectors, Assistant Directors, and Deputy Directors to undertake thorough inspections of their respective jurisdictions to identify and halt any illegal and unauthorized construction activity.

The directives issued mandate the officers of taking immediate action to

cease and demolish them, if such activities are discovered, said a statement issued here Friday. District Directors are tasked with monitoring illegal construction activities on a rotational basis and they, on detection of any unauthorized construction within their areas, are mandated to report the Director General for disciplinary proceedings under the Enforcement and Discipline Rules of the authority.

Additionally, all designated officers are required to provide a formal undertaking affirming their commitment to preventing illegal and unauthorized constructions within their areas of responsibility.

## Murad Ali Shah condemns Khuzdar blast, martyrdom of Press Club President

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has strongly condemned a blast at Chamrok in Khuzdar, which claimed martyrdom of President of Khuzdar Press Club Maulana Muhammad Siddique Mengal here on Friday.

According to a CM's spokesman, the chief minister expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of Maulana Muhammad Siddique Mengal.

The chief minister expressed his condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for the speedy recovery of those, injured in the blast.

## Asad Qaisar calls for judicial probe into May 9 incident

LAHORE (Online): PTI leader and former speaker National Assembly (NA) Asad Qaisar has said people mandate is being stolen then why the people should contest election.

"One man who is rejected is sitting in assembly. Their conscience don't prick them. This country in fact is police state. The country will not run this way. People have to decide that whether they have to spend life like goats and lambs, he said this while addressing the lawyers in Lahore High Court Bar Association and later talking to media men.

They are playing with the constitution of the country. There is tremendous pressure on courts. Need is there that lawyers should forge unity.

## World Press Freedom Day observed across northern Sindh

SUKKUR (APP): Like other parts of the country, World Press Freedom Day was observed across northern Sindh on Friday to encourage press freedom initiatives and spur assessments of the state of press freedom.

On the day, journalist organisations arranged different seminars, conferences, walks and several other programmes, highlighting the importance of freedom of the press and the role of media and its responsibilities.

This year the day has been dedicated to the importance of journalism and freedom of expression in the context of the current global environmental crisis.

## Gilani emphasizes to protect press freedom, create a safe environment for journalists

ISLAMABAD (INP): On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has extended his heartfelt acknowledgement and commendation to journalists in Pakistan and across the globe for their invaluable contributions to society.

"On this important day, let us reaffirm our shared commitment to guarding and sustaining freedom of press which plays a pivotal role in upholding democracy, promoting accountability, and providing a platform for diverse voices", he said.

The Chairman Senate said: "As someone who has studied journalism, I have a

personal connection to this noble profession and a deep appreciation for the dedication and courage of journalists. Their work is central to the democratic values we hold dear".

From conflict zones to areas afflicted by violence and unrest, journalist across the world are doing a remarkable job braving all risks and obstacles with integrity and bravery while maintain highest standards of professional excellence. We must ensure they can do their jobs without fear or intimidation.

The Chairman Senate emphasized to protect press freedom and to create a safe environment for journalists to operate.



KARACHI: Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Chief, Munam Zafar addresses to media persons during press conference, at Karachi press club.

## DC chairs meeting of district education reform oversight committee

HYDERABAD (APP): A meeting of District Education Reform Oversight Committee chaired by Deputy Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Shehryar Gul Memon was held today at Darbar Hall of DC office. Addressing the meeting DC said that there is no need to hire teachers who have been absent from their duties for a long time. Department should take strict legal action against these teachers and staff and take steps to relieve them from their jobs so that their Qualified teachers can be recruited on the spot.

Deputy Commissioner further said that steps should be taken to provide basic facilities in the schools which lack facilities while all the Taluka Education Officers should make all the headmasters of the schools in their tehsils mandatory to transfer the funds coming from SMC.

In this regard, if any person becomes an obstacle,

the teacher of the school concerned will apply and action will be taken against that person. He added that in the public schools announced by the Sindh government, undergoing girls are deprived of stipend money, they should be registered, in this regard action will be taken against the lax headmaster. Take measures for the attendance of teachers and students by visiting, educational quality and provision of facilities.

Informing the meeting about the construction work, Chief Monitoring Officer Shaheed Benazirabad Tariq Ali Solangi said that schools are being visited on a daily basis to ensure the attendance of teachers and staff in the district. Due to which there has been a lot of improvement in the schools, he further said that a letter has been sent to the Education Department to take action against teachers and staff who have been absent for a long time during the monitoring of the schools.



KARACHI: Police officials arrested the beggars after crackdown against beggars over the directions of the Commissioner Karachi and DC South, at Aram Bagh in Karachi.