

# Independent

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## CM directs local govt to end transition period, hand over powers to local councils

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed the local Government (LG) Department to complete the transition period of local councils, which is still in progress so that elected people can serve the people of their areas.

He also directed the Public Health dept to prepare a scheme under which non-functional RO plants could be functionalised in the interest of the local people.

He was presiding over a joint meeting of different departments which he convened after holding meetings of party workers in divisional headquarters. Those who attended the meeting include Minister Education Syed Sardar Shah, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary Energy Musadiq Khan,

SMBNR Baquallah Unar, Secretary Livestock Kazim Jatoi, Secretary Local Govt Khalid Hyder Shah, Secretary IT Asif Ikram, Secretary Excise & Taxation Saleem Rajput, Secretary Environment Ms Nabila Umar, Secretary Mines & Mineral Tahir Sangi and other concerned officers.

The CM said that during his meeting with the elected representatives of local councils in the divisional headquarters, he was told that the transition period was in progress in their areas.

Secretary Local Government Khalid Hyder Shah said that some local bodies have not completed their transition work. At this, the CM directed the local government Secretary to complete the transition at once and hand over powers to the elected representatives so that they could serve their people.

Murad Shah said that he had also received numerous complaints during the meeting against the non-functioning of the RO plants installed in various villages. At this, Secretary PHE Sohail Qureshi told the CM that in March he repaired and functionalised 140 RO plants in various districts such as 26 in the villages of Badin, seven in Sujawal, 10 in Matiari, three in Jamshoro, Dadu, eight in Karachi, nine in Mirpurkhas, 10 in Tharparkar and 10 in Tando Allahyar villages and others.

The CM was told that the repair of 140 RO plants was made from the M&R budget.

Mr Shah said that he has also received complaints from the Mirpurkhas division, particularly the villages of Tharparkar and Umerkot where RO plants were out of order.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a joint meeting of different departments, held at CM House in Karachi.

## PM approves immediate release of Rs 23b to resolve AJK people's issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday ordered an immediate release of Rs 23 billion to resolve the issues confronting the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

The prime minister decided to provide funds after thoroughly examining the situation of the territory, in a special meeting chaired by him on the subject, a PM Office press release said.

Different parts of the AJK witnessed protest demonstrations during the last couple of days with the people seeking reduced electricity bills and taxes as well as subsidized wheat flour.

Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, AJK cabinet members, and senior leadership attended the meeting besides the federal ministers and leaders of the coalition parties. The Kashmiri leadership and other participants of the meeting thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz for his decision to provide funds.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday congratulated Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on his election as Chairman of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P).

The prime minister, in a statement, said that while serving as the MQM-P convener, Khalid Maqbool had inculcated a new spirit in the party which supported the government in its tough decisions made in the national interests.

He expressed the hope that under Siddiqui's leadership, the MQM-P would truly represent the people and play a more active role in the resolution of their issues.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Excise dept intensifies drive against tax defaulting vehicles

KARACHI (APP): The Excise Department has intensified its campaign against unregistered and tax-defaulting vehicles on the instructions of Sindh's Senior Minister for Information, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon.

During the campaign against unregistered and tax-defaulting vehicles, a total of 1105 vehicles were thoroughly checked in Karachi. Documents belonging to 119 tax-defaulting vehicles were seized during the inspection.

tion, while the owners of 11 vehicles paid their taxes online on the spot.

The Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon praised the officers of the Excise Department for their effective implementation and urged them to expedite operations to achieve concrete results. He stated that the aim of the campaign is to ensure compliance with registration and tax requirements. The Sindh government aims to promote a culture of accountability and responsibility among vehicle owners.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar has said that an effective collaboration among SCO member states holds key importance to harness the region's potential for sustained progress and prosperity.

This was stated by him while speaking during his meeting with Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Ambassador Zhang Ming on Monday.

The deputy prime minister was on a four-day visit to China to co-chair the Fifth Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi which would cover the full spectrum of Pakistan-China relations.

## Collaboration among SCO states vital to harness region's potential: Dar

DPM Dar invites Chinese companies to invest in Pakistan under CPEC

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## PM felicitates Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on election as MQM-P chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday congratulated Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on his election as Chairman of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P).

The prime minister, in a statement, said that while serving as the MQM-P convener, Khalid Maqbool had inculcated a new spirit in the party which supported the government in its tough decisions made in the national interests.

He expressed the hope that under Siddiqui's leadership, the MQM-P would truly represent the people and play a more active role in the resolution of their issues.

The discussion also touched on Pakistan's initiatives and contributions in its ongoing Chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of Government.

Ambassador Zhang conveyed his best wishes to the Government of Pakistan on assuming the Chair and reiterated SCO Secretariat's continued support to Pakistan during its tenure as Chair of the Heads of Government of the Organization.

BEIJING (INP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar meets with Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Ambassador Zhang Ming.



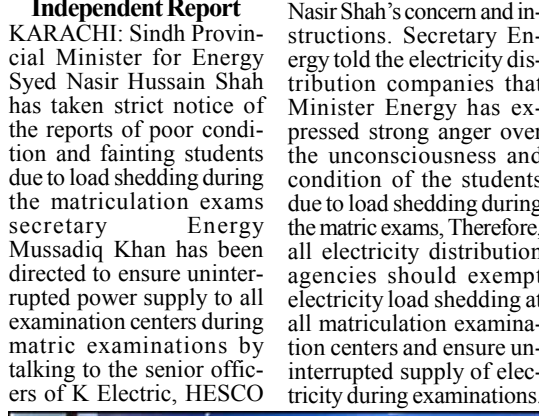
BEIJING: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar meets with Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Ambassador Zhang Ming.

## Nasir took notice on the deterioration of students due to load shedding during exams

Directed Secretary Energy to ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity to centers during matric exams

KARACHI: Sindh Provincial Minister for Energy Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has taken strict notice of the reports of poor condition and fainting students due to load shedding during the matriculation exams.

Secretary Energy Musadiq Khan has been directed to ensure uninterrupted power supply to all examination centers during matric examinations by talking to the senior officers of K Electric, HESCO and SEPCO and to exempt all examination centers from load shedding. On the instructions of Energy Minister Nasir Hussain Shah, Secretary Energy Mossadegh Ahmed Khan immediately contacted the concerned CEOs of K Electric, HESCO and SEPCO and informed them about Nasir Shah's concern and instructions. Secretary Energy told the electricity distribution companies that Minister Energy has expressed strong anger over the unconsciousness and condition of the students due to load shedding during the matric exams. Therefore, all electricity distribution agencies should exempt electricity load shedding at all matriculation examination centers and ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity during examinations.



HYDERABAD: Sindh Minister for information, Transport & Mass Transport Sharjeel Inam Memon address to media persons at press club.

## PM calls cabinet meeting today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has summoned an important meeting of cabinet today (Tuesday).

The overall political and economic situation of the country will be reviewed in the meeting. The tense situation in Azad Kashmir will also come under discussion.

The cabinet will also be taken into confidence on talks with IMF for new program.

## PTI rejects Rana Sanaullah's proposal for grand dialogue

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has firmly rejected an offer by Rana Sanaullah, Prime Minister's Adviser on Political and Public Affairs for a Grand Dialogue, asserting that any talks must involve parties with genuine authority and power.

In a statement made during a private TV Channel program, PTI's Information Secretary Rauf Hassan dismissed the proposal, questioning the legitimacy of Sanaullah and Shehbaz Sharif as representatives for negotiation.

Hassan emphasized that PTI would only engage in dialogue with those possessing real decision-making power, dismissing Sanaullah and Sharif as mere proxies lacking substantive authority.

## Jam Kamal reiterates commitment to policy of business facilitation, export diversification

KARACHI (APP): The Federal Commerce Minister, Jam Kamal Khan, reiterating the government's commitment to policy of facilitating trade and industry and export diversification on Monday, said that measures were being devised to promote local as well as export-oriented industries. The commerce minister, while addressing a media briefing here at the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), said that the incumbent government was determined to bring institutional and structural reforms, resolve issues about energy and tariffs, enhance regional connectivity, and diversify exports for ensuring sustainable growth and stabilizing the economy.

Jam Kamal said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has conducted several meetings with relevant ministries and stakeholders to deliberate upon a range of issues so that a comprehensive strategy could be framed to do away with all the challenges being faced by the business and industry in Pakistan.

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has resigned as president of PML-N.

Meeting of Central Working Committee (CWC) of PML-N has been summoned on Saturday May 18 in Lahore. The meeting has been called under clause 15 of the constitution of the party.

PML-N secretary general Ahsan Iqbal has issued notice of meeting to all the members of CWC.

In the meeting the acting president will be nominated. CWC will nominate Nawaz Sharif as acting president.

PML-N General council will endorse president-ship of Mian Nawaz Sharif on May 28.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan addressing to media persons at Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP).

## Sindh Govt not to tolerate any land grabber in Karachi: Zulfikar Shah

Independent Report: Provincial Minister for Culture, Tourism, Antiquities and Archives Sindh Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah, while reacting to the press conference of the opposition leader of MQM in the Sindh Assembly, said that such pressers appeared when the Sindh government took action against the land mafia. Everyone knows that the Sindh government will not tolerate any land grabber and continue indiscriminate action against the building mafia and China cutting mafia.

Zulfikar Ali Shah warned the opposition leader to avoid blaming the Sindh Government by such irresponsible statements. The Sindh government has freed the lands of Karachi from China cutting masters, he added. He said that with the support of the then governor and mayor of MQM, the building mafia converted the city into a jungle of concrete; the Sindh government will not tolerate any land grabber and continue indiscriminate action against the building mafia and China cutting mafia.

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RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), addressing GHQ Investiture ceremony held at General Headquarters Rawalpindi.

## COAS confers military awards upon Army Officer's at GHQ Investiture ceremony

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Monday conferred military awards upon Army personnel for their acts of gallantry during operations and meritorious services rendered to the nation during an investiture ceremony held here at General Headquarters.

A large number of senior Army officers and families of awardees attended the ceremony.

The officers & soldiers were awarded medals including Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Tamgha-i-Basalat.

Medals of Shuhada were received by their family members, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

Paying tributes to Shuhada (martyrs) and Ghazis, the COAS said, "There is nothing more noble than laying one's life for defence of motherland and the sacrifices of our martyrs strengthen our resolve to fight with utmost dedication and spirit of sacrifice."

The Army Chief also lauded brave families of Shuhada for their high spirits and sacrifices rendered by them.

The COAS said, "Shuhada and Ghazis are our national heroes and the nation owes its independence and security to the sacrifices of its valiant warriors. Our Shuhada are, indeed, the beacons of hope and resilience for the nation."

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## Manzoor Wattoo joins PPP along with family members

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Chief Minister Punjab, Manzoor Wattoo on Monday announced to join the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) with his family members.



He made this announcement after meeting with Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, said press release issued here by the party secretariat.

Former Members National Assembly, Khurram Wattoo and Rubina Shaheed Wattoo and former Members Punjab Assembly, Moazzam Wattoo, Jahan Ara Wattoo and Amina Wattoo Kasuri were the family members of Manzoor Wattoo who joined the party.

Bilawal Bhutto welcomed the new entrants in the party. Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Hassan Murtaza, Shahzad Saeed Cheema and Chaudhry Sajjad ul Hassan were also present in the meeting.



KARACHI: Scholar Professor Dr. Ahmed Rafique meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House.

## Sindh produced 4.2 million tons wheat in crop season 2023-24: Jam Khan

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Food Minister, Jam Khan Shoro, on Monday, stated that total wheat production in the province surpassed 4.2 million metric tons for crop season 2023-24 while food department had procured 643,000 metric tons so far.

The Sindh government has fixed wheat procurement target of 900,000 metric tons for crop season 2023-24 at the price of Rs4000 per 40 kilogram and process of purchasing wheat from the growers was continue in the province, the food minister informed, in a statement issued here.

This time the wheat crop has been better than the previous years, Shoro said, while food department already had 0.5 million met-

ric tons wheat stored in warehouses of the department.

He further said that the food department has so far purchased 643 thousand metric tons of wheat.

The Food Department had planned to establish a total of 353 wheat procurement centers across various regions.

As per details 78 wheat procurement centers were designated in Hyderabad Division, 71 in Larkana Division, 68 in Sukkur Division, 40 in Mirpurkhas division and 58 centers in Shaheed Benazirabad division while 38 procurement centers were to be established in Sanghar district.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Spending restrictions

The consistent contraction in the size of the federal Public Sector Development Programme for the past three years is yet another sign of Pakistan's lingering financial and economic crisis. New official data shows that the government has squeezed federal infrastructure development to Rs353bn — less than 0.4pc of GDP — during the first 10 months of the ongoing fiscal year to April, as the cash-strapped centre slashes its expenditure to meet the IMF goal of producing a primary budget surplus of 0.4pc of GDP this year.

The total spending for the period under review is 38pc of annual PSDP allocations of Rs940bn, and is 12.3pc less than what was spent on development projects during the same period a year before. That the government does not have enough money for new projects, or even for maintaining existing ones, underlines the costs Pakistan's citizens are forced to pay to survive the country's worst economic crisis ever. The lingering financial troubles also mean that most of the millions of people affected by the devastating floods of 2022 are still waiting to be rehabilitated.

A media report suggests that the IMF wants Pakistan to bring down expenditure by around 163bn to Rs183bn — to make up for a significant revenue shortfall — as the Fund is not willing to make concessions on the goal of achieving a primary budget surplus this year. The government has hardly any choice in the matter, unless it is prepared to breach the IMF conditions for a primary surplus — which is an indication of a government's borrowing requirements — that was agreed to under the recently concluded short-term \$3bn Stand-by Arrangement. This would jeopardise its chances of getting a longer and larger bailout to stay afloat.

Another report suggests that, with the discussions on the new bailout approaching, Pakistan has committed to the IMF that it would aim for a primary surplus equal to 1pc of GDP in the next fiscal year. The Fund is already believed to have told the government to raise additional revenues of Rs1.7tr, contain its development expenditure, and increase the petroleum levy target by more than 24pc to about Rs1.1tr next year. The country has achieved a sort of economic stability in recent months and economic fundamentals have shown some signs of improvement.

But this 'recovery' remains fragile and any shock at this point can mean a relapse. The IMF, therefore, has been insisting that Islamabad persevere with economic contraction as long as the fiscal and governance reforms suggested under the SBA — and which are likely to be part of the next programme — create enough fiscal space to put the country back on the growth trajectory. In this context, it would be naive to expect the government to bolster investment in public infrastructure development anytime soon.

### A lost future

Samia Liaquat  
Ali Khan

College campuses across the US have erupted into student demonstrations and sit-ins protesting the genocide in Gaza. Students across every religious denomination are involved. Columbia University, my alma mater, has been most prominently in the news. Not only for being the first set of students to call out their university, but also for the harsh retaliation by its administration. The university's current president is a woman of Egyptian descent — Baroness Nemat 'Minouche' Shafiq.

Great progress around women's and minorities' rights has been made since the turn of the century. More and more, we see men and women of colour populate what used to be the domain of 'white' Westerners. There was much celebration when Shafiq was announced Columbia's next president. In the UK, Rishi Sunak became the first prime minister of South Asian origin. Pakistanis had witnessed the journey of Malala Yousafzai from a traumatised child victim of extremist violence to a young woman at ease in the company of Western political and social elites. While controversy surrounded her, she epitomised struggle and achievement to me.

Today, conversely, as we watch six months of the Israel-Palestine war unfold, with a continuing genocide occurring before our eyes, the role of women and minority-origin leaders in the Global North seems like a sinister reprisal of the old colonial mantra of divide and rule.

The 1990s were a different period, espe-

cially for the youth. There was heady victory in the air — whether in Pakistan or even the US. The return of Benazir in 1988 had galvanised hope in our breasts — and it was still alive and kicking. President Bill Clinton's government felt fresh and exciting, and his choices for who would join him in his administration showed a genuine desire for inclusivity. Take, for example, his first national security advisor — Anthony 'Tony' Lake. He was one of my college professors, and I remember, when the course ended, thinking to myself that if there were more like him in the US administration, the world would be a better place.

The hope that globalisation meant carving a better future for everyone was propelled by events of the time. Watching on TV the 1999 protests against the World Trade Organisation, historically dubbed the 'Battle of Seattle', and studying it later, it became clear to me that there were 'protesters' on both sides of the barricades. Those on the inside believed they would be able to bring about better policies by participating in the process, while those on the outside created the pressure that would achieve global publicity. I read the columns of the inimitable Robert Fisk, writing on the Middle East, with awe and delight in the way he clearly understood the view from the other side (our side). The fall of the apartheid government in South Africa and Nelson Mandela's reconciliation process brought us face to face with what our higher selves could achieve.

But this did not preclude the darkness that was also present.

The Balkan conflict and genocide of Muslims, the genocide of the Tutsis by the Hutus in Rwanda — these were hauntingly terrible events that told of existing failures in attitudes by governments and the UN system. Good and evil, present side by side. Yet, in those few brief years, good seemed to be ahead. And then came 9/11, and the world changed forever.

The two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have been a time where a new world order has been created, one which is far more cynical and insidious than what it was in the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 'with us or against us' mantra has led to a decimation of free thinking, dialogue and debate, with compromise and trust losing out against winner takes all. In this taking, a new set of rules was also created. The fashioning of a global elite, consisting of people like us, bought with offers of money, power, glamour and status. We convinced ourselves that Western democracy models and the global neoliberal capitalist framework were the only ways forward.

Will Minouche Shafiq realise the responsibilities of her position to her own community? Could she be playing out a strategy that brings her public revile, but creates fundamental change from within? Is there a possibility that Malala will realise that her true strength lies not in reliance on Western puppet masters but in finding her own truth, different from what has been created for her? It may lead to her being shunned by those in power today, but who can predict where one's destiny lies? Only time will tell.

### Shadow of the moon

Huma Yusuf

Thanks to my seven-year-old child, I have a newfound interest in space technology. We followed the Chang'e-6 mission and enjoyed seeing images of the moon transmitted by Pakistan's first lunar satellite. This is a promising development months after Pakistan launched its first National Space Policy in December. But can we keep up the momentum?

For years, I was a space sceptic, frustrated that developing countries would expend precious resources on space programmes when citizens' basic needs were barely being met. But times and tech have changed; space technologies are now key to public welfare. Pakistan's renewed push to manufacture and deploy domestic satellites is timely and strategic. Consider me a space convert!

The launch of our space policy emphasised the need for resilient telecommunications and cybersecurity. But satellite technologies offer so many other advantages for developing countries. A 2020 report by London Economics highlighted that space technologies offer cheaper options for critical data collection required to boost economies and save the environment. Space solutions are now central to managing food security, predicting climate risks, monitoring forest resources and disaster preparedness.

Developing countries are using their satellites to track the spread of water-borne diseases and inform irrigation approaches in water-scarce regions, as well as urban planning. Real-time satellite data transfers underpin advances in telehealth, rural banking, and virtual education. To be truly inclusive, economies and societies must now look to the stars.

Pakistan already uses international satellites for storm tracking and agricultural planning, but given how climate-vulnerable it is, we must invest in domestic space infrastructure to take full advantage of the myriad uses of satellite technology at lower cost. But to do this, we have to get our programme right.

Writing for Chatham House in 2022, Val Munsami, a former CEO of the South African National Space Agency, argued that for a developing country to make the most of a space programme, it needed to consider four elements: availability of human capital, an industrial base to capitalise on the sector's commercial potential, presence of technological infrastructure, and an appetite for international cooperation. Viewed from this angle, our space ambitions seem precarious.

The biggest risk is the paucity of STEM education. Home-grown images of the dark side of the moon and talk of sending the first Pakistani citizen into space can inspire a generation of scientists to drive a domestic space programme, but only if there exists an appropriate pedagogical culture that values scientific curiosity and a robust educational sector. This we sadly lack. While the space policy acknowledges this gap, hopes to improve the quality and reach of STEM education in Pakistan remain slim.

One argument for developing countries investing in space infrastructure is that the sector can attract FDI, create new industries, and motivate manufacturing facilities to upgrade and update.

This is only true if a country can strike the right balance between investing in indigenous infrastructure and the

cost efficiencies of importing increasingly cheap satellites. The continued lack of funding for our space programme (compare Suparco's \$26 million budget for 2023 with the Indian space agency's \$1.5 billion) means the likelihood of getting this balance wrong is high.

Another risk is that the programme becomes highly securitised, with cybersecurity, counter-espionage, surveillance and space defence becoming priorities over the need to collect data to inform sustainable policy planning. Intentions matter, and Pakistan should learn from the Philippines, which launched a space programme driven by a desire for disaster preparedness after experiencing Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. The space policy must go further in terms of articulating priorities that put the Pakistanis and basic service delivery and sustenance first.

Finally, Pakistan should not miss out on the opportunities for Global South collaboration that space offers. While superpowers continue to lead the space race, developing countries are playing an impressive game of catch-up. The African Union, for example, has ranked its space strategy as one of 15 key programmes in its Agenda 2063, and more than 20 national space institutions have been established across the continent in recent years.

Global South space programmes are focused on tech that can support inclusive telecommunications and climate risk management, issues key to Pakistan's success. We should be careful not to put all our satellites in one (Chinese) basket, and instead ensure that the space collaboration is diversified as part of holistic foreign and economic development policies.

## Commerce News

### PM orders developing mobile phone App for fair wheat procurement; censures delay

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the authorities concerned to develop a mobile phone application to ensure transparent procurement of wheat and ordered the suspension of two senior officers of PASSCO over their negligence in this regard.

The prime minister, chairing a high-level meeting to review the demand and supply and procurement of wheat by the federal government, ordered the suspension of the Managing Director of Pakistan Agricultural

Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO) and Meneral manager Procurement for their failure to implement the earlier directives of utilising the technology in the wheat procurement.

Calling for crops' insurance and a third-party audit of PASSCO's stock, he instructed the organization to procure an additional 400,000 metric tonnes of wheat through a transparent process.

The prime minister said the government would not tolerate any economic loss to the farmers and

resolved to take all-out measures for their prosperity and bringing food security in the country.

He assured that the government would reward the outstanding PASSCO centers and officers during the procurement process.

Federal cabinet members Muhammad Aurangzeb, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Ahad Khan Cheema, Jam Kamal Khan, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Coordinator to PM Rana Ehsan Afzal and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding wheat stocks.

### Thousands of trucks stranded FPCCI demands immediate reopening of Chaman border: Atif

Independent Report  
KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that the Chaman border has been closed once again for the past one week, and thousands of trucks and other vehicles have been stuck under vulnerable, uncertain and hostile circumstances. It is complete chaos once again on the important and indispensable trade route between Pakistan and Afghanistan, he added.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, henceforth, demanded that Chaman border should be opened

immediately to alleviate the sufferings and financial losses of the traders — and, allow essential supplies like food and medicines to get through the border. It is a humanitarian and socioeconomic crisis as well, he added.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh explained that Chaman border nestled in the heart of the region's complex geopolitical landscape; and, has long been a significant point of interaction between Pakistan and Afghanistan, particularly as a hub for cross-border trade between the two neighboring countries.

### Flour prices decreasing cross the country, easing burden on consumers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The flour prices across the country, including the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi have witnessed a notable decline in recent weeks, offering relief to consumers.

According to official documents of Ministry of Food Security and Research, the cost of a 20 kg bag of flour has dropped significantly in

various cities. In Islamabad, for instance, the price has plummeted by an impressive Rs 850 within just one month.

Last month, residents of the capital were paying around Rs 3,000 for the same quantity, but now they can purchase it for as low as Rs 2,053, with the maximum price capped at Rs 2,133.

### Gold rates dip by Rs 1,200 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1,200 and was sold at Rs 242,300 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs 243,500 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 943 to Rs 207,733 from Rs 208,762 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 190,422 from Rs 191,365, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,650 and Rs 2,271.94 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$10 to \$2,349 from \$2,359, the Association.

### Maryam to establish Punjab's first plug and play garment city

Independent Report  
LAHORE: "All facilities will be available in the first plug and play Garment City," said Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif while chairing a special meeting to decide on the establishment of Punjab's first plug and play garment city. She added, "Organize technical training of workers of the garment industry."

Madam Chief Minister directed the authorities concerned to solicit expressions of interest from major apparel industries for the Garment City, and formed a high-

level committee led by Minister for Industries Chaudhry Shafay Hussain for the purpose.

Earlier, Madam Chief Minister was briefed, "Sheds and other facilities like weaving, dyeing and other related units will be established in the Garment City." It was also briefed that the proposed Garment City will be energized with green/solar energy systems.

Moreover, garment cities will be established in other areas gradually, after the success of first garment city pilot project.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. Mehmet Pacaci, paid a courtesy call on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Mr. Ahad Khan Cheema.

### NTDC adds 250 MVA auto-transformer at 220kV Grid Station Rohri

ISLAMABAD (APP): The project Delivery (South) team of National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) has successfully added another 220/132kV, 250 MVA auto-transformer (T-4) and 220 kV half Dia D-4 & 132kV transformer bay E-13 at 220kV Grid Station Rohri.

The auto-transformer after installation has also been energized, according to a statement issued by NTDC. This project was part of a power transmission capacity enhancement program to

improve the capacity of the NTDC transmission network. This work has been completed under the National Transmission Modernization Project (NTMP-I), funded by the World Bank and NTDC's own resources. The completion of this component of NTMP-I will benefit the domestic, agricultural, and industrial consumers of the SEPCO region, it further said.

This addition of an auto-transformer will improve the loading capacity of 220 kV grid station Rohri and provide relief to the areas under the SEPCO region.



QUETTA: A delegation of Chaman Chamber of Commerce led by Haji Jamalud Din Achakzai meeting with Balochistan Governor Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

### PCJCCI, FTO hold awareness session on redress of taxpayers complaints

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) organized an awareness session for "Outreach programmes with respect to Role and functions of FTO (Federal Tax Ombudsman) office on account of redress of complaints of taxpayers against FBR" here at the PCJCCI Secretariat on Monday.

The speakers for the event were Dr. Ahmed Shahab, Advisor, Adeela Rehman, Advisor FTO and Nazim Raza, Director FTO. The session was

attracted by huge interest from diverse stakeholders comprising representation from companies and young entrepreneurs.

Adeela Rehman, Advisor FTO, briefed that Federal Tax Ombudsman is working tirelessly for the improvement of tax services and systems in the country. She said that the main purpose of FTO is to redress the injustice done to taxpayers by FBR, Revenue Division and Government of Pakistan. "We try our level best to deal and resolve the complaints within 45 days.

### PSX stays bullish, gains 713 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 713.61 points, a positive change of 0.98 percent, closing at 73,799.11 points against 73,085.50 points the previous trading day. A total of 721,597,885 shares valuing Rs 25,649 billion were traded during the day as compared to 741,196,400 shares valuing Rs 25,268 billion the last day. Some 387 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 241 of them recorded gains and 120 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 26 remained unchanged.

## CM orders sustainable water drainage system for Lahore

Reviews C&W's road construction, maintenance projects

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, during a meeting on local government here on Monday, reviewed the state of drainage and sewerage system besides progress on repair and rehabilitation measures. The CM said, "No street in Lahore should remain unpaved. A sustainable water drainage system should be devised."

standing water in a street. She said it is painful to see dirty water and overflowing sewerage in broken streets and roads. "All institutions should not ignore problems of the people," she mentioned. She also reviewed progress on streetlights, parks and horticulture in suburban areas. Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Provincial Minister Local Government Zeeshan Rafique and Special Assistant Zeeshan Malik attended the meeting. Chief Secretary, Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Lahore, DGLDA and other relevant officers were also present. Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif reviewed the ongoing road maintenance and construction projects carried out by Communication and Works (C&W) department, here on Monday. During a meeting with Punjab Minister for Communication and Works Soheb Ahmed Malik, she was briefed about the maintenance and construction of roads across Punjab. The CM was briefed that the work on repair and rehabilitation of 590 roads covering a distance of 11500 kilometers across Punjab has been started.

relevant officers were also present. Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif reviewed the ongoing road maintenance and construction projects carried out by Communication and Works (C&W) department, here on Monday. During a meeting with Punjab Minister for Communication and Works Soheb Ahmed Malik, she was briefed about the maintenance and construction of roads across Punjab. The CM was briefed that the work on repair and rehabilitation of 590 roads covering a distance of 11500 kilometers across Punjab has been started.



MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani honored Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi with a high tea at Gilani House.

## 100,000 people avail free health facilities under Sehat Card: Minister

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah on Monday said that so far 100,000 people of the province have availed free health facilities under Sehat health card initiative since the month of Ramadan.

**PFA cracks down on fake beverages, seizes 1,100 Liters**  
ATTOCK (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has seized a staggering 1,100 liters of counterfeit carbonated and fizzy drinks during a successful raid in the Jehri Kass area near Hassanabdal, on Monday.

In a release issued here, he said that the treatment was provided to the citizens of KP admitted to different hospitals of the country and the province, adding that so far 2.7 billion rupees had been spent on the treatment of these citizens. He appreciated the Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur for reviving the health card soon after coming to power and termed it a gift to the deserving people of the province. The Minister said that a review was going on to check the quality of registered hospitals on the health card panel so that quality health services could be ensured on Sehat card. Shah noted that the health card had also helped improve the services of government hospitals.

According to PFA spokesperson, the PFA's enforcement team led by Assistant Food Safety Officer Muhammad Zahid collaborated with the local police to intercept a pickup truck transporting the illicit beverages.

## Opposition in PA slams government over worsen situation in KP

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR (APP): The opposition leader in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Dr Ibadullah, while starting debate on the budget on Monday said that there is confusion regarding the budget as the chief minister is saying that there is no fund in the province while the Finance Advisor is claiming that the budget is surplus. Dr Ibadullah said that the province has been destroyed from all aspect which is financially or law and order. He said that the constituency of chief

minister has been disconnected no go area. Dr Ibad raised question that police stations have been established in public property and rented buildings at merged districts so where is the Rs1000 billion in the context of the war on terror gone. He said that the situation has reached such a point that the session judge is being kidnaped. According to media reports, a transaction was made for payment of ransom.

## KPCM for allocation of funds in ADP 2024-25 for all sectors

PESHAWAR (APP): A meeting was held on Monday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair regarding preparation of draft Annual Development Program (ADP), for the financial year 2024-25. During the meeting, the discussion was made on proposed projects of Irrigation, Public Health Engineering and Road sectors to be reflected in the upcoming ADP. Besides Provincial Minister for Irrigation Aqib Ullah Khan, Minister for Public Health Engineering, Pakhtunyar Khan, Minister for Communications &

Works, Shakeel Khan and Advisor to Chief Minister on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, the meeting was also attended by administrative secretaries and other high ups of the concerned departments. A detailed briefing was also given in the meeting about the on-going and proposed projects of these departments that will be included in the ADP 2024-25. While issuing policy directives about new ADP, the CM directed the high ups of these departments to give top priority to the ongoing schemes specially those which are due for completion in the allocation of developmental funds.

concerned also attended the meeting. The provincial minister directed the inclusion of digitization projects of the local government sector in the annual budget to bring transparency in the governance. He said that all possible relief would be provided to the people in the upcoming annual budget. He said that schemes including women development centre, parks, footpaths and construction of roads are being included in the budget to provide best facilities to the people of the district Haripur.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique presides over the 2nd meeting of Health Insurance working group Sub Committee.

## Minister directs for early completion of beautification projects

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Local Government & Rural Development, Arshad Ayub Khan Monday said that all incomplete beautification projects to be completed as soon as possible. Presiding over a meeting regarding development schemes in the annual budget, he said that annual development programme has been framed while keeping in view the opinion of the people. Besides, Secretary Local Government & Rural Development, Dawood Khan, other authorities

concerned also attended the meeting. The provincial minister directed the inclusion of digitization projects of the local government sector in the annual budget to bring transparency in the governance. He said that all possible relief would be provided to the people in the upcoming annual budget. He said that schemes including women development centre, parks, footpaths and construction of roads are being included in the budget to provide best facilities to the people of the district Haripur.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif alongwith students addressing the inaugural ceremony of Chief Minister Skills Development Initiative.

## Heat stroke units setup at LU Hospital

HYDERABAD (APP): Medical Superintendent Liaquat University Hospital Hyderabad/Jamshoro Dr Aijaz Ahmad Abbasi has said that according to the Meteorological Department, a possible heat stroke is encountered during the increase in the intensity of heat. In this regard the hospital will immediately impose emergency measures and all the doctors, and para-medical staff leave will be cancelled. He said that in view of the increase heat stroke

in Hyderabad and its vicinity, we have set up air-conditioned units in University Hospital Hyderabad and Jamshoro to provide medical treatment. Along with supplies and medicines, senior Dr Muhammad Aslam Rajput whose mobile number is 0311-3077700 for Civil Hospital Hyderabad and Dr Faheem Lashari RMO whose phone number is 0332-1318881 for Jamshoro Hospital. They have been appointed as Heat Stroke Focal Person.

## Father and daughter-in-law murdered by unknown gunman

MANSEHRA (APP): Two people were shot dead by unknown gunmen on Monday in the village of Tarnain Bala in the jurisdiction of Shankiyari police station Mansehra. According to police sources, unknown gunmen barged into the house of Fazal Deen and killed him and his daughter-in-law Ansa Bibi. Shankiyari police registered a case of double murder against unknown people and started an investigation. The family of the deceased have refrained from accusing any specific individual in their murder case filing. The postmortem report revealed that Fazal Deen sustained three gunshot wounds, while Ansa Bibi received two. Following the completion of medico-legal formalities, Shankiyari police handed over the bodies to their heirs. Later, the funeral prayers for both victims were offered in the village of Tarnain Bala.

# International News

## Turkey's Erdogan says US, Europe not doing enough to pressure Israel into Gaza truce

**Monitoring Desk**  
ANKARA: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday that the United States and European countries were not doing enough to pressure Israel to agree a ceasefire in Gaza, after Palestinian militant group Hamas' move to accept a truce proposal. Turkey has denounced Israel's attacks on Gaza, called for an immediate ceasefire, and criticised what it calls unconditional support for Israel by the West. Ankara has halted all trade with Israel and said it had decided to join South Africa's initiative to have Israel tried for genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Speaking to Muslim scholars in Istanbul, Erdogan said Hamas had accepted a ceasefire pro-

posal by Qatar and Egypt in a "step in the path toward a lasting ceasefire", but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government did not want the war to end. "The response of the Netanyahu government was to attack the innocent people in Rafah," he said, referring to the Gazan city that Israel is targeting. "It has become clear who sides with peace and dialogue, and who wants clashes continuing and more bloodshed. "And did Netanyahu see any serious reaction for his spoiled behaviour? No. Neither Europe nor America showed a reaction that would force Israel into a ceasefire." Erdogan's intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin met with Hamas leaders in Doha on Sunday to discuss ceasefire talks and the access of humanitarian

aid into Gaza, a Turkish security source said. Israel's military conduct in Gaza has come under increasing scrutiny in recent weeks, as the civilian death toll and devastation in the enclave mount. Its planned assault on Rafah, hosting some 1.4 million Palestinians mostly displaced in the war, has helped fuel the deepest tensions in relations between Israel and its main ally Washington in generations. Ankara on Friday welcomed the United Nations General Assembly's backing for a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member. Erdogan on Sunday called on countries not recognising a Palestinian sovereign state to do so after the vote, but slammed Washington and others who voted against.



Nominee for the post of Russia's Defence Minister Andrei Belousov attends a hearing held by the defence and security committee of the parliament's upper house Federation Council as part of a confirmation process for a new government line-up, in Moscow, Russia.

## Indonesia floods, landslides kill 34, 16 missing

**Monitoring Desk**  
TANAH DATAR: At least 34 people were killed and 16 more were missing in western Indonesia after flash floods and cold lava flow from one of the archipelago's most active volcanoes damaged homes, roads and mosques, officials said on Sunday. Hours of heavy rain caused flooding in Agam and Tanah Datar districts in West Sumatra province on Saturday evening, threatening thousands of people after the down-

pours swept ash and large rocks down Mount Marapi. "I heard the thunder and the sound similar to boiling water. It was the sound of big rocks falling," housewife Rina Devina said, adding that three of her neighbours were killed. "It was pitch black, so I used my cellphone as a flashlight. The road was muddy, so I chanted 'God, have mercy!' over and over again," she said of her evacuation to a local official's office.

## Seven killed in attack on Russian flats

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: At least seven people were killed and 17 injured when a whole section of an apartment building in Belgorod collapsed after being hit by a missile fired by Ukraine, Russian officials said. In one of the deadliest attacks to date on the region of Belgorod, Ukraine launched what Russian officials said was a massive missile attack with Tochka ballistic missiles and Adler and RM-70 Vampire (MLRS) multiple launch rocket systems.

## Israel strikes Gaza after fresh Rafah evacuation order

**Monitoring Desk**  
RAFAH: Israeli forces continued to conduct air strikes on Gaza on Sunday after it expanded an evacuation order for Rafah, with the United Nations warning an outright invasion of the crowded southern city risked an "epic" disaster. Gaza's civil defence agency said two doctors were killed on Sunday in the central town of Deir al-Balah amid heavy gunfire from Israeli helicopters. Witnesses said Israel had carried out strikes in Rafah near the crossing with Egypt on Saturday and smoke was seen rising over the city. Israeli troops defied international opposition and entered eastern areas of the city, effectively shutting a key aid crossing and

suspending traffic through another. Israel expanded an evacuation order for eastern Rafah, after 300,000 people had fled the city earlier this week. "We don't know where to go," said Farid Abu Eida, who was preparing to leave Rafah, having already been displaced there from Gaza City. Residents piled water tanks, mattresses and other belongings onto vehicles and prepared to flee again. "There is no place left in Gaza that is safe and not overcrowded... There's nowhere we can go." Residents were told to go to the "humanitarian zone" of Al-Mawasi, on the coast north-west of Rafah. International outrage mounted at Israel's operations in Rafah.

## Putin replaces Shoigu as Russia's defence minister in cabinet shakeup

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday replaced Sergei Shoigu as defense minister in a Cabinet shakeup that comes as he begins his fifth term in office. In line with Russian law, the entire Russian Cabinet resigned Tuesday following Putin's glittering inauguration in the Kremlin, and most members have been widely expected to keep their jobs, while Shoigu's fate had appeared uncertain. Putin signed a decree on Sunday appointing Shoigu as secretary of Russia's Security Council, the Kremlin said. The appointment was announced shortly after Putin proposed Andrei Belousov to become the country's defense minister in place of Shoigu. The announcement of Shoigu's new role came as 13 people were reported dead and 20 more wounded in

Russia's border city of Belgorod, where a 10-story apartment building partially collapsed after what Russian officials said was Ukrainian shelling. Ukraine hasn't commented on the incident. Belousov's candidacy will need to be approved by Russia's upper house in parliament, the Federation Council. It reported Sunday that Putin introduced proposals for other Cabinet positions as well but Shoigu is the only minister on that list who is being replaced. Several other new candidates for federal ministers were proposed Saturday by Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, reappointed by Putin on Friday. Shoigu's deputy, Timur Ivanov, was arrested last month on bribery charges and was ordered to remain in custody pending an official investigation.



Police officers detain a demonstrator during a protest against a bill on "foreign agents" in Tbilisi, Georgia.

## India inks 10-year deal to operate Iran's Chabahar port

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: India signed a 10-year contract with Iran on Monday to develop and operate the Iranian port of Chabahar, the Narendra Modi-led government said, strengthening relations with a strategic Middle Eastern nation. India has been developing the port in Chabahar on Iran's south-eastern coast along the Gulf of Oman as a way to trans-

port goods to Iran, Afghanistan and central Asian countries, bypassing the ports of Karachi and Gwadar. US sanctions on Iran, however, slowed the port's development. "Chabahar Port's significance transcends its role as a mere conduit between India and Iran; it serves as a vital trade artery connecting India with Afghanistan and Central Asian Countries."

## Russia says it downs 16 Ukraine-launched missiles, 31 drones

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: The Russian defence ministry said on Monday its air defence systems destroyed 16 missiles and 31 drones that Ukraine launched at Russian territory overnight, including 12 missiles over the battered border region of Belgorod. Five houses were damaged in Belgorod, but according to preliminary information, there were no injuries. Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov wrote on the Telegram messaging app. On Sunday, 15 people were killed in Belgorod when a section of an apartment block collapsed after being struck by fragments of a Soviet-era missile, launched by Ukraine and shot down by Russian forces, Russia said. The Russian defence ministry said on Monday the 12 guided missiles were launched from a Ukrainian Vilkhva multiple rocket launcher.

## 27 killed in renewed clashes in Sudan: UN

**Monitoring Desk**  
PORT SUDAN: Clashes reignited between the Sudanese army and rival paramilitaries earlier this week in the key Darfur town of El-Fasher, the United Nations said on Sunday, killing at least 27 people in one day. Eyewitnesses have reported air strikes, artillery fire and machine gun clashes battering the city since Friday, when an hours-long battle left an estimated 850 people displaced, according to the UN. It also killed at least 27 that day, based on what the UN said were "unconfirmed reports", as the city suffers a near-total communications

blackout, with medics and human rights defenders barely able to get news to the world. The fighting has since continued, eyewitnesses said on Sunday, reporting air strikes and artillery shelling that left "houses on fire", one resident said. According to French medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF), two children and a caregiver were killed in an intensive care unit Saturday following a nearby military air strike. Since April of last year, Sudan has been in the grips of a devastating war between the army, headed by the country's de facto leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

## First patient to get pig kidney transplant dies

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The first patient to receive a genetically modified pig kidney transplant died, two months after the procedure, the US hospital that carried it out said. "Mass General is deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Mr Rick Slayman. We have no indication that it was the result of his recent transplant," the Boston hospital said. In a world first, surgeons at Massachusetts General Hospital in March transplanted the genetically edited pig kidney into Slayman, who was 62 years old at the time and suffering from end-stage kidney disease.

# President for promoting business, trade ties with Bosnia & Herzegovina

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday underlined the need to promote business and trade ties with Bosnia and Herzegovina by opening banks, trading in local currencies, and promoting barter trade between the two countries.

The president expressed these views while talking to Ambassador of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Emin Cohodarevic, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Welcoming the ambassador, the president said that Pakistan's ties with Bosnia & Herzegovina were based on historic and friendly relations spanning

over almost three decades. He added that both countries should continue bilateral engagements and interactions to further explore the avenues of cooperation in the areas of mutual interest.

The ambassador said that his country wanted to deepen ties with Pakistan in the fields of economy, security, and culture. He highlighted that there was a vast scope for economic cooperation for Pakistani businesses in different industries in Bosnia & Herzegovina, including food, tourism, and textile.

The ambassador expressed his gratitude to the Government and people of

Pakistan for their support to Bosnia & Herzegovina during the war in the 1990s.

He also solicited Pakistan's support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's draft resolution on Srebrenica in the United Nations General Assembly.

The president said that Pakistan would favourably examine Bosnia's request, adding that Pakistan stood in solidarity with the victims of the 1995 tragedy in Srebrenica. The ambassador also extended the invitation to the president to visit Bosnia & Herzegovina to strengthen economic cooperation between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Bosnia & Herzegovina in Pakistan, Emin Cohodarevic called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Sindh considers to form 'Dolphin Force' to combat street crimes

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar on Monday paid a special visit to the Karachi Police Office to chair a high-level meeting on law and order situation in the metropolis.

Additional IGP Karachi and other senior police officers welcomed the Minister at the KPO. A guard of honor was also presented to him by the police contingent.

The Home Minister chaired a high-level meeting on the law and order situation in the city and issued further necessary instructions after a detailed briefing on various aspects.

Additional IG Karachi Imran Yaqub Minhas presented a briefing on the measures being taken to curb street crimes including theft, robbery, and drug trafficking, and suggested the

## Finance minister welcomes IMF team for completing SBA with success

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday welcomed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) team and expressed gratitude for them for completing Standby Arrangement (SBA), with success.

The minister for finance and revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb met with the delegation of IMF Mission led by IMF Mission Chief Nathan Porter, said a press release issued here.

The IMF Mission Chief called on the Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb at the Finance Ministry to kickstart the discussions on further engagement with the Fund.

The meeting was attended by Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue, and senior officers of the Finance Ministry.

## Pakistan keen to learn from Korean expertise in IT, industrialisation: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that Pakistan was keen to learn from Korea's experience of industrialization and SME sector growth as well as in the field of Information Technology (IT), including artificial intelligence.

The prime minister, talking to Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan Park Ki Jun, who called on him, also offered to enhance export of skilled manpower from Pakistan to meet Korea's human resource needs.

The Korean ambassador congratulated the prime minister on behalf of the Korean leadership upon his re-election.

The prime minister thanked the Korean leadership for the warm message of greetings that he received and expressed the desire to work closely to further strengthen bilateral ties.



ISLAMABAD: Korean Ambassador, Park Ki Jun called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in the Federal Capital.

## Sindh Minister directs to submit proposals for new schemes

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro on Monday reiterated the Sindh government's commitment to the development of the irrigation and drainage systems in the province.

Chairing a meeting at the office of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) here, Shoro asked the officials to expedite the completion of the ongoing development projects.

He acknowledged that the current pace of those projects appeared sluggish.

The minister asked the officials to notify him if any budgetary constraints were hindering the progress of the project so that he could try to secure the release of the allocated funds.

Shoro suggested to the authorities to close all such projects which had exceeded the 5-year duration without completion.

He emphasized the need for the preparation and prioritization of new schemes for the upcoming fiscal year's provincial budget.

The minister said the schemes for the rehab of the flood-hit infrastructure, drainage, and Indus River's dykes should be separately included in the new proposals. Irrigation Department Secretary Zarf Iqbal Khoro reported on the review of long-standing projects in various regions, resulting in their closure and subsequent notification to the Planning and Development Department.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding Azad Jammu & Kashmir matters.

## Anwarul Haq Kakar dismisses allegations in wheat import scandal

KARACHI (INP): Former caretaker prime minister (PM) and incumbent Senator, Anwarul Haq Kakar downplayed the wheat import scandal as a 'storm in a teacup', says in media reports.

"As time passes, people understand that there is neither a wheat crisis nor is this any scandal, an attempt has been made to create a storm in a teacup, there has been a big difference in production and demand targets in the country over the past twelve years," Anwarul Haq Kakar said exclusively talking to a private TV channel.

Kakar questioned what kind of wheat scandal it is in which the commodity is becoming cheaper instead of becoming expen-

## CM grieves over loss of lives in accident near Matiari

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives in a road accident on the national highway near Matiari.

He said, 'I am deeply saddened and sorry for the loss of human lives.'

The Chief Minister directed the Hyderabad Commissioner to provide the best medical treatment to the injured persons.

He also sought a detailed report from the Hyderabad Commissioner regarding the passenger bus and trailer accident.

The passenger bus was going from Och Sharif to Karachi when the accident took place.

## IGP reviews counterterrorism efforts, advocates for enhanced measures

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Ghulam Nabi Memon Monday conducted a comprehensive review of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), delving into the operational challenges across various crime-fighting units under its jurisdiction and issuing directives for further action.

Upon his arrival, IGP Sindh was warmly received by the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIGP) - CTD and Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs).

During the visit, the DIGP - CTD provided IGP Sindh with an extensive overview of CTD's performance over the past four months. Notably, 87 cases were filed following 763 intelligence-based operations between January and April. Additionally, 10 high-profile terrorists were apprehended during this period, with 11 terrorists receiving convictions through rigorous investigations leading to court sentences.

## EC suspends membership of 77 women, non Muslim legislators of NA

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has implemented Supreme Court (SC) orders and suspended membership of women and non Muslim members against 77 reserved seats of National and Provincial assemblies.

As per notification additional reserved seats of women have been suspended in Punjab, Sindh and KP.

ECP withdrew the notification of 22 returned candidates who were allotted seats in the National Assembly. Out of the 22, 11 of them are female lawmakers given seats in the NA from Punjab, 8 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 3 minority seats in the lower house.

In KP Assembly 21 lawmakers on reserved seats for women and 4 for minorities have been suspended. In the Punjab Assembly, 24 women lawmakers and 3 non-Muslim legislators have been suspended. While in the Sindh Assembly, membership of 2 female MPs and a minority member have been suspended. The lawmakers whose membership has been suspended belong to the PML-N, PPP, MQM-P, JUI-F, Awami National Party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Parliamentarians (PTI-P), Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) and Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP).

## DIG reviews various professional matters of Sukkur Police officers

SUKKUR (APP): The Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police, Sukkur Region, Abdul Hameed Khoso presided over performance review meeting of Sukkur division at his office here on Monday.

The meeting reviewed various professional matters, including the performance, law and order, crime control, and public service delivery of Sukkur, Khairpur and Ghotki districts.

The DIG expressed satisfaction over the arrest of dacoits from katcha area of the Ghotki district and commended officers for

## Dialogue only way to steer country out of prevailing crisis: Ch Pervaiz Elahi

LAHORE (Online): PTI president Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has said talks are only way to steer country out of the prevailing crisis.

"dialogues are the only way to come out of the present crisis. Imran Khan has agreed for talks not for his own sake but for the sake of nation and country."



KARACHI: Mayor, Barrister Murtaza Wahab presiding district council meeting session, held at City Council Hall Old KMC building in Karachi.

## UAE delegation, Red crescent society inaugurate upgradation of Women hospital larkana

LARKANA (APP): Delegation of United Arab Emirates and Red Crescent Society arrived and inaugurated Sheikh Zayed Women Hospital for Upgradation here on Monday at Sheikh Zayed Women's Hospital Larkana.



The delegation was welcomed by the Vice Chancellor of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Medical University Dr Nusrat Shah and Prof. Dr Shahida Magso. According to the details, UAE Consulate-General H.E. Dr Bakheet Ateeq Al Romaithi, Red Crescent Society Secretary General H.E. Rashid Mubarak Al Mansoori, Secretary General Development and International Cooperation H.E. Fahad Abdul Rahman bin Sultan, H.E. Hamad Bakheet Al Romaithi, Director Relief and Disaster H.E. Obaid Al Balushi, Saeed Al Mazroi, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Nusrat Shah, Secretary Health Sindh Rehan Iqbal Baloch inaugurated the upgradation of Sheikh Zayed Hospital.



HYDERABAD: District Health officer talking to health workers during a visit to the Labor colony health facility to witness the XDR Typhoid vaccine campaign.

## DC for providing municipal services to public

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Shehryar Gul Memon on Monday said that elected representatives at the town and UC levels should play their full role to provide municipal services to the public and take practical steps to provide marriage certificates, birth certificates, death certificates, and other certificates to the public free of charge.

He said this while presiding over the meeting here at his office separately with the UC Chairman, Vice Chairman, and other elected representatives of HM Khawaja Town Committee of Nawabshah Municipal Corporation.

The Deputy Commissioner further said that the elected representatives should prepare

## Karachi robbery resistance death case takes shocking turn

KARACHI (INP): The Karachi robbery resistance death case took a shocking turn after the CCTV footage of the tragic incident emerged.

As per details, a 49-year-old man, Yousuf Khan, was killed in a shooting incident in Liaquatabad, Karachi. Initial reports suggested that the incident was of a robbery resistance but further investigation has revealed that the killer and the victim were acquainted.

According to police, Yousuf Khan was visiting his in-laws' house when he got into an argument with an unknown person, wearing a mask.

## CTD arrests suspect associated with banned outfit

HYDERABAD (APP): The Counter Terrorism Department has claimed to have arrested a suspected terrorist associated with the banned Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM) and recovered a pistol, bullets, cash, a motorbike and cash receipts from his possession. According to a statement issued by the CTD here on Monday the suspect Waqar alias Vicki, son of Sattar, was arrested from the bypass road in Matiari district. He was later shifted to the CTD's police station in Hyderabad where he was booked in two FIR's under the sections 11E(4) and 11F(6) of Anti Terrorism Act, 1997, and section A(I) of the Sindh Arms Act, 2013.



KARACHI: Students of matric class solving paper in examination center during Annual Examination of Matriculation under the supervision of Education Board, at Government Boys Secondary School Jail road in Karachi.

## Fire engulfs used clothes warehouse in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): A massive fire broke out at a used clothes warehouse located near Jungle School in the Saeedabad area of Karachi on Monday.

According to rescue officials, the blaze spread rapidly, engulfing the entire godown, and was brought under control after a concerted effort by four fire brigade vehicles and rescue teams.

Fortunately, no casualties were reported in the incident, a private news channel reported.

The cause of the blaze remains unknown.

## Hot, dry weather forecast for Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department on Monday predicted hot and dry weather for most parts of the Sindh province during next 24 hours.

However, day temperatures are predicted to gradually rise in the plain areas.

Mainly, hot and dry weather is likely to prevail in the province.

## Sindh Government appears apprehensive about PTI's popularity: Haleem

Independent Report KARACHI: A hearing was held on the petition filed against the denial of permission to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to hold a rally in Karachi. PTI Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh, petitioner of the case General Secretary PTI Sindh Advocate Ali Palh, along with senior PTI lawyers Barrister Ali Tahir, and other leaders attended the hearing. The court, while rejecting the reports submitted by the Home Department and Deputy Commissioner East, remarked that there is no justification for not granting permission for the rally. The Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court ordered the relevant authorities to decide on PTI's request within ten days and permit the rally at an alternative location with the consent of the applicant.

After the hearing, Haleem Adil Sheikh, President of PTI Sindh, spoke to the press outside the Sindh High Court, expressing concerns regarding the refusal to permit PTI to conduct a rally in Karachi for the last month and a half, despite court directives.



KARACHI: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President, Haleem Adil Sheikh talking to media persons during press conference after case hearing, at Sindh High Court premises in Karachi.

## WASA blames HESCO conducted power outages for water shortage in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD (APP): The Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) has complained that the power outages and tripping in the electric supply system has badly affected the water supply and drainage systems of the agency.

The agency's spokesman Nadeem Yousuf said in a statement issued here on Monday that owing to the outages during peak summer season the citizens of Hyderabad were being made to suffer the water shortage.

He pointed out that although each of the agency's filtration plants were powered through two electric feeders so that the plants remained operational when one feeder was undergoing load shedding or it was at fault.

However, he complained that most of the times they witnessed that the power supply to both such feeders was suspended simultaneously because of which WASA was unable to filter water and supply it to the consumers.

"The feeders trip after every 15 minutes and because of this WASA's largest filtration plant on Jamshoro road can't work properly," Yousuf said.