

# Independent

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## Govt to announce special incentives for farmers in upcoming budget: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday demanded the federal government to announce special incentives for farmers in the upcoming budget and provide direct relief to small farmers by subsidizing the agriculture sector.

Speaking here in National Assembly, Bilawal Bhutto emphasized the provision of subsidies to small farmers and landlords through the implementation of a "Kisan Card" system.

He highlighted that Pakistan's annual import of agricultural goods exceeds Rs. 10 billion and stressed the importance of facilitating small farmers to minimize this dependency.

He demanded the government to engage all stakeholders, including farmers' organizations, and proposed the declaration of a

10-year emergency along with the implementation of consistent agricultural policies. He emphasized that such measures would significantly contribute to the country's development.

He underscored the necessity for the government to restore the confidence of wheat-growing farmers by announcing support measures. This, he emphasized, is essential to ensure there is no shortage of wheat in the coming year.

Bilawal Bhutto urged the government to take decisive action to resolve the wheat import controversy and hold accountable those responsible during interim set-up in the wheat import scandal. He stressed that the Prime Minister should identify the bureaucrats and former ministers involved in the scandal and take prompt action against them without any further delay.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Governor calls on President Asif Ali Zardari

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail called on the President Asif Ali Zardari in President House Islamabad on Wednesday.

During the course of meeting, different matters including those related to the federal development projects were discussed. Besides, the matters of mutual interests were also discussed during the meeting.

The President on the occasion congratulated Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail on assuming the office of Governor Balochistan.

## Sindh government holds high-level meeting to address drug spread, rehabilitation measures

KARACHI (APP): A high-level meeting took place at the Sindh Secretariat, chaired by Sindh Health Minister Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, to address the spread of drugs and preventative measures.

Attendees included Home Minister Sindh Ziaul-Hassan, Provincial Ministers Sardar Shah and Mir Tariq Talpur, as well as officials from the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), the Excise Department, and other relevant departments,

according to a news release on Monday.

ANF officials provided a comprehensive briefing on actions taken against drug mafias at the provincial level, highlighting the collaboration with police, Pakistan Rangers Sindh, and other law enforcement agencies. Dr. Pechuho emphasized the need for collective efforts to enhance and tighten anti-narcotics measures, with the primary goal of safeguarding the future of the nation.



KARACHI: Sindh Health and Population Welfare Minister, Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho addresses during Stone Laydown Ceremony of Provincial Vaccine and Dry Logistics Ware House organized by Project Director Expanded Programme on Immunization Sindh, held in Karachi.

## Commissioner chairs meeting to review civic facilities

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Syed Hasan Naqvi presided over a meeting at DC office Malir on Wednesday and reviewed the facilities provided to the citizens. The meeting was told that efforts are underway to provide facilities to the citizens, including removal of encroachments that obstruct traffic.

The DC briefed the meeting about measures taken to implement government fixed prices of daily use items in the district. The commissioner later visited different areas of the city

along with DC Malir and took stock of the situation. The DC Malir Irfan Salam said the review committee on milk costs has started the process of preparing a report and milk prices will be determined in consultation with dairy farmers and the wholesalers. The Commissioner asked all the Assistant Commissioners to be remain in the field and the hindrances in the provision of facilities to the citizens must be removed. Commissioner directed that the supply of food items including milk should be ensured at fixed rates.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## SC seeks progress report on appointment of VCs in universities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday sought progress report from authorities regarding appointment of vice chancellors in public sector universities.

The court also sought details of percentage of academic and non-academic staff in universities and directed the respondents to submit the details of vacant posts of controller examinations and director finance.

The top court asked the universities to present their budget report and tell how much money they were given by the government.

The court expressed annoyance with additional advocate general of Sindh province. Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa asked that whether the AAG was aware of rule 27-A regarding the assisting the court. The CJP said that the additional advocate general even didn't know about the basic rules.

## Pakistan, US to increase capacity to meet merging threats

WASHINGTON (INP): US State Department principal deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel on Tuesday said that the Pakistan and United States agreed to expand cooperation and increase the capacity to meet emerging threats.

Replying to a question, Vedant Patel said: "We confirmed with Pakistan today our bilateral intention to increase our capacity to meet emerging threats, specifically to increase communication on terrorism—specifically terrorism trends and movements of concern—in a way that is not just actionable within Pakistan but also an area that is actionable between our two countries."

We also agreed about preventing and deterring terrorist groups and the work that can be done in that place, such as counter-IED investigations.

## Govt seeks Rs4.16 rise in electricity tariff for next fiscal year

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) on Wednesday has sought a hefty increase in power tariff for the next financial year while the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has fixed May 23 for conducting hearing of CPPA application.

Through its request, the CPPA has sought an increase of Rs4.16 per unit in electricity tariff.

All power distribution companies including LESCO have demanded to raise the tariff based on operational cost, capacity charges and fuel price.

The LESCO during the current year has been billing the consumers Rs22.95 per unit and now demanded to bill the consumers during the next financial year Rs25 to Rs27.11.

## PM directs addressing issues, concerns of Sindh govt. over development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed for removal of issues and concerns of the Sindh government with regard to development.

He also directed for expediting work on the ongoing federal funded uplift projects in the province.

The prime minister issued these directives during a meeting with Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad

Ali Shah who called on him. Federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Ahmad Khan Cheema and Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan and relevant senior officials also attended the meeting, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister said that for the revival of economy, the cooperation among the federation and the provinces was imperative, stressing that economic stability was their main objective.

The prime minister directed the federal ministers to seek permanent resolution to the financial, economic and other issues of the Sindh province. He also asked for taking of all the provinces on board and including them in the consultation process during the preparation of the upcoming development budget.

## President Zardari lauds security forces for successful anti-terror operation in Zhob

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday lauded the security forces for conducting a successful anti-terror operation in Sambaza area of Balochistan's Zhob district.

The president paid tribute to Major Babar Khan Shaheed, who was martyred in line of his duty during the operation, and applauded his bravery, patriotism and services to the country.

Applauding the professional capabilities of the Pakistan Army, he reiterated the resolve to eliminate terrorism.

President Zardari prayed to Allah Almighty for the elevation of the martyr's ranks in paradise and for patience to the bereaved family.



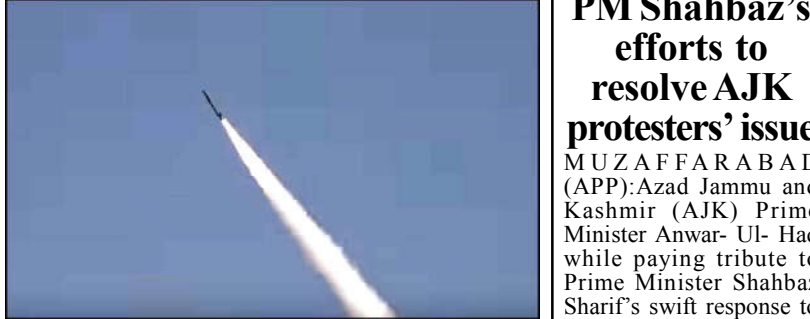
A view of 5th round of China-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing.

## Pak successfully tests Fatah-II rocket system

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Pakistan Army on Wednesday conducted the successful training launch of Fatah-II Guided Rocket System with a range of 400 kilometres. According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the launch was aimed at perfecting the launch drills and procedures.

Equipped with the state-of-the-art navigation system, unique trajectory and manoeuvrable features, Fatah-II is capable of engaging targets with high precision and defeating any missile defence system. Fatah-II is being inducted in the Pakistan Army's artillery divisions for stand-off and precision engagement of deep targets. The rocket system will significantly upgrade the reach and lethality of Pakistan Army's conventional arsenal. The flight test was witnessed by Chief of the General Staff Pakistan Army, senior officers from the three services, and dedicated scientists and engineers.

The President, Prime Minister, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Chief of Army Staff and other services chiefs congratulated the participating troops and scientists on the excellent achievement.



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## PTI founder gets bail in £190 million scam reference

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday granted post arrest bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) founder in a NAB reference pertaining to £190 million scam.

The IHC bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri instructed the accused to submit surety bonds of Rs 1 million to secure the bail.

The bench announced the verdict which it had reserved on Tuesday after hearing arguments from the respondents.

The court pronounced the short order. The detailed verdict would be issued later on.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB)'s Special Prosecutor Amjad Pervaiz had adopted the stance that the trial court had testified 39 witnesses in the cases.

As the trial was at the final stage, the accused could not be granted bail,

he said and prayed the court to instruct the trial court for early conclusion of the trial.

He stated that the said amount should have been shifted to the government's account instead of the account of Supreme Court (SC).

He said that the top court had also stated that the money was wrongly sent to its account.

Defence lawyer Latif Khosa said that a prosecution witness had admitted that there was no signatures of the PTI founder on the document, and he and his wife Bushra Bibi had not derived any personal benefit from the transactions.

He prayed the court to grant post arrest bail to his client.

In December, NAB had filed a corruption reference against the PTI founder, his wife and six other accused alleging their involvement in the 190 million pound scam pertaining to the Al-Qadir Trust.



KARACHI: High Commissioner of Mauritius Mr. Rashidally Soobadar meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House.

## Sindh Govt believes in promotion of industrial development: Jam Dharejo

KARACHI (APP): Provincial minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Ikramullah Dharejo has said that Sindh Government believes in promotion of industrial development in the province and was planning to establish new industrial zones across the province, mainly in Karachi, under a new industrialization policy to attract investors and businessmen including foreign investors.

He said this while speaking as a chief guest in a book launching ceremony at ICMA International, Head Office ICMAP Building here on Wednesday.

On this occasion Shehzad Ahmed Malik President ICMA International and Shaham Ahmed Honourary Secretary ICMA also spoke. He appreciated ICMA's pivotal role in driving economic development and nurturing skilled professionals across

both corporate and government sectors in Pakistan.

Dharejo commended ICMA and its members for their unwavering commitment to our nation's economic prosperity. He also extended his warm congratulations to the author of the Cement Book for his diligent efforts in assessing the performance of Pakistan's cement industry.

He added that the Sindh Government believes in promotion of industrial and business activities in the province and it has taken a number of steps to boost up economic progress in Sindh and following the vision of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, we are trying to bring industrial revolution in Sindh.

Jam Ikramullah Dharejo said that he would like to invite intellectuals and authors to suggest ways how the industrial issues could be overcome.

## NCRC delegation holds meeting with Sindh Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah

4.1 million children in Sindh alone are deprived of education: Shah

Independent Report KARACHI: A delegation from the National Commission on Rights of Children (NCRC) called on Sindh Education Minister Syed

Raza highlighted the commission's ongoing efforts to collaborate with provincial governments, including Sindh, to tackle the challenge of out-of-school children, which currently affects an alarming 22.8 million children nationwide.

According to a notification issued by the Federal Ministry of Finance, the price of petrol has been slashed by Rs 15.39, while the price of high-speed diesel sees a reduction of Rs 7.88.

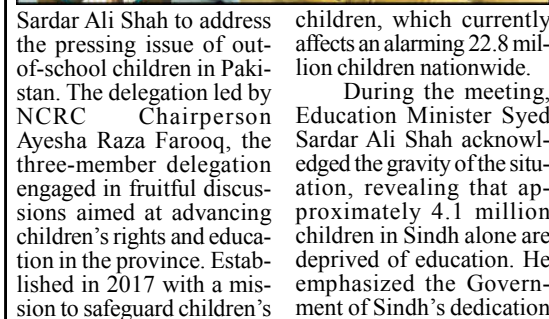
Additionally, the price of light diesel oil has been decreased by Rs 7.54.

## Haq hails PM Shahbaz's efforts to resolve AJK protesters' issue

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq while paying tribute to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's swift response to the demands of protesters has categorically denounced the malicious propaganda that AJK was being turned into a province of Pakistan.

Addressing a crowded press conference along with all members of his cabinet here on Wednesday.

During the meeting, Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah acknowledged the gravity of the situation, revealing that approximately 4.1 million children in Sindh alone are deprived of education. He emphasized the Government of Sindh's dedication to addressing this issue through various measures, including the approval of policies to upgrade primary schools.



## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Reserved seats

After the Supreme Court took exception to its decision to hand over reserved seats claimed by the Sunni Ittehad Council-PTI alliance to its rival parties, the ECP has suspended the notifications of 77 lawmakers belonging to the different assemblies. Following the development, any plans that the ruling coalition had about tinkering with the Constitution without seeking the opposition's buy-in lie dead in the water — at least for the time being.

Also in question is the fate of the senators who were voted in in the most recent round of elections to the Upper House. The 77 lawmakers who have been suspended from office had participated in the senatorial election, thereby colouring its results. Given what is at stake and the consequences for Pakistani democracy, it is hoped that the apex court will not dally on the matter.

Since it has taken up the case as one which requires constitutional interpretation, a bench comprising at least five judges has to decide how the Constitution intended for reserved seats should be divided. The court must announce a bench at the earliest so that the functioning of parliament is not affected for any longer than is absolutely necessary. It is a shame that more than three months after the general election, we still do not have a clear picture of where things stand politically. The stability which, it was hoped, the exercise would bring remains a pipe dream. Though some leader or the other regularly appears on TV to assure the people that the nation has turned a corner and better days are not too far off, it is difficult to put much faith in such words, especially since it is clear that the various institutional conflicts that have shaped our polycrisis are far from being resolved.

The role played by the ECP in perpetuating this sorry state of affairs, in particular, deserves strict scrutiny. Despite being vested with all the powers it needed to responsibly steer the country through a democratic transition, it could only manage an election that fell far short of the promise of being 'free, fair, impartial and inclusive'. It then bungled the management of election results, which gave rise to serious controversies regarding the 'fixing' of final results.

Since then, the ECP has been either unwilling or unable to address the deluge of post-election complaints: for example, it defies understanding why it refuses to notify more election tribunals for Punjab despite being in receipt of nominees from the Lahore High Court. Its decisions and actions clearly need to be reviewed in light of the country's laws, and its controversial decision regarding reserved seats seems to be a good place to start. The nation deserves to understand what its motivations have been thus far.

The politicians, parliamentarians, and members of both civil and military bureaucracy create a formidable force to shield one another from the fallout of leaks like Wikileaks, the Panama Papers, or revelations concerning Dubai properties. This network safeguards those in positions of power through compliant Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and rubber nose accountability bodies to minimize or completely neutralize the adverse effects of such leaks. Notwithstanding the fact that serious concerns about the origins of these funds and potential illicit practices such as corruption, money laundering, and tax evasion not only undermine the integrity of financial systems but also deprive the government of essential revenue needed for public services and infrastructure.

Drawing from my experience of working as Deputy Commissioner Income Tax for more than ten years (1994-2005) I can tell with certainty that the entire accountability framework, including the FBR, would already have started rectifying the gaps in the income tax and wealth tax records of prominent Pakistani figures including three children of President Asif Ali Zardari, Hussain Nawaz Sharif, the spouse of Interior Minister

Mohsin Naqvi, Sharjeel Memon, Senator Faisal Vawda, Farah Gogi, Sher Afzal Marwat, several members of the Sindh and Balochistan assemblies, the late Gen Pervez Musharraf, former Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, over a dozen retired generals, as well as a police chief, an ambassador, and a scientist.

I can also assert with certainty that tax authorities across Pakistan will be diligently examining the records of individuals beyond politicians and civil and military bureaucracies to determine if the properties leaked were declared, undeclared, or undervalued. Taxpayers and their lawyers have likely already been summoned to negotiate the cost of rectifying their records, a process that benefits themselves, their legal representatives, and the tax officials, ensuring that not a single penny goes to the government exchequer.

For those individuals whose wealth statements are available in the public domain and who either failed to declare the mentioned properties or undervalued them, they and their income tax lawyers are likely scrambling to initiate damage control measures.

The properties worth \$11 billion in Dubai starkly contrasts with the economic realities facing the nation. With foreign exchange re-

serves far below this figure and a significant portion of the population living below the poverty line, this vast wealth disparity underscores systemic challenges in income distribution, governance, and economic development. In a country where over 40% of the populace struggles amidst inflation rates exceeding 35%, the concentration of such immense wealth abroad not only widens the gap between the rich and the poor but also exacerbates socioeconomic inequalities, hindering efforts to uplift marginalized communities and foster inclusive growth.

The \$11 billion worth of leaked properties is merely the tip of the iceberg. Countless other properties have been discreetly acquired and stashed away in various countries worldwide, potentially totaling billions upon billions of dollars.

This rampant acquisition of assets abroad significantly contributes to the impoverishment of our nation. It's a stark representation of the systemic corruption and greed that plagues our society, draining resources that should be invested in uplifting our people and developing our nation.

As a senior civil servant who retired as the Press Secretary to the President in BS 21, I can attest to the fact that throughout their entire service,

whether civilian or military, any bureaucrat can only afford a modest house and a middle-class car with their legal income. Similarly, my experience as Director General of the Minister's Office for four Federal Ministers confirms that politicians can barely sustain their household expenses with their legitimate assets.

Any wealth beyond these modest means is likely obtained through illicit means or illegal sources of income as civil and public servants are prohibited from engaging in business activities during their service.

How they launder black money through an intricate web of financial transactions is intriguing.

The illicit funds are injected into the financial system through depositing cash into third-party bank accounts, acquiring high-value assets, or establishing shell companies. These funds undergo a series of transactions to obscure their origins, including transfers between accounts, investments across different markets, and international wire transfers through multiple jurisdictions. Subsequently, laundered funds are reintroduced into the economy disguised as legitimate assets, often through the sale of initially purchased high-

value assets at deflated prices followed by reinvestment in legitimate businesses or the acquisition of real estate and other valuable assets.

Moreover, politicians and civil servants frequently exploit their positions of authority and leverage legislative influence to create loopholes or favorable conditions for concealing illicit wealth. They may also utilize personal connections and influence to access offshore banking systems or establish intricate corporate structures, further complicating the tracing of asset ownership.

The parliament and the executive often collaborate to introduce Tax amnesty schemes. They declare previously undisclosed assets or income, often attributing them to gifts received from friends, relatives, or loyal party supporters.

Through paying nominal taxes, which are often a fraction of the true value of their assets, they effectively launder their illegal wealth freely, use or invest it without fear of legal repercussions.

Let us create a hypothetical scenario that individuals implicated in illegal asset acquisition were US citizens. They could have faced various legal ramifications under U.S. law. This includes potential charges for money laundering, stemming

from transactions involving proceeds of corruption or bribery. This would have led to hefty fines and lengthy imprisonment upon conviction on two accounts, failing to report income or assets gained through illicit means, subjecting them to IRS prosecution and civil penalties and violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) carrying fines and imprisonment and forfeiture to seize properties and assets acquired illegally.

Let us create another hypothetical scenario in which the politicians, bureaucrats, civil and military implicated in the Dubai leaks were US citizens and had acquired assets as gifts from friends, supporters or well wishers.

They could face charges of bribery targeting both the giver and recipient for exchanging something of value for official favors.

They could face honest services fraud charges for compromising their public duties. Failure to disclose the gift or avoid decisions benefiting the giver could lead to conflict of interest violations requiring to forfeit the gift, facing civil penalties and reputational damage with added consequences of legal risks, potentially tarnishing careers and undermining public trust. But we all know with certainty that in Pakistan every-one will get away.

# Dubai Leaks: Will Everyone Get Away?

By Qamar Bashir

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

## Commerce News

### Aleem Khan says:

## Govt taking steps to facilitate investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has said that the government was trying its best to facilitate investment in the country.

He said that the government was making it easier for the business community to start new initiatives, said a press release issued here Wednesday.

Expressed his views while addressing as Chief Guest at the 16<sup>th</sup> All Pakistan Chambers Presidents' Conference organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, he said that the Board of Investment was providing fast-track platforms of "Ease of Doing Business" and "One Stop Shop" which would ultimately boost investment in the country.

"According to the business trends of the world, we also have to make changes in our system", he said add-

ing that it is not the government's job to do business but its responsibility is to provide all kinds of facilities to the business class and create a congenial environment which can attract investment.

Abdul Aleem Khan further said that when business flourishes it will automatically increase foreign exchange reserves and benefits will reach the common man at the grassroots level. He said that the government has decided to privatise 24 institutions, in which PIA is at the top while the privatisation of PIA will be shown live on TV, as well.

He assured that transparency will be ensured at all costs in the privatisation of all projects including PIA, for which we will also seek help from the media.

Abdul Aleem Khan further said that if a better environment is provided in Pakistan, investors will be immediately interested as so far many leading busi-

ness groups have contacted for the privatization of PIA.

Appreciating the role of the Chamber of Commerce, Abdul Aleem Khan said that this forum should continue to play a positive role in maximum investment in the country. He congratulated the Chamber for organizing the 16<sup>th</sup> All Pakistan Chambers Presidents' Conference.

President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce Saqib Rafique said that the Special Investment Facilitation Council is playing an important role in economic improvement and restoring the confidence of the business community. Group Leader Sohail Afiah highlighted that the confidence of local and foreign investors has to be restored. In this two-day Conference, Presidents of Chambers of four Provinces, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan and Presidents of Women's Chambers participated.



Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in meeting to address the issues confronted by Industrial Sector Related to Energy in Islamabad.

## Fertilizer manufacturers of Pakistan, Advisory Council to reduce prices of fertilizer urea

ISLAMABAD (APP): The fertilizer manufacturers of the Pakistan Advisory Council have agreed to reduce the prices of fertilizer urea to provide relief to the agriculturists in the country.

The Managing Director and CEO, Fauji Fertilizer Company, Jhanagiri Paracha called on the Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain here on Wednesday and informed that the Fertilizer Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council have unanimously agreed to reduce the prices of fertil-

izer urea in the country.

He said that all fertilizer plants should formally be allocated and supplied gas exclusively from the Mari Gas field under bilateral arrangements in accordance with applicable gas pricing policies.

The minister stated that the proposal submitted by the Fertilizer Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council will be taken to the relevant forum of the Economic Coordination Council for a decision on the matter.

He said the government is committed to taking every step to ensure the

facilitation of the farmers in the kharif season.

As per the proposal submitted by the Fertilizer Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council, the government should ensure uninterrupted gas supply to the fertilizer industry for the next 10 years from Mari Gas Field. This will ensure the availability of affordable urea for our farmers and would also save foreign exchange on the import of urea.

If the proposal is agreed by the government then the fertilizer industry does not require any subsidy in the future.

## Planning Minister hopes technology spillover to benefit Pakistan's digital economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Reiterating continued support to Huawei for its existing and newly planned initiatives in Pakistan, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal expressed the hope that technology spillover would greatly help in boosting county's digital economy.

According to press release by Huawei here, the federal minister during his China visit last week visited company's Head-

quarters in Beijing, leading discussions on potential collaborations in new technologies, cellphones, high tech equipment manufacturing, automation and use of big data for industry, governance and security.

The minister held discussion with Vice President of Public Affairs and Communications Department, Huawei, Tiger Wei; Vice CEO Huawei Pakistan, Ray Yu; Regional Representative, Huawei Public Affairs and Communications Department, Ms. Maya Jin.

## 78.97 percent cotton cultivation target achieved in Faisalabad division

FAISALABAD (APP): Divisional Director Agriculture (Extension) Chaudhry Khalid Mehmood said that 78.97 percent cotton cultivation target had so far been achieved in Faisalabad division while efforts were onto for remaining target within the stipulated period. He stated this while giving a briefing during the 2<sup>nd</sup> monthly meeting of Divisional Cotton Crop Management Committee held here on Wednesday with Divisional Commissioner Madam Sitwat Saeed in the chair.

## Pakistan, US agree to boost coop. in IT, Telecom sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja and US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome on Wednesday agreed to enhance cooperation in the IT and Telecommunication sector.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest related to IT and Telecommunication, the digitalisation of Pakistan's judicial system and the promotion of the gaming industry were discussed, said a news release.

While talking to US Ambassador, Shaza Fatima said that the IT and Telecom sector of Pakistan is progressing. She said that Pakistan wanted to enhance its relations with the US in

the field of IT and Telecom.

The minister said that Pakistan wanted to work on the promotion of gaming industry with the collaboration of the United States. She also emphasised cooperation in the IT and Telecommunication sector between Pakistan and US.

Pakistan aspired to benefit from the experiences of America in the field of technology and exchange of IT experts between the two countries.

The minister of State for IT said that the present government is focusing on digitalisation in the country. Economy, governance and society are being digitalised under the Prime Minister's National Digitalisation Plan, she maintained.



ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Donald Blome calls on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

## ADB sells \$3.5bn 2-Year Global Benchmark Bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has priced a 2-year global benchmark United States (US) dollar bond worth \$3.5 billion, proceeds of which will be part of ADB's ordinary capital resources. "We are grateful for the consistently robust support from our investor community that resulted in an orderbook of over \$9 billion and enabled the issuance of a \$3.5 billion global benchmark bond with 2-year maturity," said ADB Treasurer Pierre Van Peteghem, according to press release received here.

"This will help support ADB's commitment to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific," Peteghem said.

The 2-year bond, with a coupon rate of 4.875% per annum payable semi-annually and a maturity date of 21 May 2026, was priced at 99.904% to yield 9.9 basis points over the 4.875% US Treasury notes due April 2026.

The transaction was lead-managed by Credit Agricole CIB, Deutsche Bank, J.P. Morgan, and Nomura.

## KP Governor for creating awareness among farmers about new types of wheat

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday emphasized on creating awareness among farmers about new types of wheat to get maximum yield besides meeting the demand of the province.

He said this while inaugurating the new type of wheat harvesting technology during a ceremony here at the Agricultural University Peshawar (AUP).

Governor termed the production of special types of wheat by AUP in collaboration with Washington State University and Agricultural University Faisalabad as the best initiative and also appreciated the efforts of Senator Noman Wazir for introducing the special variety of

wheat at AUP.

He said that landlords and farmers of the province should get guidance on modern varieties of wheat and use of new technologies in agriculture to increase the productivity of quality wheat.

Kundi directed the vice chancellor of AUP to transfer the modern research to local farmers and landowners, adding that serious efforts were needed to improve agricultural self-sufficiency in the province.

He also called for improving the infrastructure for water use in the province so that the barren land could be irrigated in the province and production of wheat and other agricultural commodities enhanced.

## Rupee loses 08 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday lost 08 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.26 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.18.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.25 and Rs 279.80 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 1.31 to close at Rs 301.24 against the last day's closing of Rs 299.93, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paise to close at Rs 1.78; whereas an increase of Rs1.89 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 350.44 as compared to the last closing of Rs 348.55.

## Maryam stresses quality education in govt schools

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif sought a monthly schedule for the five-year plan related to the education reforms, here on Wednesday.

The chief minister granted approval for providing 32,298 tablets to heads of primary schools. She presided over a special meeting pertaining to schools education reforms in which public schools reorganisation programme was comprehensively reviewed.

The School Education secretary apprised the CM about progress being made on the schools nutrition project. It was agreed in the meeting to set up STEM IT and Science Labs in 1000

elementary schools. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide financial assistance worth \$100 million for establishment of STEM Labs.

An approval in principle was granted for the Google Certification Agreement for 3 lakh children in the government schools. Students will be provided opportunities to avail Google Certification under the Digital Journey for TECH Valley Project.

The proposals and recommendations for establishment of Punjab Education Curriculum and Training were reviewed in the meeting. It was informed during the meeting that more than 92

per cent free books have been delivered. The CM stressed the need to improve quality of education in the government schools under any circumstances.

Senator Pervez Rashid, Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Provincial Minister for School Education Rana Sikandar Hayat, MPA Sania Ashiq, Chief Secretary, Secretary Education, Secretary Finance, MD Punjab Curriculum & Text Book Board, MD Punjab Education Foundation, CEO Punjab Initiative Management Authority, MD Punjab Education Sector Reforms Programme and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

## Getting education is basic right of every child: DC Ghotki

By Tanveer Ahmed Soomro

MIRPUR MATHILO: Deputy Commissioner Ghotki Dr. Syed Muhammad Ali visited Special Education Center Mirpur Mathelo and reviewed it.



On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner said that getting education is the basic right of every child, providing vocational training to special children is a good initiative which encourages them.

He said that the Special Education Center is a good institution, he will try to provide more facilities to the institution so that the special children can get maximum benefit. On this occasion, Deputy Director Saifullah Mahar told the Deputy Commissioner that all the children are provided transport facility from school to home while also providing vocational training along with education.

## Brother killed his brother in Shikarpur

Independent Report

SHIKARPUR: An other shameful Act of killing the real brother on the matter of property was occurred in Shikarpur District on Wednesday in the jurisdiction of Rahimabad police station.

According to initial reports reached here that one accused Muhammad Hashim Pahore accompanied with his nephews murdered his real brother identified as Qasim Pahore at village Noor Muhammad Shujrah and threw his dead body in ditch and buried there while tightening his arms and feet with rope.

While receiving the information, area police recovered the buried dead body of deceased Qasim Pahore and arrested to be accused brother Muhammad Hashim Pahore.

Police is busy in collecting further evidence and such matter is in process.

No FIR was registered till late evening.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan addresses during the 3rd National Labour Conference held in Lahore.

## VC UoS stresses importance of attracting top-tier

By Haroon Siraj

SWAT: The Vice Chancellor of the University of Swat, Prof. Dr. Hassan Sher, convened a meeting with all heads of departments and administrative sections on Wednesday to discuss various university issues and the upcoming Alumni Gathering event.

The meeting

aimed to foster a sense of community among alumni, providing a platform for networking, sharing experiences, and contributing to the university's growth and development. Head of Departments briefed the meeting on their interactions with alumni from their respective departments.

## Dacoit killed during police encounter

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): A dacoit was killed with the firing of own accomplices during police encounter in limits of Khair Pur Sadat police station.

According to police spokesperson, SHO Sheher Sultan police along with Khair Pur Sadat police on a tip off raided for the arrest of a proclaimed offender.

The suspects opened firing on a police party in which police personnel remained safe. The police van was partially damaged.

## Gilani says he feels proud in serving South Punjab people

MULTAN (APP): Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday said that he felt proud for the services he and his family had rendered for the uplift of education sector and vowed to take the same to new heights in the South Punjab. The Gilani family always served the people as their duty and obligation, he said while talking to different delegates at the Multan Circuit House.

Gilani said that his bond with the people of South Punjab, particularly Multan, would remain intact as they were like a family for him. Former Member of the

Punjab Assembly Malik Saleem Labar called on him and discussed matters of mutual interest. Gilani Law College Principal Dr. Samza Faima along with Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Bilal held a meeting with Gilani and congratulated him on his election as Senate chairman. They acknowledged the services of Gilani family in establishing and upgrading education sector facilities in the South Punjab. A delegation from Civil Society Forum led by Shahid Mahmood Ansari invited the Senate chairman to join their campaign to plant 500 saplings in the city.



LAHORE: Information and Culture Minister of Punjab Azma Bukhari addressing a press conference at D.G.P.R office in the Provincial Capital.

## Scabies transmits person to person through close skin contact: Skin specialist

HYDERABAD (APP): Scabies is a parasitic infestation caused by tiny mites that burrow into the skin and lay eggs, causing intense itching and a rash. Scabies can lead to skin sores and serious complications like septicaemia (a bloodstream infection), heart disease and kidney problems.

Dermatologist / Skin specialist Dr Rajendar Dhirani expressed these views while talking to APP here on Wednesday.

He informed that Scabies spreads easily from person to person, especially among people who live close together. Children and older people in resource-poor areas are at higher risk. Scabies is found

in every country but is particularly common in many resource-poor tropical settings, particularly in children and older people. Prevalence among children in these settings may vary from 5% up to 50%. Recurrent infestations are common, he added.

He said that Scabies is transmitted person-to-person through close skin contact (e.g. living in the same residence) with an infested individual. The risk of transmission increases with the level of infestation, with highest risk due to contact with individuals with crusted scabies. Transmission due to contact with infested personal items (e.g., clothes and bed linens)

is unlikely with common scabies but may be important for individuals with crusted scabies. As there is an asymptomatic period of infestation, transmission may occur before the initially infested person develops symptoms.

To a question about the symptoms he said that it include severe itch, often worse at night; itchy lines (linear burrows) and bumps (papules) on the fingers, wrists, arms, legs and belt area; larger rash in infants and small children, including on the palms, soles of the feet, ankles and scalp.

About the precaution he said that avoid skin-to-skin contact with an infested person, especially if they

have an itchy rash; treat all members of the household if someone has scabies to prevent the mites from spreading to others; wash and dry bedding and clothing that has been in contact with the infested person, using hot water and drying in direct sunlight, a hot dryer cycle or dry cleaning; seal items that can't be washed in a plastic bag for a week to help eliminate the mites; and clean and vacuum or sweep rooms after an infested person has been treated, especially for people with crusted scabies.

He said that Scabies can be treated with topical creams or oral medication in more severe cases. Itchiness often gets worse for

1-2 weeks after treatment starts. Ivermectin taken orally is also highly effective, but it should not be taken by pregnant women or children who weigh less than 15 kg.

Treatments do not kill the parasite's eggs, and treatment should be repeated to kill newly hatched mites. People do not experience symptoms in the early stages of infestation. To reduce spread, all people in the household should be treated, even if they do not have symptoms. Other treatments may be needed to treat the complications of scabies. Antiseptics or antibiotics are used to treat bacterial skin infections or impetigo.

## International News

### Palestinians mark 'Nakba' anniversary as thousands flee Gaza's Rafah

**Monitoring Desk**  
RAFAH: Tens of thousands of civilians fled the southern Gaza city of Rafah ahead of a threatened Israeli ground offensive, as Palestinians on Wednesday mark the anniversary of their "Nakba" or "catastrophe" of 1948.

During the war that accompanied Israel's creation, around 760,000 Palestinians fled or were driven from their homes and many took refuge in what would later become the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Wednesday's commemoration of the "Nakba" comes as multiple battles between Israeli troops and Hamas militants across the Gaza Strip force waves of Palestinian mass displacement.

Nearly 450,000 Pal-

estinians have been displaced from Rafah since May 6, and around 100,000 from northern Gaza, UN agencies said.

That means around a quarter of Gaza's population of 2.4 million people have been displaced again in about one week.

UN chief Antonio Guterres repeated his call for a humanitarian ceasefire to allow more aid into the besieged territory.

"I reiterate my appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza and for the release of all hostages. I call for the Rafah crossing to be re-opened immediately and for the unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Gaza," he posted Tuesday on social media site X.

The war and siege

have triggered a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, with the UN repeatedly lamenting aid restrictions as famine stalks the north.

Since Israeli troops moved into eastern Rafah, the aid crossing point from Egypt has remained closed and the nearby Kerem Shalom crossing lacks "safe and logistically viable access", a UN report said late Monday.

Qatar, which has been mediating peace talks, said Gazans "have not received any aid" since May 9.

Israeli police on Tuesday said they had opened an investigation after right-wing activists stopped and ransacked at least seven Gaza-bound aid trucks coming from Jordan, leaving food spilt on the road.



Palestinians hold Palestinian flags as they take part in a protest to mark the 76th anniversary of the Nakba, the "catastrophe" of their mass dispossession in the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, in Ramallah, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

### Slovak PM shot after govt meeting, facing life-threatening injuries

**Monitoring Desk**  
HANDLOVA: Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico suffered life-threatening injuries when he was shot and wounded in an attempted assassination on Wednesday, the government office said. Fico, 59, was shot and hit in the abdomen.

A reporter from the Dennik N daily saw the premier being lifted into a car by security guards and reported that police had detained the suspected gunman. "We confirm the attack on the prime minister," police spokesman Matej

Neumann told AFP. A Reuters witness heard several shots fired after the meeting in Handlova north-east of the capital Bratislava. Police detained a man and security officials pushed someone into a car and drove off, the witness said. Similarly, broadcaster TA3 reported that four shots were fired and that the leftist prime minister had been hit in the abdomen. The wounded prime minister was rushed to a hospital in Handlova for treatment and was referred to the capital Bratislava.

### Former US military intelligence official says he resigned over Gaza war

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: A former US military intelligence official released a letter on Monday that explained to his colleagues at the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) that his November resignation was in fact due to "moral injury" stemming from US support for Israel's war in Gaza and the harm caused to Palestinians.

Harrison Mann, an Army major, would be the first known DIA official to

quit over US support to Israel. A US airman fatally set himself on fire in February outside Israel's embassy in Washington and other military personnel have protested.

Mann said he kept quiet about his motives for resigning for months out of fear. "I was afraid. Afraid of violating our professional norms. Afraid of disappointing officers I respect. Afraid you would feel betrayed.

### Jordan foils arms plot as kingdom caught in Iran-Israel shadow war

**Monitoring Desk**  
AMMAN: Jordan has foiled a suspected Iranian-led plot to smuggle weapons into the US-allied kingdom to help opponents of the ruling monarchy carry out acts of sabotage, according to two Jordanian sources with knowledge of the matter. The weapons were sent by Iranian-backed militias in Syria to a cell of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan that has links to the military wing of Palestinian group Hamas.

### One killed, 12 injured in Afghan air force helicopter crash

**Monitoring Desk**  
KABUL: A helicopter used by the Afghan air force crashed as it attempted an emergency landing in central Afghanistan on Wednesday, killing one person and injuring 12, the defence ministry said.

The Mi17 aircraft encountered "technical issues" as it attempted to recover the bodies of people who had fallen into a river in the central Ghor province, Afghanistan's Taliban-run Ministry of National Defence said in a statement.

### Putin hails China's 'genuine desire' to help resolve Ukraine war

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed Beijing's "genuine desire" to help resolve the Ukraine crisis, in an interview with Chinese state media published ahead of a two-day visit to the country.

Putin arrives in Beijing on Thursday to meet his "dear friend" Xi Jinping, seeking to win greater support from China for his war effort in Ukraine and isolated economy.

The visit, where he will also travel to the north-eastern city of Harbin for a trade and investment expo, is Putin's first trip abroad since his March re-election and his second in just over six months to China.

"We commend China's approaches to resolving the crisis in

Ukraine," Putin told the Xinhua state news agency in a Moscow interview, which was also carried in English on the Kremlin website. "Beijing is well aware of its root causes and global geopolitical significance," Putin said, referring to a 12-point position paper published by China in February 2023 on reaching a political settlement to the crisis. "The ideas and proposals contained in the document show the genuine desire of our Chinese friends to help stabilise the situation," Putin said.

Days before Russia launched its full-scale military assault on Ukraine in February 2022, Beijing and Moscow declared a "no limits" partnership and have since boosted trade to record highs.

### Qatar sees Israel's Rafah attack as setback for talks

**Monitoring Desk**  
DOHA: Israel's military operation in Rafah has set truce negotiations with Hamas "backward", mediator Qatar said on Tuesday, adding that talks have reached "almost a stalemate".

"Especially in the past few weeks, we have seen some momentum building but unfortunately things didn't move in the right direction and right now we are on a status of almost a stalemate," Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani told the Qatar Economic Forum.

"Of course, what happened with Rafah has set us backward." Qatar, which has hosted Hamas's political office in Doha since 2012, has been engaged along with Egypt and the United States in months of behind-the-scenes mediation between Israel and the Pal-

estinian group. "There is no clarity how to stop the war from the Israeli side. I don't think that they are considering this as an option... even when we are talking about the deal and leading to a potential ceasefire," Sheikh Mohammed said.

Israeli politicians were indicating "by their statements that they will remain there, they will continue the war." And there is no clarity on what Gaza will look like after this", he added.

Israel continued to fight Hamas in Rafah on Monday, despite US warnings against a full-scale assault on the south Gaza city that is crowded with displaced Palestinians.

A senior US official said negotiations were "at a simmer, but are at a low boil", but that conversations with the parties were continuing.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba hold a joint press conference, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

### Top US and Chinese officials begin talks on AI in Geneva

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: Top envoys from the U.S. and China huddled in closed-door talks in Geneva on Tuesday to lay out their national approaches to the promise and perils of emerging artificial intelligence technology. The talks, which Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping agreed to launch in last 2023, are meant to open up bilateral dialogue be-

tween the world's two biggest economies — and increasingly, geopolitical rivals — on a fast-moving technology that already has consequences for trade, lifestyles, culture, politics, national security and defense and much more. U.S. technology experts say the meeting — led on the American side by high-level White House and State Department officials.

# PM for PSDP programmes ensuring sustainable development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday stressed upon initiation of such projects under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) that ensured sustainable development in the country.

While underlining the significance of third part validation of all the mega national development projects, he observed that with increase in revenues, enough funds could be made available for the uplift projects.

The prime minister chaired an important meeting on the matters related

to the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and Public Private Partnership Authority, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan, PM's Coordinator Rana Ahsan Afzal and other relevant senior officials.

The prime minister

also directed for constitution of a cabinet committee headed by the minister for planning over the development budget and PSDP.

The committee would furnish a mechanism over PSDP programmes through short, medium and long terms proposals.

The prime minister emphasized upon harmonizing the federal PSDP and provincial annual development programme and the need of improving links.

He also asked for submission of proposals by all the federal ministries over public-private partnership projects.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori and Patron presenting honorary degree to Consul General of Indonesia during a special convocation of Indus University at Governor House.

## Political stability, persistent policies imperative for growth: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal Wednesday underscored the need for political stability and continuity of economic policies to put Pakistan on a sustained growth trajectory and attain social prosperity.

Addressing the Pakistan Development Summit, the minister said, "Pakistan is blessed with all natural resources and by mobilizing these resources, we can take the country on the path of rapid economic growth and social development within a ten-year time period." The theme of the event was "5Es Framework Road map to a Trillion Dollar Economy by 2035," which aimed to bring together stakeholders from

industry, academia and sectoral professionals to shape the future of Pakistan's economic growth.

About nine key thematic sessions under the topic of 5EsFramework would gather expert feedback and prepare a comprehensive plan of action to attain sustainable economic development and social prosperity.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister stressed the need to form an economic charter, besides maintaining the continuity of these economic policies to turn around the national economy. He said that peace and political stability in the country were the other prerequisite elements to put the country on a fast track to economic uplift.

## Ambassador highlights potential of more flights between Al Ain, Pak cities

ABU DHABI (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Faisal Niaz Tirmizi on Wednesday stressed the need to enhance the number of flights between Al Ain and Pakistani major cities, especially Peshawar. He said this in a side-line meeting with Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Abu Dhabi Airports Elena Sorlini at Al Ain airport where the launch of PIA's flight from Al Ain to Turbat, Baluchistan was also highlighted.

"With the launch of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight from Al Ain airport to Turbat, Baluchistan, we see tremendous potential for further collaboration. In addition to three weekly flights by PIA from Al Ain airport to Pakistan (two to Islamabad and one to Turbat), we feel that there is a need to enhance the number of flights by including other destinations, especially Peshawar and other major cities," the ambassador emphasized.

Ambassador Tirmizi highlighted that Pakistan's strategic location between South Asia and the Middle East offered vast opportunities, especially in tourism for Emiratis and other nationals residing in the UAE.

Two robbers, a citizen killed in fire exchange during robber

KARACHI (INP): Three including two robbers and a citizen were killed in fire exchange during a robbery here in the metropolis on Wednesday, police said.

According to details, two armed robbers barged into a house near Jamali Bridge in Karachi.

An exchange of fire between a resident and robbers took place.

In cross firing, both robbers and a citizen identified as Nehal were killed.

Arms were recovered from possession of the killed robbers and their bodies were moved to hospital.



LARKANA: Residents of Naseerabad Tagar family are holding protest demonstration against the killing of Ahsan Ali Tagar and demanding the arrest of his killers held at Larkana press club.

## DC chairs district committee meeting to tackle hoarding in Sanghar

HYDERABAD (APP): A meeting of the district committee formed by the federal Interior department for action against hoarders was held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner Sanghar Dr. Imran ul Hassan Khawaja.

Addressing the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner said that relief will be provided to the general public by taking legal action against the traders who are unnecessarily stockpiling common food items and

agricultural fertilizers.

Dr. Khawaja directed all Assistant Commissioners and Mukhtarkar to visit the markets on daily basis and keep a close watch on black marketers and hoarders.

Assistant Commissioners, District Food Controller Munawar Ali Arain, Deputy Director Anti-Corruption Shaheed Benazirabad Abdul Razaque and other relevant officials were also present on this occasion.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by the President of Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians Gilgit-Baltistan, Amjad Hussain Advocate, calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Pakistan, China agree to promote CPEC with third-party participation

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan and China on Wednesday agreed to advance their joint project - China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and endorsed finalizing the modalities for third-party participation.

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at a joint press stakeout expressed satisfaction over the steady pace of CPEC and vowed to "further upgrade and expand this cooperation".

The two sides, after co-chairing the fifth Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue held here at Diaoyutai State Guest House, spoke about their in-depth discussion on the multiple facets of their bilateral relations including CPEC and cooperation on

counter-terrorism.

Termed the Sino-Pak ties as "all-weather strategic partnership", Dar and Wang expressed commitment to continue extending support to each other on issues of core interest.

Ishaq Dar said the country looked forward to further enhancing China's "development footprint" as in last 10 years, the CPEC transformed Pakistan's economic landscape by eliminating power outages and by developing a robust infrastructure network.

The two sides, he said, would pace up the implementation of Main Line-1 railway line project, Gwadar Port development, realignment of Phase 2 of the Karakorum Highway, and boost cooperation in agriculture, mining, minerals, energy, information technology, and industry sectors.

"As we embark on second phase of CPEC, we look forward to developing corridors of growth, livelihood, innovation, green development, and inclusivity," he added. Dar said the two sides were unanimous of the view that Karakorum Highway was the "linchpin of the China Pakistan geographical connectivity and an important artery of CPEC". It has been agreed to implement the previous understanding to commence all-weather operations of Khunjerab-Sust border crossing soon, he added.

He lauded China's steadfast support to Pakistan's sovereignty, integrity, and right to development, particularly "China's principled stance on the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir."

NA Speaker says Strengthening standing committees essential for ensuring quality legislation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Wednesday said that enhancing parliamentary outreach is key to abridging space between public representatives and the public.

"Digitalisation is key to transforming Parliament into a goal-orientated organization that produces quality and public responsive legislation" he expressed these views while chairing the 1st meeting of the National Assembly Strategic Plan Committee Special in

## Excise dept collects Rs7.5 million taxes during campaign

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Excise Department, during ongoing province wide campaign against unregistered and tax defaulting vehicles, on Wednesday collected different taxes amounting to Rs7.532 million.

Sindh Minister for Information, Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Sharjeel Inam Memon, in a statement issued here, informed that in the last four days of the campaign over 10,000 vehicles were checked across the province and 359 vehicles were taken into custody while documents of 912 vehicles were also confiscated.

During the campaign, the department collected Rs 4,064 million motor vehicle tax and Rs 2,933 million withholding tax as well as Rs0.564 million penalty from unregistered and tax defaulting vehicles, the minister informed adding that on payment of due taxes vehicles were released and documents were also returned to the owners.

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## NAB amendment case: SC directs Imran to appear thru video link

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has allowed former Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan to appear through video link on May 16 in NAB amendment case.

It has been said in court's order Attorney General should ensure appearance of Imran Khan through video link from Adialajail.

Notices are issued to advocate generals of all provincial governments except KP government.

Notice is issued to Khawaja Harris as amicus curiae.

NAB also supported appeals.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the meeting of Economic Coordination Committee.

## Deputy Commissioner Larkana ordered to actions against the Attae doctors

LARKANA: In Larkana city, in different cities of the district, including Naoy Dero, Rutodero, Baqrani, and in different areas and villages of rural areas, the protest made by the public due to the open clinical experience of Attai doctors, after taking notice of the Deputy Commissioner Larkana Dr. Sharjeel Noor Chana Larkana. In a meeting with the officials of the health department related to the district, they said that action should be taken against the illegal doctors, illegal laboratories and blood banks who are playing with people's lives. While the Deputy Commissioner of Larkana held a meeting with the officials of the Health Department in his office, in which the DHO of Larkana, the anti-cacheyra team and other officials of the Health Department informed the Deputy Commissioner of Larkana about the actions taken against the doctors, laboratories, illegal blood banks and others.

## Female Karachi SHO suspended for abusing power

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh Inspector General of Police has suspended a lady Station House Officer (SHO) for overstepping her authority in Karachi on Wednesday.

The IG ordered Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Asad Raza to issue a show-cause notice to SHO Sahil Tasneem Iqbal.

According to report, an inquiry was underway against the lady SHO for misuse of authority.

SHO Tasneem was suspended after the inquiry was completed.

## Very hot weather continue to soar Sindh in coming days

KARACHI (APP): The upper and central parts of Sindh to bear extremely hot weather in coming days and the scorching temperature at the day times will keep the mercury soaring above 45 on Celsius scale. The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), on Wednesday, forecast very hot and dry weather in most districts of the province and weather was likely to become hotter with day time Maximum Temperature ranging 45 to 47 C in Upper and Central districts of the province from Thursday, May 16.

However, isolated dust-thunderstorm/rain may occur in Tharparker, Umerkot, Badin and parts of Thatta districts on Wednesday night.



KARACHI: Police officials are searching commuters during the campaign against unregistered and tax defaulting vehicles, as the security has been tighten, under the supervision Excise Department, in Karachi.

## President for all-weather road infrastructure in Gilgit-Baltistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday called for establishing an all-weather road infrastructure in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) to boost trade, economic and tourism activities in the region.

He said that an all-season transport infrastructure, particularly between Gilgit and Skardu, would help ensure continuous and reliable transportation in different weather conditions, besides facilitating goods movement and enhancing connectivity.

The president expressed these views while talking to a delegation led by President of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians GB, Amjad Hussain Advocate at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The delegation apprised the president about the problems being faced by

the residents of Gilgit-Baltistan, besides highlighting the need to focus on the development of health and education infrastructure, mitigating the impacts of climate change, promoting tourism and economic activities, and providing uninterrupted power supply in GB.

Talking to the delegation, the president stressed the need to accelerate the development activities in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), saying that it was his life's mission and dream to see the GB as a developed and prosperous region.

He remarked that constructing all-weather roads and tunnels between Skardu and Gilgit would not only improve logistics and transportation for businesses but also enhance the people's access to public services such as healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.



ISLAAMBAD: Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlamov called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House.

## Murtaza inaugurates 15th Satryoon Sang Crafts Exhibition

SUKKUR (APP): Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Wednesday inaugurated the three day 15th Satryoon Sang Crafts exhibition at Dolmen Mall Clifton, here. The three-day exhibition is organized by the Sindh Rural Support Organization (RSRO) with collaboration of Sindh government displaying work of around thousands women artisans of Sindh with an aim to provide market linkages to rural women and artisans.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab appreciated the endeavours of Sindh Rural Support Organization for poor and destitute community and expecting in future to keep such spirit for rural communities of Sindh.

"We all need to be very practical in understanding the occurring issues of women at ground level and should participate in a way of solving them that would bring changes," he asserted.

According to him, handicrafts and artifact help create harmony among different cultures. He said such platforms help indigenous artisans market their products. "It's the government's responsibility to not let the work of these artisans die and appreciate the laborious work needed to create handicrafts," he said.

In appreciation of the event, Wahab emphasized the significance of such initiatives in promoting artisans, handicrafts, and Sindh's rich culture.

## I am not going to meet Imran Khan in jail: Maulana Fazal

FAISALABAD (Online): JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said no one is meeting Imran Khan.

"No one is meeting Imran Khan. Our politics is like open book. Our institutions will have to stay in their respective parameters. Establishment has gone into blind alley. There is ceasefire from PTI side which is good omen. All political parties will have to sit together and block their way, he said this while talking to media men after condoling with JUI-F Punjab Naib Amir Syed Muhammad Zikria Shah on the death of Syed Javed Hussain Shah here Tuesday.

He stated ceasefire has taken place between PTI and JUI-F. I am not going to meet Imran Khan in jail.

I don't know as to why such questions are being asked now a days, he inquired. All politicians will have to sit together for the sake of constitution.

He held every election remained controversial. This will have to be rectified at every cost.

He underlined that PPP is getting constitutional slots and is saying too that it is not part of the government. PPP is not in government, it means minority government is running.



KARACHI: Students of Karachi University hold protest against Israel Government.

## Karachi's captured dacoit reveals son in United States, daughter a medical student

KARACHI (INP): A notorious dacoit apprehended by the Clifton Investigation Police has unveiled a double life marked by crime and familial ties spanning continents. Identified as the Firozabad area back in 2008. Despite serving his sentence, Shehryar's criminal activities persisted, characterized by a pattern of fleeing to Lahore once funds dwindled, only to return to Karachi to resume his unlawful ventures.

The breakthrough in apprehending Shehryar came with the aid of hotel software records from Lahore, leading the police to swiftly act on their investigation and effectuate the arrest.

pursued a career in medicine.

The revelation further delved into Shehryar's criminal history, citing a past conviction for the murder of a policeman in the Firozabad area back in 2008. Despite serving his sentence, Shehryar's criminal activities persisted, characterized by a pattern of fleeing to Lahore once funds dwindled, only to return to Karachi to resume his unlawful ventures.

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