

# Independent

Member APNS &amp; CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 V&amp; XXV No. 253, Shawwal 25, 1445 AH Saturday May 04, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs.15

Bugti chairs meeting of Food Dept. on Wheat Procurement Policy:

## GoB decides to start process of wheat procurement from May 6

Chief Minister announces to purchase 0.5 million tons of wheat from growers this year; Rs. 5 billion already approved by cabinet; directs to release Rs. 2.5 billion by Monday next

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has decided to start process of procurement of wheat in the province from May 6 (Monday).

The Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti announced that 0.5 million tons of wheat would be purchased from the growers during current year. He directed to the Finance Department to release Rs. 2.5 billion for procurement of wheat out of total Rs. 5 billion already approved by the provincial cabinet.

He directed to release the amount by Monday next. Besides, he directed to release remaining Rs. 2.5

million for the purpose this month too.

The Chief Minister was chairing high level meeting of the Food Department on Wheat Procurement Policy and Plan 2024.

Those who were in attendance at the meeting were Provincial Minister for Food, Noor Muhammad Dummer, Provincial Minister, Nawabzada Tariq Magso, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Imran Zarkoon, Special Secretary, Asfandyar Baloch besides other concerned high ups.

The meeting decided to release Rs. 139 million for

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a meeting of Food Department regarding Wheat Procurement Policy and Plan 2024

At OIC CFM

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

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

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, in his address at the Preparatory Meeting of Foreign Ministers for the 15th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference held here on Thursday, also called for an end to the indiscriminate use of force and the return of the displaced people.

Ishaq Dar, who arrived in the Gambian capital city

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

The theme of this year's summit is "Enhancing Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue for Sustainable Development." During the meeting, Pakistan was unanimously elected as the Vice-Chair of the Bureau of Foreign Ministers' Preparatory Meeting for the 15th Islamic Summit of the OIC.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister congratulated Gambian Foreign Minister Mamadou Tangara on as-

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Members of Quetta Union of Journalists are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, at Quetta press club.

Seeks report of Khuzdar blast from IGP:

## Those sabotaging peace of Balochistan not to succeed in nefarious designs: CM

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has firmly stated that those sabotaging peace of the province would not succeed in their nefarious designs.

The elements involved in Khuzdar explosion would not escape from the clutches of law, and thus would be taken to task.

This, the Chief Minister stated in a condemnation statement issued here on Friday.

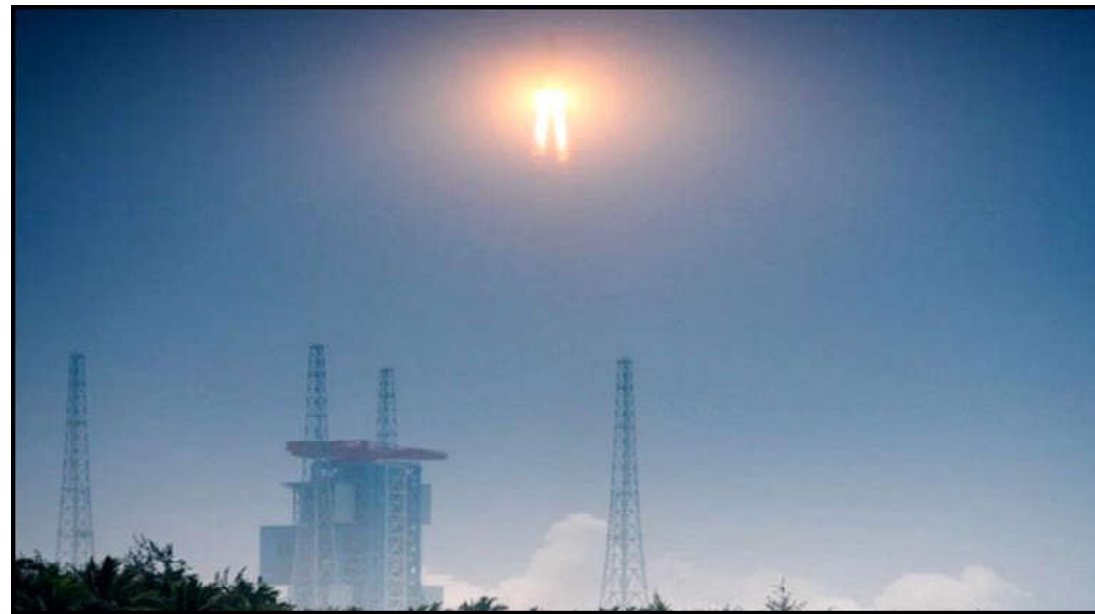
While strongly condemning the incident of blast in Khuzdar that also claimed life of a journalist besides causing injuries to

others, the Chief Minister sought the report from Inspector General of Police.

He said that it is sorrowful to martyr a journalist on occasion of the World Press Freedom Day.

He said that it is our responsibility to restore law and order and protect life and property of the general public. The responsibility would be fulfilled anyway, he added.

The Chief Minister expressed condolence and sympathy with the bereaved family of martyr media person. He directed to provide best medical treatment to those injured in the Khuzdar blast.



ISLAMABAD: In a historic moment for Pakistan, iCube Qamar, the country's first satellite mission to the moon has been launched into the space

Expresses dissatisfaction over committee report PM constitutes another 4-member committee to probe into imported wheat scandal

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has expressed dissatisfaction over the report of the committee constituted to probe into imported wheat scandal and non fixation of responsibility has set up another 4-member new committee under federal secretary cabinet which will present its report within four days.

The new inquiry committee will also decide who had given permission to import over 6 lac tones wheat within a month. Committee will fix responsibility and present its report to PM.

PM has made it clear those behind importing wheat will be brought to fore and this matter will be brought to logic end.

PM has expressed resentment over non fixation of responsibility clearly therefore, he has constituted another four members committee to review the report of the committee already constituted to investigate the matter. The new committee will be headed by secretary cabinet division Kamran Ali Afzal.

Imran accuses CJP of being 'biased' against PTI

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

"I urge all judges presiding over my cases to expedite the hearings and refrain from unjustified delays," he said in a message from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail.

Saying that delaying the decisions was unjust, he said that all cases against him were false, baseless, and concocted. Khan referred to CJP Isa's statement, saying, "He stated that there is no pressure on him, but pressure comes to those who refuse to indulge in wrongdoing. You are behaving like [government's] B-team against PTI."

"You snatched electoral symbol from PTI, denied a level playing field, and violated our fundamental human rights in the guise of the May 9 incidents, on which our petition has been pending since May 25, 2023, without a hearing till today."

He said that PTI's petitions against rigging during the general elections have not been heard yet, adding that PTI's women's reserved seats issue is also pending.

## PML-N leadership nominates Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail as Governor Balochistan

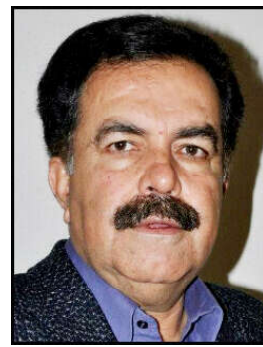
Appointments also finalised for new Governors in Punjab, K-P: Sardar Salim Haider nominated for Punjab, Faisal Karim Kundi for Khyber Pakhtoonkwa

Independent Report

QUETTA: The leadership of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has decided to nominate the provincial president of the party Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail as Governor Balochistan.

According to Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail, the central leader of PML-N Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif contacted him and conveyed the decision of nominating him as the Governor.

He said that he would play the role of bridge between the province and



Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail, the provincial president of the party

Meanwhile the appointments of new governors for Punjab and

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa have been confirmed following a high-level meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari.

Under an agreement reached between the ruling PML-N and PPP, Sardar Salim Haider has been selected as the governor of Punjab, Faisal Karim Kundi for Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

According to reports, these appointments were finalised subsequent to a

President approves Justice Siddiqui's retirement

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

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

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

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

He reached the port city on three day visit along with the Additional Secretary

Provincial Selection Board meets & recommends promotion of officers

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Selection Board met with the Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan in the chair here on Friday.

The Board recommended promotion of officers of different departments in different grades.

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

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

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

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

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

SUPARCO.

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

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

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

According to IST, CubeSats are miniature satellites typically characterized by their small size and standardized design. They are constructed in a cubic

Continued on page 2



GWADAR: Chairman Gwadar Port Padand Khan briefing Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, about Gwadar port.

## Federal Minister Maritime Affairs reaches Gwadar: Gwadar to play key role in economic dev. of Pakistan in near future, says Qaiser

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh has believed that Gwadar would play its key role in economic development of Pakistan including Balochistan.

This would bring improvement in the standard of life of general public, he added directing to the concerned authorities to take practical steps for resolving the complaints of the fishermen regarding trawler mafia immediately.

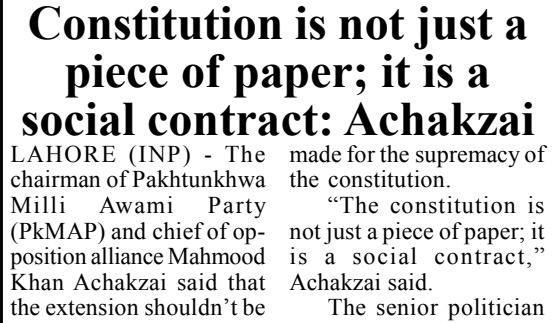
The Federal Minister was speaking on occasion of the visit to free zone and briefing about operations of the port and recent progress by the Chairman China Overseas Port Holding Company and other senior officials welcomed the Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs.

The Chairman GPA briefed the Federal Minister about the development projects continued at the Gwadar port.

Afterwards, the Chairman China Overseas Port Holding Company briefed about the operations and recent progress of the port.

During the visit of free zone, the Federal Minister inspected the newly built desalination plant supplying 1.2 million gallons of water daily.

He took keen interest in Gwadar and the mega projects associated with the port city.



LAHORE: Head of the Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Ayene-e-Pakistan (TTAP) Mahmood Khan Achakzai, addressing a press conference at press club, in the Provincial Capital.

## Constitution is not just a piece of paper; it is a social contract: Achakzai

LAHORE (INP) - The chairman of Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) and chief of opposition alliance Mahmood Khan Achakzai said that the extension shouldn't be given to a person who reaches the age of 60.

"The constitution is not just a piece of paper; it is a social contract," Achakzai said.

The senior politician said that the gas was extracted at the site of Sui in 1960s and spread across Pakistan but still the people of our area use the firewood to cook their food.

"The justice is mocked, bought and sold here in Pakistan," he added.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister of Education Raheela Hameed Khan Duurrani presiding over meeting of Public Sector Universities

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

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

20 passengers killed, 22 injured in GB bus accident

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

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



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif observes the historic launch of Pakistan's first satellite mission to the moon, titled "iCube Qamar".

## Launching Chang'e mission, testimony of Sino-Pak profound bond of friendship

ISLAMABAD (INP): Launch of Chang'e 6 2024 mission, a joint endeavor not only marks a monumental leap forward in Pakistan's space exploration journey but also prop up the profound bond between the two nations, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday.

It symbolizes Pakistan's ascent into the realm of cosmic exploration and underscores the unwavering camaraderie shared between Pakistan and China.

With the successful launch, anticipation mounts that groundbreaking mission will unravel the mysteries of the moon's dark side.

The probe is set to collect samples from the far side of the moon, making this mission the first of its kind in human history.

As Pak-China cosmic collaborations go full steam ahead, China's Chang'e 6 2024 lunar mission partnered by Pakistan's science payload has been launched with high-octane enthusiasm on May 3 (Friday), offering a tenuous glimpse of a brand-new pivot in Pak-China space and lunar explorations.

With the launch of Pakistan's lunar satellite, "iCube-Q", scheduled for liftoff with China's Chang'E6 spacecraft from Hainan, hopes are blossoming for mission wide-ranging breakthroughs.

The inception of the iCube-Qamar project stemmed from China's invitation to member states of the Asia Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) to participate in its lunar exploration mission.

Pakistan, through its Institute of Space Technology (IST) and the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), seized this opportunity to collaborate with China's Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) in designing and developing the iCubeSat.

iCube-Qamar, weighing approximately seven kilograms, is equipped with two one-megapixel optical cameras to capture images of the lunar surface. Its primary objectives include recording the release process from the Chang'e 6 orbiter, transmitting beacon signals to confirm successful operation, and capturing images of the Earth, Moon, and orbiter.

Additionally, the iCubeSat aims to gather data on the lunar magnetic field, laying the groundwork for future international cooperation in lunar exploration. iCubeSats, characterized by their compact size and modular design, offer cost-effective opportunities for scientific research and technology development in space exploration.

## PCP rejuvenated to tackle journalists' issues, fake news

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Press Council of Pakistan (PCP) was being systematically revived to use its wide influence and crucial resources in combating fake news, and tackling journalist's issues, Chairman PCP Arshad Khan Jadoon said on Friday.

Speaking at a seminar titled "Freedom of Press with Responsibility," he underscored the PCP's unwavering commitment to standing by journalists in every circumstance.

The event, dedicated to celebrating World Press Freedom Day, featured speeches from prominent journalists, lawyers, and other participants.

Prominent Journalist, Fauzia Shahid emphasized the significance of timely truth, stressing the importance of speaking out against the incumbent dig-

nitaries when necessary. "Without evidence, labeling anyone as a liar is unjustifiable. Journalists should refrain from reporting social media news without verification," she added.

Naveed Akbar of the Parliamentary Reporters Association acknowledged that journalists confronted numerous challenges but stressed the importance of introspection.

He emphasized the need to enhance defamation laws to prevent slanderous attacks.

Matiullah Jan stated that PCP caters to media consumers and newspaper readers.

Additionally, PCP is authorized to receive complaints against institutions.

He said that PCP undertook research on the le-

gal protections afforded to journalists and share insights into the difficulties they confront.

Ali Raza Alvi emphasized that responsible journalism involved practicing self-censorship, while also noting that the media tarnished politicians' image.

Barrister Urooj Bukhari, a human rights activist, asserted that every Pakistani was entitled to freedom and the right to express themselves.

Senior journalist Haji Nawaz Raza expressed concern over the erosion of journalistic ethics by social media.

He emphasized the need for journalists to respect boundaries, avoid challenging state policies, and resist being utilized as propaganda instruments.

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

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

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

He highlighted the role of Pakistan Navy for regional maritime peace and stability through Maritime Security Patrol.

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

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

## Australia pip India to top Test Team Rankings

DUBAI: Reigning ICC World Test Championship winners Australia have overtaken India and claimed the No.1 spot on the ICC Men's Test team rankings.

The ICC updated their annual team rankings on Friday and Pat Cummins' side rose to the top in five-day cricket on the back of their stunning 209-run triumph over India in the World Test Championship decider at The Oval last year.

It helped improve Australia's rating to 124 points, four clear of their closest rival and last year's World Test Championship runners up India (120) and 19 points clear of third-placed England (105).

It's the only change at the top of the Test rankings, with South Africa (103), New Zealand (96), Pakistan (89), Sri Lanka (83), West Indies (82) and Bangladesh (53) remaining unchanged in spots between fourth and ninth.

Men's Test Team Rankings

The rankings update only takes into consideration teams' performances after May 2021, with India's impressive 2-1 series triumph over Australia under skipper Virat Kohli that finished in January of 2021 dropping out of the rankings period.

All results between May 2021 and May 2023 are then weighted at 50 percent and the ones in the following 12 months - that includes Australia's World Test Championship final victory - then weighted at 100 percent.

While India (122 points) may have lost top spot on the Test team rankings, they do remain out in front in both white-ball formats and have increased their lead at the head of proceedings in ODI cricket to six rating points over Australia (116).

Third-placed South Africa (112) close the gap on Australia to just four rating points, while Pakistan (106) and New Zealand (101) round out the top five.



GWADAR: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh presiding over a meeting at Gwadar Port Authority head office.

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

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

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

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

## Bilawal calls on Prime Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan People's Party and MNA Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Friday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed matters related to mutual interests.

In the meeting, the two leaders also discussed the overall political situation of the country, a PM Office news release said.

## Pakistan calls for immediate...

Continued from page 1

suming the chairmanship of the session and the 15th Islamic Summit and appreciated the role of the outgoing chair, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Dar expressed Pakistan's deep concern about the ongoing genocide and starvation of Gaza people and called for the reactivation of the OIC's Ministerial Committee on Israeli aggression against the Palestinians, offering Pakistan's assistance to the body.

The deputy prime minister and foreign minister reaffirmed Pakistan's full support for the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and stated that the only permanent solution to the current crisis lies in the creation of a secure, viable, contiguous, and sovereign state of Palestine based on the pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

He strongly condemned the oppressive actions in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), including extrajudicial killings and media blackouts. He pledged Pakistan's unwavering diplomatic support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination as mandated by relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

Ishaq Dar stressed the imperative of joint action by the OIC to confront rising Islamophobia, which was manifested by an increasing number of incidents of discrimination, violence, and incitement against Muslims around the world.

He stated that while global social media platforms had set for themselves a clear understanding and responsibility for content relating to "antisemitism" and "Holocaust denial," the same was not the case for blasphemous and anti-Islamic content that was responsible for widespread distress among Muslims and the global wave of Islamophobia.

The deputy prime minister urged the OIC to formulate a joint strategy to influence global information networks and platforms, particularly global social media platforms, to harmonize their application of content regulation policies for blasphemous, anti-Islamic, and Islamophobic content. During the preparatory meeting, the OIC foreign ministers adopted the report of the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) and finalized various documents, including the Resolution on the Issue of Palestine, the Final Communiqué of the OIC Summit Conference, and the Banjul Declaration.



QUETTA: A delegation of Multan led by Mian Nadeem meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti.

## GoB decides to start...

Continued from page 1

purchase of bags for wheat on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister said that we want to give relief to the growers. He reiterated his government's resolve to bring transparency by eliminating corruption. He vowed that the dot of corruption would be removed from the Food Department.

He regretfully

pointed out that the officers of Food Department are reluctant to perform their routine departmental responsibilities because of the corruption and corrupt practices done in the past.

Earlier, during briefing, Secretary Food, Asghar Harifal informed that steps are being finalized for procurement of wheat in the province.

## PML-N leadership nominates...

Continued from page 1

meeting between Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz, where discussions primarily revolved around the gubernatorial positions in Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

During the meeting, PM Shehbaz hosted a luncheon for Bilawal, fostering an environment conducive to deliberations on the current political landscape of Pakistan and the crucial task of appointing governors. Bilawal proposed various names for the governorships, which were ultimately endorsed by the prime minister.

Sardar Salim Haider, with prior experience as Special Assistant to the PM on Overseas Pakistanis and as Minister of State for Defence and Defence Production, was nominated for the role of Punjab's governor. Faisal Karim Kundi, former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly under the federal government of PPP, currently assumes the position of Secretary of Information within the party.

## Pakistan launches first lunar orbit...

Continued from page 1

shape, consisting of modular components that adhere to specific size constraints.

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

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

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

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

They serve as platforms for testing new tech-

nologies and concepts, enabling access to space for a broader range of users and promoting collaboration within the space community.

Online adds: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have felicitated the entire nation on the successful launch of first lunar orbit mission.

In a statement today, Asif Ali Zardari congratulated the Institute of Space Technology, SUPARCO and the China National Space Administration on this achievement.

The President said the successful launch of the spacecraft will be a milestone for Pakistan's space programme. He said the entire nation is proud of this success.

He also commended the cooperation between Pakistan and China in the field of aerospace. He said Pakistan has to progress a lot in this domain.

The President hoped that Pakistan's space research institutes and scientists would make the coun-

try proud with more hard work, dedication and planning in the field of aerospace.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a statement today, said iCube-Q satellite is Pakistan's first step in the space.

He said Pakistani scientists, engineers and skilled workers are proving their mettle in this field like the expertise they exhibited in the nuclear technology.

Shehbaz Sharif expressed tribute to the core committee of the Institute of Space Technology, including Dr Khurram Khurshid, all the members of the SUPARCO team and students, who participated in this project.

The Prime Minister said the fragrance of Pakistan-China friendship, which is higher than Himalayas, deeper than ocean, and sweeter than honey, has crossed the frontiers of space.

He said acceptance of Pakistan's project out of the eight countries is an acknowledgement of our

scientists and experts.

Shehbaz Sharif said after this significant achievement Pakistan has entered a new era of purposeful space usage.

This triumph will further augment Pakistan's capabilities in the field of satellite communication and create opportunities in the domain of scientific research, economic development and national security.

The Prime Minister said the sons of Pakistan proved that they are capable of conquering the space. He expressed the confidence that Pakistan will achieve the economic and space excellence like it demonstrated on 28 May 1998.

Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan's excellence in science and technology and modern skills is need of the hour.

He expressed the determination to facilitate the youth to excel in science and technology and modern skills so that Pakistan will lead in the world of inventions.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan giving trophy to winning team players during the Closing Ceremony of Prime Minister's National Table Tennis Youth Sports League at Pakistan Sports Board, in the Federal Capital.

## SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited from reputable firms / authorized dealers for purchase of training aid Multimedia Equipment (VPS, Sound System & Screen) for installation, so as to reach this office till 0900 hours on 10 May 2024. This tender will be opened at 0930 hours on same day. The price should be inclusive of income tax, sales tax, and any other taxes and should be valid for FY 2023/24. For more information visit [www.cscquetta.com](http://www.cscquetta.com). The authority of accepting/rejecting the bids lies with the issuing authority.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS:-**  
Note:- The firm must be GST & NTN registered. In case of exemption, proof should accompany the quotation. R.L. No. 121905

Lieutenant Colonel  
General Staff Officer-1 (Media Support Wing)  
Command and Staff College Quetta

## TENDER NOTICE

TSE-232405404633 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FARM WATER MANAGEMENT ZIARAT invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates Tender Fee 1000 PKR & Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Works	E/Cost
1	DRILLING OF BORE WITH SOLAR SYSTEM FOR AGRICULTURE PURPOSE IN KILLI PECHHI TAJ MUHAMMAD DISTRICT ZIARAT UNDER SAP	9,887,748

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 9,887,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-6 and above (Up to 25 million) in Relevant Category And Specialized Code is CE09(ii) (Water Supply), CE10(i) (General Civil Engineering Works), EE11(iii) (Solar Energy system), EE11(v) (Solar Installation). Tax Return of the year 2023. Audit Report / Balance Sheet of 3 Subsequent Previous Years. Bank Statement/ Credit line Certificate showing Financial Capability of Firm. Tender Document Fee. **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee/Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 1,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 21 May, 2024 during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The tenders must be submitted latest by 21 May, 2024 till 11:00 AM. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00 PM **Address:** Opp. ZTBL near to NADRA Office Ziarat **Phone no:** 0833920020 **Email:** zafarpanezi017@gmail.com

DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
AGRICULTURE OFWM  
ZIARAT

## TENDER NOTICE

TSE-232405404933 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. THE DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FOREST QUETTA CITY QUETTA invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates Tender Fee Rs.1000/- and Bid Security 2%

S.No	Name of Works	E/Cost
1	Construction of officer Residence	7,923,777

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work Turn over of at least 5,546,643 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. PEC Registration C-6 or above and Specialized Code is CE10(i), CE10(ii), EE11(iv) and C5 (11). Income Tax Registration certificate is required. 03 successfully similar work completion certificate each of estimated cost or above, for the last 03 year. The bidding Firm must submit Company's latest Bank Account Statement or Bank Credit Line Certificate. Authority Letter addressed undersigned, specifically for this NIT issued by the owner of the firm on judicial stamp paper. The bidder should have fully operational office/ branch in Balochistan The firm must be provide from last 3 year audit report duly issued by the registered with ICAP. The bidder must submit the Income Tax Return of the last (3) three year. The Bidders must comply with all prevailing all Govt taxes as notified by FBR from time to time. The firm must be attached tender fee challan in original. Submission of the required Bid Security in original with technical bid Undertaking on legal valid and attested stamp paper that the firm is not involved in litigation with any of Provincial or Federal Government Department, Agency, Organization or autonomous body anywhere in Pakistan. In case involved in any litigation process, proof of dispute resolution is required. Affidavit on judicial stamp paper Affidavit on stamp paper of Rs. 100/- duly notarized to the effect that (i) Bidder has submitted the correct and complete information along with the bid/off. If any document/information is found forged / engineered / fake / bogus at any stage, the bidder may be declared as Blacklisted in accordance with law and the performance guarantee and payment, if any may be forfeited. Signature & company/firm seal on every page of the bidding document **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under- signed from a scheduled bank. **Tender Documents:** The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 1,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 21 May, 2024 during office hours on working days **Last Date of bid submission:** The tenders must be submitted latest by 21 May, 2024 till 09:45 AM. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 10:45 AM. **Address:** Quetta **Phone no:** 0819204754 **Fax no:** Email: [lawaddio@gmial.com](mailto:lawaddio@gmial.com)

DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FOREST QUETTA

PRQ No.2093/3-5-2024

## Pak, Syria edu ministers discuss mutual coop. in education sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level Syrian delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Education of Syria Mr. Rami Al-Dhulli called upon the Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and discussed cooperation & exchange of expertise between both countries to bring advancement in the education sector.

The meeting was attended by the Ambassador of Syria to Pakistan Mr. Ramiz Al-Rai and the Deputy Ambassador of Pakistan to Syria Mr. Umar Hayat Khan, according to a press release on Friday.

Senior officials of the ministry including the Secretary of Education Mr. Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani also attended the meeting.

Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that Syria and Pakistan enjoy longstanding brotherly relations. He said that Pakistan hopes to provide every support possible to Syria to uplift its education system. He said that only through cooperation and exchange of expertise both

countries can advance in the education sector.

He emphasized the need to upgrade and expand technical skills development and said that Pakistan aims to train millions of youth in advanced-level Information and Technology courses. Secretary Education Mr. Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani briefed the delegation about the various initiatives of the government in its bid to adopt the latest best practices in the education sector.

Mr. Wani explained the numerous programs launched by the current

government to reduce the out-of-school children number and increase access to and quality of education.

He said that the School Meals Program launched in the capital, AJK and GB has shown tremendous results and that he hoped that through such creative initiatives, children along with their parents can be attracted to continue their education. Deputy Minister of Education of Syria Mr. Rami Al-Dhulli said that Pakistan and Syria have had numerous MoUs since 1971 on educational exchange.



ISLAMABAD: A high level Syrian delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Education of Syria Mr. Rami Al-Dhulli called upon the Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan discussing Pak-Australia historical relations with the Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Mr. Neil Hawkins on the occasion of Australia Day in spring 2024.

## Gilani calls for collective work to ensure welfare of journalist community

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Friday called for collective working for the collective rights and welfare of the journalist community.

On the World Press Freedom Day, the Senate Chairman extended his profound acknowledgement and commendation to journalists in Pakistan and across the globe for their invaluable contributions to society. "On this important day, let us reaffirm our shared commitment to guarding and sustaining freedom of the press which plays a pivotal role in upholding democracy, promoting accountability, and providing a platform for diverse voices", he said.

The Chairman Senate said: "As someone who has studied journalism, I have a personal connection to this noble profession and a deep appreciation for the dedication and courage of journalists. Their work is cen-

tral to the democratic values we hold dear."

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

The Senate Chairman called for protecting press freedom and creating a safe environment for journalists. He said the government and the public to support journalists and recognize their role in promoting transparency and justice.

"Press freedom is a cornerstone of robust and progressive democracy and a key driver of inclusive progress. On this World Press Freedom Day, let's honor those who bring us the news and let us commit to safeguarding their rights."



Officers/faculty members of Balochistan Civil Services Academy (BCSA), Quetta visiting Senate Museum at Parliament House, Islamabad.

## Aleem felicitates nation on Pakistan's first space mission 'ICUBE-Q' launch

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communication Abdul Aleem Khan on Friday while congratulating the nation on the launch of Pakistan's first space mission 'ICUBE-Q' said that today is undoubtedly a day of pride and historical significance for all of us.

In a statement, the minister lauded the role of scientists, experts and members of space agencies. "Our youth and experts have the ability to conquer the world by relying on their abilities, temporary problems cannot stop the path of prosperity and stability," he added. He said that Pakistani nation's dream of conquering space will surely come true, adding that the first Pakistani moon mission 'ICUBE-Q' will immortalize Pakistan-China friendship in space as well.

## Resolving workers' problems govt's priority duties: Mandokhail

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Member National Assembly (MNA) Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Prof. Dr. Qadir Khan Mandokhail, who is also the Patron-in-Chief of the Railway Workers Union, said resolving the problems of workers was one of the priority duties of the government.

He made these remarks during a seminar titled "Labor Convention" organized by the Railway Workers Union Open Line on the occasion of International Labor Day at the Rawalpindi Press Club here Friday.

Mandokhail said the

rights of the workers should be ensured legally whereas the activities of trade unions were part of the constitution that could not be ignored.

"In all the federal, provincial, small or big institutions where labourers are present, the existence of trade union is indispensable.

The trade union is performing its duties for the betterment of the country, institutions and workers and is the representative of the fundamental rights of the workers. No country can develop without fulfilling the rights of workers," he said.

## KSrelief distributes 1,367 shelter aid bags in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) Friday distributed 1,367 shelter aid bags in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

The assistance was provided to 9,569 individuals from vulnerable families residing in flood-affected areas, as part of the third phase of the 2024 relief materials and winter bags distribution project in Pakistan, SPA reported.

The initiative is part of the Kingdom's ongoing humanitarian and relief endeavors, undertaken through its dedicated humanitarian arm, KSrelief, to support underprivileged and affected individuals across the globe.

## Faizabad Dharna, non allocation of reserved seats to PTI cases fixed for hearing

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has fixed for hearing Faizabad dharna case and non allocation of reserved seats to PTI.

Hearing of the cases will take place next week.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa will hear the case on May 6.

The court has issued notice to the respective respondents.

Federal government will present Faizabad Dharna commission report in the court.

On the other hand the case on non-allocation of reserved seats to PTI has also been fixed for hearing on May 8.

SC has constituted 3-member bench to hear this case.

The bench headed by justice Mansoor Ali Shah will be comprising justice Muhammad Ali Mirza and Justice Athar Minallah.

## Muqam grieves over loss of lives in GB bus incident

PESHAWAR (APP): Expressing profound grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives during the bus accident in Diamir Gilgit Baltistan, Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions and Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs, Engr. Amir Muqam contacted the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary of the Gilgit Baltistan and assured every possible support in this hour of difficulty. He directed the concerned authorities in Gilgit Baltistan to provide speedy assistance and medical care to the injured. He also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. The Federal Minister expressed sympathies with the victims' families. He prayed Allah Almighty to may rest the departed souls in an eternal place.

## Jam highlights deep-rooted friendship b/w Pak, Australia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Friday highlighted the deep-rooted friendly relations between Pakistan and Australia, which spanned over political, economic, and defence sectors.

He was speaking as a chief guest at a ceremony held to celebrate 'Australia Day in Spring' to mark the enduring ties between the two nations, a news release said.

Prominent among those who attended the ceremony was Australia's High Commissioner in Pakistan Neil Hawkins.

The minister emphasized the significance of sports, particularly cricket, squash, and hockey in fostering mutual recognition

between Australia and Pakistan, noting Neil Hawkins' enthusiasm for hockey.

Turning to bilateral ties, Jam Kamal underscored Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its relationship with Australia and emphasized mutual respect and cooperation.

He praised Australia's role as a development partner, especially in sectors such as agriculture and education.

Addressing trade relations, the minister acknowledged the existing trade surplus enjoyed by Australia and emphasized the untapped potential for further collaboration.

He outlined Pakistan's major exports to Australia, including textiles, rice, sur-

gical equipment and steel products, noting recent increases in imports of Canola and other commodities from Australia.

Proposing new steps to enhance bilateral cooperation, Jam Kamal called for intensified efforts to deepen agro-trade and urged the reduction of trade barriers.

He highlighted the need for a level playing field in textiles and encouraged exploration of new avenues such as agro-tech industries and fruit exports.

Expressing gratitude for the Pakistani diaspora in Australia, the minister praised their contributions across various fields and commended the Australian Government's recognition of their efforts.

## IIOJK among most dangerous places for journalists in world

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) is one of the most dangerous places of the world where people associated with the press and media are performing their professional duties in the most difficult circumstances. According to a report compiled by Kashmir Media Service Editor, Raies Ahmed Mir, on the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day, today, twenty journalists have been confirmed killed while performing their duties during the Kashmiris' ongoing freedom struggle since 1989. They include Shabbir Ahmed Dar, Mushtaq Ali, Muhammad Shaban Wakeel, a woman scribe Aasiya Jeelani, Ghulam Muhammad Lone, Ghulam Rasool Azad, Pervez Muhammad Sultana, Shujaat Bukhari, Ali Muhammad Mahajan.

## Aleem expresses grief over Chilas bus mishap

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communication Abdul Aleem Khan on Friday expressed grief and sorrow over the Chilas bus accident in which several people lost their lives and were injured. In a statement, the minister prayed to the Almighty to give deceased highest position in Heaven and speedy recovery to the injured. He said the whole nation was saddened over a great loss of lives.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Ms Jane Marriott in a group photograph with the participants of Meet the Press during the World Press Freedom Day 2024 seminar on "Freedom of Expression & Challenges in Pakistan" at National Press Club.

## Free, responsible media essential for democracy: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar has emphasized on the necessity of an independent and responsible media to promote democracy and accountability in the society.

In his message on 'Press Freedom Day here Friday, he said, this year's theme, "A Free Press for a Sustainable Future: Journalism Facing Environmental Challenges," highlights the important role of the media in addressing environmental issues and sustainability.

The law minister said that the Constitution of Pakistan ensured freedom of expression.

It is our duty, as guardians of justice, to ensure a conducive environment where journalists can work freely, he added.

## PMD forecast chances of rain at few places

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly dry weather for most parts of the country and hot in central and southern parts during the next 24 hours.

However, partly cloudy weather conditions with chances of rain-windstorm/thunderstorm at few places in upper Punjab, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir.

## NDMA launches e-learning tool kit for Disability-Inclusive DRR

ISLAMABAD (APP): NDMA's National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), attended by Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik and Country Heads of STEP and UNESCAP in Pakistan, Aiko Akiyama, UNESCAP, Muhammad Atif Shiekh, STEP Founder and CEO and Abia Akram, STEP Director Programs briefed the session about at empowering Disaster Management Professionals with essential skills and knowledge to effectively address the needs and concerns of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) during all disaster phases and across various disaster types. The launch of tool kit signifies a proactive and futuristic approach adopted by the NDMA. It reflects the authority's commitment to inclusivity and its dedication to building a disaster-resilient future where no one is left behind.

NDMA's National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), attended by Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik and Country Heads of STEP and UNESCAP in Pakistan, Aiko Akiyama, UNESCAP, Muhammad Atif Shiekh, STEP Founder and CEO and Abia Akram, STEP Director Programs briefed the session about at empowering Disaster Management Professionals with essential skills and knowledge to effectively address the needs and concerns of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) during all disaster phases and across various disaster types. The launch of tool kit signifies a proactive and futuristic approach adopted by the NDMA. It reflects the authority's commitment to inclusivity and its dedication to building a disaster-resilient future where no one is left behind.

## Int'l workshop on 'Big Data Analytics, AI, & Data Security' to end

ISLAMABAD (APP): Six-day International workshop arranged by the COMSTech titled "Big Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Data Security" will conclude on Saturday at the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University in Kazakhstan. The workshop emphasized the critical importance of data security, ensuring participants gain a comprehensive understanding of data protection strategies in today's digital landscape. The COMSTech distinguished scholars program plays a pivotal role in fostering international collaboration and capacity building in science and technology in OIC member states.

This program identifies and engages top scientists, engineers, and scholars to serve as expert resource persons, facilitating knowledge sharing and capacity building activities.

## Dy Chairman Senate, Irfan Siddiqui discuss legislative issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Sardar Syedaal Khan and parliamentary leader of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) in the Senate, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, held discussions on Friday regarding legislative issues currently under consideration in the Senate.

During a meeting Irfan Siddiqui congratulated Syedaal Khan on his recent election as Deputy Chairman of the Senate, expressing his best wishes for a successful tenure.

He also shared his optimism that Syedaal Khan will guide the Senate pro-

ceedings with efficiency and fairness, ensuring that all political parties are given a voice in the decision-making process, said a news release issued here.

During the meeting, both leaders engaged in a detailed conversation about the political situation in the country.

Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan expressed his gratitude to Senator Siddiqui for his kind words and his role as a leader within the Senate.

He hoped that presence of Senator Siddiqui, as a parliamentary leader of the Muslim League (N), would serve as a source of strength for everyone.

Syedaal Khan said that PML-N is the largest po-



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Sardar Syedaal Khan and Senator Irfan Siddiqui during a meeting on Friday.

## Secretary says: 'Free meal project in Capital' primary schools linked to improve growth in children

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Mohyuddin Wani Friday said the federal government has launched an initiative to provide free lunch meals to primary students of government educational institutions in Islamabad, to improve the growth of children and to encourage schooling.

In the first phase about forty elementary schools are being provided healthy, quality, and hygienic free meals, he said while talking to a Private news channel.

He said that the collaboration of Allah Waley

Trust and the government are providing lunches for the kids, adding, that free meals are being ensured for kids attending elementary schools under the Federal Directorate of Education's supervision.

The latest acute malnutrition (AMN) analysis by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) has found that 2.14 million children in parts of Pakistan are suffering acute malnutrition, he mentioned.

The secretary highlighted the collaborative effort between the government and a trust supporting the provision of meals to school children.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people participating in Clean & Green Pakistan Cleanliness Drive organized by SOS foundation Pakistan at H-9 sector.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

Saturday May 04, 2024

## Under siege

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

In India, press freedom has seen a marked decline, driven by a political climate that increasingly stifles dissent. Media ownership is concentrated among a few aligning closely with the BJP — slated to win a third straight term in power — narrowing the diversity of voices in the media. Journalists face harassment and legal actions, and purse strings dictate media narratives.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh, ranked lowest for press freedom in South Asia, faces its own challenges. The Cyber Security Act approved last year threatens to deepen the state's control over media, limiting journalistic freedom and leaving room for the arbitrary interpretation and application of the law. Such developments, alongside violence and judicial harassment of journalists, underscore a growing hostility towards independent journalism.

A similar climate prevails in Pakistan, where the media has always been under siege. The battle is dual-fronted: the government and security establishment both assert control, looking to influence editorial policy. This suppression continues regardless of which party holds power. A notable example is the implicit 'ban' on media channels from naming PTI founder Imran Khan. This policy, initiated during Shehbaz Sharif's last tenure as PM, persisted through the caretaker rule and remains sporadically enforced.

Opposition parties, despite their cries for media freedom, often employ similarly suppressive tactics once in power. Whether through direct censorship, withholding advertising, or sinister measures such as harassment, legal intimidation and violence, the press in Pakistan navigates a hazardous terrain.

Making matters worse is a troubling shift within segments of the media landscape, where the lofty ideals of journalism have been sidelined in favour of compliance. Many media houses, once bastions of fearless reporting, now capitulate under the aforementioned twin pressures.

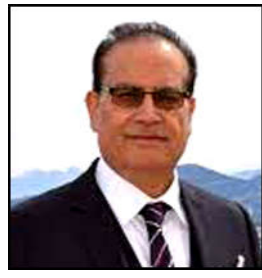
This surrender is often motivated by financial incentives or coercive force, leading to journalism that panders rather than probes. Powerful corporate entities are an additional pressure, some of whom throw money at media houses to campaign against specific outlets. Most recently, four leading publications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

The need for unity in Pakistan's media has never been stronger, to navigate pressures more effectively, maintain journalistic integrity and push back against attempts to influence editorial content. On this World Press Freedom Day, let us resolve to put up a unified front, to not only safeguard our operational independence but also fortify the very foundations of press freedom in the country.

# The Army knows its constitutional limits

By Qamar Bashir

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



The army chief said that while the army understands its constitutional limits, those who criticize the army should also be aware of the constitutional boundaries set by Article 19 of the constitution.

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

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

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

nications Act 2003 includes provisions related to offensive and menacing messages sent over electronic communications networks.

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

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

Additionally, social media platforms should be engaged

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

Conscious efforts should be made to strengthen support for and promote traditional media, operated by seasoned, experienced, and highly refined professionals. These individuals are adept at the art and science of making difficult, sensitive, and critical communications in the best interests of our institutions, the people of Pakistan, and the country as a whole. This will enhance credibility in traditional media and discourage the spread of misinformation that often occurs in the unregulated jungle of social media.

In social media, facts and reality are distorted with total impunity, often driven by the prime objective of increasing views, which translates to higher revenue. This creates added incentive for social media activists to create sensationalism, anarchy, and chaos in society. Therefore, the public should be incentivized to turn to traditional media by weaning them off social media. However, the

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Building bridges, sharing light:

# Tablighi jamaat's role in muslim unity



By Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

In the realm of Islamic faith, the Tablighi Jamaat stands as a prominent movement, deeply rooted in the tradition of prophetic practices. Its essence lies in the endeavor to spread the message of Islam and revive the spiritual consciousness of Muslims worldwide.

At the heart of Tablighi Jamaat lies a noble purpose — to invite Muslims to return to the fundamental principles of Islam, to strengthen their faith, and to promote unity and brotherhood among believers. The movement emphasizes the importance of practicing Islam not only in personal rituals but also in everyday life, fostering a holistic

approach to spirituality.

Central to its mission is the concept of "dawah" or inviting others to Islam. Members of Tablighi Jamaat, known as Tableeghis, dedicate themselves to this cause through regular gatherings, known as "Khurooj" or trips, where they engage in preaching, teaching, and spiritual reflection. These journeys serve as a means to reconnect with the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah, as well as to encourage fellow Muslims to lead righteous lives.

The roots of Tablighi Jamaat can be traced back to the early 20th century, in the Indian Sub-Continent. Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi, a devout scholar, founded the movement in 1926 in response to what he perceived as a decline in Islamic values and practices. Inspired by the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions, Maulana Ilyas sought to revitalize Islamic spirituality and revive the spirit of dawah

among Muslims.

Under Maulana Ilyas's leadership, Tablighi Jamaat adopted a simple yet effective methodology.

The movement focused on grassroots outreach, encouraging individuals to devote time to spreading the message of Islam in their local communities. What started as a small initiative soon gained momentum, with followers across the globe embracing its principles and practices.

One of the primary benefits of Tablighi lies in its ability to foster understanding and tolerance among people of different backgrounds. By engaging in open dialogue and sharing perspectives, individuals can develop a deeper appreciation for the diversity of beliefs and cul-

tures. This exchange of ideas promotes empathy and compassion, dismantling stereotypes and

prejudices that may exist within communities.

Tabligh serves as a catalyst for building strong social bonds within communities. Through outreach activities such as communal gatherings, discussions, and collaborative projects, individuals forge meaningful connections with one another.

These interactions create a sense of belonging and solidarity, empowering individuals to support each other during times of need and celebrate shared achievements.

Engaging in Tabligh often involves self-reflection and introspection,

leading to personal growth and development. By articulating their beliefs and values to others, individuals deepen their understanding of themselves and their convictions. Moreover, the process of sharing knowledge and experiences encourages continuous learning and refinement of one's worldview, fostering intellectual and spiritual growth.

Tabligh plays a crucial role in promoting social justice and empowerment within communities. By raising awareness about pressing issues and advocating for positive change, outreach initiatives contribute to the advancement of marginalized groups and the promotion of equality. Through collective action and solidarity, individuals can address systemic injustices and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

For many religious communities, Tabligh is an integral aspect of faith and spirituality. Through the dissemination of religious teachings and practices, individuals deepen their

connection to their faith tradition and strengthen their spiritual beliefs. This process of sharing and reaffirming religious values not only strengthens the individual's relationship with the divine but also fosters a sense of community and belonging among fellow believers.

In essence, Tablighi Jamaat epitomizes the timeless tradition of prophetic guidance, calling upon Muslims to emulate the exemplary life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Through its humble yet impactful efforts, the movement continues to inspire countless individuals to deepen their connection to Islam and contribute to the betterment of society. As we reflect on the purpose and history of Tablighi Jamaat, let us remember the words of Maulana Ilyas: "Become carriers of the divine light, dispelling the darkness of ignorance and guiding humanity towards the path of righteousness." In embracing this noble mission, may we find spiritual fulfillment and unity in our shared journey of faith.

## Zubeida Mustafa

Since its inception, Pakistan has lurched from crisis to crisis. The poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz was once asked what the future held in store for the country. He is said to have replied: "It will just go on and on like this". And it has. In the current phase, a new factor has emerged: the loss of humanity. This ensures that living conditions won't get any better for the impoverished majority.

The real problem is the breakdown of the moral fibre of society and the erosion of social conscience. As a result, our values, such as respect for social justice, egalitarianism and integrity, have vanished. What is worse is the stratification of society, with the haves robbing the have-nots of their dignity and self-esteem.

The masses — the real victims — lack the strength to fight their

oppressors. They have, after all, been systematically handicapped by being denied the benefits of good education. Today, 30 million children are out of school in Pakistan. Most of those enrolled resort to rote learning as that is what they are taught. The rapidly growing population earmarks another failure of the rulers that has worked against the underprivileged. With insufficient access to birth control counselling and contraceptives, the poor are generally burdened with large families, making it impossible for them to improve their lives. Finally, the increasing trend towards indoctrinating people through the distorted interpretation of ideology and faith makes them submissive and unable to think rationally.

Pakistan's situation today should be seen against the backdrop of the observation that one

per cent of the population (elite) controls the destiny of 99pc (underprivileged). The political parties' lack of unity of purpose has allowed the military establishment to adopt a strategy of divide and rule. Force is used only against select individuals and groups of opponents who threaten to upset the applecart.

The haves do not make a cohesive block, and that makes it easier to divide them. They comprise such diverse interests that they can be appeased by using a variety of methods. Thus, there are members of the armed forces, the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the legislatures, the executive branch, the guardians of law and order, the corporate sector, the landowners and builders, transporters, and professionals who have emerged as power groups and have a say in policymaking.

Many government departments might have modest budgets, but their staff is affluent, having acquired ill-gotten wealth through their public dealings including in sectors such as education, taxation, customs and police. There are others who have flourished because they have never been brought into the tax net, though legally they should have been taxed. They constitute the 'taxation expenditure', that is, what the state is losing because of the exemptions and concessions granted to them. These amounted to Rs2.24 trillion in 2022-23 according to the Federal Board of Revenue, ie, a third of the federal revenue collected by the centre that year. The provinces have their own stories.

This sector is also internally stratified. There is a wide gap between its top officers and the rank and file.

The administration is structured in such a way that opportunities exist to grant perks and concessions arbitrarily to favour any power group that needs to be won over.

What happens to the masses? They also have their share of unscrupulous elements who cheat and exploit. Given their limited capacity, the harm they inflict is relatively small, but violence is more visible.

What would have been an impossible situation is contained by a massive amount of philanthropy, which is generated by individuals seeking their salvation in the hereafter. According to the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy, individuals collectively donate Rs240 billion every year. The corporate sector generates Rs16.4bn. The most significant fact is that the bulk of the philanthropy goes towards

feeding the poor. Transformative giving forms a smaller proportion of philanthropy in the country. The government itself helps many organisations in aiding those in need. In any case, philanthropy keeps starvation at bay. In Karachi, the sight of meals being served to people is common. There is no danger of people dying of hunger. They may be malnourished but their stomachs are not empty.

This is not a wise way of running a country of 241m people. Living on charity is self-demeaning. For rulers who have no qualms about picking up the begging bowl to collect funds for the treasury, it may be a normal thing. But how would they justify the violation of human rights and the breach of social justice that IMF dole-outs do not allow for? — Courtesy Dawn

## Sindh govt taking measures to eliminate malnutrition: Murad

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

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

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

Mr Shah stated that his government is dedicated to reducing the current stunting rate in the province. He mentioned that when he assumed the office of Chief Minister, he initiated an Accelerated Action Plan to reduce stunting. In 2017, with the assistance of the WB, Sindh govt adopted a multi-sectoral approach to reduce stunting and other forms of malnutrition.

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

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

Mr Shah mentioned that the unprecedented floods in Sindh in 2022 caused havoc for the people of Sindh. The calamity affected every sector of society, including education, health, agriculture, and livestock. Large swaths of land were under water for many weeks. Sindh government had only priority to save human lives and give them shelter with its meagre resources available for such a catastrophe, the CM said and added 20,000 schools were either partially or fully damaged and hundreds of health facilities came under water, however, our government stood by the people in that moment of trial and tribulation. Murad Shah stated that poverty, income, and social protection have a direct impact on stunting in children under 5 years of age.



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

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

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

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

He paid tribute to journalists across the country, especially in

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

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

"I salute the sacrifices of journalists who lost

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

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

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

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

U.S. Consul General to Lahore Kristin Hawkins was also present during the meetings. During the meetings Ambassador Donald Blome explored opportunities to strengthen US - Pakistan partnership in the Punjab province. He also held meetings and attended

events focused on bilateral collaboration in the fields of IT, health, and culture.

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

The envoy also visited the offices of a technology firm and a pharmaceuticals company to learn more about ongoing U.S. - Pakistan collaborations in the IT and health sectors. "The U.S. government is providing nearly 85 million dollars in funding to address the issue of malnutrition in Pakistan, including 12 million dollars to treat severely malnourished children," Ambassador Blome said. "I appreciate the work the pharmaceuticals company is doing to combat malnutrition and other global health challenges besides collaboration with US - based partners."



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

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

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

He said that the 26229 kanals of public and private land worth Rs.15,834 billion were recovered while the total value of the financial relief received by the complainants was Rs.6,669 billion rupees.

The ombudsman said this while addressing an event regarding the annual report of the Office of Provincial Ombudsman Punjab 2023, which held here on Friday. He presented a comparative review of the annual report and presented data related to the performance of his department, especially in redressal of complaints related to the Police, Local

Government and Education departments.

He highlighted that an improved data driven result of increased number of resolved complaints was a proof of the growing confidence of the public in the office of the Ombudsman Punjab. The ombudsman while giving details informed that in the year 2023, 7212 complaints were received against police, 5980 local government, 5678 revenue, 2531 primary and secondary health care, 1961 school education and 1563 complaints were received against district administration.

On the orders of the Ombudsman Office, 119 complainants have also been provided jobs in government departments under Rule 17-A of the Punjab Civil Servants, he informed. Ombudsman Punjab also briefed the participants on the details of disposal of government land worth billions of rupees.

## Press freedom imperative for just society: Mayor

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

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

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

making all possible efforts for press freedom in the country. He paid tribute to the journalist community for their valuable services for the survival of democracy in the country and said that journalists who while raising the voice of one's right have never bowed down have in fact nurtured the high values of journalism and their struggle will always be remembered. Barrister Murtaza Wahab said, free press has a fundamental role to play in building the best society and this fact is recognized all over the world. Freedom of press is also the need of the hour and an important step.

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

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

According to an official release and information posted on official facebook page, the district administration would ensure sale of 100 gram Roti at a price of Rs 15 per piece at Geo Tagged hotels and Tandoors through a modern online application.

Deputy Commissioner Captain (Retired) Rizwan Qadeer has ordered price control magistrates to keep checking shops, hotels and Tandoors on a daily basis and ensure availability of food items to the people at fixed price.

## Delegation of KEF calls on Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): A representative delegation of Khyber Eye Foundation (KEF) called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali and informed him about the performance of the foundation. The delegation was led by Patron-in-Chief of the foundation Professor Dr. Daud comprised Adnan Jalil, Khawaja Khalid Sultan, Yawar Nasir and Ubaid Amjad. The delegation informed the Governor about the achievements of eye foundation and discussed with him the establishment of a hospital in Lower Dir. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor appreciated efforts of the foundation to help out ailing community and assured his cooperation in establishing hospital in Lower Dir.

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

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

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

## LHC CJ visits Rawalpindi Bench

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

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

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



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

## Qasim inaugurates District Health Info System-2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## ANF seizes 2133 kg drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover 2133 kg drugs and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that 580 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for the UK at the DHL office at Lahore Airport. In the second operation, 460 grams Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Karachi Airport.

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

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

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

According to a press release issued here, she said that recent flood and rain had badly hit the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. She said that she wanted to express solidarity with the people over the Gilgit-Baltistan bus incident.

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

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

## Health minister visits Children Complex to review health facilities

MULTAN (APP): Punjab Health Minister, Khawaja Salman Rafique, along with Secretary South Punjab, Afzal Nasir Khan, visited Children Complex to review the health facilities being extended in the hospital. Health Minister inspected the Child Life Emergency, new medical wards, Outdoors, and ongoing construction work at Children Hospital.

Medical Superintendent (MS) Dr. Kamran Asif briefed minister on the provision

of medical facilities at the hospital. Head of Paeds Medicines Dr. Waqas Imran and Head of cardiology Dr. Sohail Arshad were also present. The minister also conducted a detailed visit of various departments of the hospital and assessed the availability of medicines and medical facilities for patients.

Rafique also discussed the provision of medicines and medical facilities with the relatives of the patients.



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

## TEVTA's BoD decides capacity building, adoption of frugality

PESHAWAR: The Board of Directors (BoD) of the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided enhancement of the role and utility of the authority in the promotion of technical education, skill development, capacity building of the technical educational institutes, adoption of frugality and transparency in financial affairs.

These decisions were taken in 21<sup>st</sup> BoD meeting of TEVTA held at the

Department of Industries, Commerce and Technical Education in Civil Secretariat with Special Assistant to KP CM Abdul Karim Khan in the chair here on Friday.

Besides, Secretary Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah, Managing Director (MD) TEVTA Aamir Afaq, public & private sector members of the BoD, Directors TEVTA and other concerned authorities attended the meeting.

The board approved budget for financial year 2023-24.



LAHORE: Health workers giving information to pilgrims in Haji Camp during health awareness program for Pilgrimages (Haji) organized by Ministry of health and Ministry of Religious Affairs, in the Provincial Capital.



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

## World Bank sees brighter future for Pakistan

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

Speaking at PIDE and World Bank Debate on Fiscal and Governance Reforms, Mathew emphasized the need to prioritize reforms addressing the current economic crisis.

The WB Regional Director said Pakistan's

existing economic model was unsustainable due to its reliance on borrowing to finance its fiscal and current account deficits, leading to a growing debt level, which has reached 80% of GDP.

He further added that Pakistan's spending exceeds its revenue, and it imports more than it exports, resulting in increased domestic and external borrowing.

On the occasion, the Vice Chancellor of Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Dr. Nadeem ul Haque spearheaded a pivotal economic reform initiative

titled "ISLAAH: Immediate Reform Agenda - IMF and Beyond, beginning with his opening remarks at this significant event.

This strategy emerges in response to Pakistan's pressing need for substantial external financing, highlighted by an IMF report which necessitates over USD 120 billion in the next five years.

Dr. Haque's comprehensive reform agenda addresses crucial sectors including regulatory modernization, tax reform, market liberalization, energy efficiency.

## Kitchen items' prices ease as weekly inflation falls by 1%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of one per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on May 02, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 316.95 points as compared to 320.14 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 24.37 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs. 17,732, decreased by 1.09 per cent and went down to 306.26 points from last week's 309.64 points.



ISLAMABAD: PTCL and the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) have joined forces to inaugurate the Safe City Project Rawalpindi to revolutionize urban safety and security. Group Director, Enterprise Solution PTCL, Waqar Ahmed and Chief Information Officer PITB Sajjad Ghani signed the agreement in the presence of Group Chief Business Solutions Officer PTCL and Ufone 4G, Zarrar Hasham Khan.

## SCCI for proactive steps for promotion of poultry farming

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry urged the government to take proactive steps for promotion of poultry farming and resolution of issues attached with this important sector.

The demand was made by SCCI Senior Vice President Sannaullah Khan while addressing as chief guest at Pak International Poultry Expo 2024, said a statement here on Friday.

The Expo was attended by KP Minister for Agriculture Maj @ Sajjad Barkwal, Secretary Livestock Dr Ambar Ali Khan, Principal Veterinary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr Syed Masoom Ali, Poultry Association president Raj Wali, along with poultry farming community in a large number Sannaullah Khan assured that chamber will take up issues facing the poultry farming community.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He said that low international wheat supply means this season that exports would face possible decrease, leaving

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

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

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

Attorney General, Mansoor Usman Awan

was also present on the occasion, according to press statement issued by FBR.

During the meeting, Chairman FBR, Malik Amjad Zubair Tawana gave a detailed briefing to the minister about the revenue collection efforts for the current financial year (2023-24).

The Chairman also briefed about measures being taken for the digitalization of FBR to further improve its performance.

Various other issues including pending legal cases also came under discussion during the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Leghari was called on by Charge d'Affairs of Tajikistan H.E. Mr. Shafiev Saidjon.

## KP Food Minister inspects wheat godown in Mardan

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

According to the briefing received by the provincial minister, the wheat godown in Mardan has a storage capacity of approximately 28,000 metric tons, with an existing stock of around 6,000 metric tons from previous seasons.

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

Shah emphasized the KP government's commitment to transparency and quality control in the wheat procurement process. He highlighted the institution of committees at the district level, comprising officials from the food department, district administration, NAB, and anti-corruption agencies, to oversee the procurement process and prevent malpractices.

"Concerned district godown would be purchasing point for the procurement," said the minister, adding that this step aims to ensure thorough examination of wheat quality and quantity at godown.

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Gwadar Chamber of Commerce led by its Chairman Naveed Jan Kalmati meeting with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday gained 10 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.20 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.30.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, stood at Rs 277.35 and Rs 280.1 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 74 paisa and closed at Rs 298.85 against the last-day closing of Rs 298.11, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen went up by 3 paisa and closed at Rs 1.81, whereas an increase of 82 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 349.33 compared to the last closing of Rs 348.51.

The Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 3 paisa each and closed at Rs 75.74 and Rs 74.17 respectively.

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

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

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

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

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

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

country's progress and prosperity.

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

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

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

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



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

## Charge d'Affairs of Tajikistan calls on Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Charge d'Affairs of Tajikistan, Shafiev Saidjon called on Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Leghari here on Friday.

Areas of mutual interest and cooperation between the two countries came under discussion during the meeting, said a press release.

The minister stressed the early completion of CASA-1000 transmission line and suggested to initiate proposal of reverse energy with all the members countries so that surplus supply during the winter season could be exported to the member countries, it was further said.

## Women access to technology, internet vital: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja Friday said that women's access to technology and the internet was vital in the current era of information technology.

She expressed the views during a meeting with a delegation of the P a k i s t a n Telecommunication Authority (PTA), said a news release.

During a meeting, the matters related to digital gender inclusion, and digital transformation were also discussed. The minister said that the present government was committed

to ending the digital gender divide for empowering women. Shaza Fatima said that the development of the Digital Gender Inclusion Strategy was a positive step, as this strategy would help remove hurdles in the way of using mobile phones and information and communication technology by women.

She said that the practical inclusion of women was aimed at establishing the digital ecosystem having equal opportunities for all.

The delegation said that the PTA was taking every possible step for developing the telecom sector through digital inclusion.



QUETTA: Kissan Ittehad Chairman, Khalid Hussain addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

## Telenor Velocity, Google Cloud partner for startup competition Pakistan 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Telenor Velocity, Telenor Pakistan's startup accelerator, has collaborated with Google to unearth and empower the nation's most promising tech ventures and help embolden the country's tech landscape.

Telenor Velocity joins as a Community Partner for the Google Cloud Startup Competition Pakistan 2024, which aims to unearth and empower the nation's most promising tech ventures and help embolden the country's tech landscape.

Telenor Velocity hosted the Islamabad edition and first of the 'Master Your Pitch' series, at Telenor Pakistan's 345 campus, which opened its doors to young innovators, said a news release issued

here on Friday. Master Your Pitch is a platform that allows entrepreneurs to pitch their startup ideas to venture capitalists, investors, and experts to receive valuable feedback before competing in the final competition. The Islamabad edition received around 130 participants, out of which 10 startups were selected to present their pitches to a panel of experts.

The panel comprised Faisal Aftab, founder and GP at Zayn VC; Ahsan Maykan, VP of Marketing and Digital at Telenor Pakistan; Rohma Labeed, Country Director at Accelerate Prosperity; and Sayyed Ahmad Masud, Project Director at National Incubation Center Islamabad.

## PSMA urges govt to allow export of surplus sugar to fetch valuable forex

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) and Punjab Sugarcane Growers Association (PSGA) on Friday appealed to the government to allow export of surplus sugar at the earliest to avail an opportunity of earning valuable foreign exchange for the country.

According to a press release issued here, Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (Punjab Zone) officials and Punjab Sugarcane Growers Association Chairman Rana Iftikhar

discussed problems faced by the growers in a meeting.

Rana Iftikhar agreed that production costs of manufacturing white sugar had increased manifold due to high input costs.

He said during the crushing season of 2022-23, growers got minimum support price of sugarcane at Rs 300 per ton whereas in 2023-24, this rate was fixed at Rs 400 per ton in Punjab and Rs 425 in Sindh, which later reached up to Rs 500 per ton. Because of this, farmers got better return of their crop.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

breaking what he called a network of Ukrainian strongholds.

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

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

## Swinney set to be Scotland's new leader

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRUSSELS: NATO countries say they are deeply concerned by a campaign of hybrid activities on the military alliance's soil they attribute to Russia, and which they say constitute a threat to their security.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday in a message posted on the social media platform X that actions including disinformation, sabotage, acts of violence and cyber and electronic interference "will not deter us from supporting Ukraine." There was no im-

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



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

## Kyiv's forces are up against a concerted Russian push in eastern Ukraine, a military official says

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: The situation on the front line in eastern Ukraine is worsening but local defenders are so far holding firm against a concerted push by Russia's bigger and better-equipped forces, a senior Ukrainian military official said Thursday.

Russia has amassed troops in the Donetsk region in an effort to punch through the Ukrainian defensive line, according to Nazar Voloshyn, spokesperson for Ukrainian strategic command in the east of the country.

"The enemy is trying to seize the strategic initiative and breach our defense," Voloshyn said on national television.

"The enemy is actively attacking along the entire front line, and in several directions they have

achieved certain tactical advances," he said. "The situation is changing dynamically."

Russia has pushed Ukraine onto the back foot on the battlefield as Kyiv grapples with shortages of troops and ammunition. Ukrainian forces are now racing to build more defensive fortifications at places along the around 1,000-kilometre (600-mile) front line.

Ukraine's difficulties have been deepening for months as the military waited for vital new military aid from the United States. The support was held up in Washington for six months.

Cities in Russia's crosshairs, including recent target Chasiv Yar in eastern Ukraine, are pulverized by Moscow's missiles, drones and glide bombs.

## Pro-China leader elected as Solomon Islands PM

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

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

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

## Trump praises New York police raid on Columbia university protesters

**Monitoring Desk**  
WAUKESHA: Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump said on Wednesday it "was a beautiful thing to watch" New York police officers raiding a Columbia University building occupied by pro-Palestinian students, and called on officials to crack down on campus protests across the United States.

"New York was under siege last night," Trump told supporters at a campaign rally in Wisconsin, praising the police officers for arresting about 300 protesters at Columbia and City College of New York who he referred to as "raging lunatics and Hamas sympathizers." While what the student protesters are seeking varies school to school, many are demanding an immediate ceasefire in the war on Gaza.



Portland Police detain a protester who re-occupied the Portland State University Library building with others after it had been cleared and several protesters were detained earlier in the day, during the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Portland, Oregon, U.S.

## Indonesia to permanently relocate 10,000 people after Ruang volcano eruptions

**Monitoring Desk**  
JAKARTA: The Indonesian government will permanently relocate almost 10,000 residents after a series of explosive eruptions of the Ruang volcano has raised concerns about the dangers of residing on the island in future, a minister said on Friday.

About 9,800 people live on Ruang island, in the province of North Sulawesi, but in recent weeks all residents have been forced to evacuate after the mountain has continued to spew incandescent lava and columns of ash kilometres into the sky.

Authorities this week

raised the alert status of the volcano to the highest level, closed the provincial airport in Manado, and also warned of a possible tsunami if parts of the mountain collapse into the surrounding waters.

Hundreds of "simple but permanent" homes would be built in the Bolaang Mongondow area to facilitate the relocations, said coordinating human development minister Muhadjir Effendy, after a cabinet meeting to discuss the volcano on Friday.

"As instructed by President Joko Widodo, we will build houses that meet disaster-standards."

## Nepal battles raging wildfires across the country

**Monitoring Desk**  
KATHMANDU: Firefighters and local residents battled a massive wildfire on the outskirts of Nepal's capital Thrusday as the Himalayan republic endures a severe fire season authorities have blamed on a heatwave. Nepal sees a spate of wildfires annually, usually beginning in March, but their number and intensity has worsened in recent years, with climate change leading to drier winters.

Emergency crews worked through the night to fight the blaze which engulfed a forested area in Lalitpur, on the southern periphery of the Kathmandu valley.

## Rebuilt face unveiled of woman who lived 75,000 years ago

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAMBRIDGE: A UK team of archaeologists on Thursday revealed the reconstructed face of a 75,000-year-old Neanderthal woman, as researchers reappraise the perception of the species as brutish and unsophisticated. Named Shanidar Z after the cave in Iraqi Kurdistan where her skull was found in 2018, the latest discovery has led experts to probe the mystery of the forty-something Neanderthal woman laid to rest in a sleeping position beneath a huge vertical stone marker.

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

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

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

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

The two countries had a trade volume of \$6.8 billion in 2023.

Turkiye last month imposed trade restrictions on Israel over what

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: Russia's ability to mete out like-for-like retaliation if Western leaders seize its frozen assets has been eroded by dwindling foreign investment, but officials and economists say there are still ways it can strike back.

The United States wants to seize immobilised Russian reserves - around \$300 billion globally - and hand them to Ukraine, while EU leaders favour ringfencing profits from the assets, estimating they will total 15-20 billion euros by 2027. Much of that money is centrally held, meaning it is accessible if the West decides to go after it. Russia says any attempt to take its capital or interest would be "banditry" and has warned of catastrophic consequences, although it has been vague about exactly how it might respond.

Former President Dmitry Medvedev on Saturday acknowledged that Russia did not have enough

U.S. state property to retaliate symmetrically and would have to go after private investors' cash instead - a step he said would be no less painful. Reuters spoke to six economists, lawyers and experts who have been tracking the status of assets frozen by both sides since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The consensus among them was that one of the most likely countermeasures would be to confiscate foreign investors' financial assets and securities currently held in special "type-C" accounts, access to which has been blocked since the war started unless Moscow grants a waiver.

Russia does not disclose how much is in the accounts, held by the country's National Settlement Depository, a sanctioned entity. Russian officials have said the amount is comparable to the \$300 billion of Russian reserves frozen.

## Flights cancelled, schools, offices shut amid heavy rains in UAE

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Several flights were cancelled and schools and offices were closed due to heavy rains that returned to United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Thursday and Friday.

Authorities asked students to study from home. People working at offices were also asked to operate remotely. The Met department had issued an orange alert for Thursday as heavy rains and thunderstorms lashed the UAE.

The UAE authorities had asked schools to start distance learning and companies to allow people to work from home. The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) announced that the decision applied to all private schools, nurseries, and universities.

told Khaleej Times that the "adverse weather conditions in Dubai on Thursday have caused some delays to their operations".

India's IndiGo said its flight operations had been affected by bad weather in Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, and Abu Dhabi. Vistara and SpiceJet also said that departures, arrivals, and flights would be impacted by inclement weather.

Last month's downpour, the heaviest in UAE since records began in 1949, flooding overwhelmed the UAE's drainage systems. Many residents lost their belongings when their homes flooded, and the flooding waters destroyed many cars.



Environmental campaigners hold placards outside the High Court in London, Britain.

## Indian wrestlers upset as Modi's party fields controversial lawmaker's son in polls

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Top Indian Olympic wrestlers have criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party for fielding the son of their former federation chief in national elections, despite his father being charged with sexually harassing female wrestlers. Scores of Indian wrestlers came out in protest last year seeking criminal action against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, a lawyer from Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

A trial court admitted a case of sexual harassment

and intimidation against Singh, who has denied wrongdoing and is currently on bail. In India's long general election, Singh's son Karan is standing as a BJP candidate in his father's Kaiserganj seat in the politically crucial Uttar Pradesh state, a seat Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh has previously won six times.

"Daughters of the country have lost, Brij Bhushan won," said Sakshi Malik, a 2016 Rio Olympics bronze medalist, in a social media post on Thursday.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed the hope that the government, in collaboration with the global partners and national institutions, would be able to eliminate polio from the country very soon. The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) led by Dr Christopher Elias, Chair of Polio Oversight Board and President of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Development Division, said the government was fully resolved to purge the country of this fatal disease.

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

He told the delegation that the government would carry out the accountability of the institutions in-

involved in the polio eradication to ensure transparency in the process.

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

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

He said the Pakistan-Afghanistan cooperation was a must to eradicate polio from the region.

The members of the delegation apprised the prime minister of the ongoing measures for polio eradication and appreciated the government's resolve to get rid of the disease.

The delegation also highlighted the problems faced during the immunisation.

The delegation members observed that the government was resolved to ensure success of polio eradication drive by provid-

ing necessary technical expertise. Dr Christopher told the prime minister that Bill Gates was extremely pleased over the anti-polio initiatives taken during his both stints as Punjab chief minister. The meeting was attended by Regional Director of EMRO Dr Hanan Balkhi, Sanjay Wijesekera, UNICEF Regional Director of South Asia, Dr Omotayo Bolu, Polio Branch Chief of Centres for Disease Control, Dr Luo Dapeng, WHO Representative in Pakistan, Abdullah A. Fadil, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan, Dr Hamid Jafari, Director Polio Eradication, EMRO and Michael Galway, Deputy Director Polio Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Information Minister Attallah Tarar, State Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja, PM's Coordinator on Health Mukhtar Malik and relevant senior officers were also present.



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

## Steel mills, DISCOs, women bank, HBFC, others being privatized: Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD (Online): Minister for privatization Abdul Aleem Khan has said 10 larger institutions have expressed interest for privatization of PIA so far and obtained elementary documents.

"Privatization Commission (PC) is extending PIA privatization for 15 days. The documents regarding expression of interest can be filed till May 18 and this date will not be fur-

ther extended, he said this during media briefing here Friday. He went on to say in certain news papers correct statistics with reference to privatization of PIA have not been given while real situation is encouraging because this institution has such potential now too that it can be transformed into profit yielding institution by integrating new planes.

He went on to say the privatization of PIA which

is running into deficit of Rs 830 billion is in national interest. I am sure whenever Bilawal Bhutto comes to know the real facts, he will support privatization too.

He indicated that Steel Mills, DISCOs, First women bank, house building finance corporation and other institutions are too being privatized.

He pointed out that government wants to privatize 6 to 7 DISCOs.



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

## Naqvi directs improving facilities for passengers at Lahore Airport

LAHORE (INP): Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Mohsin Naqvi has said that the immigration counters at Lahore Airport will be increased for the convenience of the passengers leaving for abroad.

He along with Minister for Aviation and Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif paid two hours long visit to Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore on Friday.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the facilities available to passengers at the airport, the federal ministers emphasized the need for improvements.

Mohsin Naqvi said that the immigration counters will be increased for the convenience of the passengers going abroad and the lengthy and 3-tiered search process will be made easier and faster. He also ordered immediate resolution of the immigration issues and increasing facilities for passengers.

The federal ministers

instructed concerned authorities from ASF, ANF, and Customs to devise a comprehensive plan within the next 24 hours in this regard.

Khawaja Asif stated that after the successful implementation at Lahore Airport, the simplified search process will also be implemented at other airports as well.

The Interior minister directed to increase the number of immigration counters at the arrival and departure terminal to save passengers from the hassle of waiting.

He added that a final plan in this regard should be presented within three days.

Mohsin Naqvi stressed the importance of providing maximum facilities to passengers through out-of-the-box initiatives. Besides reviewing the facilities available to passengers at the airport, he also observed the search process of ANF, ASF and Customs.

## Spokesman GoB grieved over death of President KPC in blast

Independent Report

QUETTA: The spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind has expressed deep grief and sorrow over death of senior journalist and President of Khuzdar Press Club, Maulana Muhammad Siddiq Mengal in the explosion took place in Khuzdar.

In an official statement issued here on Friday, the spokesman of provincial government said that he is grieved over martyrdom of a journalist on the World Press Freedom Day.

He said that the government has sought report of the incident from concerned authorities.

Shahid Rind said that the media persons of Balochistan have been discharging their professional duties in hard circumstances.

He expressed condolence with the bereaved family of martyr journalist saying that we share grief with it.

## Ahsan Iqbal stresses space exploration for national development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday met with the Chairman Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), emphasizing the importance of space exploration for Pakistan's development.

The minister noted that six countries have successfully landed on the moon, but none of them were Islamic countries.

He highlighted that the holy Qura'an encourages Muslims to explore and conquer the universe and recalled that in the past Muslim scientists made significant contributions

to space research and technology.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan was a pioneer in space technology in South Asia in the 1960s and suggested upgrading the Institute of Space Technology, and the National Center of Excellence for Satellite and GIS (Geographic Information System).

He also proposed establishing a space museum at the Narowal Learning Center to promote science education among children.

The minister emphasized the need for Pakistan to catch up with the advancements in space technology and exploration, and SUPARCO's role in achieving this goal.

## President approves Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday approved the Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill 2024 under Article 75 of the Constitution.

The bill aims to amend taxes and duties related laws, a President House news release said.

The amendments made through the bill include changes to sections 30DD, 43, 45B, 46 and 47 of the Sales Tax Act 1990.

Similarly, through the amendment bill, changes to sections 29, 33, 34 and 38 of the Federal Excise Act 2005, and sections 122A, 124, 126A, 130, 131, 132, 133, and 134A of the Income Tax Ordinance 2001 have also been made.

The Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill 2024 was passed by the National Assembly on April 29, 2024.

The president approved the bill on the advice of the prime minister.

## Meeting in connection with amendments in rules of JC ends without any conclusion

ISLAMABAD (Online): The meeting held under Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) in connection with amendment in rules of Judicial Commission (JC) ended without any conclusion.

Federal government has also decided to make constitutional amendments on the matter of appointment of judges in higher judiciary. The stature of National Judicial Commission (NJC) is likely to be changed due to this development.

The meeting was postponed for indefinite period.

Sources said meeting of NJC was postponed for indefinite period.

The meeting was informed about the constitutional amendment by federal government.

Senior judge of SC

Justice Muneeb Akhtar while raising important questions said can the stature of the NJC undergo change due to these amendments possibly.

Law minister said there is clear possibility about it.

Justice Yahya Afridi said it is my opinion in the prevailing situation that I will not give any opinion on these proposed rules. He reserved his opinion. All the judges of judicial commission agreed with Justice Yahya Afridi.

Chief justice Peshawar High Court said more judges are needed in our high court. The appointment of judges in Peshawar High Court be made on existing rules.

The other chief justices of high courts agreed with chief justice Peshawar High Court on this matter.



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

## Pakistan marks World Press Freedom Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Press Freedom Day observed across the world including Pakistan on Friday to celebrate hard work, dedication and services of the journalists for bringing positive change in the society by unearthing truth.

A number of walks, events and special ceremonies were held across the country including Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) to uphold the international right of press freedom and promoting responsible journalism.

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

In Islamabad, the Press Council of Pakistan (PCP), National Press Club and other media organizations held seminars, walks and special events to recognize the contributions of journalists' community to the society, and also highlight importance of responsible journalism.

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

## Minister C&W directs to remove hurdles in way of Quetta Development Package

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Communication and Works (C&W) Department, Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa has directed to remove all the hurdles in way of timely completion of the projects under Quetta Development Package.

He also directed to prepare comprehensive policy for ensuring smooth flow of traffic in Quetta city.

The Minister C&W was chairing a meeting on review of the Quetta Development Package here on Friday.

The Secretary C&W, Qambar Dashti, Chief Engineer Design, Dr. Sajjad

Ahmed Baloch, Project Director of Quetta Development Package, Rafiq Ahmed briefed the meeting about the progress and hurdles in way of completion of the Quetta Development Package.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister C&W said that the beauty of Quetta would increase further with completion of projects being executed under the Quetta Development Package.

He said that it would also lessen the hardships of people of Quetta.

He said that the beauty of roads and infrastructure should be attractive being the provincial capital.



QUETTA: MPAs Fazal Qadir, Mir Rehmat Saleh Baloch and Mir Khair Jan Baloch meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti

## Tarar expresses grief over demise of Khuzdar Press Club President in blast

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar on Friday expressed a deep grief and sorrow over the demise of Khuzdar Press Club President Muhammad Siddiq Mengal in a bomb blast in Khuzdar.

The minister, in a news statement, lauded the services rendered by senior journalist Muhammad Siddiq Mengal in the field of journalism.

"The martyrdom of Muhammad Siddiq Mengal is a big blow to journalism," he said.

He prayed to the Al-

mighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss.

The minister said he shared the grief and pain of the bereaved family, and prayed for the early recovery of those who sustained injuries in the blast.

Reiterating the government's commitment to root out terrorism from the country, he vowed to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to the justice.

He assured that a thorough probe would be conducted in this regard.

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

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

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

Laure High Court Bar Association and later talking to media men. They are playing with the constitution of the country. There is tremendous pressure on courts. Need is there that lawyers should forge unity.

It is the blackest era of history of Pakistan, he underlined. People mandate has been stolen.

He called for releasing PTI founder and his associates. It is our demand judicial probe be got conducted in respect of May 9 incident.

## Barrister Gohar denies negotiations with anyone

ISLAMABAD (INP): PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan stated that the party did not receive any nod regarding negotiations and is not engaged in talks with anyone.

He stressed the need for a transparent inquiry into the May 9 events.

Addressing the media in Rawalpindi, Barrister Gohar highlighted PTI's view, expressing hope for a fair decision from the Supreme Court regarding reserved seats, excluding those acquired through electoral 'robbery'.



ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Raja Pervaiz Ashraf addressing the World Press Freedom Day 2024 seminar at National Press Club.

## APHC says Pakistan Army Chief's unflinching support great inspiration for Kashmiris

SRINAGAR (INP): In Indian illegally Jammu and Kashmir, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has hailed Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir's remarks on Kashmir, terming his assertion as a source of inspiration and a reminder that the Kashmiri people are not alone in their struggle for self-determination.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir, addressing the passing-out parade of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) cadets in Raisalpur, reiterated that Pakistan would continue to provide "moral, political and diplomatic support to our Kashmiri brothers". He asserted that India had maintained its illegal occupation of the region and

added the "silence of the entire world about the ongoing Indian aggression in Kashmir cannot suppress the voice of freedom there".

APHC spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhar in a statement in Srinagar said that the Pakistan army chief's statement was a clear-cut message to India to stop peddling lies on Jammu and Kashmir, as it is an internationally recognized disputed territory whose final status is yet to be ascertained. He said that the statement reflects that entire Pakistan is fully standing by the Kashmiri people in their pursuit for freedom. He urged the international community to recognize the Kashmir dispute as a key factor.



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

## Umar Ayub appreciates performance of Pishin Chamber of Commerce

Independent Report

QUETTA: The senior leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and leader of Opposition in National Assembly, Umar Ayub Tareen has appreciated performance of the Pishin Chamber of Commerce and Industry despite having the limited resources.

He praised the founding member and Patron-in-Chief of the Pishin Chamber Muhammad Asif Tareen on establishment of the Chamber. He said that Pishin is his home town and it's Chamber belongs to him for we have to make struggle together.

Umar Ayub stated so during his visit to the Pishin Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He maintained that Pishin is his home town from where his forefathers had migrated to Hariapur some 450 years ago.

He said that he is very pleased while finding him among the people of Pishin.

He thanked the people on extending love and hospitality to him during his visit to Pishin.

He said that the agriculture has come to the brink of destruction due to the drought and lack of government's attention. The industries and other trade activities also lack in the area, he added.

Despite this, the role of Pishin Chamber of Commerce is exemplary for promotion of business, increasing the revenue, creating opportunities of livelihood and resolving issues of traders community in the limited resources, he added.

In the end, Muhammad Asif Tareen thanked the Opposition leader on visit to the Pishin Chamber of Commerce.

## IMF 'proposes' Pakistan to tax pensioners

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Monetary Fund has presented Pakistan with a set of stringent proposals as conditions - including taxing pensioners - for a new bailout package, ranging from \$6 to \$8 billion, reported a section of the press. The IMF is pushing for additional tax measures to boost government revenue. The government may be required to further increase electricity and gas prices, and privatise all state-owned enterprises operating at a loss. An IMF delegation is expected to arrive on May 15 to finalize the details of the package, which could have significant implications for the Pakistani economy and its citizens.

The news outlet while quoting sources said that the Federal Board of Revenue was ready to bring reforms to the pension system, including the possibility of taxing pensioners.



QUETTA: PD Quetta Development Project Rafiq Ahmed briefed Provincial Minister for Communication & Works Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa