

# Independent

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CM Balochistan &amp; Federal Minister Planning meet-up:

## Work to be done for converting 29,000 registered tube wells on solar energy in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti had crucial meeting with the Federal Minister Planning, Ahsan Iqbal in Islamabad on Tuesday in order to resolve the issues of agricultural tube wells in Balochistan.

During the course of meeting, it was decided to start work on the measures for converting the 29,000 registered agricultural tube wells of the province on solar energy as an alternative solution.

It was informed during a briefing conducted by the Power Division, there are more than 11,000 illegal ag-

gricultural connections in the province too.

However, there was also discussion on the supply of electricity to the agricultural tube wells in the meantime till their solarization. The Power Division was also talked in this regard.

speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister Planning told that the Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif has directed to resolve the issues of Balochistan on priority basis.

The Chief Minister Balochistan offered the measures for restoration of electricity in the province

on behalf of the provincial government.

The Federal Minister Energy Owais Ahmed Leghari requested the Government of Balochistan to work together for prevention of the power pilferage.

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti invited Federal Minister Energy to visit Balochistan and assured him of best cooperation in this regard.

The Chief Minister assured that the campaign would be started afresh against prevention of theft of electricity in the province.

Meanwhile, it was de-

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ISLAMABAD: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti talking with Federal Ministers and other officials regarding provision of uninterrupted electricity to tubewells in Balochistan and other issues

## PM's timely decision on AJK situation averted a tragedy: Attaullah Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's decision to resolve the ongoing crisis in Azad Jammu and Kashmir had averted a tragedy.

Addressing a press conference along with Federal Minister of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam at the Parliament House, he said that the conspiracy of the inimical forces was foiled who faced humiliation due to the Prime Minister's timely actions.

Terming Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf as "Tehreek-e-Intishar", he said its dreams of creation of chaos and anarchy had also been shattered.

"Along with the enemy, the 'Tehreek-e-Intishar' also thought that in some way or the other, chaos would spread and there would be anarchy" as its leadership

wanted to benefit from the sad situation.

Tarar said that the Prime Minister took all the coalition parties and stake holders on board and heard their views.

"Yesterday's meeting was attended by all the political leadership including the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir", he remarked.

The minister said the political leadership and federal ministers resolved the issues through mutual understanding.

The minister said that the prime minister resolved the issue with excellent decision making as the crisis can be eliminated only by timely decisions.

"There is a world of difference between the incompetent government of the past and present elected regime", he added.

He said that inflation was being controlled by prudent government policies and measures.

## SC orders appearance of PTI founder through video link

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday ordered the federal and provincial governments to ensure the attendance of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) founder in the next hearing in intra court appeals against termination of amendments in National Accountability Bureau law.

Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa said that if the founder of PTI wants to give arguments, he can give through video link. He said that we accept the request of PTI founder in this regard and instructed the government to make arrangements.

A five member larger bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Amin ud Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi heard the appeals of federation.

## Armed men kill Allah Rakhya Bugti in Sui

QUETTA (APP): Armed men shot dead Allah Rakhya Bugti, a close friend of chief minister Sarfraz Bugti in Sui area of Dera Bugti district of Balochistan.

According to details, the gunmen managed to escape after firing and killing Allah Rakhya Bugti.



QUETTA: Consul General of Germany Dr. Rodiger Lotz meeting with Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango

## Dr. Rudiger Lotz calls on Provincial Minister for Home & IA: India involved in terrorism in Balochistan, Zia Langove tells German Consul General

Our enemies are hatching conspiracies against Gwadar & CPEC in which they would not succeed at all; German diplomat assures cooperation for bringing improvement in education and health sectors in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has categorically stated that our enemy country, India is involved in terrorism in Balochistan for it (India) is also making funding for this purpose.

However, our security forces are fighting war for eliminating terrorism in the province. He said that our enemies are hatching con-

spiracies against Gwadar and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), however, they would not succeed in their designs all.

The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs was speaking to the German Consul General based in Karachi, Dr. Rudiger Lotz who called on him here on Tuesday.

The Honorary Consul General of Germany in Quetta, Murad Baloch,

Additional Secretaries and Deputy Commissioner Kalat, Bilal Shabbir were also present in the meeting.

During the meeting of meeting, the current situation of law and order was discussed.

The German envoy greeted Mir Ziaullah Langove on assuming the office of Provincial Minister for Home.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding CPEC Phase II and other projects under Chinese investment in Pakistan.

## Dubai property leaks: 17,000 Pakistanis own 23,000 residential properties worth \$11bn in Dubai

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: A collaborative investigative journalism initiative has unveiled the property ownership of influential figures worldwide in Dubai.

Named 'Dubai Unlocked', the project relies on data offering an extensive insight into hundreds of thousands of properties in Dubai, along with details regarding their ownership or utilization, primarily spanning the years 2020 to 2022.

Pakistani nationals are also among those listed, with their collective property holdings estimated at approximately \$11 billion.

The revelation includes approximately \$400 billion worth of properties owned by non-residents, including \$11 billion worth of properties owned by Pakistanis.

The "Property Leaks" expose the names of sev-

eral political figures, government officials, and retired civil servants from around the world. Among them, Pakistanis own \$11 billion worth of properties in Dubai, making them the second-largest group of non-residents purchasing properties in the city.

According to the "Property Leaks", 17,000 Pakistanis have bought 23,000 properties in Dubai. Indian citizens lead among non-residents purchasing properties in Dubai, with 29,700 Indians owning 35,000 properties in the city.

Additionally, there are 19,500 British citizens who own 22,000 properties in Dubai. The total value of properties purchased by British citizens in Dubai amounts to \$10 billion. At least 8,500 Saudi citizens have bought 16,000 prop-

erties in Dubai, totaling over \$8 billion.

The project — 'Dubai Unlocked' — is based on data that provides a detailed overview of hundreds of thousands of properties in Dubai and information about their ownership or usage, largely from 2020 and 2022. Properties purchased in the name of companies and those that are in commercial areas are not part of this analysis.

The data was obtained by the Centre for Advanced Defence Studies (C4ADS), a non-profit organisation based in Washington, DC.

It was then shared with Norwegian financial outlet E24 and the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), which coordinated a six-month investigative project with reporters from 74 me-

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BEIJING: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar holds a luncheon meeting with Chairman of China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) Luo Zhaoxui.

## Pakistan, China reiterate resolve to accelerate all CPEC projects

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan and China on Tuesday expressed joint determination to accelerate progress on all projects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) including ML-1 upgradation, Gwadar Port, and realignment of Karakorum Highway.

The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed in a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), Liu Jianchao here.

The deputy prime minister is on a four-day visit to China mainly to co-chair the Fifth Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

In the meeting, the two leaders also reaffirmed the importance of the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership between Pakistan and China and to further reinforce mutually beneficial collaboration.

They discussed the longstanding cooperation and exchanges between the political parties of Pakistan and the Communist Party of China.

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## IHC bars govt from blocking non-filers' SIMs

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday barred the federal government from blocking the SIMs of non-filers.

IHC Chief Justice Aamir Farooq issued the order in response to a writ petition filed by the telecom operator. The court also issued notice to the federal government in this regard, with the next hearing on the matter scheduled for May 27, 2024.

The petition challenged Clause 114-B of the Income Tax Ordinance and the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) Income Tax General Orders against non-filers.

The petitioner argued that the tax regulator's new-found authority violated the fundamental right to freedom of business under Article 18 of the Constitution.

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## PM announces to privatise all SOEs sans strategic ones

Directs routing proportion of country's imports through Gwadar Port

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday announced that the government would privatise all state-owned enterprises (SOEs), excluding the strategic ones, regardless of their profitability or financial losses.

The prime minister, chairing a high-level meeting to review the matters related to the Ministry of Privatisation and Privatisation Commission, directed all the federal ministries to carry out the necessary procedures and extend their cooperation with the Privatisation Commission for the purpose.

In the meeting, the privatisation ministry and the Privatisation Commission presented a roadmap for the Privatisation Programme 2024-29.

Continued on page 2

The prime minister said the government had nothing to do with running the businesses but was mandated to facilitate the investors. He viewed that the privatisation of SOEs would save the taxpayers' money to help the government provide quality services to the people.

Reiterating the government's commitment to a transparent process, the prime minister directed to live telecast the bidding and other procedures of the privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines and other entities.

During the briefing on the progress in the SOEs' privatisation, the participants were told that the pre-qualification process for PIA privatisation would be



ISLAMABAD: Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhail called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## PM, Mandokhail vow to strengthen relations between federation, provinces further

Shahbaz Sharif reiterates desire to work with all political forces to steer country out of problems

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail called on the Prime Minister, Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif here in PM's Secretariat on Tuesday.

During the course of meeting, the Prime Minister congratulated Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail on assuming the office of Governor Balochistan and expressed best wishes for him.

Besides, several issues of the province including overall development of the province, ongoing development projects, issues and progress of the public sector universities were also discussed during the meeting.

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TURBAT: Chief Justice Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Hashim Khan Kakar in a meeting with lawyers of Kech Bar Association

to the recent rains in the province.

The flashflood and rains caused heavy human and financial losses in Pishin and Chaman.

Besides, the houses of people were also damaged due to the torrential rains forcing them to live in the tents in open sky, he further pointed out.

The MPA Asghar Tareen demanded of the government to pay compensation to the affectedes at the earliest.

Speaking on the call attention notice, the Provincial

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## Pakistan beats Ireland to win T20I series

### Sports Desk

DUBLIN: A strong partnership between Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan guided Pakistan to beat Ireland by six wickets to clinch the three-match T20I series at Dublin on Tuesday.

Rizwan struck 56 off 38 while Azam smashed 75 in pursuit of 179 runs target, propelling Pakistan to victory with 18 balls to spare.

The duo fell back-to-back after the impressive performance. At this time, Azam Khan showed fireworks and ensure the series win by 2-1 for the Team Green.

Earlier, Pakistan won the toss and put the Ireland to batting first. The hosts set 179-run target for Pakistan to win the third and final T20I. Ireland captain Lorcan Tucker scored 73 runs while Pakistan's Shaheen Afridi took three wickets.

For the third match, Pakistan have replaced Naseem Shah with Hassan Ali.

Furthermore, brisk breeze with speeds reaching up to 19 kmph will be

blowing. Fakhar, who smashed 78 off 40 with the help of six fours and as many sixes, said Pakistan were shaken by the defeat in the first match.

"Team needed a wake-up call, the way we lost the first match," Fakhar said after the match. "That was on everyone's mind, and it reflected on how we played this match... everyone was fighting a lot."

"I hope that the way we played this match, we will carry this momentum forward to the World Cup."

However, Azam Khan, who, unlike Usman and Irfan, couldn't feature in Pakistan's recent series against New Zealand, is being a full run against Ireland and he repaid the team management's trust with a blistering finishing knock of 30 off 10 balls.

The burly batter smacked the Ireland bowlers for four sixes and a four to take Pakistan over the line with 19 balls to spare.

Azam's show, coming in at number five, must have given the national side some hope of solving its issues in the middle order.



ISLAMABAD: Leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Moulana Abdul Ghaffoor Haideri calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Members of the National Assembly Usman Badini and Noor Aalam Khan are also present.

## 17,000 Pakistanis own....

Continued from page 1  
dia outlets in 58 countries, uncovering scores of convicted criminals, fugitives, and political figures who have recently owned at least one piece of real estate in Dubai. The News and Dawn were partners from Pakistan.

Among the Pakistanis listed in the Property Leaks are President Asif Ali Zardari's three children, Hussain Nawaz Sharif, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's wife, Sharjeel Memon and family members, Senator Faisal Vawda, Farah Gogi, Sher Afzal Marwat, four MNAs and half a dozen MPs from the Sindh and Balochistan assemblies. The Pakistani list also features the late Gen Pervez Musharraf, former prime minister Shaukat Aziz and more than a dozen retired generals as well as a police chief, an ambassador and a scientist – all of whom owned properties either directly or through their spouses and children.

In 2014, President Asif Ali Zardari had received foreign property as a gift. By the time he declared it in 2018, he had gifted it to someone. In 2014, a business tycoon co-accused with Zardari in the fake accounts case, Abdul Ghani Majid, declared in his wealth statement that he had granted a gift of Rs329m but neither mentioned its type nor the recipient. The JIT however recovered a memo about the purchase in March 2014 of a penthouse in Dubai. The Property Leaks data has now unveiled that Ghani had gifted this property to Zardari who gifted it to his daughter.

Chief Financial Officer of Omni Group Aslam Masood along with his wife is also shown as a listed owner of several

properties in the data. The News checked the value of one of them and found out that it was purchased at AED1,060,626 (Rs80m) in March 2013.

Sohrab Dinshaw is also a property owner in Dubai. A villa he purchased in 2015 carried a purchase price of AED 1271888 (Rs 96m).

All of the individuals mentioned were sent questions (except Aslam Masood who is deceased). None responded.

The Altaf Khanani network which was sanctioned by the US for involvement in money laundering has also surfaced on the list. His son, daughter, brother, and nephew are listed owners of several properties in Dubai. Three of them are facing sanctions. Another notable character is Hamid Mukhtar Shah, a Rawalpindi-based physician who was sanctioned by the US for his involvement in the kidnapping, detention of, and removal of kidneys from Pakistani labourers. He is listed as the owner of scores of properties.

The Property Leaks have also revealed that Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's wife owns a property in Dubai which he didn't declare in the nomination papers he submitted in March this year for the Senate election.

Per the Property Leaks data, Naqvi's wife owns a five-bedroom villa in the Arabian Ranches. She received a rental income of AED600,000 (Rs45m) from this villa, which was purchased in August 2017 for AED4,347,888 (Rs329m) according to the record seen by The News. The villa remained in her ownership till April 2023 when it was sold for AED4,550,000 (Rs344m) as per the record.



LAHORE: Senior Journalist and Columnist Mujibur Rahman Shami and Salman Ghani giving shields to the participants in the discussion organized by the Press Information Department on the theme "Religious Harmony."



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Mir Ali Madad Jattak, MPs Farah Azeem Shah, Mir Younis Aziz Zehri, Mir Ghulam Dastagir Badini, Asghar Ali Tareen, Syed Zafar Agha, Hidayatur Rehman and Shahida Rauf expressing their views on point order during Balochistan Assembly session chaired by Speaker Captain (ret'd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai

## Babar Azam breaks Kohli's big record in T20I cricket

DUBLIN (INP) – Pakistan skipper Babar Azam scripted history as he broke the Indian batsman Virat Kohli's big record for most 50-plus score in T20I cricket.

Azam achieved the milestone while playing in the final game of three-match T20I series against Ireland. He struck 75 off 45 balls as Pakistan beat the Ireland by six wickets to clinch the T20I series.

He now has 39 fifty-plus scores in T20Is while Kohli stands at 38.

During the first T20I against Ireland in Dublin, Babar hammered his 35th half-century in T20Is and his overall 38th 50-plus score, which helped him equal the Kohli's record.

## Naval Chief visits Air War College Institute

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf on Tuesday visited the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Air War College Institute (AWCI), Faisal, where he was received by President Air War College Institute, Air Vice Marshal Amir Shahzad.

The chief guest congratulated the AWCI faculty for achieving the educational standards worthy of an institute of the highest calibre and emphasised on the importance of preparing future military leadership capable of facing modern day challenges of aerial warfare, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf in a group photo along with Air Vice Marshal Amir Shahzad, President Air War College Institute and faculty members during his visit PAF Base Faisal in Karachi.

## India involved...

Continued from page 1  
The Minister Home on the occasion pointed out that terrorism is occurring in Balochistan from the neighbouring countries.

He said that India is not digesting the development and prosperity of Pakistan.

He also referred to the steps being taken by the incumbent government for improving law and order, health and education sectors in Balochistan. The German Consul General on the occasion praised hospitality of the province saying that he has also visited province earlier.

He said that the hospitality of Balochistan is an exemplary. He gets utmost pleasure while visiting the province, the German envoy added. He said that the German government would continue cooperation for improving health and education in Balochistan.



LAHORE: Senior Journalist and Columnist Mujibur Rahman Shami and Salman Ghani giving shields to the participants in the discussion organized by the Press Information Department on the theme "Religious Harmony."

## Fazl announces movement against election rigging, public march on June 1

FAISALABAD (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman announced that his party had launched a movement against what he referred to as electoral malpractices.

Addressing a gathering of reporters here, Fazl declared that the JUI-F would hold a public million march on June 1. Fazl stated that the country's system was in turmoil, and urged all politicians to reflect on the perennially disputed nature of elections in Pakistan.

He deplored a lack of implementation of the constitution, and questioned its purpose if not followed. The JUI-F leader criticised the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for its passive stance in face of electoral rigging and constitutional violations. He, however, cautioned against solely blaming the Commission, arguing that doing so would imply a void of the

constitution and law in the country.

Expressing reservations about the May 9 violent riots, Fazl condemned attacks on state institutions and the burning of listed and government buildings. In a veiled reference to the military establishment, Fazlur Rahman asserted that if they denied any election rigging, they should acknowledge that the people had dismissed the May 9 narrative. He stressed the need for all political parties to unite to obstruct their [establishment's] influence for the sake of the country's progress.

Fazl also criticised the current coalition, pointing out that a minority government held power. He also questioned how the Pakistan Peoples Party could hold constitutional positions while denying its role in the government.

## IED blast inside house kills five in S. Waziristan

PESHAWAR (APP): At least five people from the same family including women were killed when a improvised explosive device (IED) blast occurred inside a house in South Waziristan on Tuesday morning.

According to police the incident took place in Tangi Badinzi area of Laddha tehsil in South Waziristan where the blast of an IED killed five family members. The initial reports said two women were among those killed in the blast. The family had shifted to the house

some days back.

Police said the house was rented out to an Afghan national, adding that frequent visits of suspected people to the house were witnessed by the locals. Police asserted that the blast was most probably a result of accidental flareup of the explosives stored inside the house.

Those killed in the blast were identified as Banot Khan, his wife, daughter, son Shahzeb and another unidentified child. Police have started a thorough investigation into the incident.

## Masood pledges support for Iqra Fund's role in educating children in Pakistan

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, has assured the head of Iqra Fund, which is named after a young girl who set up a tent school for the surviving 2005 earthquake's children, for its contribution to educating children, especially girls, in the country's Northern areas.

The Pakistani envoy made this pledge during a meeting with Genevieve Walsh, a US citizen who is the chief executive officer (CEO) and Co-Founder of the Fund, at the Pakistan Embassy in Washington,

DC, according to an embassy press release.

"Your mission to educate children is truly inspiring", the ambassador told Ms. Walsh, who called on him on Monday.

"Indeed, you are a symbol of friendship between the peoples of Pakistan and the United States."

Ms. Walsh said that she first visited Pakistan in 2007, two years after the devastating earthquake that killed over 80,000 people. Inspired by Iqra's initiative, she said she founded the Fund in 2011 with a goal of creating sustainable access

to quality education.

Iqra Fund's strategic partnership with the government to transform non-functioning government schools has resulted in the establishment of 20 village schools engaging 234 local women of the area.

The Fund has hired 94 teachers who have been trained and mentored as school and community leaders.

The Organization has successfully enrolled 4098 first generation students in Iqra Fund Schools including supporting 26 differently abled families and students.



TURBAT: Vice Chancellor Dr. Jan Muhammad Baloch briefed Chief Justice Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Hashim Khan Kakar during his visit to Law Faculty of Turbat University

## NAB organizes seminar regarding corruption elimination in UoT

INDEPENDENT REPORT  
QUETTA: The University of Turbat (UoT), in collaboration with the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Balochistan, organized a seminar titled "The Role of Students in the Eradication of Corruption" at the Conference Room of UoT.

The seminar aimed to empower youth to become positive change agents in society by playing their due role in eradicating corruption. Students, faculty members, and administrative staff from various de-

partments attended the seminar, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

Addressing the event, the distinguished speakers, including Dr Muhammad Rashad Incharge NAB (Balochistan) Sub Office Gwadar, Mr Ganguzar Baloch Registrar UoT, and Mr Amjed Habib faculty member of UoT shared their insights on the menace of corruption.

Dr Muhammad Rashad outlined the disadvantages and root causes of corruption, along with strategies for its eradication, highlighting NAB's role, jurisdiction, functions, responsibilities, and achievements.

Emphasizing the pivotal role of students and youth in the fight against corruption, he said that the young generation should work against corruption and curb it from society.

He highlighted the importance of ethical leadership, transparency, and accountability in building a

corruption-free institution and society. Dr. Muhammad Rashad also emphasized the importance of sensitizing all segments of society to combat the menace of corruption.

The seminar also featured a question and answer session, during which participants not only asked questions about the role of NAB in the elimination of corruption but also shared their suggestions and perspectives on eradicating this societal ill.

An oath-taking ceremony for the members of the newly established "Character Building Society (CBS)" was also conducted at the end of the seminar, in which, the students pledged to actively contribute in creating a more equitable society where corruption has no place. The event concluded with a commitment to uphold the principle that "self-accountability is the best accountability".

## Asim Kurd assures...

Continued from page 1  
cial Minister for Revenue, Mir Asim Kurd assured that the compensation would be paid to the rain and flood affected people soon.

He said that the 2022 floods had severely affected the province causing damages to the basic infrastructure.

He said that the Naserabad division was mostly affected during the floods while the compensation of the damages is still awaited.

He mentioned Rs. 16 billion have been released by the federal government for flood affected people.

Earlier, speaking on the point of order, the Provincial Minister Ali Madad Jatak said that zamindars have been protesting for their demands outside the provincial assembly.

He said that the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has assured to solarize the agricultural tube wells of the growers. He said that the funds would be provided by the federal and provincial governments for solarization of the tube wells.

The leader of Opposition, Mir Younas Aziz Zehri said that the zamindars are lodging protest over the issue of power load shedding in compulsion.

He said that zamindars should be informed about what ever decided in the meeting of Chief Minister with Prime Minister in Islamabad.

He demanded of the government to provide electricity for eight hours until and unless the agricultural tube wells are solarized.

## PM announces to privatise...

Continued from page 1  
completed by the end of this month. The consultation for privatisation of Roosevelt Hotel was underway and the government-to-government transaction of the First Women Bank was in process with the United Arab Emirates.

It was told that the power distribution companies had been included in the 2024-29 Privatisation Program and the privatisation of loss-making SOEs would be prioritised.

The participants were told that a pre-qualified panel of experts would be appointed at the Planning Commission for a swift and transparent privatisation process.

Federal ministers Khawaja Asif, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Jam Kamal Khan, Awais Ahmed Leghari, Abdul Aleem Khan, Dr Musaddik Malik and Ahmad Khan Cheema, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to ensure routing a proportion of country's imports, particularly related to the government, through the Gwadar Port.

The prime minister made this landmark decision with a view to fully

operationalise the Gwadar Port.

He was chairing a high level meeting on the projects under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor and Chinese investment.

The prime minister instructed all the ministries to enhance collaboration for swift execution of the CPEC's second phase and warned against any laxity by the ministries and government departments.

Instructing the provision of foolproof security to the Chinese workers, he said the promotion of trade and commerce ties with time-tested friend China was welcoming.

He told the meeting that Pakistan-China partnership was on the highest ever level, so the relevant officers and departments should strive for the positive outcomes of this relationship.

Federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Dr Musaddik Malik, and Abdul Aleem Khan, SAPM Tariq Fatemi, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal and relevant senior officers attended the meeting. The provincial chief secretaries joined the meeting via video link.



## Ahsan Iqbal emphasizes need of professional officers, technocrats to achieve government's objectives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said that there was an urgent need for skilled and professional officers and technocrats to achieve the fundamental objectives of the government.

He stated this while presiding over a high-level meeting to discuss the role and reforms of the Planning Commission with a committee formed on the instructions of the prime minister, said a press release issued here.

During the meeting, important aspects of economic reforms and capacity building necessary for sustainable development of Pakistan were reviewed.

Federal Minister for Power and Water Resources, Mossadeq Malik, MNA Ali Pervez Malik, Planning Secretary, Cabinet Secretary and senior officials of the Ministry of Planning participated in the meeting.

Ahsan Iqbal reiterated the importance of capacity building within line ministries to ensure the efficient preparation of project proposals (PC-Is), thereby enabling the Planning Ministry to focus on strategic planning and thought leadership.

The minister emphasized that over the past 16 months, sector specialists from the market had been recruited within the Planning Ministry to strengthen the technical capabilities across diverse sectors and accelerate project completion.

He emphasized that over the past 16 months, the sector specialists from the market had been recruited within the ministry to strengthen the technical capabilities across diverse sectors and accelerate project completion.

Ahsan Iqbal acknowledged the effective functioning of the operational and technical sections within the ministry.

However, he emphasized the need to attract top talent from the market to enhance thought leadership within the ministry.

To achieve this, the minister signified the importance of revised remuneration, adding "We have to revise our pay scales to attract people with professional skills and experience from the market."

Reflecting the past achievements, Ahsan Iqbal cited the successful formulation and implementation of Vision 2025 during 2013-18.

In addition, the Planning Ministry has the credit of achieving substantial savings amounting to Rs 700 billion from the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) over five years from 2013 to 2018. This accomplishment was made possible through rigorous scrutiny of PSDP projects and careful financial management.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson BISP, Ms. Rubina Khalid, receives a comprehensive briefing from Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad, during an introductory meeting at BISP HQs in Islamabad on May 14, 2024. Also in attendance are Addl. Secretary BISP, Dr. Tahir Noor, and all Directors General of BISP.

## Chairperson BISP urges dignity, empowerment for needy women

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Rubina Khalid has underscored the importance of upholding the self-respect and dignity of BISP's deserving women.

Addressing senior management and officers during an introductory meeting at BISP Headquarters, she emphasized the need for unwavering commitment to providing essential services to the programme's beneficiaries.

Rubina Khalid made it unequivocally clear that any instances of mismanagement or misconduct would not be tolerated under her leadership, and strict action would be taken against individuals involved.

Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad, endorsed the chairperson's statement, reinforcing the commitment to accountability and efficiency within the organization.

Additionally, Ms. Khalid expressed her intention to personally visit BISP field offices to monitor the situation closely, emphasizing her hands-on approach to ensuring effective implementation of her directives.

Emphasizing transparency and empowerment, she stressed the establishment of bank accounts for BISP beneficiaries, allowing them to access their funds independently, thus minimizing human intervention.

The chairperson emphasized the significance of vocational and technical training, particularly for the children of beneficiaries, as a means to alleviate their hardships and contribute positively to their families' well-being.

## Japanese singer's performance held at Japan Embassy

ISLAMABAD (APP): A special event featuring a performance by young Japanese musician Kenta Shoji was held at the residence of WADA Mitsuhiro, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan on Tuesday.

The singer Kenta first mesmerized the audience with piano which was followed by captivating songs that he sang in Japanese, English and Urdu language.

The singer from Kyoto, Japan, took the audience by surprise when he sang popular Pakistani hit song of Vital Sign "Dil Dil Pakistan" and "Aitebar" and received a great applause from each attending the function.

Kenta started playing piano at the age of 20.

## Anti drug awareness movement on full swing in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have initiated a special "Nasha ab Nae" tehrak to eradicate use of narcotics from the federal capital and ensure the safety of the youth from the curse of drugs. Police teams have conducted special lectures in educational institutions to educate students about the harms of drugs and preventive measures.

Following the special directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police has launched a special "Nashaa Ab Nahi" tehrak to eradicate narcotics and keep the youngsters safe from the curse of drugs, public relations officers said.

During this campaign, the SP Rural Zone has delivered lecture in educational institute about the harms of drugs and preventive measures, emphasizing that drug abuse is detrimental to the health and future of students.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal chairing a meeting of committee for improving the structure and capabilities of Planning Commission.

## Climate finance pivotal point in journey towards sustainable resilience in Pakistan: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam said that climate finance was a pivotal point in the country's journey towards securing sustainable resilience in Pakistan.

Addressing the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS)'s round-table titled "Climate Finance: Towards Securing Sustainable Resilience in Pakistan" here on Tuesday, the PM's Coordinator said that country must strive to conceive bankable finance in the most cost-efficient manner, leveraging both public and private resources to maximise impact which necessitates a strategic approach aligned with national development priorities meeting rigorous standards of international financiers.

Romina said, "As we convene here today, the imperative for action on climate change has never been more pressing. The challenges we face are multifaceted, demanding innovative solutions and concerted efforts at both the national and international levels."

She mentioned that the role of non-state technocrats could not be overstated as their expertise and insights were invaluable in designing bankable projects that not only address climate vulnerabilities but also unlock economic opportunities for the local communities.

By harnessing the collective intelligence of technocrats on a regional level, we can ensure the viability and scalability of our climate finance initiatives.

Furthermore, climate diplomacy offers a powerful avenue for advancing our agenda on sustainable finance.

Pakistan must engage with the global community, leveraging diplomatic channels to advocate for our climate priorities and forge partnerships that enable greater access to finance.

By positioning ourselves as proactive and constructive players on the global stage, we can attract the necessary investments to drive our climate resilience efforts forward.

## Randhawa chairs Islamabad Development Working Party meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting of Islamabad Development Working Party here at his office. Representatives of the Ministry of Interior, Planning Commission, Pakistan EPA, PWD, Islamabad Police, Local Government and Rural Development and other departments attended the meeting, said the Spokesman of Chief Commissioner Office Nouman Nazim.

A total of 24 development projects were presented in the meeting, including 17 projects of the Local Government, 4 projects of the Islamabad Police, 2 projects of the Agriculture Department, and 1 project of the Libraries Department spanning from grassroots endeavours to modernizing urban infrastructure. With a strategic focus on community involvement, the meeting heralded a new era of collaborative governance. The Chief Commissioner Islamabad directed that all projects be shifted to Geographic Information System (GIS).



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Dr. Nizamuddin and Nadeem Mujtaba.

## Iranian embassy denounces Nakba Day, demands justice for Palestinian victims

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Iranian Embassy on Tuesday, marking the Nakba Day, denounced the "apartheid and occupying Zionist regime" for its ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people.

The embassy, in a statement, emphasized that the dark legacy of the Nakba was the "76 years of occupation of Palestinian land" characterized by genocide, displacement, and the violation of human rights.

It accused the Zionist regime of committing "the most heinous crimes ever throughout the history of mankind," including war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

The embassy expressed outrage at the recent escalation of violence, citing the brutal massacre of more than 35,000 innocent people, including children, men, and women, as well as the displacement of hundreds of thousands in the occupied Palestinian territories. It condemned the destruction of buildings and infrastructure by the Zionist regime and called for the trial of those responsible for war crimes. The embassy also criticized the United States for its role in disrupting ceasefire efforts and opposing the recognition of the Palestinian state in the United Nations.

## IG Islamabad pins rank badges to newly promoted 91 Sub Inspectors

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, a series of departmental promotions are underway in Islamabad Police, a public relations officer said.

He said that, in this regard, a prestigious ceremony was held to promote new officers to the rank of Sub Inspector at Police Lines Headquarters Islamabad.

IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi graced the event as a special guest, while senior police officers, and the families of newly promoted inspectors were also present on this occasion.

IG Islamabad pins rank badges to newly promoted 91 Assistant Sub-Inspectors to the rank of Sub Inspector, he congratulates them, and expresses good wishes for their future endeavors.

On this occasion, IGP Islamabad welcomed and congratulated the police officers and their families who participated in the ceremony. I salute your hard work, dedication, bravery, and courage, he added.

My prayer is that whatever promotion you have achieved, may Allah Almighty give you the grace to do justice with it. May your children consider you their hero, may your mother feel proud of you.

## Ashrafi presents copy of 'Code of Conduct for Pilgrims' to Saudi envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman and Hajj Organizers Association of Pakistan (HOAP) Patron-in-Chief, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, on Tuesday convened a meeting with Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki and presented him a copy of the 'Code of Conduct for Pilgrims'.

He expressed gratitude to the leadership of Saudi Arabia, particularly to the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

## Over 1,300 patients get treatment at Army medical camp

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Army has organized a medical camp at Raichand Higher Secondary School Chelhar in Tharparkar, providing free medical treatment to over 1,300 patients.

The camp, which included lab testing facilities and minor surgical procedures, aimed to address the healthcare needs of the local residents, PTV reported.

The medical camp was staffed by experienced doctors and paramedical personnel who provided treatment for various ailments, including malaria, diabetes, blood pressure, and stomach diseases.

In addition to medical care, the army also distributed ration and food among the residents, further supporting the community.

## IRSA releases 217,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 217,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 239,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1470.00 feet and was 72.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 61,200 cusecs and 60,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1173.30 feet, which was 123.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.

## Perpetrators of May 9 incidents to face legal consequences: Amir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for States and Frontier Regions Engr. Amir Muqam on Tuesday emphasized that those involved in the May 9 incidents should not escape legal consequences and must be dealt with according to the law.

Speaking here in National Assembly, he said that a political party should see its past as it remained involved in unrest in the country after 2013 general elections.

They were previously involved in attacking Parliament and Pakistan Television, stirring unrest and now were discussing similar disruptive actions, the minister added.

However, he affirmed that such actions would not be tolerated this time, emphasizing the rule of law.

He also highlighted the damages inflicted on critical locations such as the Chakdara toll plaza and the Radio Pakistan office in Peshawar on May 9, emphasizing that the public was keenly aware of the perpetrators behind these incidents.

The minister stated that an individual was currently facing in around 100 genuine cases and he should confront them directly, rather than resorting to misleading the nation through mere slogans.

He stated that the former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) cabinet and machinery were utilized for organizing protest gatherings in Islamabad and at the Governor's House in Peshawar.

The minister emphasized that the lives of ordinary people were significantly impacted, with ambulances being stopped due to protests by a certain party in the past, making the public the ultimate vicarious.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan Mr. Mitsuhiro WADA called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House.

## PM Coordinator advises PTI to engage in unconditional national dialogue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister Rana Ishaan Afzal Khan Tuesday advised Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief to change attitude and accept unconditional grand national dialogue with government as a way forward.

Talking to PTV news, he said that his party wanted to establish a "working relationship" with all other parties, and that the PTI was not cooperating with other parties in order to counter challenges including the economy.

He said that the opposition should support any legislation aimed to protect the national interest, adding, the opposition will be replying to a question, he said that PTI should wait till next general election in the country.

## Federal Govt gives historic relief package for AJK people: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Azad Jammu & Kashmir Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan on Tuesday said that the Federal Government had given a historic relief package worth Rs 23 billion for the people of AJK. Talking to a private news channel, the minister said that due to the timely intervention of PM Shehbaz, the issue of subsidies had been amicably resolved.

The AJK Government, he said, issued notifications for subsidies in flour and electricity prices.

Under the relief package, he said, the price of flour had been reduced from Rs 3,100 to Rs 2,000 per 40 kilograms. Likewise, the consumers would be charged Rs 3 per unit for usage of upto 100 units, Rs 5 for 100-300 units, and Rs 6 above 300 units, while commercial rates were fixed at Rs 10 per unit for upto 300 units and Rs 15 for above 300 units. The minister reiterated that the Federal Government had not only resolved the issue amicably but also thwarted the attempts of some elements to exploit the situation for political gains.

## Islamabad Police launches "Voice for the Voiceless" to recuperate abandoned animals

ISLAMABAD: The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, has decided to launch the initiative "Voice for the Voiceless" for the treatment and rehabilitation of the abandoned, injured, and sick animals.

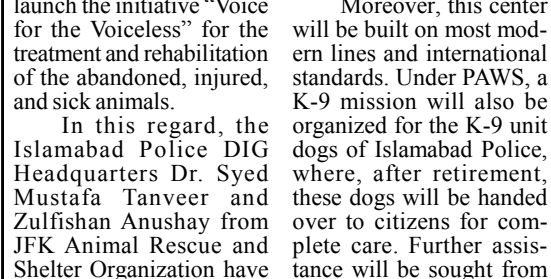
In this regard, the Islamabad Police DIG Headquarters Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer and Zulfishan Anushay from JFK Animal Rescue and Shelter Organization have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), under which the Islamabad Police is going to set up Police Animal Welfare Services (PAWS).

The primary goal of this initiative is the welfare of homeless, retired, and non-serviceable animals, whether they belong to government or private institutions.

The project includes establishment of a shelter home, a pet cafe, and a pet hotel for these animals, where citizens who travel or go on long journeys can avail these facilities for their pet, where the best care of these animals will be ensured through professional caretakers.

Moreover, this center will be built on most modern lines and international standards. Under PAWS, a K-9 mission will also be organized for the K-9 unit dogs of Islamabad Police, where, after retirement, these dogs will be handed over to citizens for complete care. Further assistance will be sought from other animal welfare organizations as needed.

On this occasion, the IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said that this initiative is genuinely a voice for the voiceless and its echo should reach the entire world through the message of love and care for the animals as an important component of the environment, nature and human life. He further said that animals that retire after serving in any force should not be put down; instead, their complete care should be ensured.



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters stage a protest demonstration against the Israeli brutalities at D-Chowk in the Federal Capital.



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## Privatisation divide

With Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar having clawed his way back to the centre of economic policymaking, a tussle between two competing viewpoints — one represented by him, the other by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb — was inevitable.

Mr Aurangzeb believes that Pakistan's economy can no longer bear the burden of state-owned enterprises, which need to be privatised as early as possible. On the other hand, Mr Dar, who is foreign minister and a confidant of Nawaz Sharif, fears that all-out privatisation could deplete his party's already dwindling political capital. Hobbled by high inflation, recent blunders in wheat procurement and rising energy costs, the party can ill-afford any agitation against privatisation. Hence, no matter what the finance minister says, the two are not on the same page as evident in his outright rejection of Mr Dar's concept of "strategic and essential SOEs". "There is no such thing as strategic SOEs," Mr Aurangzeb told a pre-budget conference. All SOEs, regardless of their categorisation, he asserted, would be handed over to the private sector. His stance on the 'strategic' SOEs is the opposite of what Mr Dar, who was previously finance minister and heads the important Cabinet Committee on Privatisation, had stated recently. Removing seven profitable public companies at the disposal of the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund from the privatisation list, Mr Dar reportedly said that the government would restrict its concerns to "strategic and essential SOEs", whose number — 40 — would be decreased after scrutiny.

The final decision on which the entities are to be categorised as strategic or essential is to be made by the Cabinet Committee on SOEs headed by Mr Aurangzeb. It might not be easy for him to have his way on their privatisation, despite support from the powerful circles that signed him up for implementing taxation, energy, and SOE reforms along with privatisation under the IMF's tutelage. Mr Dar's economic ideas are acceptable neither to the IMF nor to these circles. Under these circumstances, his transfer to the foreign ministry and later his elevation as deputy prime minister were perceived as major concessions from PM Shehbaz Sharif, although under pressure from Nawaz Sharif. Put simply, the differences between Mr Aurangzeb and Mr Dar reflect the tensions within the ruling party as well as the compulsions of an economy that cannot pick up momentum until it has undergone drastic and politically unpopular changes. The disagreement between the current and former finance minister on privatisation has emerged at a time when the government is all set to start talks for another IMF bailout facility in order to revive the economy. How this disagreement within the government will sit with the lender, which is already wary of the risks attached to the execution of the economic stabilisation policies, is anybody's guess.

**Jawed Naqvi**

Most neutral observers are sanguine that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is winning a third term. Let's put it this way, it isn't a foregone conclusion that Mr Modi is losing the election, which crossed its fourth of seven phases on Monday, despite compelling pointers he could. The assumption of his defeat is based on broad headcounts computed by seasoned analysts.

On the other side is the unceasing clamour from 'Modi channels', amid communal dog-whistling by anchors, that he is winning 400-plus seats. That's a two-thirds majority with which we are told he would change the constitution. Adding weight to the claim of a Modi victory is psephologist Prashant Kishore's assessment that the BJP could become the single largest party in West Bengal and Odisha. He says the BJP could make inroads for the first time in Tamil Nadu or at least its vote share in the state would hit double digits. That's good news for

Modi, but Kishore does have a mixed reputation at predicting poll outcomes.

We can discuss both sides of the claim and draw our respective conclusions. The question is, would Mr Modi accept defeat if it does come calling. Or would he take the Donald Trump route on losing, whipping up a terrifying frenzy instead? There are many variables to say just what the verdict could be at the hustings, not least because publishing the findings of exit polls is officially banned until the last vote is cast. Exit polls would come on June 1, although there can be no certainty about their veracity either. That's what experience shows. Thus, we must wait for the outcome till June 4.

But let's hear from Yogendra Yadav, veteran former psephologist who recently became a member of Rahul Gandhi's cross-country unity march for democracy. He said in a TV analysis on Monday after visiting key battleground states and noting the relatively low voter turnout that Mr Modi was likely to lose. "Election

karvat le raha hai," he said. (The election is changing course.)

The phrase is commonly heard on YouTube channels watching the elections from the ground, a far cry from regular TV channels that have already declared a victory for Mr Modi. Bunching the states in the fray including those that scored the maximum for the BJP in 2019, Yadav estimated those where Modi could lose a few, not least because there was no way to increase the tally from 100 per cent wins in Gujarat or Rajasthan and Haryana or Delhi. The bulk of Mr Modi's losses are expected from Maharashtra and Bihar, he says. Maharashtra is where Modi ditched the Shiv Sena and split the former ally to form a state government with the BJP. Now Shiv Sena leader Udhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar, both members of the INDIA opposition alliance, are campaigning with doubled energy on the plank of defeating the 'ghaddaars', or traitors.

With Thackeray's Shiv Sena, the BJP secured 41 of 48 seats in

Maharashtra in 2019. Without Thackeray, Yadav sees a loss of 20 seats at least. Bihar is where Chief Minister Nitish Kumar quit an alliance with Lalu Yadav's party to go back for a third or fourth time to the BJP. Kumar is lampooned widely as 'dal badloo', a party hopper. The BJP and Kumar had 39 of 40 seats in Bihar last time. Yadav says they could lose 15.

Mr Modi's tally could shed 10 in today's Congress-ruled Karnataka where BJP had 26 of 28 seats in 2019. In West Bengal and the northeastern states, estimates Yadav, the BJP could be losing 10, which is at variance with Kishore's reading. In Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand where the BJP held 69 jointly, it could lose 15. The BJP could gain five seats from the cluster of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Telangana, and 10 from Andhra where it has an alliance with a local party. All told, Modi and allies at current reading could land 268, four short of majority.

Let's consider both scenarios, Modi winning

or losing. Lending weight to Yadav's estimates is Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, author of best-selling biography of Modi at the start of his Delhi sojourn. In an article last week, he said what could hurt Modi. "Reduced turnout, near absence of the famed cadre of the Sangh Parivar, lacklustre campaign of Modi, and the need to resort to ... divisive and communally polarising spiel — all suggest the Modi script of 2024 has gone awry." Despite Yadav's headcount, if Modi does go on to win cleanly then he has won a third term. What if he loses?

According to Parakala Prabhakar, author of a best-selling Modi critique and husband of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the BJP could try to steal the elections. It has too many skeletons in the cupboard waiting to tumble out. Besides, 2025 is the centenary year of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. They wouldn't want not to be in power to celebrate. Yet, analysts also claim it is the RSS that may be dragging its feet on hand-

ing a great victory to Mr Modi. The dice, says Prabhakar, is loaded and potentially spiked. "The regime has eliminated the role of the supreme court in the selection and appointment of the election commissioners. Whether the government-appointed election commissioners will do the regime's bidding is a matter of speculation or suspicion."

Mr Modi moved to freeze the bank accounts of the Congress party, crippling its putative challenger. He put two chief ministers in prison. But for the supreme court giving interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Modi regime had rendered the opposition's onslaught that much weaker.

"There is every likelihood that the present dispensation would, therefore, try to do everything to steal this election. Unlike the earlier general elections, the present election is unlikely to conclude with the conclusion of polling on June 1 and declaration of results on June 4." -- Courtesy Dawn

# Modi won't go down sans a fight

## Political merry-go-round

**Arifa Noor**

There has been far too much discussion on May 9 in the past week, making the issue as repetitive as our talk show discussions. But then, I do claim to write on politics so it is perhaps fair to bore the readers as much as the poor viewers compelled to watch television talk shows.

The week, in a way, did begin with the press conference of the DG ISPR in which he made it clear that the trials of the 'perpetrators' of May 9 were essential, while also adding that the PTI had to apologise for its role and change its behaviour.

Parts of this message were picked up by key members of the government as well. For example, Khawaja Asif, the defence minister, spoke of the trials reaching their logical conclusion, while the prime minister also promised a similar commitment.

However, the DG, as well as some members of the cabinet, mentioned dialogue with the PTI and its importance. The

former pointed out that a dialogue can only take place among political forces as it was "not appropriate for the military to be involved", according to a story in this paper. Since then, Rana Sanaullah has spoken of a grand dialogue, as did Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari who emphasised the need for parties to talk to each other.

It would require courage far more than I possess to comment on the DG ISPR's statement but little bravery is required to dissect whatever the politicians are uttering. So here goes.

While it seems the statements emanating from the 'government' side were harsh (as was the reaction from the PTI), they were also not very clear. To promise strict accountability, along with occasional hints about a crackdown on the PTI, and then asking the party to also talk to its political opponents in the larger context is a bit of a mixed message.

For instance, had a similar message come last year in the aftermath of

May 9, the PTI would perhaps have responded with eagerness. But after a year-long crackdown, which the party survived (it also contested and won an election) this offer may be a case of too little, too late.

And this is not simply because of its stubborn leader; there are two other factors to consider here: the party's workers are now in an aggressive mood but also the broad-based nature of the crackdown in KP and Punjab means that beyond power politics, the past year has turned matters into a confrontation between the state and the people.

It is a point hard to explain or argue over and over again for it's simply earned me the title of being a PTI apologist in the past year or so. But this old thought comes to mind when I come across Wusutullah Khan's sound bite: he narrates what the rickshaw wallah said to him as he travelled to the airport after attending the Asma Jahangir Conference in Lahore.

The clip is easy to find online for those who

have mastered the art of using VPN. Hence, there is little need to narrate his experience; suffice it to say that in the past six months, at least two other visitors to Lahore who hired cars or cabs recounted the same story. Or take the kind of reception Mahrang Baloch got at the conference. It wasn't just about the ovation that she received when she spoke but also the dozens who kept coming up to her to get pictures taken with her. There is a sense of shared experience when a young Lahori man comes up to this Baloch woman and speaks of his sister who is a huge fan of Mahrang.

It is this gap that needs to be bridged, especially in the wake of a controversial election and the formation of a government seen to enjoy little legitimacy. And by this I mean the gap between the ordinary people, who have suffered due to a year-long crackdown on a party, and the state.

Has the process already begun? Will it help if some of the incarcerated

are released? Or for the trials to be expedited? Or would it mean the PTI has to be given some relief, despite 'May 9'? This is for the big brains running this government. A journalist is a journalist because it is easy to point out the problems without getting into the nitty-gritty of policymaking.

This may prove necessary because it is not enough to get the PTI into parliament and talking to other parties without also appeasing public opinion — if the people continue to be angry, they might just dump the PTI and find more radical options.

This is not simply an abstract suggestion from a bleeding-heart liberal — another label increasingly being thrown my way. Though as an aside, it is well worth pointing out a confrontational situation between the people and the state is not going to allow for a coherent and effective response to the militancy problem, which is not simply festering but growing.

The economy needs work, lots of work in the form of 'reform'. But these reforms, despite what most suggest, are not technical decisions. They are inherently political. And among other factors, no unpopular government that is starting down a popular opposition is going to own difficult decisions such as taxing the traders or privatising SOEs. For both will carry the risk of further alienating yet another section of society. This may prove as true of the government as the establishment. And the latter will also have to consider the implications of similarly 'difficult' decisions such as a tax on real estate. Mere talks in themselves will not prove enough.

There will have to be concrete actions along the way too if some of the more difficult decisions are to be owned and carried out. And for this, it is not enough for the parties to cooperate in parliament; if it was, the extension given to Gen Qamar Bajwa would not be an orphan today.

## Climate justice

**Jamil Ahmad**

In the face of rising risks from climate change, calls for climate action and climate justice have grown stronger. The creation of the Loss and Damage Fund under the UN climate convention is considered an important step towards action. A request is pending before the ICJ for an opinion on states' obligations towards people on climate change.

Civil society has sought judicial assistance to compel national authorities to take swift climate action. Governments and companies have been taken to courts for inaction or failure to implement environmental agreements.

The number of cases on climate and the environment has grown over the years as the dangers associated with climate change became more ominous, with efforts to control global warming falling short of expected targets. Vulnerable communities took the lead in seeking redressal through the courts.

Two landmark cases in Asia are illustrative. In Pakistan, Asghar Leghari, a farmer, took the government to court in 2015 for not acting to combat climate change, arguing that the inaction of the authorities was against the constitutional right to life, because climate change posed a serious threat to water, food, and energy security. In the Philippines, a group of schoolchildren went to court in the 1990s pleading that deforestation harmed their fundamental rights. In both cases, the courts ruled in favour of the litigants.

The rise in climate litigation is propelled also by developments in international environmental governance and breakthroughs in the global environmental policy do-

main such as the Paris climate accord and other agreements. Once ratified, their legal injunctions and policy directions are incorporated into national legal frameworks. Failure of the parties to multilateral environmental agreements to abide by their pledges and implement measures to address climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution give justified grounds for lawsuits against the authorities, industry, and the corporate sector. A report Global Trends in Climate Change Litigation, 2023 by the London School of Economics, citing figures from databases, notes that around two-thirds of climate-centred lawsuits have been filed since 2015, when the Paris Agreement was signed.

Meanwhile, the codification of the concept of a rights-based approach to the environment has taken place in parallel. Historically, environmentalists have advocated a rights-based approach. They challenged governments in the courts and in most cases, obtained favourable decisions. Last year, Brazil's supreme court declared that the Paris Agreement was a human rights treaty, which enjoyed "supranational" status. Lately, a group of Swiss women obtained a verdict from the European Court of Human Rights that inadequate efforts by their government to control climate change was violating human rights — a ruling that can prompt similar lawsuits elsewhere.

The recognition by the UN General Assembly in July 2022 of a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right further strengthened a bottom-up, rights-based approach to the environment and climate change. It catalysed legal actions against governments for

their failure to implement climate policies and actions which exacerbated the negative impact of climate change.

According to the UNEP's Global Climate Litigation Report: 2023 Status Review, "the total number of climate change court cases has more than doubled since 2017" and is growing worldwide. The report found that the "cases mostly fell under one or more of six categories; cases relying on human rights enshrined in international law and national constitutions; challenges to domestic non-enforcement of climate-related laws and policies; litigants seeking to keep fossil fuels in the ground; advocates for greater climate disclosures and an end to greenwashing; claims addressing corporate liability and responsibility for climate harms; and claims addressing failures to adapt to the impacts of climate change".

Increased climate litigation will help climate action and ultimately climate justice. However, the extent of following up on court judgements remains limited in developing countries like Pakistan, where adjudicating on environmental issues is complex and confronts structural obstacles in the way of implementing court orders. Prompt enforcement of statutes, regulations and judicial pronouncements on climate and environment, will be enabled by incorporating the environmental dimension in all aspects of legal actions. All segments of the legal community must be equipped with the appropriate tools and information about environmental matters. A revamping of the legal architecture is a 'sine qua non' for coping with surging litigation on the environment and climate. -- Courtesy Dawn

## For a better deal

**Dr Niaz Murtaza**

As the IMF's most habitual client globally, we often get a dose of the Fund's harsh medicine. Each time, business, civil society and other groups rightly object to an IMF deal's harsh terms, but mostly after it has been struck. As an IMF team will arrive soon for a new deal, they must coordinate to influence deal talks.

Some blame our leaders but others the IMF for harsh deals. The problem starts with our governments — from Musharraf to the PTI. In their zeal to get high GDP growth, they take the faulty path of high fiscal and external deficits and money supply growth, instead of high investment, productivity and exports that require politically costly reforms. That path soon leads to high inflation and falling dollar reserves, and finally to the Fund's door. But just as doctors often mistreat serious diseases caused by bad patient habits, so does the IMF often misdiagnose and mistreat economic ills caused by state policies.

The immediate patient symptoms before the IMF are usually high inflation and falling reserves due to high twin deficits and money supply growth. To stabilise the patient, the IMF usually prescribes higher interest rates, rupee depreciation, higher taxes and cuts in state expenses. All these put a brake on GDP growth, albeit fake, and cause a huge loss of jobs and state services that hurt poor and small businesses more.

In our recent deals from 2000 to 2019, the IMF has also included issues that affect the twin deficits and money supply growth indirectly — State Bank autonomy;

state units, circular debt and power sector reform; exchange rate and tax policy; etc. Even though we were at the peak of economic crises each time and needed major stabilisation, many IMF demands were rightly criticised for their sequence, extent and precise focus.

But things now differ. Economic policy targets macroeconomic stability, growth, equity and sustainability. We already have some stabilisation from the last stand-by IMF deal. Inflation and fiscal deficit are falling; reserves are up and the rupee has been climbing for months. Thus, we need an unorthodox IMF programme. We must not raise interest rates but cut them.

The IMF wants high interest rates to treat both inflation and falling currency and reserves. True, a stable rupee has been achieved via stringent controls on dollar demand for imports, profit repatriation, etc. which are slowing GDP growth. Once these controls are ended to raise GDP growth, reserves and the rupee may fall. But this pressure must be fixed via front-loading about half of IMF flows (and back-loading the rest to ensure compliance) and dollar flows expected from multilateral and bilateral donors rather than high interest rates. This will reduce fiscal deficit and create room for GDP and job growth.

Instead of indirect taxes and development and social spending cuts, the Fund must demand non-essential defence and civilian outlays cuts and increased direct taxes on non-taxed sectors and elites. If it signs a deal without this, it would be equally culpable in burdening the poor.

Such steps will help achieve both stability and

growth. But durable growth will require more creative strategies to raise savings, investments, exports and outputs. Our savings must rise, being among the lowest regionally. This means that even for investment for domestic outputs, we often use foreign investment which creates profit repatriation liabilities without export earnings, thus raising our external deficit.

We must ideally use foreign investment for sectors that give export revenues and/or help obtain high-end technical capacities. In-crescent exports require state-capital-labor-intensive to enter the high-end export sectors. But growth policies are beyond the IMF's remit, the wrong neoliberal take being that stabilisation will automatically give growth. This raises questions. The IMF must not overdo stabilisation now, to let us follow growth policies. It must ensure equity by requiring big outlays for the poor suffering from years of stagflation.

Beyond specific IMF terms, austerity-linked Fund deals imposed since 1980s don't make sense, unlike earlier condition-free ones. Policy conditions encourage reform-averse states to adopt good policies, but they can't afford them during economic crises when IMF aid must allow counter-cyclical growth policies. Donors must proactively apply policy conditions linked to bigger aid from bilateral and multilateral donors in normal times when the roots of crises are being laid via faulty state policies. Rich states must also change their unfair global policies that choke growth in poor states. Only then can recipient states achieve stability and equitable growth. -- Courtesy Dawn



## CM chairs 7th cabinet meeting Can't allow looting of precious national resources: Maryam

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired the 7th meeting of the provincial cabinet here on Tuesday.

Advocate General briefed the cabinet members that the Constitution has made mutual consultation of the stakeholders indispensable before making important appointments. It was agreed in the meeting that the government does not believe in conflict with any institution, but undue interference in the executive authority is not acceptable.

The Cabinet approved Food Minister Bilal Yasin's proposal to constitute a ministerial committee for making important appointments after meaningful consultation with the other

stakeholders.

The Cabinet ratified Rock Salt Amended Policy 2022, and directed to form a committee to decide on rock salt mining leases. It was also decided in the Cabinet meeting to approach NAB against those responsible for corruption in the grant of Rock Salt Leases.

The CM said, "Can't allow looting of precious national resources. Illegal leases of rock salt mining should be suspended immediately." She added that do not waste even a single particle of salt, \$13 billion rock salt mineral reserves is a valuable asset of the province. "If the world can buy our salt at cheap rates and sell it at higher price after value addition, why can't we?" she questioned.

The Cabinet gave approval to extend contract of 23 employees of Policy and Strategic Planning Unit of the Primary and Secondary HealthCare Department, besides lifting a ban on recruitment against vacant posts.

The Cabinet also approved presenting before the Provincial Assembly the special, project and performance audit reports of the Punjab government and District Governments from 2016 to 2022. Approval was also accorded to the appointment of Bakht Fakh Behzad as Judicial Member and Chairperson of the Appellate Tribunal of Punjab Revenue Authority.

The Cabinet approved Punjab Government Advertisement Policy



MULTAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi addresses to media persons during Meet the Press program held at Multan press club.

## Governor resolves to forge collaboration with KP govt for masses' welfare

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Faisal Karim Kundi Tuesday reaffirmed his commitment to safeguarding the rights of the masses through collaborative efforts with the KP government.

He extended an open invitation to all political parties, stating that the doors of the Governor House KP were accessible to workers from across the political spectrum.

In "Meet the Press" program at Multan, the governor said "I assure the people of KP that I will spare no effort to ensure

that their rights are protected," adding that his intention to prevent the masses from enduring hardships stemming from political discord with the KP government.

Responding to queries regarding political difference with CM KP, the Governor emphasized his primary focus on forging coordination and collaboration with the provincial government for the welfare of the masses.

He extended a goodwill gesture to the Chief Minister of KP, inviting him to the Governor's office to prioritize the uplift of the province, and setting aside political differences.

Acknowledging his political mentors, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari.

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## Kristin Hawkins inaugurates four restored cultural heritage sites Wazir Khan Mosque

LAHORE (APP): US Consul general to Lahore Kristin Hawkins on Tuesday inaugurated four US-funded restored cultural heritage sites at the Southern-side of the Wazir Khan Mosque including the 17th century tomb of Imam Gammu, six hujras, a central pavilion and the Southeast minaret.

"Dating back to the 17th century, these structures stood as important pieces of Lahore's Mughal Heritage, but over time, neglect and development of the local neighborhood caused significant damage to the buildings," says the plaque dedicated to the citizens of Lahore and inhabitants of the Walled City from the people of the United States. These U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP-branded) cultural heritage preservation projects have been completed by the Aga Khan Foundation Cultural

Services Pakistan (AKFCP) and Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) with a funding of 200,000 dollars.

Kristin Hawkins said it is hoped that the work which has been done to restore the Wazir Khan Mosque will emerge as a strong symbol of Pakistan partnership as well as the respect the US has for the rich and diverse cultural and religious heritage of Pakistan and the respect for the people of Pakistan.

United States partnership as well as the respect the US has for the rich and diverse cultural and religious heritage of Pakistan and the respect for the people of Pakistan.

She said the Wazir Khan Mosque and Chowk area have benefited from four grants totaling approximately \$1.6 million from AFCP and the U.S. Mission Pakistan since 2002. "During my tour of this completed work today at the Wazir Khan Mosque, I had the opportunity to hear from some of the interns of the US-funded program who have participated in the cultural preservation projects here.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting with Chairman Gilgit-Baltistan Service Tribunal Mumtaz Ahmad.

## GB Govt takes steps for the well-being of Journalists: CM GB

GILGIT (APP): Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan Tuesday assured the Gilgit-Baltistan Union of Journalists that the government is taking concrete measures to address the problems faced by working journalists in the region.

While talking to a delegation of GB Union of Journalist who called on him, GB Chief Minister said a high-level committee has been formed to ensure the safety and well-being of journalists, which will submit its recommendations within the next 10 days. The committee's work has been expedited, and alternative

members have been included to replace those who were unavailable, he added.

Chairman of the Board of Investment and Member of the GB Assembly, Fatahullah Khan, and Special Assistant to the Chief Minister, Hussain Shah, have also been included in the committee to ensure that recommendations are finalized within the given time frame.

The CM expressed his commitment to resolving the issues faced by journalists in the region and saying that the govt is working to find permanent solutions to the problems faced by journalists.



LAHORE: United States (US) Consul General in Lahore Kristin K. Hawkins visit the Historical place Masjid wazir khan and the Shrine of Imam Gammu after unveiling of plaque of Conservation and Rehabilitation of Southern Side of Wazir Khan Mosque Funded by U.S Department of State and Government of the Punjab.

## Azad demands concerned quarters to nab culprits behind labourers killing in Gwadar

KHANEWAL (APP): Muhammad Abdul Khair Azad, Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee on Tuesday demanded the concerned quarters to nab culprits behind labourers killing in Gwadar.

A handful of terrorists are trying to disrupt law and order situation in the country, he said while talking to journalists after attending funeral prayer of mother of Jameel Khan Pathan, a known political and social figure, in Darul Uloom Eid Gah Kabir walla.

Expressing views on Gwadar tragedy, he said that the killing of innocent labourers in Gwadar is a conspiracy to spread fear and chaos in the country, which will not be allowed at any cost.

Regretting over brutal killing of seven people in Gwadar, he said that he is with the bereaved family in this hour of sorrow. He

demanding the concerned quarters to arrest those who are responsible for the murder of innocent labourers.

He further said that before advent of Muharram, the government must deal with such elements disrupting peace with iron hands. "We will continue efforts to promote unity among all segment of society," he said.

Maulana Muhammad Abdul Khair Azad said that for the first time in Pakistan, fasting and Eid appeared on the same day and this is an honor of the Central Royat Hilal Committee. On this occasion, Mufti Anwar Hassan, Mufti Owais Irshad, Maulana Abdullah Umar, Abdul Basir Azad, Sahibzada Syed Abdul Razaq Azad, Syed Farrukh Raza Tirmidhi, Muhammad Junaid, Khan Shehbaz and others were also present.

## Ziaul Lanjar directs SSP Sukkur to recover kidnapped child forthwith

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar while taking notice of a minor boy kidnapped in Panoaqil Mehran Colony area of the Sindh province directed the SSP Sukkur to recover him immediately.

He has also sought the details of the initial steps taken by SSP Sukkur Police.

The Minister directed the Police to take immediate action regarding the safe recovery of the child.

He said that strict action should be taken against kidnapers in collaboration with other districts of the police range.

## ANF seizes 384 kg drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover 384 kg drugs and arrested 10 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that in two different operations at Karachi Airport, 280 grams Ice and 466 grams hashish were recovered from two passengers going to Doha and Bahrain.

280 kg Ice was recovered from a container in Karachi and two accused were arrested.

36 kg hashish was recovered from an accused netted near Sultanabad in Karachi.

In two different operations near M-1 Islamabad, 37 kg hashish and 700 grams Ice were recovered from two suspects.

## Sufi singer Abida Parveen to lead Sindh Talent Hunt Program: Culture Minister

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Culture, Tourism, Antiquities and Archives Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah Tuesday said that youth of Sindh have immense potential, but they need a real platform to express their potential, which the Sindh Culture and Tourism Department will provide to them.

The world-renowned legend Abida Parveen is the ambassador of Pakistan's recognition and our ancient culture in the whole world, which is an institution herself. He expressed these views in meeting with internationally renowned Sufi singer Abida Parveen

and discussed Sindh Talent Hunt and other issues for the promotion of culture and tourism. The minister said Abida Parveen's presence in the talent hunt program will be a source of encouragement for the youth, we also try to help the new talent in Sindh to learn from a legendary artist like Abida Parveen. Her support will be no less than an honor for Sindh, he added. He also invited Abida Parveen to visit Sindh Institute of Music and Performing Art Jamshoro. The Sufi Singer Abida Parveen assured the Provincial Minister Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah.

## Jinnah House attack: ATC grants bail to 7, denies to 3

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday granted post-arrest bail to 7 accused and denied bail to three others in the Jinnah House attack case of the May 9 riots.

ATC Judge Arshad Javed heard the post-arrest bail petitions of the accused and announced the verdict upon completion of arguments by the parties.

The court allowed post-arrest bail petitions of Muhammad Tazeem, Muhammad Qaisar Kamal, Adnan Asghar Butt, Muhammad Imran, Abdul Waqar, Naem Riaz, and Tayyab Gulzar and ordered them to furnish surety bonds of Rs 100,000 each.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique addressing the participants of 3-day training session.

## CJ LHC Malik Shahzad says: LHC would provide all possible cooperation to resolve the issues faced by the bar associations

LAHORE (APP): Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan on Tuesday met with a delegation of the High Court Bar Association Bahawalpur.

The delegation was led by the president of the High Court Bar Association Bahawalpur, Sardar Abdul Basit Advocate, and it extended an invitation to the chief justice to visit the High Court Bar Association Bahawalpur soon.

The lawyers briefed the chief justice about the issues faced by the bar associations in Bahawalpur

Division and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest. They appreciated the steps taken by the chief justice for the convenience and facilitation of the lawyers and litigants and also presented suggestions for the betterment of the bar associations.

Sardar Abdul Basit Advocate, the president of the High Court Bar Association Bahawalpur, told the chief justice that the map of the new judicial complex for the District Bar Association Rahim Yar Khan had been approved

and the file had also been received by the Lahore High Court's Building Department. He requested the early release of funds for the construction of the judicial complex. The delegation informed the chief justice that the number of judges in the LHC Bahawalpur Bench was insufficient, resulting in an increase in the number of pending cases. Therefore, they requested an increase in the number of judges at the Bahawalpur Bench. Sardar Abdul Basit Advocate also suggested the nomination.



KARACHI: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami, Hafiz Naeem-ul-Rehman holding a press conference at Idara Noor-ul-Haq in the Provincial Capital.

## CECVE, PHILDAT, IRI joins hands to counter violent extremism

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (CECVE), Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) and Islamic Research Institute (IRI), International Islamic University on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to develop joint projects to strengthen local communities in preventing and countering violent extremism.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Ayaz Khan highlighted the role and efforts of CECVE for the promotion of peace and tolerance in society. "PIADAT and IRI would collaborate to develop a comprehensive programmatic strategy titled "Paigham E Pakistan", he said adding that the strategy would be based on promoting and exchanging expertise, adopting best practices and resilience-building efforts.

The MoU was signed by Chief Coordination Officer KP CECVE Dr Ayaz Khan, President PILDAT, Ahmad Bilal Mehboob, and Professor Zia Ul Haq of Islamic Research Institute (IRI) during a ceremony held at Islamabad, said a press release issued here

Workshops and community engagement would be conducted to promote peace and initiate consensus within the community where all stakeholders and participants exchange their ideas and thoughts effectively for preventing violent extremism.



KARACHI: Supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami Minority Wing take part in a rally against Israeli airstrikes and to show solidarity with Palestinian people living in Gaza, in Provincial Capital.

## KP Tourism advisor bans free accommodation for VIPs in Govt rest houses

ABBOTTABAD: The Advisor for Tourism to the Chief Minister KP Zahid Khan Zeb in response to public complaints has announced an immediate ban on the free accommodation of VIP personalities and their families in government rest houses across the province.

The Advisor aims to address concerns raised by the tourists who often struggle to find accommodation in govt

rest houses, cottages, and camping pods under the Tourism and Culture Department. Meanwhile, VIPs and their families have been availing these facilities for free, sometimes for extended periods.

Zahid Khan Zeb has also issued notifications to ensure compliance with the ban, directing all relevant authorities including the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority.



LAHORE: Members of Kashmir Students Council are holding protest demonstration to express solidarity with Kashmiri People and against unrest situation in Azad Jammu Kashmir, at Lahore press club.

## Gilani promises necessary measures to ensure development of 'Waseb'

MULTAN (APP): Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Tuesday said that he had always made relentless efforts in resolving the problems of people and would continue to serve them with the same spirit.

He pledged that he would take all necessary steps for the development of 'Waseb' and the funding for South Punjab would surely be spent on the public welfare projects.

He expressed these views while talking to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

(KP) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and different delegates who called on him at the Multan circuit House.

The Senate chairman and the KPK governor discussed matters of mutual interest.

Earlier, Gilani met different delegations led by notables of the city, including Makhdoom Syed Shamaul Shah, Haji Altaf Gara, A. D. Khan Baloch, Malik Munir Arain, Chaudhry Usman and Ali Mehdi.





ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on the matters related to Ministry of Privatisation and Privatisation Commission.

## SATRC on policy, regulation, services starts

ISLAMABAD (APP): First meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC) on Policy Regulation and Services commenced on Tuesday.

Organized by the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and hosted by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), this three-day international meeting convenes regulatory experts and policymakers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh,

Bhutan, Iran, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The meeting started with an inaugural event widely attended by industry and government stakeholders. Masanori Kondo, Secretary General of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) in his welcome address urged the delegates to actively engage in insightful discussions and commended PTA for organizing the workshop.

Dr. Khawar Siddique Khokar Member

Compliance & Enforcement PTA who is also the chair of the SATRC Working Group on Policy, Regulation, and Services (PRS) in his address, outlined the meeting's primary objective: fostering the exchange of insights, experiences, and best practices to address challenges, explore opportunities, and finalize initial steps on work items.

Chairman PTA, Major General @ Hafeez Ur Rehman in his inaugural note, underscored the

importance of regional collaboration in addressing common ICT challenges through dialogue and knowledge sharing. He highlighted the importance of learning from each other's experiences to effectively introduce new technologies and services while safeguarding consumer rights and nurturing industry growth.

Shaza Fatima, Minister of State for IT & Telecom who was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony.

## Atif Ikram says: Business community is ready to help govt in taking domestic exports to 100 billion dollars

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that Business Community is ready to help the government in taking domestic exports to 100 billion dollars. The solution to energy problems in Pakistan is necessary now and must be a business-friendly environment because without a business-

friendly environment, it will not be possible to take exports to 100 billion dollars by 2030. We demand that incentives should be given to the export industry in the budget of the new financial year. Federation President Atif Ikram Sheikh said that the Saudi business delegation's visit to Pakistan has been very positive. Investors from other countries, including Saudi Arabia, should be

invited. In the joint coordination committee meeting with China, the discussion on economic zones should be taken forward. If industries are set up in economic zones, employment opportunities will be created in the country. The government's initiatives to attract foreign investment in Pakistan are commendable. The country's economy can be improved only through investment.

## Commerce minister orders review of EDF projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Tuesday directed a thorough assessment and analysis of projects funded by the Export Development Fund (EDF) in recent years.

The directive aims to evaluate the initiatives that have bolstered export development and to identify areas for improvement, said a press release issued here.

The ministry of commerce has communicated this directive through a series of letters to various stakeholders involved in EDF-funded projects.

These letters, including one addressed to the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP), underscore the

need for detailed progress reports and updates on specific projects.

Among the highlighted projects are REAP's projects, Child Labour Elimination, Program in Soccer Ball Industries of Sialkot, Placement of hi-Scan E-ray Inspection System at Sialkot International Airport, Italy-Pakistan Technological Center, Sports Goods Training and Facility Center at Sialkot, Sialkot Tanneries Zone, Cutlery Institute of Pakistan, Wazirabad, Export Development Training Program in Ready Garments and Knitwear Industry and others.

The letters demand comprehensive information on these projects to be submitted within three weeks.



BEIJING: Executive Vice President of China Three Gorges Corporation (CTG) and Chairman of China Three Gorges International Limited (CTGI) Wu Shengliang called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

## Dar meets CTGI chairman; highlights FDI opportunities in Pakistan

BEIJING (APP): Executive Vice President of China Three Gorges Corporation (CTG) and Chairman of China Three Gorges International Limited (CTGI) Wu Shengliang called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here on Tuesday.

The deputy prime minister, who is on a four-day visit to China, highlighted Government of Pakistan's reform agenda and shared an overview of the opportunities for foreign direct investment (FDI) in Pakistan, especially in infrastructure development and renewable energy sectors.

He appreciated the renewable energy projects of CTG in Pakistan, including in Karot and Jhimpir that serve as model projects.

Dar noted renewable energy as one of the priority sectors identified by the incumbent government in Pakistan, along with the incentives offered to international investors in this regard.

Chairman CTGI reaffirmed CTG's continued commitment to Pakistan and expressed his determination to expedite completion of the in-progress projects like Kohala and Mahi Hydro Power Projects, in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

## OGRA raids petrol pump on complaints of mixing impurities

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): A joint team of Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) and local administration raided a petrol pump on complaints of mixing impurities in petrol and sealed its storage after collecting the samples for analysis.

The OGRA team headed by its Joint Director Muhammad Iqbal accompanying District Officer Industries Muhammad Ghazi Khan, civil defense officer, Customs and Pakistan State Oil (PSO) officials raided a petrol pump at Mahmood Kot road. Officials collected samples of presumed impure petrol.



HYDERABAD: A customer selecting and purchasing solar panel from vendor during summer season at Station Road.

## Azerbaijan envoy visits PCST&I; emphasizes on increasing import, exports

PESHAWAR (APP): Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov along with his spouse on Tuesday visited Peshawar Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry (PCST&I) and inaugurated the new building of the chamber.

Upon his arrival the former governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali and group leader Malik Maher Elahi welcomed the delegation and discussed bilateral trade.

Speaking on the occasion the ambassador said that very soon informative visits would be arranged for business communities of the two countries, adding that this was the best time to increase and promote import and export between

the two-country.

He said that a business expo would be arranged in Azerbaijan in November this year where the Pakistani businessmen could explore the potential of investment and trade.

Khazar Farhadov said that Azerbaijan had made visa acquisition very easy for Pakistanis because the government and people of Azerbaijan give special love and respect to the people of Pakistan.

On the occasion, the former KP governor Ghulam Ali expressed gratitude to the business community of Azerbaijan for their love and support and said that indeed the exchange of business delegation between the two countries would strengthen the bilateral ties.

## Barkwa advocates cultivating barren lands to boost agri production

PESHAWAR (APP): Minister for Agriculture, Major (Retd) Sajjad Barkwa, chaired a meeting of the Agriculture Department on Tuesday to discuss the schemes of ADP, AIP, and PSDP for the financial year 2024-25.

The minister received a detailed briefing on both new and ongoing schemes.

He directed the authorities concerned to cultivate barren lands to boost the province's agricultural production.

He stressed the importance of solarizing tube wells in agricultural lands and identifying suitable areas for saffron cultivation to enhance its production. Practical measures were also ordered to increase olive production.

The minister further instructed the relevant authorities to expedite work on ongoing projects and provide maximum facilities to landowners.

## KP Minister launches online wheat procurement App for farmers, suppliers

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru, announced on Tuesday the launch of an online app for wheat procurement aimed at facilitating farmers and suppliers.

The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has introduced this online app to streamline services for local and provincial farmers and suppliers.

In a video statement, Minister Zahir Shah Toru highlighted that farmers and suppliers can now input information about their available wheat through the app, ultimately aiding the Food Department in its operations.

The online app encompasses all necessary features for wheat procurement, and priority will be given to farmers and suppliers meeting the standards set by the Food Department. Minister Toru emphasized that starting from May 18, wheat procurement will be conducted from those who adhere to SOPs and provide standard wheat.

He mentioned that wheat procurement from local farmers within the province will take place from May 7 to 17. He assured that transparency and merit will be upheld throughout the wheat procurement process.

Shahid Rasheed says: PM restored confidence of lenders, int'l institutions

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has successfully regained the confidence of the lenders and other international institutions.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, he said that under PM's guidance, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb would successfully negotiate a new contract with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which would positively impact the economy.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the Finance Minister's resolve to sell state-owned firms was commendable, as it would help save trillions of wasted rupees to keep these companies artificially alive. The country was saved from bankruptcy due to the Prime Minister's efforts, and now the confidence of the international institutions has been restored, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Muhammad Alyas Khan and Sardar Yasir Alyas Khan, CEOs of Tamimi Group and Centaurs Mall, respectively calls on Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan to discuss strategies for boosting trade.

## Easypaisa partners with IGI Life & IGI General to enhance insurance-based offerings

ISLAMABAD (APP): The easypaisa has signed an agreement with IGI Life and IGI General, laying the foundation for digital distribution of various insurance-based products, ensuring provision of ease and convenience to millions of Pakistanis.

The signing ceremony was attended by senior management of Telenor Microfinance Bank (TMB)/easypaisa & IGI General & IGI Life, said a press release.

As part of the collaboration with IGI Life, easypaisa users will be able to avail vitality rewards, providing weekly

rewards based on customer activity and health status, monitored through the Vitality App connected to their smartwatches, along with natural death cover ranging from Rs 500,000 to Rs 2,000,000. Addressing the ceremony Kashif Ahmed, Acting President & CEO, TMB said that transformative partnership underscores the unwavering dedication to elevating every facet of the customer journey for the insurance-based product offerings, symbolizing our relentless pursuit of seamless convenience and unparalleled user experience.

## Gold rates dip by Rs 1200 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1200 and was sold at Rs 241,100 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs 242,300 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 943 to Rs 206,790 from Rs 207,733 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 189,479 from Rs 190,422, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,650 and Rs 2,271.94 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$12 to \$2,337 from \$2,349.



ISLAMABAD: A labourer busy in loading sugarcane on vehicle at Vegetable and Fruit Market.

## Mangla Refurbishment project to add additional 310 MW electricity to national grid

ISLAMABAD (APP): The power generation capacity of Mangla Hydel Power Station will increase from 1000 megawatts (MW) to 1310 MW after the completion of the Mangla Refurbishment Project.

Sources told APP here that after the completion of the project, the average annual generation will also jump from 5 billion units to 6.6 billion units.

Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) is executing the project with an approved PC-I cost of Rs.52.224 billion. USAID is providing US\$150 million as a grant and AFD France is providing Euro 90 million

as a loan for the project, while the rest of the amount is being arranged by WAPDA through loans and from its resources, they said.

The Project is being carried out in various phases, wherein the generating units are to be refurbished by closing down one tunnel (two generating units) at a time. Refurbishment of the first two units had already been completed in 2022, while refurbishment of all 10 generating units is likely to be accomplished by the year 2027-28 in a phased manner.

Meanwhile, WAPDA has also awarded contract Package III C amounting to \$6.28729 million.

## PSX stays bullish, gains 732.08 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 732.08 points, a positive change of 0.9p percent, closing at 73,531.19 points against 73,799.11 points the previous trading day.

A total of 574,182,210 shares valuing Rs 23,425 billion were traded during the day as compared to 721,597,885 shares valuing Rs 25,649 billion the last day.

Some 387 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 189 of them recorded gains and 178 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 20 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Nerygicco PK with 35,483,501 shares at Rs 4.63 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 29,894,985 shares at Rs 1.44 per share and K-Electric with 28,167,436 shares at Rs 4.64 per share.

Ismail Industries Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 96.28 per share price closing at Rs 1,385.57.

## LESCO collects over Rs 4.53m from 110 defaulters in 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has recovered more than Rs 4.53 million from 110 dead defaulters in all the five districts - Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara - on the 220th day of its recovery campaign.

LESCO spokesman told media here Tuesday that on the 220th day, SE (Superintending Engineer) Nisar Sarwar has recovered outstanding dues of Rs 0.64 million from 18 defaulters

in Northern Circle; SE Umar Bilal recovered Rs 0.87 million from 26 defaulters in Eastern Circle; SE (Central Circle) recovered Rs 0.86 million from 22 defaulters; SE (South Circle) collected Rs 0.21 million from 04 defaulters; SE (Nankana Circle) recovered Rs 0.37 million from 12 defaulters; SE Najamul Hassan recovered Rs 0.51 million from 09 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle; SE Jamshed Zaman collected Rs 0.49 million.

## Acting President FCCI says: Environment protection is collective responsibility

FAISALABAD (APP): Environment protection is a collective responsibility and the FCCI and other concerned departments must make joint efforts to achieve this objective, said Dr Sajjad Arshad Acting President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI).

He was talking to a delegation of the Environment Protection Department (EPD) during a meeting in his office here on Tuesday. Shakeel Ahmad Ansari Chairman Sizing Association was also

present on the occasion.

Dr Sajjad Arshad said that prior to the new legislation, the powers of de-sealing boilers and imposing fines on polluting industries were rested with the concerned Deputy Commissioner but now these powers had been transferred to the judicial environment commission. This situation was problematic for the industrial sector as they had to repeatedly visit to Lahore for de-sealing their boilers which add additional financial burden on them.

## SAU to assist PBS in digital agricultural census

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Agriculture University will assist the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) in conducting the digital census of the agriculture sector, experts and students from the university will jointly provide awareness services. According to spokesman of the University, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics will commence the 7th agricultural census.



KARACHI: Chairperson National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC) Gulmina Bilal Ahmad and President Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh Signing MoU during Ceremony Between (NAVTC) and (KCCI) at KCCI.



# Israel pushes into north, south Gaza as toll surpasses 35,000

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: The death toll from Israel's military offensive on Gaza since Oct 7 has crossed 35,000, according to the health ministry, as Israel's forces pushed further into north and south corners of the besieged enclave for fresh assault.

In a statement on Monday, the Gaza health ministry put the death toll at 35,091, with 57 killed in the past 24 hours.

Israeli forces pushed deep into the ruins of Gaza's northern edge on Monday to recapture an area where they claimed to have dismantled Hamas months ago, while in the south, tanks and troops pushed across a highway into Rafah.

Israeli operations in

Rafah, which borders Egypt, have closed a main crossing point for aid, which humanitarian groups say is worsening an already dire situation.

Gaza's health authority on Monday appealed for international pressure to reopen access via the southern border to allow in aid and medical supplies. "The wounded and sick suffer a slow death because there is no treatment and supplies and they cannot travel," it said.

In northern Gaza's Jabalia camp, residents fled along rubble-strewn streets carrying bags of belongings. Tank shells landed in the centre of the camp and airstrikes destroyed clusters of houses, they said. Health officials said they had recovered 20 bodies of

Palestinians killed in overnight airstrikes.

"We don't know where to go. We have been displaced from one place to the next... We are running in the streets. I saw it with my own eyes. I saw the tank and the bulldozer. It is on that street," said one woman, who did not give her name. Attending a Memorial Day ceremony to mark Israel's fallen soldiers in Jerusalem on Monday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the war against Hamas is a struggle to secure Israel's "existence, liberty, security and prosperity." In Rafah, Israel stepped up aerial and ground bombardments on the eastern areas of the city, killing people in an airstrike on a house.



**Palestinians carry the dead body of a child recovered from under the rubble of a house hit in an Israeli strike, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.**

## Turkey says to apply to intervene in ICJ genocide case against Israel

**Monitoring Desk**  
KHARKIV: Two teachers met them with a smile at the steel door, and down the concrete staircase the mother and daughter clattered, hand in hand, through another blast door and into the bunker for the first day of school.

Hundreds of children began lessons this week in Ukraine's first purpose-built bunker school, 6 metres (20 feet) below the ground to protect them from Russian drone and missile attacks.

Kharkiv's primary

school 155 is reached through a door in a small white concrete box on the pavement. At the bottom of the stairs classrooms branch off a corridor. There are no windows, but the rooms are brightly lit and the hallways painted in white and lime green.

Ukraine's second-biggest city, located in the country's northeast near the Russian border, has been under relentless Russian attack since Moscow's invasion was halted at its ramparts 26 months ago.

## US ban on Russian-enriched uranium imports begins Aug 11

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: A US ban on imports of enriched uranium from Russia will take effect on Aug. 11, the Department of Energy said on Tuesday. The ban, signed into law by President Joe Biden on Monday, allows waivers in case nuclear power plants have supply issues. The waivers will end on or before Jan 1, 2028.

It was the latest move by Washington aimed at reducing revenues available to Russian President Vladimir Putin to fight the war in Ukraine.

## Melinda to leave Gates Foundation, receive \$12.5bn

**Monitoring Desk**  
LOS ANGELES: Melinda French Gates on Monday announced she was leaving the mega philanthropy foundation which she established with her ex-husband (the co-founder of Microsoft), Bill Gates.

The resignation, which will come into effect on June 7, will leave Bill Gates as the sole chair of one of the world's most influential and powerful non-governmental organisations.

"After careful thought and reflection, I have decided to resign from my role as co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation," Melinda French Gates, wrote in a statement, shared on social media.

## White House does not see Gaza killings as genocide

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on Monday that President Joe Biden's administration did not view the killings of Palestinians in Gaza by Israel as genocide.

Sullivan, speaking to reporters at the White House, said the United States wants to see Hamas defeated, that Palestinians facing the brunt of Israeli onslaught were in "hell", and that a major military operation by Israel in Rafah would be a mistake.

"We do not believe what is happening in Gaza is a genocide. We have been firmly on record rejecting that proposition," Sullivan said.

Biden, who is running for re-election this year, has faced heavy criticism from his own supporters domestically for his support of Israel; some of those critics have accused Israel of committing genocide.

Reiterating a comment Biden made on Saturday, Sullivan said there could be a ceasefire in Gaza now if Hamas would release prisoners.

The world should be calling on Hamas to return to the negotiating table and accept a deal, Sullivan said.

The United States is working urgently for a ceasefire and prisoner release deal, Sullivan said. He said he could not predict when or if such a deal would be sealed.

## Belousov says Russia must win in Ukraine while minimising casualties

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russia's main task is to achieve victory on the battlefield in Ukraine with the minimal loss of troops, incoming defence minister Andrei Belousov said on Tuesday.

Belousov, an economist whom President Vladimir Putin unexpectedly nominated on Sunday to replace Sergei Shoigu, said the military sector needed more efficiency and innovation in order to achieve its goals. "The key task, of course, remains achieving victory. Ensuring the achievement of the military-political goals of the special military operation, set by the president. At the same time - I want to specifically emphasise this - with minimal human losses," he told a parliamentary hearing.

His comments were striking because Russian officials rarely discuss ca-

sualties in the war except to praise the heroism of fallen soldiers.

Neither Russia nor Ukraine publishes details of their dead and wounded. But Western military analysts say Russia, with a population more than three times larger than Ukraine's, has shown itself much more willing to incur heavy casualties for the sake of even incremental gains. Russian officials say such analysis, as it comes from the West, is neither objective nor accurate. Belousov presented himself as a man of integrity, telling parliamentarians: "I have always been, and will be, guided by the reinforced concrete principle 'You can make mistakes (but) you can't lie.'" Belousov, who has no military experience, has been tasked by Putin with maximising efficiencies in Russia's war economy as its troops.

## Blinken says US arms to make difference in Ukraine amid new Russian offensive

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Tuesday that American military aid to its way to Ukraine will make a "real difference" on the battlefield, as the top diplomat made an unannounced visit to reassure an ally facing a fierce new Russian offensive.

In increasingly intense attacks along the northeastern border in recent days, Moscow's troops have captured around 100 to 125 square kilometers (about 40 to 50 square miles) of territory that includes at least seven villages, according to open source monitoring analysts. Though most of those villages were already depopulated, thousands of civilians in the area have fled the fighting.

Analysts have called this moment one of the most dangerous for Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 — and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy asked Tuesday for more air defense systems to protect civilians under Russian fire in the northeast.

"We know this is a challenging time," Blinken said in the Ukrainian capital where he met with Zelenskyy. But he added that American military aid is "going to make a real difference against the ongoing Russian aggression on the battlefield."

The visit comes less than a month after Congress approved a long-delayed foreign assistance package that sets aside \$60 billion in aid for Ukraine, much of which will go toward replenishing badly depleted artillery and air defense systems. US special operations leaders are having to do more with less and learning from the war in Ukraine. Some of that "is now on the way," Blinken said, and some has already arrived in Ukraine. Moscow's renewed offensive in the northeastern region of Kharkiv is the most significant border incursion since the early days of the war.

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## Brazil's flooded south paralyzed as rivers swell, again

**Monitoring Desk**  
CANOAS: Rivers in south Brazil rose anew Monday as flood rescue efforts intensified and President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva conceded authorities had not been "prepared" for a disaster of such magnitude.

More than 600,000 people have been displaced by heavy rains, flooding and mudslides that have ravaged the southern Rio Grande do Sul state for about two weeks.

At least 147 people have been killed and more than 800 injured in the deluge, and rescuers searched Monday in boats and on jet skis for 127 people reported missing.

Hundreds of cities and towns and part of the regional capital Porto Alegre—a bustling city of 1.4 million inhabitants—have been under water for days, with streets turned into waterways.

"It is a catastrophe for which we were not prepared," Lula said in a conference call with Finance Minister Fernando Haddad and Rio Grande do Sul Governor Eduardo Leite.

The state remained paralyzed Monday, with some 360,000 pupils not in school, the international airport shuttered, and numerous roads and bridges impassable. Many farms were also underwater in a region that supplies more than two-thirds of the rice consumed in Brazil. The federal government has said it would import 200,000 tons of rice to guarantee supplies and prevent price speculation.

Some 80,000 people have found refuge in schools, sports clubs and other buildings transformed into makeshift shelters.

The floods are the latest weather extreme to hit Brazil, following record-breaking forest fires, unprecedented heat waves and drought. The government and experts have blamed the El Nino weather phenomenon, exacerbated by climate change. Rains eased on Monday, but fresh downpours over the weekend caused rivers to swell once again. "It is not the moment to return to homes in risk zones," Leite urged residents of affected areas on Monday.



**US Secretary of State Antony Blinken watches Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy greet US Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink prior to their meeting in Kyiv.**

## Singapore's incoming PM makes minor cabinet reshuffle, seeks 'continuity and stability'

**Monitoring Desk**  
SINGAPORE: Singapore's incoming prime minister Lawrence Wong appointed a new deputy premier in a minor reshuffle of the cabinet on Monday, as he gears up to become the city-state's fourth leader since its independence six decades ago.

Trade Minister Gan Kim Yong was given the additional role of deputy prime minister, one of two in Wong's cabinet, according to the prime minister's office. Gan, 65, will also take Wong's job as chair of the board of the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), the central bank said.

Wong will retain the finance portfolio and takes over on Wednesday from 72-year-old Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Lee, the son of the founding father of modern Singapore Lee Kuan Yew, will remain in cabinet as senior minister, in accordance with tradition.

"Continuity and stability are key considerations, especially as we are approaching the end of this term of government," Wong told a press conference attended by local media.

The reshuffle was minor and included the promotion of several junior ministers plus the appointment of two parliamentary backbenchers to junior ministerial positions.

Singapore must hold its next general election by November 2025, at which Wong will lead the People's Action Party (PAP), which has ruled the wealthy city-state since 1959.

## Clashes break out in Afghanistan over poppy crop clearing

**Monitoring Desk**  
FAIZABAD: Clashes broke out on Monday between Taliban forces tasked with clearing poppy crops and farmers in Afghanistan's northeastern Badakhshan province, residents said. Poppy cultivators threw rocks and demanded Taliban security units not destroy their crops, said Jamaluddin, a resident of Barlas Shalmar village in the Argo district of Badakhshan whose name has been changed for security reasons.

In response, Taliban authorities fired their guns to disperse villagers, Jamaluddin, who witnessed the incident, said. A nurse at a medical facility in Argo said the clinic received "two dead and nine wounded people" from the Barlas area — a string of three neighbouring villages. A statement from the Taliban's army unit in Badakhshan said there had been protests to prevent poppy clearing in Argo.

## Former Kazakh minister gets 24 years in prison for murdering wife

**Monitoring Desk**  
ASTANA: A former economy minister of Kazakhstan was sentenced to 24 years in prison on Monday for murdering his wife following a widely watched trial that some saw as a litmus test of the president's promise to strengthen women's rights.

Kuandyk Bishimbayev, 44, was found guilty of torture and murder by the court.

His trial, which has been broadcast live over the past seven weeks, has been widely regarded as an attempt by the authorities to send a message that members of the elite are no longer above the law. CCTV footage played during the trial showed Bishimbayev repeatedly punching and kicking his wife.

## Poland to boost intelligence spending due to Russian threat

**Monitoring Desk**  
WARSAW: Poland will allocate an additional 100 million zlotys (\$25.30 million) to boost its intelligence services, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on Tuesday, as he warned of a rising threat from Russia.

Poland says its place as a distribution hub for supplies to Ukraine has made it a key target for Moscow's intelligence services, fears that were exacerbated last week when a judge who had access to military secrets defected to Russian ally Belarus.

"I decided to allocate 100 million zlotys from my reserve, the reserve of the prime minister, to strengthen the internal security and intelligence agencies," Tusk told a news conference.

He said that Russian efforts to destabilise Euro-

pean countries, particularly Poland and the Baltic states, were set to intensify in the run-up to European elections in June.

"We will have to invest more resources, time, more actions when it comes to our special services," he said.

However, he said that there was as yet nothing to indicate that several large fires in Poland in recent days were the work of external forces.

Nevertheless, he said that Polish services had prevented several sabotage attempts.

"In the last dozen or so weeks, also thanks to the support of our allies, Poland thwarted attempts to commit sabotage and arson," he said.

Tusk added that Poland was likely to get EU funds to help strengthen its border with Belarus.

## Modi files candidacy for parliamentary seat in India's election in holy city Varanasi

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Cheering crowds greeted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday as he submitted his candidacy for a Hindu holy city's parliamentary seat in a general election his party is strongly favoured to win.

Modi remains roundly popular in India, in large part due to his cultivated image as an aggressive champion of the country's majority faith.

Varanasi is the spiritual capital of Hinduism, where devotees from around India come to create deceased loved ones by the Ganges river, and the premier has represented the

city since sweeping to power a decade ago.

"I swear on God... I will have faith and allegiance to India's constitution," Modi said before handing over the paperwork to an election registrar, flanked by a Hindu mystic dressed in a loinloth. Hundreds of supporters had gathered to applaud Modi outside the local government office where he lodged his nomination, at the end of a two-day campaign stop packed with numerous public displays of worship. "It's our good fortune that Modi represents our constituency of Varanasi," devout Hindu Jitendra Singh Kumar, a 52-year-old farmer.



**Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves to supporters after filing his nomination papers to contest the parliamentary seat in Varanasi.**

## Indonesia's Mt Ibu erupts, spewing ash clouds

**Monitoring Desk**  
JAKARTA: Indonesia's Ibu volcano erupted on Monday morning, spewing thick columns of grey ash several kilometres into the sky, the country's volcanology agency said.

The volcano on the remote island of Halmahera erupted at 9.12 am (0012 GMT) for about five minutes, projecting ash into the sky as high as 5 km (3.1 miles), officials said.

A smaller eruption was also recorded on Friday.

The alert status of the volcano remains at the second-highest level, Hendra Gunawan, head of

Indonesia's Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation Centre, said in a statement.

All activities within a five-kilometre radius of the volcano were prohibited, he added.

"If it starts to rain ash, we recommend people who are near the volcano to wear a mask and glasses," Hendra said.

Footage of the eruption shared by the centre showed clouds of grey ash billowing from the crater. The official said a booming noise was also heard.

No evacuation of residents has been reported so far.

## Chinese COVID whistleblower due for release after 4 years in jail

**Monitoring Desk**  
CHINA: Authorities in China were expected on Monday to release a citizen journalist jailed for four years after she documented the early phases of the coronavirus outbreak from the central city of Wuhan in 2020.

Zhang Zhan, 40, had travelled to Wuhan in early 2020 from Shanghai where she was based, posting first-hand accounts from crowded hospitals and empty streets that painted a more dire picture of the pandemic than the official

narrative.

After several months of reporting that included videos, she was detained in May 2020.

She went on hunger strike in late June, court documents seen by Reuters said, prompting police to strap her hands and force-feed her with a tube, her lawyers said at the time.

In December 2020 she was convicted by a Shanghai court of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" and sentenced to four years imprisonment.

## Putin to visit China May 16-17, Kremlin says

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit China on May 16-17, his first foreign trip since his inauguration for a new term as president, the Kremlin said on Tuesday.

"At the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin will pay a state visit to China on May 16-17 as his first foreign trip after taking office," the Kremlin said.

Putin and Xi "will discuss in detail the entire range of issues of the comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation, identify key areas for further development of Russian-Chinese practical cooperation."

## Strong earthquake strikes near Mexico-Guatemala border

**Monitoring Desk**  
MEXICO CITY: A magnitude 6.4 earthquake struck near the coast of Chiapas in Mexico on Sunday morning, the United States Geological Survey said.

The quake was at a depth of 75 km (46.6 miles), the USGS said. Mexico's national civil protection agency reported on social media that it was monitoring the situation but that there were no initial reports of damage. In Guatemala, where the quake could be felt in the capital of Guatemala City.



**Demonstrators take part in a rally to protest against a bill on "foreign agents" in Tbilisi, Georgia.**



# President assures support to provinces for Green Pakistan Initiative

RAWALPINDI (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday visited the Green Pakistan Initiative Headquarters where he was given a detailed briefing about the Initiative, Land Information and Management System operations.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari were also present on the occasion, the President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The president was briefed about the improved water irrigation system based on modern patterns. A briefing was also given over agriculture, dredging of canals, IT-based operations and effective irrigation water system under the Green Pakistan Initiative.

The president was also apprised of the concepts of model agri-farms and agricultural smart farms operations to facilitate the farmers' community for progress of the agriculture sector.

President Zardari appreciated the working of Green Pakistan Initiative and Land Information and Management System under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

While lauding the team of Green Pakistan Initiative, he stressed upon working with equal zeal for the national and economic development of the country.

For the bright future of Pakistan, the president also assured complete co-operation of all the provinces for achieving the objectives of Green Pakistan Initiative.



RAWALPINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari in a group photo with officials of the Green Pakistan Initiative during his visit to its headquarters

## Governor Balochistan meets Sardar Ayaz: Parliament determined to play role for development of Balochistan: Speaker NA

ISLAMABAD: The Speaker of National Assembly, Sardar Muhammad Ayaz Sadiq has stated development of Balochistan is actually development of Pakistan and as such the Parliament is determined to play its role for development of the province and welfare of its people.

The Speaker of National Assembly was speaking to the Governor who called on him at the Parliament House, Islamabad on Tuesday.

During the course of meeting, they discussed about the overall economic and political situation besides the matters of mutual interests.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq greeted Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail on assuming the office of Governor.

He also expressed best wishes for the Governor Balochistan.

He expressed the hope that Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail would play his constitutional role for strengthening further the relations between the federation and the provinces in befitting manner.

The Governor thanked the Speaker National Assembly for expressing best wishes for him.

He also applauded his role for running the proceedings of National Assembly in an impartial manner.

Both the leaders pledged to play their wholehearted part for sustainable development and prosperity of the country.

## Announces to visit Muzaffarabad PM expresses deep grief over loss of lives in AJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday expressed his deep grief and sorrow over loss of lives during the protest incidents in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and announced that he would visit Muzaffarabad within few days to hold further consultations over the issue.

Addressing the participants of the federal cabinet meeting, the prime minister said that it was a matter of immense pain that few people lost their lives during the protest, besides damage caused to buildings.

"It was a very unfortunate incident," he said, adding that a police officer also lost his life, besides a number of personnel of law enforcement agencies were also hurt.

The prime minister and the members of the cabinet also offered Fataha for the departed souls.

The prime minister emphasized that maintaining law and order in the country was a priority so that the country could move on path of progress and prosperity. "Azad Jammu and Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan as declared by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah," he added.

The prime minister further said that he held meetings on the AJK issue and thanked President Asif Ali Zardari, political leaders of the allied parties, leaders of AJK chapter, AJK leadership and parliamentarians for their support.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House.

## Bugti, Langove flay terrorism incident in Sui: Fresh wave of terrorism to be defeated as well, asserts Chief Minister

Minister Home seeks report of incident of killing of Allah Rakhia from ACS; directs to arrest culprits

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Azam Nazeer Tarar, said on Tuesday in the National Assembly that a comprehensive uniform policy is being implemented to address power pilferage nationwide.

Responding to Asad Qaiser, he highlighted that under this policy, increased load shedding is being applied to feeders with high levels of power theft.

He said that curbing power pilferage is crucial to mitigate the circular debt issue. He further mentioned that the government has initiated a campaign against power theft, resulting in the recovery of billions of rupees. He said that significant progress has been made in border management at Chaman through new mechanisms. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to resolving issues faced by the people at the Chaman border. He said that the public has elected representatives to advocate for their concerns and formulate solutions within parliament.

He appreciated the Italian Defence Industrial potential and its ability to address needs of the Pakistani defence forces.

Lieutenant General @ Muhammad Chiragh Haider also emphasized that Pakistan had a lot of potential in the fields of energy and defence production with the possibility of joint ventures which needs to be explored. Both the sides stressed on the need to have a regular exchange of high-level visits between both countries.

He said that the government has declared an education emergency to enroll out-of-school children in educational institutions.

Regarding transportation, he said that in addition to existing school and college bus services, the ministry plans to deploy 20 buses from urban to rural areas specifically for girl students and female teachers from both public and private schools.

He said that the government has consistently manifested its commitment to the Charter's vision of preventing war and promoting peace; fostering global prosperity; and promoting universal respect for human rights, Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said during a debate on the forthcoming

election to the 15-member Council, organized by the World Federation of UN Associations (WFUNA) at the UN headquarters in New York on Monday. Founded in 1946 as a Federation of national associations, WFUNA works to promote the values of the UN Charter, defend multilateralism, and raise awareness on the main pillars of work of the United Nations—peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights. "If elected to the Council, Pakistan will continue its efforts in the same vein to promote a peaceful and equitable world order that responds to the needs and priorities of all nations," the Pakistani envoy said in presenting Islamabad's vision and priorities as a Security Council member.

## US warns of sanctions after India-Iran Chabahar Port pact

WASHINGTON (APP): Hours after India signed a 10-year contract to operate Iran's Chabahar port, the US warned that its sanctions on Tehran remain in place and "anyone" considering business deals with the Islamic Republic needs to be "aware of the potential risk". At the same time, the State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson, Vedant Patel, said that it will let the Indian government speak on its foreign policy goals.

"I will let the government of India speak to its own foreign policy goals vis-à-vis the Chabahar port as well as its own bilateral relationship with Iran," Patel said in the department's daily press briefing on Monday.

"We are aware of these reports that Iran and India have signed a deal concerning the Chabahar Port," Patel said in response to a question.

In collaboration with Indus Hospital Network: GoB decides to initiate Chief Minister initiative of Health on Wheels in Balochistan

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti here on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the delegation of Indus Hospital briefed the Chief Minister about the proposal of CM Initiative of Health on Wheels in the province.

The CM Initiative of Health on Wheel service would be started from the native district of Chief Minister (Dera Bugti) in collaboration with the Indus Hospital.

The decision to this effect was made during meeting of a delegation of Indus Hospital with the management of Indus Hospital.

He directed to start the Health on Wheel initiative from his native area, Baikar.

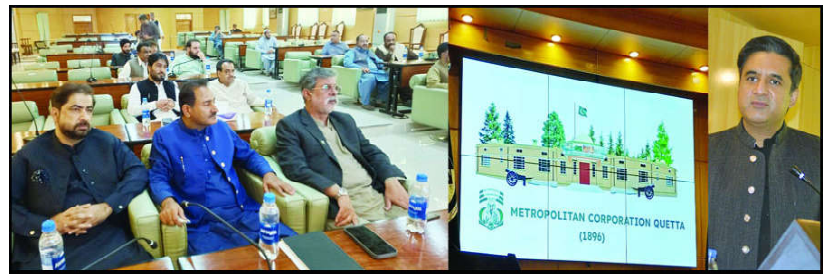
Meanwhile, the Indus Hospital delegation also briefed the Chief Minister about upgradation of the GDA Hospital in Gwadar.

The Chief Minister also directed to remove the hurdles in making the Pak-China Friendship Hospital operational for the patients in Gwadar.

The Hospital, it may be mentioned here, has been established with assistance of Chinese government.



QUETTA: Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazla Gola, Provincial Advisor Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi and MPA Shahnaz Umrani talking with Provincial Minister Mir Asim Kurd Gailo after BA session.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta and Administrator Metropolitan Corporation Quetta Hamza Shafiqat briefing Provincial Minister for Local Bodies and Rural Development Sardar Sarfaraz Chakar Domki about MCQ

## Nazeer Tarar says: Uniform policy pursued to combat power pilferage

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## Pakistan Coast Guard takes action against anti-narcotics, smuggling

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Coast Guard took action against anti-narcotics and smuggling, on the instructions of Interior Minister and Anti-Narcotics Mohsin Naqvi.

According to the press release issued on Tuesday a huge amount of contraband was seized during special operation of Pakistan Coast Guards on the coastline. During the operation, 12,970 kg of supari, 3,049 packets of gutka mix, 1,524 packets of cigarettes, 1,543 kg of cloth mix, and 206 bundles of net cloth, dairy and bakery products, grocery items, dry fruits, makeup accessories, cooking oil, crockery, electronic devices, speed boats, various vehicles, engine oil, Iranian petrol and diesel were seized.



QUETTA: Provincial Food Minister Haji Noor Muhammad Dummar meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

## Bureaucracy continues to be reshuffled Secretaries of various departments transferred

Independent Report QUETTA: The reshuffling of senior civil bureaucracy of Balochistan province is continued as administrative secretaries of different provincial government departments were replaced giving them new postings.

According to an official notification issued here by the Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD), the senior officer of Balochistan Civil Service, Kambar Dashti (BS-21), serving as the Secretary Communication and Works (C&W) Department, has been transferred and posted as the senior Member Board of Revenue with immediate effect.

Similarly, the senior officer of Balochistan Secretariat Service (BS-21), posted as the Secretary Excise Taxation and Anti-Narcotics, has been transferred and posted as the Secretary Forests and Wildlife.

Similarly, the officer of BCS, Muhammad Hayat Kakar (BS-20), serving as Member Chief Minister Inspection Team, has been posted as the Secretary Transport Department.

Moreover, the BCS officer, Lal Jan Jaffar (BS-20), serving as Secretary (Planning) Planning and Development Department, has been posted as the Secretary C&W Department while the BSS officer, Imran Gichki (BS-20), posted as the Secretary Fisheries and Coastal Development, has been transferred and posted as Secretary PHE Department and the BCS officer, Javed Anwar Shahwani (BS-20) serving as the Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs has been transferred and posted as the Secretary Fisheries and Coastal Development.

Besides them, the BCS officer, Yasir Khan (BS-20) serving as Secretary Transporter and the BSS officer, Abdul Wali Kakar (BS-20), posted as the Secretary PHE, have been directed to report in the S&GAD.



QUETTA: Opposition leader Mir Younis Aziz Zehri, MPAs Mir Ghulam Dastagir Badimi, Fzai Qadir, Asghar Ali Tareen, Naqem Khan Bazai, Syed Zafar Agha, Dr. Nawaz Kibzai and Mir Asadullah Baloch meeting with Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani.

## Italian Defence Secretary General calls on Secretary Defence Production

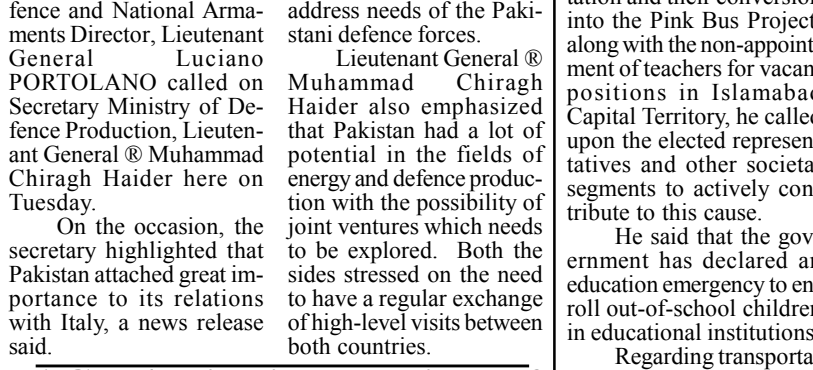
ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and National Central Bureau (NCB)-Interpol Pakistan has achieved significant milestones in combating transnational crime, says the six-month performance report issued on Tuesday.

During the last six months, a total of 66 accused wanted for serious crimes, including murder, attempted murder, robbery, kidnapping, and corruption, were apprehended from different countries, says the report adding that FIA NCB - INTERPOL had issued red notices for the arrest of these accused.

On the occasion, the secretary highlighted that Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Italy, a news release said.

He appreciated the Italian Defence Industrial potential and its ability to address needs of the Pakistani defence forces.

Lieutenant General @ Muhammad Chiragh Haider also emphasized that Pakistan had a lot of potential in the fields of energy and defence production with the possibility of joint ventures which needs to be explored. Both the sides stressed on the need to have a regular exchange of high-level visits between both countries.



RAWALPINDI: Italian Defence Secretary General and Secretary Defence Production in a meeting.

## AGP denies impression of interference in judiciary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP), Mansoor Usman Awan on Tuesday strongly denied the impression of interference in the powers of judiciary by any institution.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that a wrong impression was made on a letter written to the chief justice of Islamabad High Court (IHC).

He said that it was also a wrong impression that if there was a conflict between executive and judiciary.

The AGP said that it was essential to clarify the issue as the IHC judges' letter is being presented in a wrong way. He said, it was requested to hear surveillance-related matters in-camera so that the sensitive information wouldn't go in public domain, and this was communicated to the relevant quarters, he added.



NASEERABAD: Provincial Minister for Irrigation Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani talking with mediemen.

## PHE minister for provision of facilities to people in Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Public Health Engineer (PHE) Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetrani Tuesday said that measures were being taken to address public issues for facilitating to people in the area.

In his statements, the minister said that the fruits of the measures for the welfare of the people and the development of the area would be revealed soon. He said he was grateful to the people of the constituency, who believed and supported him every time. Solving people's problems is my first priority, practical steps have been initiated to fulfill the promises made to the people, he said.

Sardar Khetrani said that keeping in mind the service of our leader Nawaz Sharif, we were all striving for the welfare of the people and the country adding that history was a witness that whenever Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) came to power.