

# Independent

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## Debt of soldiers, citizens to be repaid by relentlessly eliminating terrorism: PM

### Attends Namaz-e-Janaza of Shaheed Captain Faraz Ilyas

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday attended Namaz-e-Janaza of Shaheed Captain Faraz Ilyas in Kasur who was martyred in an improvised explosive device (IED) attack in District Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The funeral prayer was attended by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, IG Police Punjab and a number of senior military officers, civil authorities and residents.

The prime minister also met with the parents of shaheed captain and expressed condolences.

He announced to transform the native village of martyred officer as model village and renamed it as "Faraz Ilyas Shaheed".

He told the parents that the sacrifice of their son would not go in vain and

prayed for the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude.

Under the Quranic teachings, a shaheed had an elevated place in Jannah, he said, adding that a large number of Jawans of armed forces had laid down their lives for the motherland.

The prime minister said that the nation was proud of its brave sons and the coward terrorists could not succeed in shaking their strong resolve.

Separately, on X account, the prime minister said that he was deeply saddened by the martyrdom of Pak Army personnel including a captain in a targeted attack in District Lakki Marwat.

"The sacrifices of our brave soldiers and citizens is a debt on us that we must repay by relentlessly eliminating terrorism from our nation. Heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families," he further posted.



KASUR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif participates in the burial of Shaheed Captain Muhammad Faraz Ilyas who was martyred in Lakki Marwat.

## Pakistan's enemies perturbed over its rapid progress under PM: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting and National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Monday said Pakistan's fast-track progress under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had stunned its enemies in contrast with their dreams of its downfall economically.

The disgruntled elements were fully perturbed as the prime minister had charted the country on path of progress and development, he said while addressing a press conference.

The minister said a so-called leader while being at the helm of affairs in 2018 had adversely affected Pakistan's relations with the brotherly countries thus causing serious problems on the diplomatic front.

On the other hand, the government led by PM Shehbaz Sharif had not only

mended relations with the brotherly states, besides restoring the country's prestige in the global community, he added.

Tarar said the prime minister's historic visit to China was "highly successful", which had been marked by an unprecedented level of enthusiasm and mutual cooperation.

A multitude of issues, he said, were addressed during the visit, fostering the dawn of a new era in the bilateral relations of two countries which had been enjoying exemplary bonds for decades.

Their unparalleled friendship stood steadfast against all odds over the years, he added.

The minister said the Chinese leadership congratulated Pakistan on securing a seat in the United Nations Security Council and achieving 182 votes in the 193-member General Assembly.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar addressing a press conference.

## 33 illegal cattle markets removed

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Karachi Syed Hasan Naqvi directed all Deputy Commissioners to take immediate action and remove all illegal cattle markets. He was chairing a meeting at his office on Monday. The Commissioner was informed that all Deputy Commissioners are making efforts to remove illegal markets in their respective districts, and so far, 33 markets have been removed from all districts.

15 markets were removed from Malir, 3 from Korangi, 2 from Central, 10 from East, 2 from Keamari, and 1 from South, and 3 in-

dividuals were arrested in district south. The meeting was informed that even the markets authorized by the Karachi Municipal Corporation and Pakistan Railways are being removed.

Both organizations have been told that they are not authorized to issue permission for cattle markets. The Commissioner said that all markets operating without the permission of city administration are illegal.

He said that illegal cattle markets are causing traffic problems and difficulties for pedestrians, and immediate action is needed to remove them.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs meeting of the National Economic Council in Islamabad.

## NEC approves 13th 5-year National Development Plan, economic growth target for 2024-25

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Economic Council on Monday approved in principle the 13th five-year National Development Plan along with the annual economic growth targets for the financial year 2024-25 and macroeconomic framework for annual planning.

The NEC meeting, presided over by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, was informed that the key objectives of the plan included development of every part of the country, especially the less developed areas; increase in exports; promotion of the small and medium industry; social protection and poverty alleviation; increase in the capacity building of the work force; and a framework to protect from the

impacts of climate change.

The NEC directed the Planning Ministry to ensure the positive role of the provinces in the national economy and to present a comprehensive framework to increase the exports.

The ministry was also directed to include the provinces in the consultation process to achieve the overall economic growth target of the country.

The prime minister emphasized that the government would ensure the best utilization of the existing resource for revival of the economy and prosperity of the people.

He further said that in all important decisions regarding the economy, the Federation would ensure consultation with the provinces and other stakehold-

ers so that as a result of the collective vision for the development of the country, such decisions were made that were positive and involved the consent of all.

"The National Economic Council is the biggest forum for important decisions regarding the country's economy, which will be used for important decisions for the recovery of the economy," he added.

The prime minister also directed the National Economic Council to set up a committee which in consultation with the provinces and other stakeholders, should formulate the proposals to not only make the Council active but also to harmonize it with the modern requirements.

The meeting was informed about the perfor-

mance and the annual development projects for the year 2023-24 and proposals for the upcoming fiscal year 2024-25.

It was told in the meeting that the growth rate target for the upcoming fiscal year had been increased significantly.

The prime minister on the occasion said that as the agriculture sector was the backbone of the country's economy, therefore consultation with the provinces for its development was very important. He directed to ensure inclusion of the provinces' proposals regarding agriculture and other sectors in the plan.

The Council was also informed about the national goals for the recovery of the economy and the measures to achieve them.

## Governor pays tributes to martyred seven soldiers

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor, Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori on Monday paid tributes to 7 martyred soldiers in Laki Marwat.

The soldiers, who were martyred included a Captain in an improvised mine explosion, he said in statement.

The governor prayed for the patience to bereaved families of the martyrs.

He said that the great sacrifices of our soldiers strengthened the resolve to eliminate terrorism from the country.

The governor said that the entire nation stood by the security forces and was determined to eliminating the terrorists.

## Shehbaz felicitates Modi on swearing in as Indian PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday felicitated Narendra Modi as he took the oath of the office of the Prime Minister of India.

"Felicitations to Narendra Modi on taking oath as the Prime Minister of India," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline.



KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon handing over a relief cheque of Rs10 million to the brother of martyred journalist Nasrullah Gaddani at Karachi Press Club (KPC).

## PPP has nothing to do with Punjab Defamation law, says Sharjeel

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon has said that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is standing with the journalists and has no link with the Punjab Defamation Act 2024 which came into force on Monday.

Addressing a news conference at Karachi Press Club Sharjeel Memon said the PPP is not a part of the approval process of the Defamation Act. "PPP's governor did not give his consent to the bill," he made it clear. Sharjeel Memon told newsmen that his party had never introduced such a law. "We are standing with our journalist brothers. We have always worked for the press freedom," he added.

The minister said the

## Bilawal expresses deep sorrow over Neelum river tragedy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of lives following a tourist vehicle's fell into the Neelum River.

According to a press release issued by the Media Cell at Bilawal House, he expressed deep shock upon hearing the news of the Neelum Valley accident. He extended his heartfelt condolences to the victims' families and prayed for their strength during this difficult time. "I share the grief of the families who lost their loved ones in this tragic accident."

## Very hot weather forecast for Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department on Monday predicted very hot weather in most upper districts of the Sindh province during the next 24 hours.

However, hot and humid weather is forecast in coastal areas and dust raising wind in central and southern districts during afternoon period.

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

## Minister Energy Nasir Shah took important decisions regards legislation of SEPPRA

Says SEPPRA will be fully empowered with power generation, distribution & transmission

### Independent Report

KARACHI: Sindh Provincial Energy Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has said that SEPPRA will be a fully authorized in Sindh of power generation-distribution and transmission and it will be the first autonomous organization in Sindh and it will be the first autonomous body in the provinces across the country which will make its own decisions as compared to NEPPRA.

He expressed these views today on the occasion of presiding over an awareness meeting held in



the Sindh Energy Department's office regarding the SEPPRA legislation.

Secretary Energy Mosaadiq Ahmed Khan and Member Nepra Rafiq Ahmed Sheikh were also present. Secretary Energy and Member Nepra informed the Provincial En-

ergy Minister in detail regarding energy.

Nasir Shah also asked various questions regarding the laws. Minister said that according to the vision of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto, we are with every decision that can provide relief to the people and welfare of the

people and fully support every institution or project which is in accordance with the hopes and aspirations of the people.

He added that the purpose of setting up SEPPRA Board is to provide cheap electricity tariff or cheap electricity to the people, electricity from SEPPRA established and fixed electricity tariff 30% to 40% discount will be available.

Minister said that due to the simplification of electricity tariff issues, facilities will be provided to the public.

## President Asif directs payment of compensation to 1500 affectees of Diamer-Bhasha Dam

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday directed the authorities concerned to ensure the payment of compensation worth Rs 4.7 million each to 1500 affectees of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam.

The president said this in separate meetings with Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam and Energy Minister Dr Musaddik Malik, according to a President House press release.

Highlighting the necessity of establishment of a medical college and hos-

pital in GB, he instructed the relevant departments to take measures on priority for the purpose.

Besides, he also directed for extending the scope of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) for the people of GB to provide them healthcare facilities.

A few days ago, the GB governor and the Members of GB Council had apprised the president of the issues faced by the GB people.

The president had also assured them for the measures to help resolve the problems.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Austria, Mr Muhammad Kamran Akhtar, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aitwan-e-Sadr.

## Chairperson BISP visits Payment Campsites in Sindh to check facilities

KARACHI (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Rubina Khalid made significant visits to the Benazir Income Support Programme payment campsites in Bachal Shah, Sukkur, and Babarloe, Khairpur on Monday. The purpose of these visits was to personally monitor the payment disbursement process and to inspect the arrangements and facilities provided for women beneficiaries receiving their Kafaalat and Taleemi Wazaif stipends, said a news release.

During her visit, Rubina Khalid interacted with the women beneficiaries, listened to their concerns, and personally guided the needy and elderly women in receiving their cash amounts. Recognizing the need for efficiency, she directed the officials to increase the number of Point of Sale (POS) agents at the campsites to reduce the waiting time for the beneficiaries.

Following her inspections, Chairperson Rubina Khalid addressed the media, emphasizing the commitment to transparency in the disbursement process as directed by President Asif Ali Zardari. "We have established these payment campsites to ensure transparency in the mechanism of payment disbursement," she stated. "We are heading towards a better payment mechanism and soon we will be able to open bank accounts for these beneficiaries for direct payments, minimizing human involvement."



LARKANA: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Rubina Khalid presides over the high-level meeting at Deputy Commissioner Office in Larkana.

## Mayor Karachi chairs general meeting of the KMC

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Monday chaired the general meeting of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) Council at the Council Hall of the KMC head office here.

Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad and Municipal Commissioner S.M Afzal Zaidi also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, a total of five resolutions were presented. One resolution expressed deep sorrow and grief over the passing of Chairman UC-7 Liaquatabad, Shahabuddin, recognizing his services and dedication to the betterment of the community and the promotion of religion.

Another resolution expressed condolences for the tragic incident in Laki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where a landmine explosion resulted in the martyrdom of soldiers. The council also condemned and expressed sorrow on the

street crimes that led to the deaths of Irtaqa Moeen, Abdul Basit, and Muhammad Fayyaz. Through the resolution presented by Deputy Parliamentary Leader Juman Darwan and Dil Muhammad, the council also expressed grief over the deaths of City Council member Yasmin Butt's brother and Chairman UC-2 Mominabad Mumtaz Tanoli's brother, offering prayers for the deceased.

Addressing the meeting, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab mentioned that according to council traditions, meetings are adjourned when a council member passes away. He also highlighted that last year, 2.4 million people received medical treatment at NICVD, with patients coming from various cities. He noted that Jinnah Hospital provides free cancer treatment under the PPP government, attracting patients from all over Pakistan, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Approaching budget

The constitution of the National Economic Council to review and approve the macroeconomic budgetary framework, as well as proposed federal and provincial development spending plans for 2024-25, gives hope that the announcement of next year's budget will not be delayed beyond June 12. Considering that the Annual Plan Coordination Committee had firmed up its macro targets for FY25 at the beginning of this month, the delay in the announcement has been surprising, if not perplexing. Apparently, it was done to facilitate Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif undertake his China visit, which had many guessing about its purpose just ahead of the budget presentation. Rumour has it that the visit was undertaken in connection with IMF-dictated budget targets and programme goals concerning Chinese debt and power purchase agreements with Chinese companies.

That the government is making its budget in exceptionally challenging conditions is an understatement. The present macroeconomic environment is probably the most demanding any government has faced in years — despite the newfound economic stability under the IMF's short-term SBA facility. Macroeconomic conditions remain vulnerable to the slightest shock. Politically, too, the situation is tough. On the one hand, a court decision has, at least for now, deprived the fledgling government of an absolute majority in parliament. On the other, it must find a balance between stringent IMF demands and the public's expectations of relief. Caught between a rock and a hard place, the finance managers have repeatedly reassured the people that the burden of 'adjustments' to be made in the budget under an agreement with the IMF would fall on the affluent. Yet few have faith in those commitments, given the stern IMF conditions that would require drastic direct and indirect taxation and withdrawal of subsidies in the next budget, and a significant increase in energy prices at the beginning of FY25 to qualify for a new bailout.

In this context, the government's budget priorities are clear: economic stabilisation by containing the current account deficit in the balance-of-payments, and reduction in the budget deficit and borrowing requirements through primary budget surplus. Stabilisation is crucial for Pakistan to make its external debt payments on time, bring up its dwindling foreign exchange reserves to a safe level, and achieve debt sustainability by narrowing the gap between its income and spending by mobilising additional tax revenue and cutting public expenditure. It goes without saying that these goals require extensive policy reforms. Both the prime minister and finance minister have time and again expressed their commitment to carrying out the required structural reforms under the new IMF programme. The budget for the next year will be their first test. Many are sceptical of them translating their words into well-defined actions in the budget. Will they prove their doubters wrong?

### In protest mode

Huma Yusuf

In a year of elections, some signs of democratic revival were inevitable. These have come in the electoral outcomes in India, Mexico and South Africa, where leaders have been held accountable at the ballot box. You can almost hear those who believe in due process breathing a collective sigh of relief after years of authoritarian creep. But what impact will these democratic stirrings have on public protest, and why does it matter?

In recent months alone, Pakistan has seen protests against inflation, food prices, border policies that hamper local trade, energy prices, alleged poll rigging, censorship, disappearances, etc. We are not alone. Indeed, we are living through a new age of protest.

A 2021 report on World Protests from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung think tank and Initiative for Policy Dialogue found that the number of protests worldwide had tripled between 2006 and 2020. The research found that 54 per cent of the protests recorded were triggered in response to "perceived failure of political systems or representation", while 28pc included demands for "real democracy".

The year 2022 saw even more protests — 11,000 across 145 countries — largely against high costs of living. In 2023, protests erupted in 83 countries, on proliferating matters as wide ranging as the Israel-Palestine war, cost of living crisis, climate justice, assaults on democracy, women's rights and government service provision.

The intersectionality of protests is also increasing. Take, for example, the global protests against Israel's atrocities in Gaza.

Climate change activists aligned with the pro-Palestine protest movement early on, arguing that climate justice has to be underpinned by basic human rights and security and freedom from occupation.

Climate activists have been pointing out the immense climate toll of the war: greenhouse gas emissions from war activities, plus the significant emissions expected from future reconstruction activities. They have also accused Israel of carrying out ecocide, for example, by razing olive trees that have stood on the land for centuries. Given the West's current focus on tackling climate change, the disregard for these issues in Palestine is highlighted as further proof of double standards, an argument that resonates with the core messaging of pro-Palestine protests.

More powerfully, the two movements have identified that many financial institutions or corporations that fund or facilitate the fossil fuels sector are the same that facilitate the Israeli defence sector or Israeli companies that operate in or profit from settled areas. By joining forces, the groups have been able to share tactics and intensify pressure on economic institutions.

Similarly, global women's rights and feminist movements have aligned with pro-Palestine protesters given the excessive impact of the conflict on women and children, who account for at least half the lives lost in Gaza since October. Beyond the death toll, women have also been subject to sexual violence, inadequate healthcare, miscarriages and lack of nutrition. Allyship with Gaza women is becoming a feminist imperative.

Will this epic year of elections reduce some of this protest activity or in-

tensify it? Will there be a coalescing of demands or further diversification? The growing intersectionality of protesters has been a fascinating development, forcing disparate groups to engage with each other and find common ground, a refreshing development in polarised times.

But in the context of vibrant democracies, multifaceted protests are less effective in holding democratic governments to account or effecting policy change. As I recently wrote in relation to pro-Palestine protests on US campuses, the most effective protests are the ones with local, relevant and tailored demands.

The activist community must consider how the gradually shifting political landscape will affect protest movements, because the ultimate goal must be to keep the spirit of protest and accountability alive. And as much as we live in an age of protest, we also live in an age of crackdowns, and the threat from authoritarianism and censorship continues to loom large, including in 'democratic' contexts.

For lasting, positive change, protest activity is essential. As political scientist Erica Chenoweth has pointed out, civil disobedience is the most effective way of changing political trajectories, with protests twice as likely to achieve their goals than violent means or any form of conflict. Chenoweth also found that it takes around 3.5pc of a population actively participating in protests to effect meaningful political change. In all scenarios, that means we should remain ready to take to the streets (literally or metaphorically), and remain open, once we're there, to talk to each other rather than across each other. — Courtesy Dawn

### Unlocking potential

Neda Mulji

Not even 10 per cent of the 531 companies listed on the PSX offer formal training to their employees. These companies have a collective annual turnover of over Rs8 trillion. It wouldn't take much to calculate the impact on productivity if they were to invest in their employees' learning and development opportunities. Learning and development (L&D) helps employees identify their strengths, unlocks thinking potential, and opens lines of communication.

Employees can hugely benefit from simply being heard as they sit for conversations with a workplace coach or mentor. Typical questions that a workplace coach may ask are: what skills can help you do your job better? How can you develop these skills, and what are your priorities for career growth? Ongoing reflection with a mentor or coach not only motivates but can also help align the employee with the company's goals and strategy, as well as drive individual career growth.

Most employees strive for significance — to be seen and valued for their work. An employer's motivation to value employees comes from what they can bring to the table in terms of teamwork, capability, efficiency and productivity. Often, employees complain about churning the same wheel, but lots can change if they take action to drive innovation within their teams.

A McKinsey report on successful L&D strategy by Nick van Dam points out key elements of employee development that are beneficial to companies. Besides building individual capabilities and retaining talent, companies create their own 'brand ambassadors'. This results in a

value-based culture where employees embody the company's reputation and competitive advantage. Brand ambassadors are not just driven by data analytics on productivity, but also the perceived significance of their work, loyalty to the company and ownership of their role.

To be successful, L&D opportunities need to incorporate programmes that are sustainable. From in-person, on the job training and collaboration with colleagues to coaching and mentoring, these programmes can be delivered online. Online training is often viewed with suspicion, as it has been historically considered inferior to in-person interaction. However, studies have shown that online training is a 'safer' place giving opportunities for self-expression and individual work to employees who may not be comfortable speaking in public or in a face-to-face set-up.

Those with full schedules during the day are more receptive to online sessions that they can attend sitting at their desk or at home, rather than clearing their calendar for a physical meet-up. Online learning is often also easier to monitor if followed by assessments that gauge learning impact and key takeaways. In fact, online training programmes are all the more necessary in Pakistan to empower professionals to use technology and digital tools with greater ease in this fast-evolving era of learning management systems.

Ninety-one per cent of Fortune 500 companies offer mentoring and coaching programmes. This correlation between investment in employee development and the companies' success is not coincidental. An increasing number of global companies are

looking towards investment in professional development, particularly reskilling and coaching as a way of increasing productivity. Not only does L&D target goals, it also ensures a continuous learning culture so that employees are able to respond to the fast-changing work and external environment.

Development opportunities have come to be recognised as a deciding factor for the 'employer of choice'. The 'millennials' are increasingly choosing companies that can commit to their growth. Most employees choose to stick with a company that caters to their well-being, keeping them engaged in the company's values, goals and teamwork as opposed to reporting on day-to-day tasks.

Investing in employees not just saves the company the costs associated with a high turnover, it also ensures that skills are not misdirected, with employees stuck in roles not suited to their ability. It helps employers make conscious decisions for placement, promotion and professional development. It also ensures that employees stay motivated, learn how to manage themselves and rise up to challenges as a team. The employee engagement that results from these efforts helps safeguard and promote the company's reputation with its customers.

Understandably, many companies avoid the costs of training employees for fear of losing them to competitors, but the price of avoiding training will always be higher. As Henry Ford once said, "The only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave is not training them and having them stay." — Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### SBP cuts down policy rate to 20.5% amid easing inflationary pressures

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday slashed the policy rate by 150 basis points to 20.5 percent owing to subsiding inflationary pressure and ease in inflation expectations amid tight policy stance that was also supported by fiscal consolidation and administrative measures by government.

"The reduced policy rate of 20.5% will be effective from June 11, 2024," the SBP said in its monetary policy statement issued after the meeting of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

The MPC found decline in inflation since February broadly in line with expectations and May out turn better than earlier anticipation and assessed that underlying

inflationary pressures were subsiding as reflected by continued moderation in core inflation and ease in inflation expectations of both consumers and businesses in the latest surveys.

The committee viewed some upside risks to the near-term inflation outlook associated with the upcoming budgetary measures and uncertainty regarding future energy price adjustments noting that "the cumulative impact of the earlier monetary tightening is expected to keep inflationary pressures in check."

While reviewing key development, the MPC noted that the real GDP growth remained moderate at 2.4% in FY24 as per provisional data, reduced current account deficit

helped improve the foreign exchange reserves to around \$9 billion despite large debt repayments while the government has also approached the IMF for an Extended Fund Facility Programme, which was likely to unlock financial inflows that would help in further building up of FX buffers.

The committee noted that international oil prices have declined, whereas non-oil commodity prices have continued to inch up.

The committee termed it an appropriate time for reducing the policy rate on basis of recent developments, noted that the real interest rate was still significantly positive which was important to continue guiding inflation to the medium-term target of 5 to 7%.

### Women export display centre to be set up at Faisalabad: FWCCI

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FWCCI) will establish a Women Export Display Centre at Faisalabad in collaboration with the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) to facilitate 'Access to Market' for women products.

These products, particularly handmade articles, are high in demand in traditional and non-traditional markets abroad, said Mrs. Rubina Amjad, President FWCCI and Chairperson of FPCCI Standing Committee on Think Tank.

She was addressing the participants in a symposium on 'Digital Transformation of Women Businesses in Pakistan', organized by Think Tank Committee in collaboration with the FPCCI here today.

She said that Pakistan's export volume can go further high if we are able to facilitate and fetch best prices for women products, particularly handmade products, in international markets.

She said that as founder and current President of Faisalabad Women Chamber and now Chairperson of FPCCI Think Tank Committee, her main emphasis is that women doing business or start-ups must be facilitated and equipped with digital transformation that offers a pathway to overcome traditional barriers and achieve sustainable growth. By embracing digital tools and strategies, women entrepreneurs should enhance their competitiveness and market base in this planet of more than 200 countries, she added.

### Pak sees 62.3% surge in IT exports; report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan has witnessed a remarkable 62.3% increase in IT exports in April this year compared to the same period last year, according to a recent report by the BBC.

The surge in IT exports is attributed to the policy reforms and business-friendly policies introduced by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), PTV reported.

The stability of the local currency and the decision to allow freelancers to deposit foreign earnings into local bank accounts have been key factors in this growth, the report read. It further stated that the State Bank of Pakistan's relaxation of the retention limit for IT companies from 35% to 50% has also contributed to the increase.



ISLAMABAD: The Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi calls on the Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain.

### TCP imports 6,572,430 metric tons of wheat from 2020 to 2023: NA Informed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan informed the National Assembly on Monday that the Trading Corporation of Pakistan Limited (TCP) imported 6,572,430 metric tons of wheat during the period from 2020-21 to 2022-23.

During the question hour in the house, the minister said that the TCP imported wheat based on the instructions of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and the federal cabinet.

Jamal Kamal clarified

### Talal Chaudhary says: Centre constitutionally authorized to levy taxes for greater national interest

FAISALABAD (APP): Central leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Talal Chaudhary said that federal government was constitutionally authorized to levy taxes and nobody could stop it from exercising this right.

Talking to media persons at Jaranwala here, he strongly condemned the statement of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister and said that taxes were the lifeline of a

government and the government was determined to collect and spend taxes for the uplift of the country and welfare of the masses. He termed the statement of the KP Chief Minister irresponsible and unconstitutional and said that a major portion of taxes collected by the federal government is distributed among the provinces to launch their projects from this pooled money.

He explained that TCP acts as the sole medium for purchasing wheat for food security purposes, while its storage and distribution are managed by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research.

The minister dispelled any rumors regarding the export of wheat flour, stating that such reports are baseless and no such decision has

been made. He said that it was decided last year that the private sector would be responsible for importing wheat, and TCP would not engage in wheat imports. However, he said that TCP can only import wheat under a mandate given by the government.

Regarding sugar, the minister clarified that decisions related to the import and export of sugar are made by the Sugar Advisory Board, and no decision has been made yet regarding sugar imports.

### Jazz ranks leading cellular mobile operator

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz was ranked as the leading cellular mobile operator in Pakistan, topping multiple categories in the Pakistan.

The QoS survey, carried by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) out in 16 cities of Pakistan during the first quarter of 2024, assessed the performance of Cellular Mobile Operators (CMOs) in accordance with the Cellular Mobile Network Quality of Service (QoS) Regulations 2021, said a news release issued by the company.

### Country holds surplus electricity, ready for 24-hour supply: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari informed the National Assembly on Monday that the country has surplus electricity and we are ready to provide 24-hour power supply to feeders with zero losses.

Speaking at the National Assembly forum, he said, "The system has enough generation and transmission capacity to meet the electricity demand, and we are ready to provide electricity 24-hours to consumers. However, this is not possible without

controlling line losses and power theft."

The minister said that the country cannot afford to increase the circular debt further.

"We don't provide electricity to feeders with high line losses because this adds to the losses in the power sector, which cannot be borne by the country's economy," he added. The minister stressed that unless distribution companies, with the assistance of provincial governments, change their course and control their losses, "load shedding will continue on these high-loss feeders."



SARGODHA: A vendor selling seasonal fruits near Shaheen Chowk.

### KE introduces live App for providing easy access to income tax certificates

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the fiscal year closes and citizens prepare to file their taxes, K-Electric has introduced a quick and new service for customers to download their tax certificates through the KE Live App in just four simple clicks.

These include sales tax for our industrial or commercial customers, advance income tax for residential accounts, and withholding tax certificate for net metering customers, said a press release issued on Monday. The initiative is an extension of KE's efforts to digitize its services to bring

in more efficiency and customer-centricity in its processes and leverages technology and innovation to bridge the gap between the customer and the company. Sharing his comment on the features, spokesperson KE stated "We're pleased to expand the portfolio of services on the KE Live App, which reduces the need for customers to physically visit our centers by offering them a digital solution at their fingertips. Customers can also apply for new connections, change of name requests, and get real-time updates on their power supply from any location."

## AJK PM vows to use tax money for people's welfare

MIRPUR-AJK (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq on Monday pledged to use tax money to improve the lives of the common man.

Speaking at a reception in Dheerkot, the AJK PM said his government's goal is to provide good governance and ensure that tax money would be spent on people's welfare.

The government has made significant progress, turning a 16 billion rupee loss into a 32 billion rupee profit.

A significant portion of 19 billion rupee, had been utilized for road development without any corruption.

The AJK PM emphasized the need to end politics based on caste, class and tribe.

He expressed hope that development works will be expedited soon, stressing the importance of tolerance, wisdom and strong institutions.

The government had collected an amount of 11 crore rupee taxes

annually and the AJK PM warned that failing to fulfill the state responsibilities would be a sheer violation.

He advocated for peaceful resolution of all genuine issues.

He was of the opinion that protest is not the solution of any problem. The AJK PM reiterated his belief in the slogan "Kashmir Banega Pakistan" and urged an end to civil war.

The event was also attended by various government ministers.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Rafique presides over the special meeting. Punjab Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Kirmani is also present.

## CM directs expansion of promising Saffron cultivation initiative

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has directed the Agriculture Department to collect detailed data on agricultural lands across the province and prepare for saffron cultivation on suitable lands by the upcoming season.

Yar Muhammad Khan Niazi, the Chief Minister's Focal Person for Digital Media, reported that the pilot saffron planting by the KP Agriculture Department has shown promising results.

With seed and input costs around Rs 3.2 million per acre, the tentative annual return is estimated at about Rs 6.8 million. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 127,950 acres of potential saffron-growing area, capable of producing 255 tons of stigma, which could generate an annual economic return of billions of rupees. The investment in saffron farming in KP will be phased over short (4 years), medium (7 years), and long-term (10 years) periods. Over a decade, this initiative could create

around 3.6 million direct jobs, employing 4 laborers per kanal.

The Chief Minister emphasized the need for the effective utilization of available agricultural land to make it a significant source of income for the provincial government.

He instructed the Agriculture Department to undertake saffron cultivation directly, rather than leasing the lands, while also encouraging farmers to cultivate saffron on suitable lands.



ABBOTTABAD: Fire fighters extinguishing fire at dairy farm warehouse building during rescue operation after fire broke out incident due to electric short circuit, in Abbottabad

## Measles under control in Punjab: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare, Khwaja Imran Nazir said on Monday that the measles situation in the province was under control, with a significantly lower number of confirmed cases and fatalities compared to other provinces.

Speaking to a private news channel, he stated that while measles cases in Punjab were fewer than in other provinces, the vaccination campaign was intensified to protect children from infectious diseases. Khwaja Imran said out of over 10,000 suspected cases reported, 2,700 were confirmed, representing a 25% ratio, whereas only 28 deaths were confirmed with the

disease, as per the National Institute of Health.

The minister emphasized that every child's life was precious and that the government was taking measures to ensure their safety.

He clarified that a 2-3% death ratio was natural in every disease, and the measles ratio was even lower.

The Punjab government is utilizing digital monitoring and clustering to combat the disease, with Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz focusing her attention on the issue. The minister said clustering analysis had identified Bahawalpur, Jhang, and Chaniot as the most affected areas, while the rest of the districts had routine patients.

## Man kills wife over domestic dispute

PESHAWAR (APP): A man shot dead his wife over domestic dispute in the vicinity of Pahari Pura police station, police said on Monday.

Pahari Pura police said the incident occurred in Gul Abad No-2, Pahari Pura where a man shot dead his 27-year-old wife.

The brother of the deceased woman told police that his sister, Shazia was married to Shah Saud.

He alleged that Shah Saud shot dead Shazia with the consent and help of his brother Shah Khalid.

The police shifted the body to hospital for post-mortem and started investigation after registering a case against both the accused.

## Bus crushes youngster to death

MULTAN (APP): A bus crushed the youngster to death near the Niaz petrol pump on Khanewal Road Multan.

According to Rescue 1122, a youngster named Muhammad Aziz (21) son of Muhammad Sharif, resident of Block W New Mulan, was heading to his destination.

## KP gov't taking measures to enhance educational facilities, females' literacy: Minister

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Provincial Education Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Khan Tarakai on Monday said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has unveiled a series of revolutionary initiatives aimed at increasing female literacy rate and educational facilities for women, particularly in merged areas.

Addressing a briefing session organized by the Merged Districts Education Foundation, he highlighted the urgent need to expand access to education and control

dropout rates, especially among girls.

He emphasized the launch of community-based education centers under the supervision of the Foundation, including the Sabaoon Schools Program and Middle School Program, to swiftly establish schools and address immediate educational needs. During the briefing, Managing Director of the Foundation, Mian Ainullah, informed that the foundation was operating as many as 207 community-based education centers in the province.

## ANF seizes over 262 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country seized over 262 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that 1.2 kg heroin was recovered from the possession of a female passenger going to Bahrain at Islamabad Airport.

1 kg heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Dubai at Karachi Airport while 63.6 kg hashish and 72 kg opium were recovered from two suspects rounded up near Ravi Toll Plaza Lahore.

## Health minister visits Pak Children's Hearth Foundation, reviews facilities

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique on Monday visited the Pakistan Children's Heart Foundation and the hospital under construction in the University of Lahore (UoL) and reviewed the medical facilities there.

Chairman Farhan Ahmed briefed the minister regarding the working details of the Pakistan Children's Heart Foundation.

Chairman University of Lahore Owais Rauf, Medical Superintendent Dr Zahid Parvez, Dr Ali Nasir, Dr Arsal, Professor Uzmi, and others were present. Minister Khawaja

Salman Rafique said that the capacity of cardiology departments in Jinnah Hospital, Mayo Hospital, Ganga Ram Hospital, and hospitals in Wazirabad as well as Faisalabad was being increased. The number of children born with heart disease in Pakistan was unfortunately increasing every year, he said, adding that government cardiology hospitals were trying to increase the number of surgeries. The minister said that Nawaz Sharif was going to build a state-of-the-art cardiology hospital in Sargodha, and in this regard, Pakistan Children's Heart Foundation was with them.



MUZAFFARABAD: University students protesting at Azadi Chowk for the release of poet Ahmed Farhad.

## Relief Commissioner Punjab briefed about Monsoon Contingency Plan 2024

LAHORE (APP): Relief Commissioner Punjab Nabil Javed chaired a meeting about Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) measures in the committee room on Monday in which construction and restructuring of the PDMA Punjab Complex was discussed. Director General PDMA Irfan Ali Kathia, Secretary Board of Revenue Shafiqullah Mushtaq and other officers attended the meeting.

The DG briefed Relief Commissioner Nabil Javed about PDMA's

initiatives and briefed about the Monsoon Contingency Plan 2024. DG PDMA Irfan Ali Kathia said that the probability of monsoon rains this year was higher than before, adding that preparations had been completed in anticipation of monsoon rains and possible floods. He said that warehouses of PDMA would be established in Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur, Sargodha, Rajanpur, and Jhang. Nabil Javed issued instructions to remove encroachments from rivers and canals.

## International News

### UN Security Council set to vote on Gaza ceasefire deal today after US call

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: The United States announced on Sunday it has requested a UN Security Council vote on its draft resolution backing a plan for an "immediate ceasefire with the release of hostages" between Israel and Hamas.

Diplomatic sources said the vote is planned for Monday, but has not yet been confirmed by South Korea, which holds the Security Council presidency for the month of June.

"Today, the United States called for the Security Council to move towards a vote... supporting the proposal on the table," said Nate Evans, spokesman for the US delegation, without specifying a vote date.

"Council members should not let this opportunity pass by and must speak with one voice in

support of this deal," Evans said. The United States, a staunch ally of Israel, has been widely criticized for having blocked several UN draft resolutions calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.

US President Joe Biden on May 31 launched a new push for a ceasefire and hostage release deal, separate from the United Nations.

Under the proposal, Israel would withdraw from Gaza population centers and Hamas would free hostages. The ceasefire would last an initial six weeks, with it extended as negotiators seek a permanent end to hostilities.

The United States is placing primary responsibility for accepting the proposal on Hamas, specifically calling on the Palestinian militant group to accept the document in the latest version

of the draft text.

That version, which was distributed to member states on Sunday and was seen by AFP, "welcomes" the new ceasefire proposal while stating, unlike in previous versions, that Israel has already accepted.

The draft resolution "calls upon Hamas to also accept it, and urges both parties to fully implement its terms without delay and without condition."

In response to requests from several member states, the latest text clearly lays out the proposal.

This includes a first phase with an "immediate, full, and complete ceasefire," release of hostages taken by Hamas, and "exchange of Palestinian prisoners" plus "withdrawal of Israeli forces from the populated areas in Gaza."



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrives at Cairo airport, Egypt.

### Italy's PM Meloni comes out on top in EU vote, strengthening her hand

Monitoring Desk ROME: Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's arch-conservative Brothers of Italy group won the most votes in the European parliamentary election over the weekend, results showed, boosting her standing both at home and abroad. With 96% of the ballots counted, Brothers of Italy won 28.8% of the vote, more than four times what it took in the last EU election in 2019 and exceeding the 26% it secured in the 2022 national

ballot, when it rose to power. "I am proud that Italy will present itself to the G7, to Europe with the strongest government of all. This is something that has not happened in the past but is happening today, it is a satisfaction and also a great responsibility," Meloni said early on Monday from the party's headquarters. The opposition centre-left Democratic Party came in second with 24%, while another opposition group, the 5-Star Movement,

### US, Poland launching group to help Ukraine counter Kremlin disinformation

Monitoring Desk WARSAW: The United States announced Monday that it is setting up an operation in the Polish capital to help neighboring Ukraine counter Russian disinformation.

The U.S. State Department's Global Engagement Center, which works to highlight disinformation by what it considers hostile states, said in a statement that the U.S. and Poland have jointly launched a Ukraine Communications Group.

### Macron calls snap legislative elections

Monitoring Desk PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday announced he was dissolving parliament and called snap legislative elections after the far-right trounced his centrist alliance in EU polls.

The first round of elections for the lower house National Assembly will take place on June 30, with the second round on July 7. Macron announced in an address to the nation.

The outcome of the EU elections, he acknowledged, is "not a good result

for parties who defend Europe." Macron noted that, including the top scoring National Rally (RN), far-right parties in France managed to take almost 40 per cent of the vote in the EU elections in France. "Far right parties... are progressing everywhere in the continent. It is a situation in which I cannot resign myself," he said.

"I decided to give you the choice... Therefore I will dissolve the National Assembly tonight.

"This decision is serious and heavy but it is an act of confidence.

### Mexico ruling party wins lower house super-majority but falls short in Senate

Monitoring Desk MEXICO CITY: Mexico's ruling Morena party and its allies have won a super-majority in the lower house of Congress but not the Senate, the party's president said on Sunday, falling just short of the two-thirds majority needed in both houses to change the constitution. Preliminary results from the June 2 vote.

### US, Saudi Arabia close to finalising security treaty, says WSJ

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: The Biden administration is close to finalising a treaty with Saudi Arabia that would commit the US to help defend the Gulf nation as part of a deal aimed at encouraging diplomatic ties between Riyadh and Israel, the Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday, citing US and Saudi officials.

The possible deal, widely telegraphed by US and other officials for weeks, is part of a wider package that would include a US-Saudi civil nuclear pact, steps toward the establishment of a Palestinian state and an end to the Israeli aggression in Gaza, where months of ceasefire efforts have failed to bring peace.

Approval of the

treaty, which the WSJ said would be known as the Strategic Alliance Agreement, would require a two-thirds majority vote in the US Senate, a threshold that would be difficult to achieve unless the treaty were tied to Israeli-Saudi normalisation.

The draft treaty is modelled loosely on Washington's mutual security pact with Japan, the newspaper cited US and Saudi officials as saying.

In exchange for the US commitment to help defend Saudi Arabia if it were attacked, the draft treaty would grant Washington access to Saudi territory and airspace to protect US interests and regional partners, the newspaper reported.

### International investors grab 'majority' of Aramco shares

Monitoring Desk RIYADH: Oil giant Saudi Aramco said on Sunday that international investors had snatched up the bulk of shares sold in its latest offering, which was set to raise \$11.2 billion.

The secondary offering was expected to provide a short-term boost to Saudi Arabia's finances as the Gulf kingdom builds large-scale projects including resorts and stadiums, part of a reform drive to prepare for an eventual post-oil future.

"The majority of the shares constituting the institutional tranche of the Offering was allocated to investors located outside of the Kingdom," the company said in a statement before the Saudi bourse reopened on Sunday.

Aramco ended trading on Sunday at 28.60 Saudi riyals (\$7.63) per share, after opening at 27.95 riyals, giving it a market capitalisation of around \$1.85 trillion.

Sources close to the

situation said that around 58 per cent of shares were allocated to international investors, up from around 23pc for the company's initial public offering in 2019 which was the biggest flotation in history.

The sources said around 70pc of orders outside the local market came from the European Union and the United States, while others came from Japan, Hong Kong and Australia.

Aramco, the mostly state-owned jewel of the Saudi economy, announced on May 30 that it would sell 1.545 billion shares, or approximately 0.64pc of its issued shares, on the Saudi stock exchange.

It was widely seen as a test of foreign investor interest more than halfway through the kingdom's campaign known as Vision 2030, whose ambitions are reflected in so-called gigaprojects such as NEOM, a planned futuristic megacity in the desert.

### Putin set to visit North Korea, Vietnam, Vedosti reports

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit North Korea and Vietnam in the coming weeks, Russia's Vedosti newspaper reported on Monday, with an official telling Reuters the Vietnam visit was planned for June 19-20 but has not yet been confirmed. Putin's visit to Pyongyang is being "actively prepared", Russian Ambassador to North Korea Alexander Matsegora confirmed to the newspaper.

The newspaper reported that Putin could visit Vietnam as early as June and most likely immediately after his visit to North Korea. An official in Vietnam told Reuters the dates of the Hanoi visit had been agreed, but the agenda was still under discussion. Energy, military cooperation, settlement of payments and an agreement in the educa-

tion field are among the main issues expected to be discussed, the official said.

Vedosti quoted Russia's trade representative in Vietnam as saying last month that the most pressing trade issue between the two countries was banking support for settling payments.

Vietnam's foreign ministry did not reply to a request for comment.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visited Russia last September for talks with Putin.

He toured Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrome space launch centre in Russia's Far East and Putin promised to help North Korea build satellites. The Kremlin has said Russia wants to build a partnership with North Korea "in all areas" but has not confirmed the date of the visit.

### South Africa's Ramaphosa to miss G7, focus on finding partners to govern

Monitoring Desk JOHANNESBURG: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will not attend this week's Group of Seven (G7) summit in Italy, his spokesperson said on Monday, as his party rushed to find partners to govern the country.

Ramaphosa's African National Congress (ANC) is holding talks with a wide range of other parties, saying it wants to form a national unity government after losing its majority for the first time since the end of apartheid in last month's election. Diplomatic sources had said Ramaphosa was due to take part in the G7 summit from June 13-15 at the invitation of Italy, which holds the rotating presidency of the G7 and wants to broaden the gathering beyond the usual seven industrial democracies.

## Over 0.255 mln tonnes plastic bottles discarded per annum in country, Senate told

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate session during a motion tabled by the Opposition benches on Monday was informed that over 0.255 million plastic bottles were being discarded per annum in the country choking and polluting its natural water bodies, drains, rivers and the ocean.

Senator Mohsin Aziz of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) moved the motion demanding the House to discuss the need to ban manufacturing or use of 500 ml plastic bottles for drinking water as the same causes environmental hazards, chokes drainage system in the cities and is a source of pollution.

Senator Mohsin Aziz while explaining the motion said the non-degradable one-time use plastics particularly bottles of 500ml and smaller in size have drastically degraded and damaged the scenic and

pristine natural beauty of the country's iconic water bodies and rivers in the past four decades.

The rivers, lakes, drains, tourist sites and water bodies were overflowed by plastic waste and plastic bottles comprised a major chunk of it including 500ml and below, he said.

The Senator noted that the developed and developing states recycling plastic waste were promoting on-source segregation to ensure effective recycling of the plastics.

"It's a non-degradable material that cannot decompose for centuries. There are 13 billion plastic bottles used globally. The developed country implementing recycling and responsibly managing plastic waste are reporting satellite images of plastic islands in its territories indicating colossal scale of plastic waste," he added.

According to estimates, by 2035 there would be more plastic bottles captured in fishnets of local fishermen of Pakistan than fish due to increased plastic pollution in the ocean, he said, adding, "50-60 million plastic bottles are used per day and only 10% are recycled of the total consumed in the country whereas each bottle weighed 6-8 grammes."

He proposed that during the old times, reusable bottles, glass bottles and thermos were used as drinking bottles. According to the UNDP report, the leading multi-nationals and national beverage companies were using advertisements to use it more.

"We should ban plastic bottles and reintroduce glass bottles to reduce environmental hazards and clean water bodies from depleting due to plastic bottles," he added.

### Senators condemn operation at Shibli Faraz's house

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lawmakers in the Senate while condemning operation at Shibli Faraz's house on Monday called for appropriate action against the concerned officials besides referring the matter to the House Privilege Committee.

Speaking on a point of order, PTI Senator Saifullah Abro said that the House should not only condemn the act but also hold inquiry into the matter.

### Police arrest two for smuggling gutka

KARACHI (APP): The Orangi police station of district West on Monday arrested two individuals suspected of smuggling gutka and seized a large quantity of the smuggled gutka.

The police reported that the suspects transported the hazardous Indian gutka from Sakran, Balochistan, using a car with fake license plates.

Acting on a tip-off, police conducted a targeted operation in Sector-13, resulting in the recovery of 20 sacks of smuggled Indian gutka, a car, and fake number plates.

The suspects, identified as Hidayatullah and Taj Muhammad, confessed to distributing the smuggled gutka in various areas of Karachi, Thatta, Makli, and Badin.

A case has been registered, and further investigations are ongoing.

### Woman, daughter killed in road accident

HYDERABAD (APP): A woman and her daughter were killed while her son sustained critical injuries in an accident between a motorbike and a truck near District and Sessions Court in Kotri, Jamshoro district, on Monday.

According to the police, Zareena Khoso (40), Ajeebad Khoso (20) and Qurban Khoso (25) were riding on the motorbike which was hit by the truck. The dead bodies and injured were shifted to taluka hospital in Kotri. The family lived in a village near Jamshoro Power House. The police impounded the truck and arrested the driver.

### Alleged killer from Punjab gets security guard job in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): A proclaimed offender and absconder from Punjab, got a security guard's job in Karachi.

The man arrested by the Punjab and Karachi police two days ago, disclosed how he was recruited and remained security guard in the metropolis for 14 months without proper documents.

Accused Waseem had murdered a man Nasir in Lahore's Baghbanpura in year 2023 and escaped with the wife of the victim, first to Rawalpindi and later to Karachi.

Accused Waseem and the woman accompanying with him, were first hiding at Madhu Goth in Karachi's Gulshan area, the accused told police after his arrest.



ISLAMABAD: Prince Rahim Aga Khan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Govt set to present FY2024-25 budget tomorrow

ISLAMABAD (APP): Amid challenges both at internal and external levels, the incumbent government is all set to present its first budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 in the Parliament on June 12 (Wednesday).

The budget will be presented by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb.

The budget had been formulated while considering the existing challenges being faced by economy at domestic and international fronts. Hence, mitigating the people's sufferings, transforming the agriculture sector, promoting information technology (IT), and boosting exports would be the main focus of the document, sources said.

In addition to fiscal

management, revenue mobilization, measures for economic stabilization and growth, reduction in non-development expenditures, job creation and people-friendly policies for the socioeconomic prosperity of the country would feature in the budget.

The sources said the preparations for the announcement of the federal budget for fiscal year 2024-25 continued in full swing in accordance with the prescribed timelines.

The budget was being prepared in close coordination among all the departments and ministries involved in the budget related events, including the presentation of the budget in the Parliament and launching of the Economic Survey, they added.

## Chairperson BISP visits Garhi Khuda Bakhsh

LARKANA (APP): Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), chairperson Rubina Khalid visited Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto on Monday and offered fateha at shrines of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Shaheed Mir Murtaza Bhutto, Shaheed Shah Nawaz Bhutto and other martyrs besides laid flowers on the graves.

Speaking to the media, Rubina Khalid said that the institution established in the name of martyr Benazir Bhutto is sacred for us, and added that no injustice will be tolerated in this regard.

President Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had given the responsibility to

work for the rights of poor and provide relief to them in a transparent manner.

"I will try my best to fulfill this great responsibility in a better way," she said. She said that President Asif Ali Zardari has instructed that there shouldn't be any kind of deduction from the money given to the beneficiaries under BISP.

She said, we are creating a system through which, the poor people could get money in a dignified manner.

In reply to a question, the BISP Chairperson said that this system is linked to NADRA, it may have errors but after reviewing the program it will be cleared from errors.



GARHI KHUDA BUX: Benazir Income Support Program Chairperson, Rubina Khalid offering Fateha for the peace of departed soul at the graves of PPP Founder, Martyred Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Martyred Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto during his visit at Bhutto Mausoleum in Garhi Khuda Bux.

## First Mango, Handicrafts Expo concludes in Matiari

HYDERABAD (APP): The first mango and handicrafts expo organized by District Administration Matiari successfully concluded. Commissioner Hyderabad Division Ahsan Ali Qureshi, was the chief guest of the closing ceremony.

Commissioner Qureshi visited various stalls showcasing mangoes, handicrafts, and animal exhibits, expressing admiration for the efforts of farmers and artisans.

On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Matiari Muhammad Yousuf Shaikh, SSP Syed Asghar Ali Shah, Additional Deputy Commissioner Noor Ahmed Khahro, CEO of Sindh Enterprise Development Fund Khizar Parwez, District Officer Education Amir Bux Sahito, Additional Director Agri-

culture Zameer Surhyo, Additional Director Social Welfare Rafiq Ahmad Jamali, Deputy Director Livestock Dr Riaz Laghari and other officials were also present.

Commissioner Hyderabad Ahsan Ali Qureshi congratulated the district administration on the successful event, expressing his delight at witnessing the variety of mango and handicraft stalls as well as children's scientific models. He emphasized the importance of organizing such events across the entire division. Deputy Commissioner Yousuf Shaikh highlighted that the success of the expo was a result of the relentless efforts of officers from various departments including Revenue, Agriculture, Livestock, Social Welfare, Police, and Education.



HYDERABAD: Members of Qaumi Awami Tehreek are holding protest demonstration against Israeli aggression and atrocities on the Gaza Strip and solidarity with the Palestinians, at Hyderabad press club.

## PM congratulates Israr on election as Oxford Union president

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday congratulated Pakistani student Israr Khan on his election as the President of the Oxford Union.

Israr Khan has been elected Oxford Union President for Hilary Term 2025 with 617 first preferences, winning by a significant margin over Izzy Horrocks-Taylor's 393 first preferences.

Hailing from Balochistan province, Israr Khan is pursuing a DPhil in Law at Regent's Park College and served as the Union's Chief of Staff.

## Zulfikar Ali Shah posted as Chairman Anti-Corruption

KARACHI (APP): Zulfikar Ali Shah, an officer of Ex-PCS (BS-20), awaiting posting is posted with immediate effect and until further orders as the Chairman of Enquiries and Anti-Corruption Establishment, Sindh. This was stated in a notification issued here on Monday.

## PQFTL announces appointment of new CEO

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Family Takaful Limited (PQFTL), a leading provider of Shariah-compliant Family Takaful solutions, has appointed Waqas Ahmad as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Waqas Ahmad boasts an impressive three-decade career in the Takaful and insurance industry, marked by significant achievements in various areas. He has demonstrated expertise in Life Insurance/Takaful underwriting and servicing, product development and innovation, re-Takaful arrangements and strategic partnerships, digital transformation and technology integration, and establishing and leading new Takaful ventures. In terms of leadership experience, Waqas Ahmad has held various roles, including Chief Operating Officer (COO) at PQFTL, where he honed a deep understanding of the company's operations and values.

## Man shot dead over resisting robbery

KARACHI (INP): In a tragic incident, a man was shot dead by unknown armed robbers in the Quaid Abad area of Karachi on Monday.

As per details, the incident occurred at a dairy shop, when a 35-year-old Baqir, resident of Hamal Goth, was buying milk in Quaid Abad. The onlookers told police that two armed robbers tried to snatch the victim's mobile but opened fire when he resisted the robbery. Police officials stated that the robbers fled without taking the phone, further investigation is underway. In a separate incident, a man was gunned down by unknown armed robbers in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal area of Karachi.

## Cancellation of flights continues at Karachi Airport

KARACHI (INP): It seemed not much effort was being put in to operate the flights schedule fully at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport as a number of more flights were cancelled on Monday also.

Air Blue flight PA-171 from Karachi to Jeddah has been cancelled while Serene Air flights ER-501 and 503 to Islamabad were also put off. Serene Air flight ER-551 from Karachi to Peshawar has also been cancelled along with Air Sial flight PF-144 from Karachi to Lahore.

## PM invites AKDN to invest more in Pak tourism sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday invited the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) to increase its investment in Pakistan's tourism sector.

He extended the invitation in a meeting with Chairperson Executive Committee of Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development Prince Rahim Aha Khan, who called on him along with a five-member delegation.

The prime minister also congratulated Prince Rahim Aha Khan on receiving the Nishan-e-Pakistan Award from the Government of Pakistan.

He expressed gratitude to Prince Rahim Aha Khan for establishing vari-

ous social welfare projects in less developed and remote areas of Gilgit-Balistan and Chitral.

He said setting up of various welfare projects in Pakistan's education, health, agriculture, tourism, IT and other sectors was commendable.

The establishment of a software technology park and solar power plants organized by the Aga Khan Development Network in Hunza were also highly commendable, the prime minister said. He also expressed his appreciation for the establishment of the microfinance banking center of Habib Bank Limited in Gilgit under the auspices of Aga Khan Development Network.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Tax Ombudsman, Dr Asif Mahmood Jah, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Salik attends symposium on Saudi Arabia's Hajj arrangements

MAKKAH (APP): AL MUKARRAMAH (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Monday attended a daylong annual symposium organized by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to share its elaborate Hajj arrangements for serving the guests of Allah Almighty in the holy land.

The minister was accompanied by Director General (Hajj) Abdul Wahab Soomro, Director (Hajj) and other senior officers of the Pakistan Hajj Mission and the ministry.

The 48th Grand Hajj Symposium, titled "No Hajj without permission," was an initiative of the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and was attended by ministers and

religious scholars from various countries.

The symposium is a primary platform for intellectual leadership and knowledge exchange, fostering deeper understanding, appreciation, and comprehension of the spiritual, cultural, and social dimensions of the Hajj rituals.

Speakers highlighted the Kingdom's achievements in serving pilgrims, showcasing pioneering projects and developments in the two Holy Mosques.

They emphasized the cultural and civilizational role the Kingdom undertook to serve Hajj pilgrims, consolidating the principle of peaceful intellectual dialogue on issues concerning the Hajj season.

## Govt implementing measures to control iron smuggling on border areas: Ali Pervaiz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Economic Affairs Ali Pervaiz on Monday informed the National Assembly that the government is implementing measures to control iron smuggling at Taftan border area. During the question hour in the House, the minister said that all out resources would be utilized to protect the production of the country's local industries including the iron industry. The minister said that monitoring on both sides of the Iran-Pakistan border has been tightened to prevent iron smuggling on bordering areas.

Ali Pervaiz said that the only way to escape the clutches of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program is through reforms, quoting the examples from countries like Vietnam, Indonesia and India.

To another question, he said that appeals involving amounts over Rs 20 million would be decided by appellate tribunals instead of the Commissioner of Income Tax, adding that artificial intelligence and other methods are being used in the selection of audits.

Ali Pervaiz said that minimum wage should be reviewed considering the current inflationary period, adding that he would convey members' views on revising the minimum wage in the upcoming budget.

To another question, he said that Bank Al Habib is a private bank with its own board where employees can address their grievances, adding that there is the institution of the Banking Ombudsman for such matters. He said in terms of Section 183(1) of the Companies Act, 2017, the Board of Directors (BoD) of banks are responsible for the policy making and supervision of the affairs of the bank including human resource related policies.



HYDERABAD: Workers of HDA Mazdoor Union (CBA) hold a protest against non-payment of their 6 months salaries outside the Mayor office.

## BISP chairperson meets with PPP ladies wing office bearers

SUKKUR (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Rubina Khalid on Monday met with the office bearers of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) ladies wing Sukkur to discuss about the ongoing and recently launched initiatives of the programme.

Rubina Khalid said the programme played an important role in the economic empowerment of women and reiterated her commitment to serve the

marginalised segments of the society through the programme.

She said that the Benazir Income Support Programme is dedicated to provide essential support to the most vulnerable communities, particularly focusing on the economic empowerment of women.

We are committed to enhancing the programme's reach and impact to ensure that no one is left behind, said Ms Khalid.

## No water shortage, provinces given 100% share: Minister told NA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Water Resources Musadik Malik informed the National Assembly on Monday that there is currently no water shortage in the country, and all provinces are receiving their full water share as per the agreed accord in the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) meeting.

Responding to a calling attention notice regarding a 29 percent water shortage observed in Sindh province during the early Kharif season and the diversion of flow into the Link

Canal, he said that the IRSA meeting on May 13 decided that water would be provided to provinces according to their shares.

"At present, there is no shortage of water, and all provinces are receiving 100 percent of their water share as agreed in the accord," he said. He said that IRSA included representatives from all provinces and that all decisions are made by consensus. Regarding the Link Canal, he mentioned that only provinces with canals can decide on the provision of water to canals.

## Aafia Siddiqui are given electric shocks in head for reciting Holy Quran in US jail: Dr Fouzia Siddiqui

KARACHI (Online): Dr Fouzia Siddiqui has said that her sister Dr Aafia Siddiqui is given electric shocks in head after tying her with ropes in US jail for reciting the Holy Quran.

She said this while talking to media men on her return from US here at Karachi airport Monday.

While speaking to the media men about her meeting with her sister Dr Aafia Siddiqui in US she said they took her to a room on the first day for meeting with her sister Aafia Siddiqui. It was room made of glass and phone was out of order. We asked her to repair phone and they replied the equipment is not available to repair phone.

We tried to talk to her by screaming aloud. The counsel was also with us. US authorities did not allow us to get signature on any documents from Dr Aafia. On next day the conversation was arranged by installing an other phone. Jail Authorities had done some thing with the phone by using chemicals. As soon as I took phone, my breathes was stopped and I started coughing. My condition deteriorated. Due to it I could not talk to Dr Aafia. When phone was switched off then the US authorities did not allow us to talk again.

They agreed with great difficulty for arranging phone talks.



KARACHI: Police staffs restore baton charge and using water cannon to repel protesters moving towards Red Zone area during protest demonstration of All Pakistan Clerk Association (APCA) for acceptance of their demands, held at Karachi press club.

## KE introduces live app for easy access to income tax certificates

KARACHI (INP): The K-Electric on the occasion of closure of the fiscal year when citizens prepare to file their taxes has introduced a quick and new service for customers to download their tax certificates through the KE Live App in just four simple clicks. These include sales tax for our industrial or commercial customers, advance income tax for residential accounts, and withholding tax certificate for net metering customers.

The initiative is an extension of KE's efforts to digitize its services to bring in more efficiency and customer-centricity in its processes and leverages technology and innovation to bridge the gap between the customer and the company. The KE spokesperson sharing his comment on the features said, "We're pleased to expand the portfolio of services on the KE Live App, which reduces the need for customers to physically visit our centers by offering them a digital solution at their fingertips."