

# Independent

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## No country allowed to interfere in Pakistan domestic affairs: Dar

**Pakistan weighs tit-for-tat resolution after US election probe demand; "We must show our unity, we must show that we mean business," says Foreign Minister**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar informed the National Assembly on Thursday that the government would bring a resolution in the House to counter the resolution passed by the US House of Representatives on June 25.

Winding up the discussion on a cut motions, he said, "The government has taken note of the resolution passed by the US House of Representatives on June 25. We believe that the timing and context of this particular resolution do not align well with the positive dynamics of our bilateral ties and stem from an incomplete understanding of the political situation and electoral process in Paki-

stan. Pakistan, as the world's second-largest parliamentary democracy and fifth-largest democracy overall, is committed to the values of constitutionalism, human rights, and the rule of law in pursuance of our own national interest."

He said, "We must show our sovereignty and unity. We must show we mean business... I will request all to come together and present a clear resolution in response to the US resolution."

The deputy prime minister also read out a statement earlier issued by the Foreign Office saying, "Pakistan has taken note of the passage of House Resolution 901 by the US House of Representatives on June 25. We believe that the timing and context of this particular resolution do not align well with the positive dynamics of our bilateral ties and stem from an incomplete understanding of the political situation and electoral process in Paki-

stan. Pakistan, as the world's second-largest parliamentary democracy and fifth-largest democracy overall, is committed to the values of constitutionalism, human rights, and the rule of law in pursuance of our own national interest."

He said that Pakistan believed in constructive dialogue and engagement based on mutual respect and understanding. Such resolutions, he noted, were neither constructive nor objective.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding promotion of Pakistan-Azerbaijan economic ties.

## Threats to Parliament House prompts enhanced security: Speaker NA

ISLAMABAD (INP): Speaker National Assembly (NA), Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Thursday said that threats to Parliament House prompted to enhanced security measures.

Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) Member National Assembly (MNA), Shehryar Afridi during the session on Thursday, raised concerns about the extensive presence of police and security personnel within the Parliament House premises.

He highlighted that the increased security had been causing difficulties for members of Parliament.

In response, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq acknowledged the security concerns, stating, "Parliament House is facing a threat, which necessitated these security arrangements."

## Reforms in institutions priority of govt: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif says the government is working on many projects to provide ample employment opportunities to the youth and to develop their skills.

He was talking to a delegation of young parliamentarians that called on him in Islamabad today.

The delegation included Members of the National Assembly Raja Osama Sarwar, Barrister

Aqeel Malik, Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, Ahmed Atiq Anwar, Nosheen Iftikhar, Rana Aradat Sharif Khan, Muhammad Usman Owaisi, Amar Ahmad Khan Leghari, Dr. Shaista Khan, Zamab Baloch, Saad Wasim and Shahid Usman.

Talking to the delegation, the Prime Minister said we have taken many steps to provide relief to the common man in the budget of the new financial year.

## NA approves over Rs 47.567b for Interior Division

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly (NA) on Thursday approved the demand for grants worth over Rs 47.567 billion for the Ministry of Interior to meet the expenditure during the financial year 2024-25. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Aurangzeb moved four demands for grants which were approved by the house with majority of votes.

## Home Minister expresses grief over demise of crime reporters

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Home Minister Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar expressed his deep sorrow on Thursday over the passing of two veteran crime reporters.

In separate condolence statements, the Minister mourned the loss of senior crime reporters Tanveer Baig and Zulfiqar Bhugio.

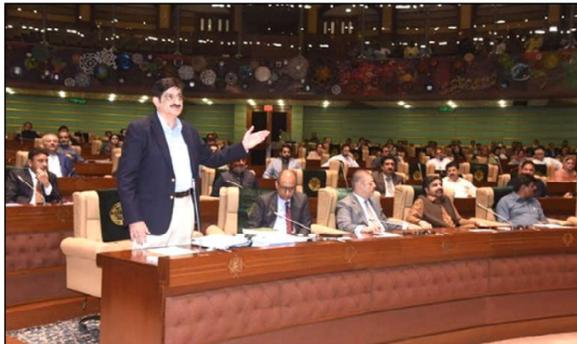
## PM directs strategy formulation for stronger economic ties with Azerbaijan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday instructed the formulation of a comprehensive strategy to strengthen cooperation and trade partnership with Azerbaijan in the fields of economy and investment.

During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on initiatives aimed at enhancing trade volume, capacity, and trade and investment between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

It was highlighted during the briefing that there was substantial potential for energy cooperation with Azerbaijan, and discussions were ongoing for a preferential trade agreement between both countries.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, along with Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for Privatization and Investment Abdul Ajeem Khan, Federal Minister for Power Sardar Owais Khan Leghari, Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi, and other senior officials attended the meeting.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah concludes the debate on the budget for 2024-25 on the floor of the assembly.

## China lauds establishment of SPU in Islamabad for foreigners

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi held an important meeting with his counterpart from the People's Republic of China (PRC), Qi Yanjun, in New York on Thursday. The meeting took place at the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations. The two leaders engaged in a detailed discussion on Pakistan-China relations and security matters. They also discussed cooperation between law enforcement agencies and China's support in training and modern technology.

Qi Yanjun said that China would provide full cooperation in training and capacity building of Pakistani law enforcement agencies. He also appreciated the es-

tablishment of the Special Protection Unit (SPU) in Islamabad for the security of foreign nationals, particularly Chinese citizens. He also assured the Federal Minister for Interior full cooperation in the training and other related matters of the SPU.

Regarding Pakistan-China relations, the PRC Minister said that Pakistan and China are all-weather friends and their friendship is stronger than steel.

The federal minister for Interior briefed his PRC counterpart on the progress made in the Dassu incident.

Qi Yanjun expressed satisfaction over the progress in the case and praised Pakistani agencies for their hard work and professional approach in tracing the unfortunate incident.

## Attaullah Tarar says: Opposition's cut motions unrelated to Law Ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday said that the cut motions of the opposition members had nothing to do with the Ministry of Law and Justice.

Instead of demands for grants of the Law Ministry, their discussions focused solely on the judiciary's internal matters, he said while speaking in the National Assembly.

The minister said the opposition legislators highlighted issues unrelated to

the Law Ministry. They even did not mention the funds specifically allocated for ensuring common people's access to justice, he added.

Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, who was chairing session, put the cut motions pertaining to the Law and Justice Division for the approval of the House.

However, the same were ultimately rejected and the demands for grants put forth by the Ministry of Law and Justice received approval.

## Power tariff likely to hike by Rs3.41/unit

ISLAMABAD (INP): The power tariff is likely to hike by Rs 3.41 per unit on account of monthly fuel adjustment (MFA).

As per details, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) is set to hear an application by the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) to hike the power tariff by Rs3.41 per unit. The CPPA has filed an application to NEPRA seeking an increase in the electricity tariff, citing an increase in the monthly fuel adjustment for May.

According to the CPPA, 12.26 billion units of electricity were generated last month, with a production cost of Rs9.12 per unit.

## Three killed, seven injured in Hyderabad road mishap

HYDERABAD (INP): Three people including a woman were killed and seven others injured in a dreadful road mishap here on Thursday.

According to details, gravel laden over speeding truck rammmed into two motorcycles and a rickshaw near Mehran Arts Council in Latifabad area of Hyderabad.

As a result of accident, three people including a woman were killed on the spot while seven others were injured.

The bodies and injured were shifted to hospital and police after registering a case against truck driver started investigations.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar addressing the National Assembly.

## IG Sindh announces free hepatitis and HIV screenings for police force

KARACHI (INP): Inspector General (IG) of Sindh Police Ghulam Nabi Memon announced free screenings for hepatitis and HIV among both male and female police personnel on Thursday.

Following the IG's directive, the Medical Superintendent (MS) of the Police Hospital Dr Muzaffar Ali Jakharoni initiated the necessary measures to implement this programme.

Dr Jakharoni has communicated with the heads of the hepatitis and HIV programmes to coordinate the screening efforts.

Medical teams from

the Police Hospital in collaboration with experts from the Hepatitis and HIV Programme will conduct the screenings. This comprehensive process will be executed in phases to ensure thorough and effective coverage. "The primary objective of this screening initiative is to provide free treatment to any personnel diagnosed with these diseases," stated Dr. Muzaffar Ali Jakharoni. He also assured that the confidentiality of those who test positive will be strictly maintained, emphasising the importance of privacy and dignity for all individuals involved.

## Faisal Edhi announces rally against load shedding in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Abdul Sattar Edhi's son Faisal Edhi has announced the launching of the Liyari Bachao movement which will hold a rally against the load-shedding of electricity on June 30 in Karachi. Faisal Edhi announced the rally will be taken out from Chaki Wara to Karachi Press Club. Faisal Edhi said in the current heat wave, people are dying due to load shedding of electricity. He said during the recent heat wave, 568 dead bodies have been brought to cold storage in Edhi centres.

## CPEC 2.0 to bolster Pakistan's 5E initiative: Planning Minister

KARACHI (INP): CPEC 2.0 will bolster Pakistan's 5E initiative, said Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal while addressing a seminar held here by KASB Ktrade Securities.

The 5Es initiative is centred around five key pillars, which include exports, E-Pakistan, environment and climate change, energy and infrastructure and equity and empowerment.

The seminar themed "CPEC 2.0: Business Collaboration Between Pakistan and China". Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the opportunities of the new phase of CPEC featured by B2B cooperation with a view to the outcomes of Pakistani

PM Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China earlier this month.

According to Gwadar Pro, the Planning Minister summarised that over 1000 business meetings were held during PM's visit to China, which has brought together over 150 companies from Pakistan and over 200 firms in China in a grand business conference.

In terms of the first "E", exports, he cited the success of sesame seeds and chilies. "The exports of sesame seeds to China just started around 3 years ago, and today we have an export of \$300 million.

Similarly, exports of chilies have expanded exponentially.



ISLAMABAD: Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan talking with media persons outside district court in the Federal Capital, as the court rejects Imran Khan, wife appeal in unlawful marriage case.

## Court rejects PTI founder & his wife's appeals for suspension of sentence in marriage case

**PTI announces to challenge decision regarding rejection of appeals**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The District and Sessions Court on Thursday rejected the petitions of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and his Bushra Bibi for suspension of their sentences in the marriage case.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka announced the verdict which he had reserved on June 25. The court, in its 10-page written order, observed that the accused had not provided any valid reason to justify their plea for the suspension of sentence.

Bushra Bibi's status as a woman also did not justify suspension of the sentence or her release on bail, heard the case. It may be added that on February 3, 2024, Senior Civil Judge Qudratullah had convicted the PTI founder and his wife in the marriage case with seven years jail term. Bushra Bibi's ex-husband Khawar Manika filed the case against their marriage.

The PTI founder and his wife's appeals against their conviction were filed on February 23, 2024, in the court of Sessions Judge Shah Rukh Arjumand. On May 23, Judge Arjumand reserved the verdict on the

appeals. On May 29, Khawar Manika expressed no confidence in the court, leading Judge Arjumand to request the Islamabad High Court to transfer the appeals to another court.

On June 3, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) transferred the appeals to Additional Sessions Judge Afzal Majoka.

On June 13, IHC's Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb ordered the sessions court to decide the petitions seeking suspension of the sentence within 10 days and the main appeals within a month.



NEW YORK: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi attending meeting with his counterpart from the People's Republic of China Qi Yanjun.

rent year.

Afghan interim government had boycotted second Doha talks due to participation of representatives of Afghan women and civil society representatives.

Sources said for the first time special representatives from world on Afghanistan will sit face to face with Afghan Taliban in Doha talks.

UN will make consultation with representatives of Afghan Civil Society inside and outside Afghanistan ahead of Doha talks.

The representatives of Afghan women and Afghan civil society will talk to special representatives on Afghanistan on July 2 after Doha talks.

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has decided to participate in Doha talks on Afghanistan taking place this week.

According to diplomatic sources Pakistan special representative on Afghanistan Asif Durrani and Assistant foreign secretary (West Asia) Ahmad Naseem Warraich will represent Pakistan in the talks.

Pakistan delegation led by Asif Durrani and Ahmad Naseem Warraich will leave for Doha within next few days.

The third two days Doha talks will start from June 30 under UN.

Afghan interim government will formally participate in third Doha talks and conference in the cur-

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Positive feelers

Hopes were not very high that relations between Pakistan and India would improve greatly under Modi 3.0, and up till now there is little to suggest that Narendra Modi's third stint in power would change the bilateral equation positively. Pakistan was not invited to the Indian prime minister's oath-taking earlier this month, whereas other regional leaders attended. Moreover, there was a lukewarm exchange of X posts between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Mr Modi to mark the latter's election victory, and while replying to Nawaz Sharif's congratulatory tweet, the Indian leader highlighted the need for 'security'.

Yet the Pakistani administration has lately sent out positive public feelers, perhaps to gauge the mood in New Delhi. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, who also oversees the foreign affairs portfolio, while speaking at an event on Tuesday, called for "good-neighbourly relations" with India, at the same time emphasising a "just and peaceful solution" to the Kashmir dispute. Mr Dar added that it is time for "sober reflection" on the status of bilateral ties. Considering Mr Dar's position on the totem pole, the public outreach to India appears to be a serious attempt to mend ties. From here, the onus is on India to reciprocate. One small but crucial step towards normalisation can be the restoration of full diplomatic ties. Both capitals have been without the other state's high commissioner for nearly five years, after ties were downgraded in 2019 in the aftermath of India's scrapping of Article 370 of its constitution.

Moreover, the stalled dialogue process should be restarted, both at the official level and via the backchannel. The Indian establishment can pretend that Pakistan no longer matters in its foreign policy calculus, but the truth is that a peaceful region will bring economic and other dividends for the entire subcontinent, including India.

As and when this process of talking to each other commences, Pakistan should stick to its principled stand on Kashmir, yet it should be willing to discuss all other outstanding issues. While it is expected that India would keep repeating its mantra on 'terrorism' and 'security', New Delhi's negotiators should adopt a less rigid stance if they are at all serious about regional peace.

Either the status quo can continue, and with it the mistrust and toxicity that have dominated bilateral relations for over seven decades, or both sides can take bold steps for peace, and create a better future for the more than two billion people of the subcontinent.

A basic framework for peace exists from the Musharraf era; this can be dusted up and updated if both sides are committed to leaving the past behind and working for a better future. Much will depend on whether and how New Delhi reacts to Mr Dar's overture.

## Istanbul, not...

F.S. Aijazuddin

Turkish cuisine is to die for, not from. What seafood is to the Japanese, meat is for the Turks. It promises longevity.

The average lifespan of a Japanese is 84 years, a Turk 71 years. Indulgent Pakistanis last only 66 years.

Türkiye today is where Pakistan should have been, had it been properly husbanded. Pakistan, although a brother in Islam, took instead the path of unbridled procreation. Türkiye's population (99 per cent Muslim) increased from 21 million in 1950, to 86m in 2023. Over the same period, Pakistan's population burgeoned from 34m to over 220m. Birth control is spelt differently in Turkish.

Today, while Pakistan is still struggling to emerge out of its ideological sac, Türkiye knows what it is. It is the Türkiye envisaged by its Jinnah; ie, Kemal Atatürk. On Nov 10 each year — Atatürk's death anniversary — all Türkiye comes to a halt and observes one minute's silence. Jinnah shares his birthday with Jesus Christ and Nawaz Sharif.

The late president Pervez Musharraf studied in Türkiye until 1956. He spoke Turkish fluently. Unfortunately, that is all he learned. He forgot Türkiye's seismic shift from a khaki kleptocracy to a democratically elected dictatorship.

Its present ruler, Recep Erdogan, has been in power as prime minister, then president, since 2003. On his way up, he served as Istanbul's mayor. (In China, being mayor of Shanghai helps in reaching Beijing.)

In 1999, he served four months in jail for making a speech in which he recited Ziya Gökalp's 1912 poem, Soldier's Prayer. Erdogan quoted: 'Minarets are bayonets, domes are helmets, mosques are our barracks, believers are

soldiers'.

Is Erdogan a second Atatürk? No. Türkiye's pantheon has only one place at the top. Is he a Turkish version of the Saudi MBS? Erdogan, even if he had the money, is too canny to waste resources on the folly of a \$1.5 trillion Neom city project.

Türkiye — dismissed in the 19th century as the "sick man of Europe", and, in the 20th century, denied entry into the EU — has decided to steer its own course. It is a vibrant example of a benign Islam — shorn of ritualism and an intrusive clergy.

Its priorities are education, infrastructure and expanding tourism. In 2023, Türkiye's income from 57m visitors exceeded \$54 billion. The largest number — Russians — live within spitting distance across the Black Sea. Pakistan sent 140,388, less than 155,155 Mexicans. The Mongolian hordes have yet to invade Türkiye. A Turkish Chinatown is still decades away.

A 1990 guide book warned travellers that Turks were just "beginning to learn about living on plastic". Modern Turks are now as addicted to plastic cards as the Americans are to plastic surgery.

Turkey is becoming a preferred destination for medical tourism. Almost half a million foreign visitors come to have their looks improved (or damaged) by Botox procedures. Some hospitals have dedicated hotels where patients check in, go next door to have their operation, and return for five-star recuperation.

In Istanbul, stray dogs and cats are tagged at official expense and pampered with free meals and comfortable kennels. The Indian cynophile, Maneka Gandhi, who fought for Delhi's canines, would have been gratified. After the recent Eidul

Azha holidays (known as Kurban Bayrami), bones became hard to come by. A rabies epidemic could force the Turkish administration to rethink its hospitality.

Despite the keenness to encourage tourists, Turks are curiously xenophobic. They insist on speaking only Turkish. This often leads to a dialogue of the deaf between Turks and strangers, until both tap into their mobile phones for translation.

Istanbul's shopping malls are a treat, even for a tourist tired of London. In them, designer outlets rub cheeks with shops offering every kind of Turkish sweets and flavours of honey. Haunches of cured meat compete with Har-ro-ds' Food Hall. The generational divide appears in the Food Court, where hamburgers and fried chicken overwhelm traditional adana kebabs and shorba.

Türkiye is now more than a country; it is an experience. To savour its fullness, one needs to immerse oneself in it. Young locals do it by dipping into the Bosphorus, which is remarkably clean considering the armada of tankers, cruise ships, ferries and boats that ply through it.

To spend a few days in a Turkish hotel is to escape from home. To live in a villa in the cool, silent suburb of Zekeriyaköy, high in the green, undulating hills that overlook Istanbul, is to holiday in heaven. Over Kurban Bayrami, its affluent residents fled to their second seaside homes, leaving streets empty for dogs, their walkers, and for those who prefer their Eid away from an urban abattoir.

Holiday in Türkiye. You will emerge from its hammam physically cleansed, emotionally relaxed, and pumelled free of domestic anxieties. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Taxing health

Navaira Ali Bangash

'Babu' a colloquial term and a remnant of our colonial past, was used to refer to the British bureaucracy, who would wield the stick to tax the people. Even after independence, our inherited bureaucratic system and 'babu' mindset haven't evolved. Every year before the budget, we hear of tax babus arbitrarily formulating policies, including on health, to decide the fate of the people.

Interesting research published by the British Medical Journal in 2011 chronicles how, in 2003, the Tony Blair government in the UK invited all food companies, secretly, and informed them of the burden of hypertension cases on the National Health Service. The government's ask was to reduce sodium content by 10 per cent every year for three years. It was an inclusive, well-informed policy directive that didn't appear out of thin air, but was backed by data and research. After many years, once its impact had taken effect, the study quoted above was published to document this.

Clearly, almost eight decades after leaving the subcontinent, the British have evolved, backing policy measures with authentic data to make informed decisions without disadvantaging any specific stakeholder. But we have not. Take the matter of health tax; there are numerous global examples of health taxes on a myriad of items consumed by the public to save on healthcare costs. Some countries impose duties on beverages (liquor and carbonated drinks) and junk food, and particularly on tobacco. The decisions taken are well-

formed and intended for the long term; they are not simply an arbitrary exercise to meet revenue shortfalls.

Last year, the government imposed massive duties on the cigarette sector to discourage consumers. While the decision was correct, it should have also noted that the number of cases of oral cancer exceed those of lung cancer. Gutka consumption is the main reason behind oral cancer, an undocumented area that is not just completely off the tax authorities' radar but that also doesn't face any action except for the occasional 'ban'.

Meanwhile, it is undeniable that sugar consumption has harmful effects. Yet solely holding fruit juices and drinks responsible for our increasing diabetes burden is to overlook other factors. This is backed by studies. For example, official research published by the US in 2022 on the role of dietary sugars and obesity in type 2 diabetes, conducted a meta-analysis of multiple interventional studies. It showed that one can no longer conclude that sugar consumption alone causes type 2 diabetes, and that, instead, a hypercaloric diet — defined as "one in which a person's energy consumption exceeds their energy expenditure" — achieved by the overconsumption of any type of macronutrients, is a major risk factor.

Diabetes avoidance needs a total lifestyle change; attributing diabetes solely to sugar consumption oversimplifies the complex factors involved in the development of the disease.

In Pakistan's context, the lion's share of sugar consumption stems from our cultural sweet tooth thanks to halwais (who more of-

ten than not evade tax regulations), while the risks of packaged confectionary items are completely overlooked. The easiest sector to drop the anvil on is beverages that have some goodness of fruit in them, and to bracket them with energy drinks and sodas that are caffeinated and full of added sugar.

How can a country that is already facing a malnutrition crisis and needs fortified products tax juice with natural fruit content, which contains essential micronutrients such as Vitamin C, often prescribed by doctors for patients recovering from illness to boost immunity? Multiple research has suggested the importance of juice as a healthy source of energy, whereas in countries such as the US, the dietary guidelines for 2020-2025 allow for up to half of the recommended daily fruit intake to be replaced with fruit juice.

All this brings me back to the point that any policy decision should be well-thought-out, especially when it comes to one that will have an impact on the health of the common man. It is an unfortunate fact that when those in policymaking circles are not connected with the ground realities and tend to overlook hard facts as well as research, it becomes near impossible to take the correct steps. Invariably, the fallout of uninformed policymaking is suffered by the masses, and not by the decision-makers who will get transfers and postings and will eventually retire with hefty pensions and perks without having to answer any uncomfortable questions about how they exercised their powers. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Agriculture top priority for government: Tanveer Hussain

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday said the agriculture sector is a top priority for the government.

Discussing the Opposition's cut motions on the Ministry's demands for grants, he said that efforts were underway to incorporate research and modern technology into the sector to boost per-acre yield.

Rana Tanveer said a National Development Regulatory Authority has

been established to enhance productivity and targeted subsidies for the Kharif crop are in progress. He said prompt payment to sugarcane farmers is also being ensured.

The minister expressed gratitude to the Opposition for raising critical points. He highlighted that food security was a major global challenge today and the current government had focused on agriculture, which formed the backbone of the national economy. He said several initiatives have been

undertaken for farmers, including subsidies for the Kharif crop, overseen by a cabinet committee headed by the finance minister, ensuring transparency. He said the prime minister has directed the swift completion of these measures.

Rana Tanveer assured that fixed prices for crop production would be guaranteed and outstanding payments to sugarcane farmers would be made.

The minister noted improvements in agricultural output and ongoing technology

collaborations with China and Belarus. "Plans are in place to send students to China and double the per-acre yield," he added.

He emphasized the importance of agricultural research, stating that the federal government has allocated Rs.5 billion, with 26 universities and research centers working on this front.

Rana Tanveer said subsidies for solar-powered tube wells are being introduced by the federal and Punjab governments.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecom Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja addressing Roundtable on IT and Digitalisation with Swedish companies.



Brain storming session headed by Chief statistician Dr.Naeem-uz-zafar (SI) regarding 7th Agricultural Census at Pakistan bureau of statistics, Islamabad.

### B2B cooperation with China upgrading Pakistan's technology

KARACHI (INP): Business to Business (B2B) cooperation with China is upgrading Pakistan's technology.

"Ten years ago, if a Pakistani wanted to use a smart phone, he probably needed to get one from smuggling.

Now, the majority of demand can be met with local production, with 8 of the top 10 mobile manufacturers, mostly Chinese companies, have established presence in Pakistan", said Adnan Aftab, CEO of s m a r t p h o n e

manufacturer Airlink Mobile at a seminar held by KASB Ktrade Securities themed "CPEC 2.0: Business Collaboration Between Pakistan and China".

Earlier this month, the company inked a MoU with Chinese technology company IMIKI to manufacture smart wearable devices in Pakistan.

This collaboration is an epitome of the transformative B2B cooperation between the two countries going on recently.

### PSX stays bullish, gains 252 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 252.61 points, a positive change of 0.32 percent, closing at 78,528.25 points against 78,275.65 points on the last working day.

A total of 283,542,503 shares were traded during the day as compared to 469,756,007 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 11.067 billion against Rs 19.777 billion on the last trading day.

### Pakistan aims to boost trade with Central Asia: Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Thursday said that Pakistan wants to promote bilateral trade and business activities with all the countries of Central Asia for which practical efforts have already been initiated.

Talking to the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov, who called on him, the minister said that States of Central Asia can be beneficiaries of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project which will significantly increase

economic activities in the region, said a press release.

Abdul Aleem Khan apprised the Ambassador about his recent visit to Central Asia and the trade agreements held at the Ten Shen Conference in Tajikistan. Speaking on the occasion Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan expressed his gratitude to the minister for offering promotion of bilateral cooperation and said that there is a large capacity for manpower from Pakistan in various fields of professional expertise for which steps would be welcomed.

### Influx of grey imports continues to undermine auto industry: PBF

KARACHI (INP): Highlighting the critical issues facing Pakistan's automotive CKD sector in its letter to the ministry of industries and production, Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has stated that the automobile sector employs over 3.5 million people and is vital for our industrial development.

With an installed capacity of 1.1 million

units per annum, the sector struggles to produce and retail merely 100,000 units annually, representing less than 10% of its potential.

PBF President Khawaja Mehboob ur Rehman said, "Unfortunately we don't have any vision for putting the country's economy on a self-sustained path of growth.

### Shaza Fatima urges Swedish companies to invest in IT, Telecom sector of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Thursday urged Swedish companies to invest in Pakistan's Information Technology and Telecom sector.

"The present government is taking steps to promote Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the country, as the growth of ICT is a vital factor for progress," she expressed these views while addressing the Roundtable

on IT and Digitalization with Swedish tech companies held at the Ministry of IT & Telecom.

Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan Henrik Persson and representatives of Swedish companies including Ericsson, Need Insights, LCC/Talkpool, Quixel, Saab, and Mahana Wealth Ltd were present on the occasion.

Shaza Fatima said, "Ministry of IT & Telecom is working on fulfilling Digital Pakistan vision through

multiple cross sectoral initiatives including laws, policies and rules and regulations for enablement of true digital landscape."

The Minister of State for IT said, "Digital Pakistan Policy is paving way for taking Digital transformation to the next level." She said, "The government is committed for provision of affordable and quality ICT services to masses. Shaza Fatima said that atmosphere for investment in Pakistan is conducive."

### Rupee gains 03 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Thursday gained 03 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.37 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.40.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.6 and Rs 280.5 respectively.

### LCCI, SBP jointly organise event on Micro, Small & Medium-sized Enterprises Day

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Thursday organised an event, in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), in connection with the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day observance. The day, declared by the United Nations, is marked every year on June 27.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar was the chief guest while Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, SBP Chief Manager Tariq Riaz, Senior Deputy Chief Manager Muhammad Tahir, Hamza Talib of State Bank and a large number of industrialists and traders participated in the event. More than 15 banks set up stalls at the event.

## Pakistan has long-standing deep brotherly relationship with Turkiye: Sardar Saleem

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: The Governor of Punjab met with the Consul General of Turkiye, Durmus Bastug, at the Governor's House, Lahore. In the meeting, issues of mutual interest, strengthening bilateral relations in trade, education and other sectors were discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider said that Pakistan has a long-standing deep brotherly relationship with Turkiye. He said that both the countries have stood by each other in every difficult time. Governor Punjab said that he was grateful to Turkiye's for the its unwavering support for Pakistan's stance on international forums, especially on the Kashmir issue. He said that there is a need to increase the volume of trade between Pakistan and Turkiye. Governor Punjab said that there should be exchanges of delegations of businessmen between Turkiye and Pakistan. He said that the student exchange program between Turkiye and Pakistan should be expanded. The Governor of Punjab said that there is a need to make a comprehensive strategy

regarding scholarships for Pakistani students to study in Turkish universities. Consul General of Turkiye Mr. Durmus Bastug said that there are strong religious and cultural ties between Pakistan and Turkiye. Consul General of Turkiye, Darmus Bastug, congratulated Pakistan for being elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Darmus Bastug said that he would do his best to take the relationship between Pakistan and Turkiye to new heights.



LAHORE: Consul General of Turkiye, Durmus Bastug meeting with Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider at Governor's House.

## Punjab govt conducting first school census to introduce skill based program: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab's Education Minister, Rana Sikandar Hayat Thursday said that all-out measures would be taken to standardise the education system in public schools of Punjab where for better policies, the first school mapping programme to collect data about all school kids will be conducted soon transparently.

Talking to a Private news channel, he stressed on conducting school census at the national level, adding that the Punjab government is taking the lead among all other provinces and recently with the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif school mapping was being conducted to count kids. Through NADRA data will be checked about the enrollment data of students at every district level, he said, adding that long-term policy-making for government schools and enhancing the quality of education will be the top priority of the Punjab government.

## KP lifts ban on recruitment in govt depts

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has lifted the ban on recruitment in government departments. As per details, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has directed the concerned authorities to lift the ban on all types of recruitment in the province. A letter has been issued to the Chief Secretary from the Chief Minister's secretariat. On March 3, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur imposed a ban on all types of recruitment, with the exception of cases already in process at the Public Services Commission.

## 15 dead, 1,237 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 15 people were killed and 1,237 others injured in 1,173 road traffic crashes in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 547 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 690 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 692 drivers.



LAHORE: A group photo of Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, with Vice Chancellor, Shaughta Naz, Dr. Arifa on the occasion of the closing ceremony of the three-day International Conference on Challenges in Global Sustainability (Economics, Environment, and Science) at Lahore College for Women University in the provincial capital.

## CS chairs meeting to review Muharram arrangements

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry to review the arrangements for Muharram ul-Haram in the province. The meeting was attended by IG Police Akhtar Hayat Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Home Department, Member Board of Revenue, relevant secretaries, commissioners, deputy commissioners, security officials, and other officers. During the meeting, a detailed review of the security arrangements for Muharram ul-Haram was conducted. Additional Chief Secretary Muhammad Abid Majid provided a comprehensive briefing, stating that control rooms would be established in both the Police Department and the Home Department to maintain strict vigilance on all activities during Muharram ul-Haram.

## Khawaja Salman says: Punjab aims for enhanced universal health insurance

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique announced the government's intent to enhance the universal health insurance program during a meeting at the Punjab Health Initiative Management Company on Thursday. The session, attended by representatives from various insurance companies, focused on improving the existing framework of the health insurance system. The minister emphasized that all stakeholders are being engaged to refine the program. He highlighted the effective administration of the health card program under PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's leadership but acknowledged challenges in universalizing the health card facility.

## Four killed, 3 injured in armed clash over property dispute

PESHAWAR (INP): At least four people were killed and three others injured in armed clash between two groups over property dispute here on Thursday. According to details, armed men of two groups which were in dispute over ownership of a property exchanged fire in Nahaqi area in jurisdiction of Daudzai police station of Peshawar. In cross firing, four people were killed while three others sustained injuries.

## Two children drowned in fish pond

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Two children, a minor boy and his sister, drowned while bathing in a pond at a fish farm in the suburbs of the city on Thursday, rescuers said. Rescuers 1122 spokesman said that they received information that five years old Khadeeja and seven years old Hadi s/o Shakir had drowned. They reached the site at Khanga Shumali, Jhang Road, within thirteen minutes but by that time, the relatives had retrieved their bodies.

## Nigerian delegation visits PDMA, lauds its working

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of the Nigerian government comprising government officials and governors of three states visited the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), here on Thursday. The delegation learnt about the natural disaster management system of the Punjab government. In view of the ongoing work on disaster risk reduction in Nigeria with the support of the World Bank, information was exchanged with the Punjab government authorities.

According to a PDMA spokesperson, Director General Irfan Ali Kathia informed the delegation about the PDMA working. He said 24-hour communication with all districts was ensured in the provincial control room. The PDMA was alert to all challenges including flood, covid, dengue, drought, smog and heat wave, he added and said advance warnings and alerts are issued to management about heat waves, rain floods and other disasters. The DG briefed the delegation about the flood simulation model. The Nigerian delegation was impressed with the PDMA control room and emergency response system.



LAHORE: U.S. Consul General in Lahore Kristin K. Hawkins being welcomed by Punjab Social Welfare Minister Sohail Shaukat Butt during her arrival at Office of Welfare and Baitul Maal.

## KP govt decides to form judicial commission to probe into May 9 incidents

PESHAWAR (Online): KP government has decided to constitute judicial commission to probe into May 9 incidents. The resolution passed by provincial assembly will now be presented before provincial cabinet for approval. Through the resolution the withdrawal of cases against Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi has been demanded too. Text has been worked

out for judicial inquiry wherein it has been demanded that CCTV be made public. Meeting of KP cabinet has been summoned. The resolution on judicial inquiry is part of agenda of cabinet meeting. It is pertinent to mention here resolution regarding judicial inquiry was passed in KP assembly on May 10. The resolution was tabled by Mushtaq Ghani and Akbar Ayub.

# International News

## Israel says it can send Lebanon 'back to Stone Age' as UN warns against war

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Israel said it does not want war in Lebanon but could send its neighbour "back to the Stone Age", as the UN's humanitarian chief warned such a conflict would be "potentially apocalyptic". The border between the two countries has seen daily exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and Iran-backed Hezbollah militants ever since the October 7 attack on Israel by Hezbollah's ally Hamas, which triggered the war in Gaza. Fears those exchanges could escalate into full-blown war have only grown in recent weeks as cross-border attacks intensified, and after Israel revealed it had approved plans for a Lebanon offensive, prompting new threats from Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah. Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said dur-

ing a visit to Washington on Wednesday that his country could "take Lebanon back to the Stone Age, but we don't want to do it". "We do not want war, but we are preparing for every scenario," he told reporters. "Hezbollah understands very well that we can inflict massive damage in Lebanon if a war is launched." Israel's allies, including key defence backer the United States, have been keen to avoid such an eventuality. A US official said Washington was engaged in "fairly intensive conversations" with Israel, Lebanon and other actors, and believed that no side sought a "major escalation". US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told Gallant on Tuesday that another war with Hezbollah could have "terrible consequences for the Middle East", and urged a diplomatic solution. Germany on Wednesday, echo-

ing a Canadian warning from the day before, "urgently requested" its citizens in Lebanon leave the country. "The current heightened tensions in the border area with Israel could escalate further at any time," updated foreign ministry advice in Berlin said. UN humanitarian coordinator Martin Griffiths told reporters in Geneva on Wednesday that Lebanon was "the flashpoint beyond all flashpoints". "It's beyond planning. It's potentially apocalyptic," warned Griffiths, whose term ends this week. A war involving Lebanon "will draw in Syria... it will draw in others", he added. "It's very alarming." Lebanon's national news agency reported about 10 Israeli strikes on areas near the border on Wednesday, including one around 10:00 pm that destroyed a building in Nabatiyeh, wounding five people.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European leaders attend a family photo session, during the European Union leaders' summit in Brussels, Belgium.

## Ukraine signs security pacts with EU, Lithuania and Estonia

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRUSSELS: The European Union and two of its member countries, Lithuania and Estonia, signed security agreements with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at a summit in Brussels on Thursday. The agreement with the EU lays out the bloc's commitment to help Ukraine in nine areas of security and defence policy - including arms deliveries, military training, defence industry cooperation and demining, according to a draft seen by Reuters. The pact - along with the documents signed with Lithuania and Estonia - is intended to complement other similar agreements sealed between Ukraine and its allies as it continues its defence against Russia's invasion. Countries including the United States, Britain, France and Germany have sealed such pacts with Kyiv. Officials say the agreements are not the same as the mutual defence pact between NATO nations, but are pledges to provide Ukraine with weapons and other aid to bolster its own security and deter any future invasion.

## Irish prime minister condemns bomb hoax at his home

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBLIN: Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris said a hoax bomb threat made to his home on Wednesday night is "utterly unacceptable" and that the intimidation of politicians and their families cannot be allowed to continue. There have been increased instances of people gathering outside the homes of Irish ministers, sometimes wearing masks and erecting anti-migrant banners. Three men were arrested last week over the alleged harassment of an elected official after they gathered outside Harris' home.

## 21 children are set to exit Gaza in first medical evacuation since early May

**Monitoring Desk**  
KHAN YOUNIS: Twenty-one critically ill children were set to exit Gaza on Thursday in the first medical evacuation since the territory's sole travel crossing was shut down in early May, Palestinian officials said. The nearly nine-month Israel-Hamas war has devastated Gaza's health sector and forced most of its hospitals to shut down. Health officials say thousands of people need medical treatment abroad, including hundreds of urgent cases. Family members bid a tearful goodbye to the children and their escorts left the Nasser Hospital in the southern Gaza town of Khan Younis bound for the Kerem Shalom cargo crossing with Israel. It was not clear where they would receive treatment.

## Former Chinese defense minister expelled from ruling Communist Party over graft allegations

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: Former Chinese defense minister Li Shangfu was expelled from the ruling Communist Party and is being investigated for corruption and bribery, the official Xinhua news agency reported Thursday. Li was removed from office in October 2023 after disappearing from public view for almost two months.

## 2 Bolivian army leaders arrested after coup attempt

**Monitoring Desk**  
LA PAZ: Two Bolivian army leaders have been arrested after soldiers and tanks took up position in front of government buildings on Wednesday in what President Luis Arce called an attempted coup. The troops and tanks entered Plaza Murillo, a historic square where the presidency and Congress are situated, in the afternoon, prompting global condemnation of an attack on democracy. One of the tanks tried to break down a metal door of the presidential palace. Surrounded by soldiers and eight tanks, the now-dismissed army chief General Juan Jose Zuniga said the "armed forces intend to restructure democracy, to make it a true democracy and not one run by the same few people for 30, 40 years". Shortly thereafter, AFP reporters saw soldiers and tanks pulling back from the square. The uprising lasted about five hours. Later Wednesday, Zuniga was captured and forced into a police car as he addressed reporters outside a military barracks, footage on state television showed. "General, you are under arrest," Deputy Interior Minister Jhonny Aguilera told Zuniga. "No one can take away the democracy we have won," Arce said from a balcony of the government palace in front of hundreds of supporters. A second senior military officer Juan Arnez Salvador, who was head of the Bolivian navy, was also arrested on Wednesday night. Salvador's arrest was announced by Interior Minister Eduardo del Castillo, who said that Zuniga and Arnez are "two military coup leaders who tried to destroy democracy and the institutionality of our country and failed."

## Taiwan raises China travel alert over death penalty threat

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: Taiwan's government on Thursday urged the public to avoid "unnecessary travel" to China after Beijing announced "die-hard" supporters of the island's independence could face the death penalty. China claims democratic Taiwan as part of its territory and has refused to rule out using force to bring the self-ruled island under its control. Last week, Beijing published judicial guidelines on criminal punishments for supporters of Taiwanese independence, including the death penalty for "particularly serious" cases involving "die-hard" independence advocates, state media reported. Taiwan's top China policy body, the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), on Thursday raised its travel warning to the second-highest "orange" level as a result. "After an overall assessment, the government deems it necessary to raise the travel alert on mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau... and advises people to avoid unnecessary travel," said MAC spokesman Liang Wen-chieh. If Taiwanese people must go to China, Liang advised them to refrain from discussing sensitive issues, photographing military sites, airports and ports, and "carrying books related to politics, history and religion". Beijing has not conducted top-level communications with Taipei since 2016 and has branded the island's President Lai Ching-te a "dangerous separatist".

## UN-led Doha meeting with Taliban not about recognition, says UN

**Monitoring Desk**  
UNITED NATIONS: A United Nations-led meeting with Afghanistan's Taliban in Qatar this weekend will not be a discussion about international recognition of the group, UN political affairs chief Rosemary DiCarlo said on Wednesday. The meeting, which will also be attended by envoys from some 25 countries, will be the third such meeting in Doha, but the first attended by the Taliban, which has not been internationally recognized since seizing power in August 2021 as US-led forces withdrew after 20 years of war. "This is not a meeting about recognition. This is not a meeting to lead to recognition... Having engagement doesn't mean recognition," DiCarlo told reporters. "This isn't about the Taliban. This is about Afghanistan and the people."

## Germany brings in new rules to make it easier to get nationality

**Monitoring Desk**  
BERLIN: The change is expected to prompt thousands of requests to become German - especially from Turkish people who moved to Germany for work. "People have now fully taken in that there will be dual citizenship. And many are now applying as quickly as possible." The law, formally passed in March, comes nearly three years into the reign of the centre-left coalition of Social Democrats, Greens and the Free Democrats. The reform will bring Germany into line with other European countries such as Italy, Sweden, Ireland and France allowing dual citizenship. Before the changes, dual citizenship was possible only for European Union and Swiss nationals as well as children in a couple where one of the parents was from abroad.

## Urges probe of missing youth Pakistan deplores UN report for omitting Kashmiri children's suffering

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Highlighting the plight of Children living under foreign occupation, Pakistan on Wednesday criticized the United Nations for ignoring the suffering of Kashmiri children in its report on 'Children and Armed Conflict', calling the omission "unjust."

Speaking in the UN Security Council, which met under South Korea's presidency, Ambassador Munir Akram said the situation of children in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir had been unjustly omitted this time, despite their ongoing suffering under foreign occupation.

"Generations of Kashmiri children have grown up amidst fear of violence and repression under foreign occupation," the

Pakistani envoy told the 15-member Council. "The report's most glaring and persistent failure and double standard has been its selective omission of certain situations, most importantly, the children of Palestine. It has taken the killing of 14,000 children in the (ongoing) Gaza war for Israel to be included in the report (this year)."

Meanwhile, Ambassador Akram added, "the plight of children in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, previously included in the reports, has been unjustly omitted, despite their ongoing suffering under foreign occupation."

Detailing the plight of children in the occupied territories, where human rights violations are "tragi-

cally routine", the Pakistani envoy said, adding "We vividly recall the heart-wrenching image of a three-year old Kashmiri boy sitting in shock on his grandfather's lifeless body just murdered by Indian soldier; we remember 18-month-old Hiba, her eyes ruptured by pellet guns fired by security forces inside her home in Kapran village of Kashmir."

He said that none of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and several Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council have, who asked for access to Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir to investigate the reports of massive violations of human rights, was allowed to go there.



KARACHI: The Deputy Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Saleemullah, visiting a stall set up at SBP building on the occasion of UN Day of Micro, Small and Medium sized Enterprises.

## SBP aims to double SME financing to Rs1100b: Deputy Governor

KARACHI (APP): Deputy Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Saleemullah on Thursday has reaffirmed the central bank's objective to double the financing of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to Rs1100 billion over the next five years under the Vision-2028 and urged the banks to embrace SME finance as a core business line to boost MSME growth.

He was addressing a seminar organized by SBP to commemorate UN Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Day under this year's theme, 'MSME Finance: Catalyst for Inclusive Growth' that underscores the importance of financial support in unleashing the potential of SMEs.

The SBP joined the global community in celebrating the MSME Day by highlighting the pivotal role these enterprises play in driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and creating jobs. The event was attended by Presidents and CEOs of banks, Development Finance Institutions, senior SBP management, government officials, and representatives of trade bodies.

## Federal Ombudsman Sukkur holds open court

SUKKUR (APP): An open court organized by Federal Ombudsman Sukkur Region Commissioner IRD Dr Abdul Waheed Indhar in the hall of Pano Aqil Municipal Committee on Thursday. The citizens lodged complaints against the different federal departments including SEPCO Sukkur, Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC), Pakistan Railways, Passport Office, EOBI and FIA and other departments.

Speaking to the media, the Federal Ombudsman Sukkur said that more than fifty applications have been collected against various federal departments.

Instructions have been issued to the concerned departments to solve the problems on priority basis, the citizens have also complaints against non-production of passports or undue delay by the passport office staff and the baggage built at the several stations of Pakistan Railways, he said.

By implementing these requests, the problems of the consumers will be resolved as soon as possible, he said, added that the Federal Ombudsman office also resolved the problems being faced by complainants against PTA and universities.



SUKKUR: View of construction and repairing work of damage to gates No 44 and 47 of Sukkur Barrage while the Kisan Gate (temporary gate) to the barrage for replace damaged gates of Sukkur Barrage in Indus River, in Sukkur.

## TDAP organizes dialogue on Banana & dates in Khairpur

SUKKUR (APP): Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) Sukkur, organized a consultative session on Banana and Dates product of Khairpur to assess the actual potential and challenges faced by the stakeholders. The event was collaborated by Khairpur Chamber of Commerce & Industries (KCCI), Sindh Chamber of Agriculture Khairpur (SCA), Sindh Abadgar Foundation Khairpur (SAF), Date Palm Research Institute (DPRI), and Banana Research Institute (BRI) Khairpur on Thursday.

The organizers of the event explained audience that the objective of such sessions is to connect and unite the concerned stakeholders who may identify structural flaws in their products. The audience of growers, traders, processors, exporters and technical experts highlighted various issues available with these products at almost all stages.

The man made issues like lack of good agriculture practices, limited and traditional varieties, unskilled labor, less educated growers, lack of pre & post harvesting techniques, improper tools, non-feasible infrastructure, inadequate transport, shortage of cold storages, lack of mechanization.

## ECP to conduct LB elections in Punjab, Islamabad peacefully

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) here on Thursday held a high-level meeting regarding the holding of local body elections in Punjab and Islamabad. Chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, the meeting was attended by Federal Secretary for Interior, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Chief Secretary Punjab, Secretary Local Government of Punjab and Secretary Election Commission of Pakistan and other senior officials, said a press release.

## BISP, MOIT join hands to combat fraudulent activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and the Ministry of Information Technology (MOIT) have agreed to devise a strategy to combat fraudulent activities targeting innocent people.

During a meeting with Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Chairperson of Benazir Income Support, Senator Rubina Khalid, emphasized the need for a national-level strategy with MOIT's assistance to protect people from deceptive practices exploiting the BISP name.

## DIG reviews Muharram security arrangements

SUKKUR (APP): A meeting regarding security arrangements for Muharram was held here on Thursday. Presiding over the meeting, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Sukkur Pir Muhammad Shah emphasized on the importance of combing and searching operations and close coordination between all security agencies during Muharram.

While giving a briefing, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Amjad Ahmed Shaikh stated that all sensitive areas, procession routes, imambarahs, mosques, madrasahs as well as all entry and exit points would remain under vigilance during Muharram.

## Mirpurkhas celebrates monsoon relief amidst heat wave

MIRPURKHAS (APP): Following days of scorching heat and persistent electricity disruptions, the arrival of the first monsoon rain on Thursday brought much-needed relief to residents.

The rainfall, while beneficial for crops and parched lands, also highlighted challenges in drainage management, causing waterlogging on major roads and streets. As per details, Commissioner of Mirpurkhas Division, Faisal Ahmed Uqeli, along with Deputy Commissioner Dr. Rashid Masood Khan and Mayor Abdul Rauf Ghorri of the Municipal Corporation, conducted inspections across the city to assess drainage operations post-rainfall.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori talking with media men after inaugurating 1294th annual Urs of Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi (RA).

## AJK President urges overseas Kashmiris to oppose Modi's plans in the region

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has called on overseas Kashmiris to unite and actively work to counter the agenda of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the region. Addressing various delegations of overseas Kashmiris at the Jammu Kashmir House on Thursday, the President highlighted the critical role the expatriate community can play in raising awareness about human rights abuses in Occupied Kashmir.

President Chaudhry emphasized that Modi's attempts to divert global attention from the ongoing atrocities in Kashmir through the pretense of holding fake elections must be exposed. He encouraged Kashmiri expatriates, particularly those in the UK,

to strengthen their political influence by supporting candidates of Pakistani and Kashmiri descent in upcoming elections.

He pointed out that increasing the number of pro-Kashmiri voices in the British Parliament, especially within the All-Parties Kashmir Committee, could significantly enhance the effectiveness of their advocacy for Kashmir's right to self-determination.

In addition to political activism, President Chaudhry urged overseas Kashmiris to invest in various sectors within Azad Kashmir, emphasizing that a stable and prosperous Pakistan is essential for the success of Kashmir's freedom movement. He stressed the importance of economic contributions alongside political efforts to support the cause.

## PM's dialogue offer noting but political point scoring: Abbasi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Awam Pakistan Party convener Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has criticized Shabbaz Sharif's offer of talks to the opposition, labeling it as mere political point scoring.

In an interview with a private TV Channel, the former prime minister commented on the conditions of PTI founder Imran Khan's imprisonment, stating that he is receiving the same facilities as common prisoners. Abbasi highlighted that Imran Khan is housed in a section of the prison that was designated during his own tenure.

## Fida Hussain Baladi posted as Director Information Sukkur

KARACHI (APP): Fida Hussain Baladi, Director confirmation (BS-19) presently posted at Electronic Media is transferred and posted as Director Information Sukkur with immediate effect and until further orders.

According to a notification, Fida Baladi will replace Aziz Ahmed Hakro who was transferred and posted as Director Information Social Media Karachi.

## Passport office officials apprehended for issuing fake passports to foreigners

KARACHI (INP): The Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Counter Terrorism Wing has apprehended Syed Nusrat Ali, the superintendent, and Farid Shah, the former assistant director of the Sadar Passport Office, for their involvement in issuing Pakistani passports to 63 foreigners.

The arrested officials are accused of tampering with records and data within the passport office to facilitate the illegal issuance.

## Bodies of three including two elderly sisters found

KARACHI (INP): Bodies of three people including two elderly sisters were found from different localities of the metropolis, police said on Thursday.

According to details, bodies of two sisters aged about 60-year and living alone at home were recovered from a house in Khokhrapar area of Karachi.

Bodies were shifted to hospital and postmortem report will confirm reasons of the death of the two.

## 2 female drug peddlers, 2kg hashish recovered

KARACHI (APP): The Mominabad police station in district West on Thursday apprehended two notorious female drug dealers and seized over 2kg of hashish along with money.

SSP West reported that the arrested women were identified as Khadija alias Shagufta and Shama Bibi.

They were detained in the Iranian Camp area, within the Mominabad police station's jurisdiction.

A case has been filed, and further investigations are in progress.

## Sindh Governor inaugurates 1294th annual Urs of Abdullah Shah Ghazi

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori inaugurated the 1294th annual Urs of Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi (R.A) at the shrine of the famous saint here on Thursday.

The Governor also laid a wreath on the shrine and offered special prayers for the development of the country.

Later, the Sindh Governor also distributed clothes, water, juices and free meal among the pilgrims.

Talking to the media on the occasion, the Governor of Sindh said that he has a strong hope that Allah Almighty will not reject the prayers for the economic stability of Pakistan.

The Governor said that today, he has also prayed for a reduction in the intensity of the hot weather and for the rain in

the province and Karachi. To a question, the Governor Sindh said that due to climate change in the world, Pakistan suffered a lot during last two years.

He said that the spiritual leader of the Bohra community intends to visit Pakistan on his request. Although letters were also written to the spiritual leader of the Bohra community from five other countries.

The members of Bohra Jamaat told the Governor that the spiritual leader of Bohra community has expressed his desire to come to Pakistan, which is a matter of honor for the Governor, he added. He said that over 50,000 people will come to Karachi due to visit of the spiritual leader of the Bohra community, which will increase the economic activity.



ISLAMABAD: NCSW Chairman Nilofer Bakhtiar Presenting Shield to Minister for Law and Justice and Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

## Petition filed in SC seeking restoration election symbol of bat to PTI

ISLAMABAD (Online): Petition has been filed in Supreme Court (SC) seeking restoration of election symbol of bat to PTI.

The petitioner filed by a citizen Engineer Qazi Muhammad Saleem under clause 184(3) of the constitution requesting the court to restore bat as election symbol besides giving reserved seats to PTI Thursday.

The petitioner while making Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) and Election Commission (EC) respondents has taken plea PTI

secured more votes than other parties in general election. PTI secured more than 18460000 votes in the general election.

The petitioner prayed that PTI contested general election without electoral symbol. Now election symbol be restored. After restoring the election symbol the independent candidates be allowed to join PTI.

The petitioner further said that reserved seats be given to PTI under the principle of proportionate representation.

## DC chairs meeting to review arrangements for Muharram

LARKANA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC), Larkana Dr. Sherjeel Noor Channa on Thursday presided over a meeting related to security measures and maintaining religious harmony during holy month of Muharram-ul-Haram.

The meeting was also attended by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Larkana, Ulema of various schools of thought, officials of law enforcement agencies, Police officials, Tehsil Municipal Officers (TMOs) and other relevant officials.

The meeting reviewed arrangements to maintain law and order during the sacred month of Muharram so as to avoid any untoward incident.

The DC directed the

police officials to make fool-proof security arrangements during Muharram and implement government orders and not to allow anyone to carry weapons during Muharram days. Besides, keep a vigilant eye on suspects likely to create disturbance.

It was stated that provocative speeches should not be allowed because these speeches spread hatred among various sections of people. The government has also banned entry on some speakers who deliver such speeches, it was further stated.

The DC Larkana asked the Police officials to have meetings with religious leaders of various schools of thought to ensure peace and tranquility during Muharram days.



KARACHI: Residents of Rashid Mihnas Road protesting against the shortage of water by blocking the road.

## Mayor Larkana distributes checks among artists for their financial support

LARKANA (APP): A ceremony of cheque distribution for financial support, stipends, treatment and dowry of more than 50 writers, poets, actors and artists of Larkana Division by the Department of Culture of Sindh was held at Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto Memorial Library here Thursday.

On this occasion, Mayor of Larkana Anwar Ali Lohar, Deputy Mayor Muhammad Amin Sheikh, President of Arts Council of Pakistan Larkana Muhammad Ismail Jatoi, Assistant Director of Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto Library Shamsuddin Kalhor, writers and artists of Larkana Division Ayub Gad, Sajjan Sindh, Salim were present. Raza Kanbar, Shiraz Abbasi, Leela Surath, Abbas Gul, Sattar Lad, Nadeem Bobi, Munir Syal, Badr Soomro, Gul Munir, Mir Memon, Sir Shah Nawaz Chaudhio and the late artist Sattar Shah's widow including 50 writers, artists, poets, and actors were given the cheques.

The recipients thanked Provincial Minister of Culture Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah and President of Arts Council of Pakistan Larkana Muhammad Ismail Jatoi.