

# Independent

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GWADAR: President Asif Ali Zardari chairing a meeting on the security and law and order situation of Balochistan.

## President for enhanced capacity of LEAs to counter terror in Balochistan

Says prosecution system needed to be improved so that the terrorist elements could not escape justice

Independent Report

GWADAR: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for enhancing the capacity of the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), posting competent officers in Balochistan, and improving the prosecution mechanism to effectively counter terrorist elements in Balochistan.

The President expressed these views while chairing a meeting on the security/law and order situation in Balochistan, in Gwadar, on Thursday.

Minister for Interior, Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, MNA Malik Shah Gorgaji, Home Minister, Mir Ziaullah Langov, MPA Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman, senior civil and military officials attended the meeting.

The President was briefed about the overall security situation of the province as well as the role of LEAs in successfully countering terrorist attacks in various districts of Balochistan.

It was informed that the provincial government had adopted a targeted approach to improve the security and law-and-order situation in Balochistan. It was further apprised that the initiatives taken by the LEAs had resulted in improving the security situation in the province. The President was informed that the provincial government was taking steps to provide fool-proof security to Chinese and foreign nationals.

The President appreciated the efforts of the provincial government as well as the sacrifices of the LEAs in combating terrorism.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that the prosecution system needed to be improved so that the terrorist elements could not escape justice. He said that compensation for the families of martyrs of LEAs in Balochistan should be enhanced bringing it at par with the rest of the provinces.

## All stakeholders have to create national consensus for dev. of Balochistan, stresses CM

Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti calls for expediting collective efforts to cope with menace of terrorism

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has underlined the need to create national consensus for development of the province. He stressed that all the stakeholders would have to come forward and create national consensus for development of the province.

He also stressed the need to expedite the collective efforts to cope with the menace of terrorism in the province.

He also stressed that

we have to impart valuable skills to the people of the bordering areas.

The Chief Minister was speaking at the chair of President Asif Ali Zardari on law and order and development projects in the province, during his visit to Gwadar on Thursday.

The President was briefed about the law and order situation besides development projects in the province.

The Chief Minister on the occasion hailed the spe-

cial attention and visits of the President Zardari to the province and said that the people of Balochistan are feeling well because of the repeated visits of the President. He said that the people of province value his love and affection a lot.

Highlighting the strategy prepared for development of the province, Chief Minister said that the historic programme of Benazir Bhutto Scholarship Programme has been started for promotion of the education in Balochistan.

## PM urges political parties to work together for development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has urged all the political parties to work together for the development and prosperity of the country and public welfare.

He was talking to a delegation of Pakistan People's Party headed by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari that called on him in Islamabad today. The delegation included Chairman Senate Yusuf Raza Gilani, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Syed Khurshid Shah, Syed Naveed Qamar and Sherry Rehman. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held discussions national political issues.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said further consultation was held with Pakistan Peoples Party regarding the

budget 2024-2025. He said economy is showing positive indicators while stock market has witnessed historic boom. The Prime Minister said steps have been taken to provide relief to the common man in the budget of the new financial year. He said more consultation will continue through committees.

A dinner was given by the Prime Minister in honour of the Pakistan Peoples Party delegation.

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar were also present in the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan People's Party headed by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

## Total volume of budget expected to be around Rs. 850b: Balochistan's budget for next FY to be presented in BA's session today

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan's budget for the next financial year 2024-25 is scheduled to be presented in the provincial assembly's session today (Friday).

The Provincial Minister for Finance, Mir Shoab Naushervani would be tabling the provincial budget for the next financial year.

It may be mentioned here that the Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has summoned the budget session of provincial assembly at 04:00 PM today.

During the budget session, the Minister for Finance would also table the supplementary budget for the current financial year 2023-24.

The budget session of provincial assembly would remain continued till June 29, 2024.

According to the sources of Finance department, Government of

Balochistan, the total volume of the provincial budget is expected to be around Rs. 850 billion.

The sources of Finance department informed that the province is expected to receive Rs. 647 billion from the divisible pool.

The estimates of non-development expenditures are proposed as Rs. 620 billion in the provincial budget.

The sources of Finance department said that 25 percent increase has been proposed in salaries of the government employees from Grade 1 to 16. Similarly, the 20 percent increase has been proposed in salaries of the employees from Grade 17 to 22.

Moreover, 15 percent increase has been suggested in the pensions of retired government employees.

The sources of Finance department told that some 3,000 vacancies are likely to be created in the next financial year's budget.

Earlier, at a presser, the Provincial Minister for Planning and Development had informed that we are going to allocate Rs. 61 billion for health sector in the next budget.

He announced that the heirs of martyrs have also been included in the Benazir Income Support Programme.

Mr. Buledi mentioned that there is a proposal of allocating Rs. 2 billion for the educational expenses of children of the martyrs under BISP in the next budget.

Besides, the Ph.D holders would be supported through full scholarship.

He also announced that Rs. 5 billion would be allocated for the public sector universities of the province in budget.

Rs. 2 billion have been allocated for bringing out of school children in the schools.

## Promulgating presidential ordinance is insult of parliament: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has sent appeals from Election Commission (EC) against Lahore High Court (LHC) decision regarding constitution of election tribunals to judges committee.

Committee will constitute larger bench next week in respect of these appeals.

SC has issued notice to Attorney General (AG) besides seeking details about constitution of tribunals in other provinces from EC.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked the matter be placed before the committee as soon as possible.

Promulgating presidential ordinance is insult of the parliament. If ordinance has to be brought then shut the parliament. How can the change be made through presidential ordinance. On one side parliament has enacted law. How can the ordinance be brought after enactment of law by parliament.

What was reason for bringing ordinance? Was there any emergency. The ordinance came from where after the enactment of law by parliament. This is too interference in election. Election act was desire of parliament.



GWADAR: President Asif Ali Zardari being welcomed by Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and Commander 12 Corps Lt General Rahat Naseem Ahmed Khan, upon his arrival.

## Grand public meeting at Chaman Parlat: We would not accept passport policy at Durand Line, assets Mehmood Khan Achakzai

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chairman Pashtoonkhaw Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) and Head of Tahafuz Aayeen Pakistan Tehreek, Mehmood Khan Achakzai has categorically stated that we are not going to accept the policy of passport on Durand Line at all.

He said that the solution to save the country lies in implementation on the constitution by all stakeholders. Mehmood Khan Achakzai was addressing grand protest public gathering in Chaman on Thursday.

The Chairman PKMAP said that those attacking our innocent children should mend their way as they are not orphans.

He said that we are living in our land for centuries and the nature has blessed us with everything. But now the establishment of country want to occupy our resources by force, he alleged.

Their desire and aspirations would not be fulfilled, he added.

The Chairman PKMAP said that we would foil every attempt of imposing more war in Afghanistan.

He said that the Pashtoons are compelled to lead miserable life at their homeland. He said that the Pashtoon tribes are living for centuries at both sides of the border, but imposing condition of passport on the people is nothing but their economic massacre.

## 35 Pakistani pilgrims fall a victim to scorching heat during Hajj, say authorities

RIYADH (INP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs has confirmed deaths of 35 Pakistani pilgrims.

According to Hajj Mission DG Abdul Wahab Soomro, nine Pakistanis died in Mashair, four in Mina, three in Arafat and two in Muzdalifah.

The Hajj DG says 20 Pakistani pilgrims lost their lives in Makkah and six in Medina.

The DG said the deaths were caused by intense temperature of 50 degrees Celsius. He said the allegation that the pilgrims were not taken care of was unfounded.

He said the dead bodies were notified by the Saudi government and arrangements of burials were made in accordance with wishes of the families of the deceased. Arrangements of bringing the bodies to Pakistan had also been made, Soomro said.

The Saudi government, he said, had always cooperated with the Pakistan government in such matters.

## PM grieved over martyrdom of Hujjaj in Makkah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic incident in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, which resulted in the loss of precious lives of Hujjaj, including some from Pakistan.

The prime minister, in a statement, directed the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pakistan's Embassy in Saudi Arabia to ensure provision of best possible medical care to the Pakistani Hajj pilgrims who were admitted in hospitals.

He talked to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhary Salik Hussain and Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahmed Farooq in Makkah and directed them to make arrangements for shifting of the bodies of martyred Hajj pilgrims to Pakistan.



LAHORE: Director Hajj Punjab Muhammad Rizwan Sharif, Deputy Director Hajj Lahore Mujeeb Shah and others welcoming Hajj Ikrum and garlanding them with flowers.

## Governor directs to ensure improving medical facilities, doctors' strength in Govt hospitals

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has directed to the concerned authorities to ensure improving medical facilities and doctors' strength in the government hospitals including trauma center and casualty department. The Governor was on visit to the Trauma Center, Sandeman Provincial Headquarter Hospital Quetta on Thursday.

He visited different sections of the Trauma Center and inspected the medical facilities there besides inquiring about the health of those being treated there.

The Medical Superintendent of Sandeman Provincial Headquarter Hospital, Dr. Ishaq Panzezi and Managing Director of Trauma Center, Dr. Arbab Kamran were also present on the occasion. He also inquired about the treatment facilities as well as the arrangements for medicines and cleanliness from the patients. While speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that half of the province's population is settled in Quetta.

He visited different sections of the Trauma Center and inspected the medical facilities there besides inquiring about the health of those being treated there.

## Armed men kidnap 10 Punjab residents from Quetta

QUETTA (INP): Unidentified armed men kidnaped 10 people hailing from Punjab from Shuban picnic point in Zarghon Ghar, Quetta.

According to details, armed men took 16 people hostage who were enjoying at Shuban picnic point in Zarghon Ghar. The DG Levies said the armed men

released six hostages after checking their Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs).

The ten people who have been abducted include a Customs Officer and others, who are residents of Punjab province.

The search for the abductees has begun by the law enforcement agencies.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), Liu Jianchao received at the Islamabad International Airport by Additional Foreign Secretary.

## Pakistan, Turkiye agree to further deepen bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday held a telephone conversation on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha to exchange Eid greetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkiye Hakan Fidan.

The two ministers reviewed the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Turkiye, a Foreign Office press release said.

## Chinese Minister arrives Islamabad on three-day visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) Liu Jianchao arrived here Thursday on a three-day visit.

He was received at the Islamabad International Airport by Additional Foreign Secretary (Asia & Pacific) Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, a Foreign Office press release said.

Minister Liu Jianchao will call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and hold extensive bilateral talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani and Mir Shoab Naushervani meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

## Tarar regrets 'smear campaign' against Pak-China friendship by a political party on Eid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Thursday took exception to a "smear campaign" launched by a specific political party against the Pakistan-China friendship on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. Addressing a news conference, the minister brushed aside the propaganda against Pakistan-China friendship particularly surrounding the upgradation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

"Undoubtedly, the lobbies against the Pakistan-China friendship are active, and are completely perturbed by the CPEC's upgradation, but such both attempts are destined to fail," he added.

The minister said the government fully understood that some powers

which were stung by the Pakistan-China friendship, were resorting to undue and unfounded criticism towards the CPEC, but nothing could harm the enduring bond between the two nations. "The people normally celebrate Eid-ul-Azha by slaughtering sacrificial animals and sharing sweets with their loved ones but there was one political party that exerted all its energies for conspiring against Pak-China Dosti," he regretted.

The minister lashed out at the political party, which, he said, was bent upon running a "smear campaign" against Pakistan-China friendship instead of reflecting on the possibilities to resolve the issues to forge unity in accordance with the spirit of Eid which taught nothing but sacrifice and altruism.



## PM Shehbaz says: Govt bringing reforms in energy sector to reduce electricity tariff

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the government was bringing reforms in the energy sector to reduce electricity tariff.

He was talking to a delegation of foreign experts in the energy sector, led by former Georgian Prime Minister Nika Gilauri which called on him at the PM House.

The prime minister said that circular debt, line losses and electricity theft were the major challenges in Pakistan's energy sector.

Emphasizing the importance of energy sector for the country's economic growth and development, he expressed his government's commitment to implement policies for reducing circular debt and improving the efficiency of electricity bill collection personnel.

He said privatization and outsourcing of the power distribution companies was the top priority of the government. "In this regard the government desires to take benefit from the Georgian experience."

The prime minister expressed his government's desire to promote alternative energy sources, particularly solar energy, and reduce reliance on expensive energy sources. He said the government would also promote public private partnership in the energy sector. The prime minister directed the federal ministers to consult with the delegation regarding the basic reforms of the country's energy sector and to evolve a comprehensive strategy regarding the reforms immediately. Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik, Power Minister Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik, and relevant high officials attended the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting with a delegation of experts of Power Sector led by Nika Gilauri Former Georgian Prime Minister, in Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain presides over a meeting of the Fertilizer Review Committee.

## Multiple agri projects underway to unleash green revolution: Kundi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that multiple agriculture development projects were underway in the province which on completion would brought a green revolution in the region.

The Chashma Lift Canal project, once completed, would help irrigate over 250,000 acres of land, and its irrigation area would be increased to 600,000 acres if its height were raised to 90 feet, he added.

The governor was addressing a ceremony held at the District Bar Dera Ismail Khan to distribute grant cheques of Rs 7.8 million among bar councils of the district.

He said the Federal Government was also working on the proposals of Tank Zam and Daraban

Zam projects, which would bring a green revolution and help meet the food requirement not only of the region but also of the neighbouring countries.

The governor said the role of bar councils was very important in resolving the social issues of the people and providing leadership to the nation. The bars also helped maintain the supremacy of law.

The lawyers' movement had proved that they were united to achieve their goals, he added.

Kundi said that there was a shortage of 10 judges in the merged tribal districts and he had taken up the matter with the Federal Government in order to ensure speedy justice for the local people.

The governor said the development of Dera Ismail Khan was his mission. They people here were fac-

ing numerous problems, including in education and health sectors.

"I have always highlighted the issues of my area with the Federation. Before the federal budget, I personally talked to the prime minister about the long-standing demand of the Chashma Lift Canal project, besides other issues, and I am thankful to the Federal Government for allocating Rs 19 billion for the canal, whose foundation stone will be laid down by the end of 2024."

The canal on completion would irrigate around 600,000 acres of land, he added.

He again expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Water Resources Musadik Masood Malik for allocating funds for the Lift Canal project.

## Minister directs for audit of fertilizer companies to determine production costs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday directed that a third-party audit be conducted to determine the cost of production of fertilizer companies, in order to ensure transparency and fair pricing in the industry.

He issued the directive while chairing a Fertilizer Review Committee meeting which was attended by Federal Secretary Industries and Production, Dr. Muhammad Fakhre Alam Irfan, said a news release.

The meeting reviewed the stock availability, demand, and prices of urea in the country.

Rana Tanveer said that there was no shortage of urea fertilizer in the country and added steps were taken to ensure uninterrupted supply of gas to fertilizer companies for smooth production of urea.

He also directed fertilizer companies to review the performance of dealers and agencies, and instructed provinces to verify fertilizer dealers and agencies, with any ghost dealers and agencies to be blacklisted.

The minister emphasized that fertilizer companies must ensure the supply of fertilizer to the provinces

## SIFC provides enabling environment for investment

ISLAMABAD (Online): Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has provided an enabling environment for investment and business development in the country by working with utmost diligence and dedication over the last one year. The most important of the measures is the provision of facility for investors in the IT sector to repatriate up to fifty percent of their profits. According to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan, IT exports have grown by sixty two percent.

Similarly, the establishment of the Office of the Investment Ombudsman has provided a platform to investors to resolve their issues efficiently and invest

## Rupee sheds 10 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Thursday witnessed a devaluation of 10 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.60 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.50. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.7 and Rs 280.6 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 55 paise to close at Rs 298.77 against the last day's closing of Rs 298.22.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, Marathopolis, MSC Positano, Atlantic Crown and Simaisma carrying container, Palm oil and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile three more ships, Maersk Chicago, Khairpur and Chemtrans Ionian with Containers, Gasoline and Mogas also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

Seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Nordic Copenhagen and IMO left the port on today morning while two more container ships, Marathopolis and MSC Positano are expected to sail on same day.

Cargo volume of 188,296 tonnes, comprising 140,778 tonnes imports cargo and 47,518 tonnes export cargo carried in 5,276 Containers (2,566 TEUs Imports and 2,710 TEUs exports) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Five ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Khairpur, OM Shanghai and Maersk Chicago & another ship 'Navios Constellation' carrying Gasoline, Chemicals and Container are expected to take berths at respectively FOICO, EVTL and QICT on Thursday.



PESHAWAR: Workers preserving the hides of sacrificial animals at their warehouse at Ring road.

## China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan to construct new railway to enhance trade, economic cooperation

BEIJING (APP): China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan will construct a new railway starting in China Kashgar and traversing Torugart, Kosh-Dobo, and Kazarman in Kyrgyzstan, culminating in Andijan in eastern Uzbekistan, to enhance trade and economic cooperation.

A trilateral intergovernmental agreement on the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project was signed at a ceremony in Beijing last week.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev hailed the event as a sign of unity and shared progress.

The governments of

China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan agreed to embark on constructing the new railway at a Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit held in the Uzbek city of Samarkand in September 2022. The project feasibility study was updated following the completion of field surveys by Chinese engineers in December last year.

"All three countries have diligently prepared for the construction, which is expected to commence later this year," China Daily reported.

The new railway, a beacon of hope and optimism, will start in China's Kashgar and traverse Torugart, Kosh-Dobo, and Kazarman in Kyrgyzstan, culminating in Andijan in eastern Uzbekistan.

It is estimated that the railway will shorten the route between China and Europe by about 900 kilometers and reduce freight transit time by eight days.

This transformative railway, with its potential to enhance trade and economic cooperation between the countries along its path, holds the promise of a brighter future and instills optimism due to the potential economic benefits it will bring.

According to an earlier announcement, the planned 523-km railway will be constructed through a joint venture involving three countries. The estimated total cost of the project is \$8 billion, with \$4.7 billion allocated for the Kyrgyz part.



Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a meeting with CEO Huawei Pakistan Mr. Ethan Sun in Islamabad.

## Exports increase by 28.75% to Rs 7.9trln in 11 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 28.75 percent during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

Exports during July-May (2023-2024) totaled Rs. 7,962,082 million against Rs. 6,183,949 million during the corresponding period of last year, according to PBS provisional figures.

Exports from Pakistan during May, 2024 increased by 25.99 percent to Rs. 790,199 million compared to exports of Rs. 627,199 million in May 2023.

On month-on-month basis, the exports from the country increased by 20.83 percent in May 2024 when compare to exports of

Rs. 653,957 million in April 2024.

The main commodities of exports during May 2024 included knitwear (Rs. 115,022 million), readymade garments (Rs. 97,564 million), bed wear (Rs. 77,184 million), rice others (Rs. 75,311 million), cotton Cloth (Rs. 48,117 million), towels (Rs. 28,768 million), petroleum products, excluding top Naphta (Rs. 25,393 million), rice Basmati (Rs. 20,807 million), madeup articles, excluding towels & bedwear (Rs. 18,558 million) and cotton yarn (Rs. 17,883 million).

On the other hand, imports during July-May (FY2023-24) totaled Rs. 14,109,047 million as against Rs. 12,272,596 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 14.96%

## Sri Lankan FM reaffirms unwavering commitment to SAARC

COLOMBO (PR): His Excellency the Secretary General of SAARC Ambassador Golam Sarwar, visited Sri Lanka from 10-14 June

recognizing his esteemed position as a member of the SAARC Council of Ministers, in propelling the SAARC process forward.



2024. During the visit, Secretary General Sarwar paid courtesy call on Minister of Foreign Affairs His Excellency Ali Sabry on 14 June 2024 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Colombo. Discussions focused on ways to further enhance the SAARC process.

The Secretary General provided an update on ongoing initiatives and the challenges of SAARC, seeking Sri Lanka's support for advancing and further energising the process. Moreover, he sought the guidance of the Minister,

Foreign Minister Sabry, acknowledging the progress achieved and appreciating the Secretary General for his efforts, underscored the need for the Association to take further strides in strengthening regional cooperation. Recognizing the significant potential of SAARC as a regional forum, Minister Sabry emphasized its capacity to facilitate extensive regional cooperation in mutually agreed-upon domains and assured Sri Lanka's unflinching commitment for the SAARC process.

## PSX closes at historic high level of 78,801 points

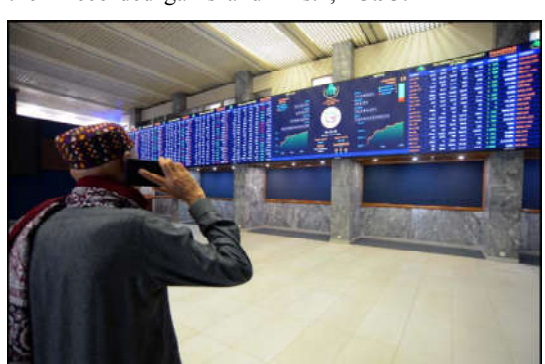
ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 2,094.76 points, a positive change of 2.73 percent, closing at historic level of 78,801.53 points against 76,706.77 points the previous trading day.

A total of 452,637,253 shares valuing Rs.20.675 billion were traded during the day as compared to 395,897,996 shares valuing Rs. 21.366 billion the last day.

Some 447 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 256 of them recorded gains and

133 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 58 remained unchanged.

In PSX, the three top trading companies were Silk Bank Ltd with 53,586,473 shares at Rs.1.09 per share, the K-Electric Ltd with 23,109,865 shares with Rs.4.72 per share and Habib Bank with 20,943,162 shares at Rs.121.92 per share. Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.86.62 per share price, closing at Rs.7,706.92, whereas the runner-up was Ismail Industries Limited with a Rs.63.93 rise in its per share price to Rs.1,443.93.



KARACHI: Brokers are busy in trading at Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi.

## New UAF sugarcane varieties suitable for cultivation during April, May: Dr Sarwar

FAISALABAD (APP): Two GM sugarcane varieties developed by University of Agriculture Fairlead (UAF), in addition to engineered traits of top-borer resistance and herbicide (glufosinate)-tolerance, are carrying numerous superior traits like input-responsiveness, high-number of millable canes, high sugar recovery and early maturing making it suitable for plantation in the months of April and May after harvesting wheat, said Pro-Vice Chancellor UAF and developer of GM sugarcane varieties Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Khan.

In the last week, The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of Pakistan under the Environment

Protection Agency (EPA), in its 34th meeting chaired by the Director General of the EPA, Farzana Altaf Shah, approved two GM sugarcane varieties; herbicide (glufosinate)-tolerant (CABB-HTS) and insect (top borer)-resistant (CABB-IRS) developed by UAF.

Vice Chancellor UAF Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan, Director General EPA Farzana Altaf Shah, and many other scientists at the meeting congratulated Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Khan (Pro-Vice Chancellor/Dean Agriculture, UAF) and his team for developing these varieties and considered it a landmark achievement in GM sector world-wide.

## High-level delegation led by Industries Minister to visit Turkmenistan from June 24

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level delegation led by Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain will visit Turkmenistan from June 24 to 26 to explore new opportunities for bilateral trade and investment.

The minister on Thursday held a meeting with Turkmenistan's Ambassador to Pakistan Atadjan Movlamov to discuss matters relating to the visit.

During the meeting, the minister said that strengthening trade and economic relations with Turkmenistan was the government's top priority and the delegation's visit would play an important role in that regard.

Ambassador Atadjan Movlamov proposed that both countries should organize a joint trade exhibition to promote trade and investment.

## Asian markets swing as traders assess rates outlook

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets were mixed Thursday as investors tried to gauge the outlook for US interest rates, while also keeping tabs on developments in France as it heads for crucial elections.

With Wall Street closed, there were few catalysts to drive buying, though sentiment has been buoyed this week by recent data indicating the world's top economy is slowing gradually, giving the Federal Reserve some freedom to ease monetary policy.

Traders are closely following the utterances of US central bank officials on their outlook for rates, with most warning that while inflation was on a downward trajectory, they wanted to see more evidence before committing to a cut.

## At UN Pakistan urges global drive to recover arms from deadly terrorists group like TTP

UNITED NATIONS (UNPoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The 2001 UNPoA, which was backed by all member states, provides the framework for activities to counter the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Since then, the UN has worked to support the implementation of the UNPoA at national, regional, and international levels.

"Terrorists and criminals do not manufacture these arms," the Pakistani envoy told delegates, pointing out they acquire them from illicit arms markets or receive them from entities that want to destabilize a particular region or country.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti giving Eidi to children.

## Benazir Bhutto's visionary leadership still inspires young generation: Raisani

QUETTA (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) always remained steadfast against the anti-democracy elements, he added. Raisani said it was Benazir Bhutto Shaheed who had become a symbol of Pakistan's identity internationally because of her prolonged fight against the dictators. She set a precedent by working for the country's solidarity, integrity and stability, he added.

Raisani said that she was the first woman prime minister of an Islamic country and was revered as the "Daughter of Islam".



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the National Emergencies Operation Centre.

## Senators call for revising taxes on salaried class, medicines, property business, cement industry

ISLAMABAD (APP): The senators on both sides of the aisle on Thursday called for revising proposed taxes on the salaried class, medicines, cement industry and property business, besides minimizing power load-shedding in the country.

Taking part in the debate on budget 2024-25 in the Senate, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) parliamentary leader Ali Zafar claimed that no relief was given in the budget rather new taxes were imposed which would further burden the people.

He said the finance minister should have proposed steps to reduce the government's intervention into the market besides promoting a market driven economy. No concrete recommendations were suggested for economic growth and reduction in the government expenditures.

The economic growth would suffer with increase in the taxes to achieve the revenue target of Rs 3.8 trillion, he added.

Kamran Murtaza of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl said JUI-F said that the federal consolidated funds needed to be discussed at the forum.

He regretted that three governments remained in power but new National Finance Commission Award had been announced in violation of Article 160 of the Constitution.

Quratulain Marri of the Pakistan Peoples Party said an amount of Rs 150 billion was allocated for electricity, and claimed that 20-hour power load-shedding was being carried out in her constituency.

Similarly, Rs 22 billion was earmarked for gas, which was also in short supply, she added.

## PM lauds CDA, ICT admin for cleanliness drive during Eid-ul-Azha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday appreciated the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Islamabad Capital Territory Administration for effectively carrying out the cleanliness drive during Eid-ul-Azha. On his X timeline, the prime minister also appreciated CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner of Islamabad over the commendable operations.

## Governor grieved over death of Arbab Abdul Zahir Kasi; pays tributes on invaluable services

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of prominent political and social personality, Arbab Abdul Zahir Kasi.

In an official condolence issued here on Thursday, the Governor said that the late Arbab Abdul Zahir Kasi was a thorough gentleman and kind human being.

He said that late Arbab Abdul Zahir Kasi spent his whole life while serving the people and creating awareness among them about their rights.

The late Kasi also made conscious efforts for promotion of brotherhood, love and sense of non-violence in the society, the Governor maintained.

He said that the invaluable services of Arbab Abdul Zahir Kasi would always be remembered.

He prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the departed soul into Its eternal peace and give enough strength and patience to the bereaved family to bear the tragic loss of his death.

## Visits revamped NEOC NDMA to become a safety wall for Pakistan: PM

Shahbaz Sharif lauds revamping NEOC; appreciates cutting-edge technology

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, lauding the revamped National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC) equipped with multiple satellite feeds and artificial intelligence tools, expressed the hope that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) would prove to be a safety wall for Pakistan against the impacts of the climate change.

"Due to climate change, Pakistan is in the red zone and among the top ten vulnerable countries. We should not lose our morale rather work hard. After this achievement, I have no doubt that the NDMA, in coordination with provincial PDMA, will become a safety wall for Pakistan," the prime minister said during his visit to the NEOC here along with the federal ministers and secretaries. This was the maiden visit of the prime minister since the revamped NEOC was inaugurated in October last year.

He highly appreciated NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik for realising his dream of focusing on the capacity building and human resource development of the Authority instead of an earlier planned project of building an office tower.

Referring to his previous meetings following the floods of 2022, the prime minister said he had suggested to prioritise the capacity building of the organisation by equipping it with the latest technology, input from the provinces and recruitment of permanent human resources, besides establishing a digital hub.

"Today, the way that dream has been realised deserves applause. I don't think any province has achieved such capacity with the world-class systems. I am happy that instead of a highrise building, you invested in this digital hub," the prime minister remarked.

He said the 2022 floods had inflicted a \$30 billion loss to the country which would take years to overcome as the Federal Government alone had spent Rs 100 billion for the rehabilitation of affected population, besides the funding from provinces as well as aid from the friendly countries.

He said consequent to the efforts by that time Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and other federal and provincial organisations, the country was able to rehabilitate millions of people.

Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated the merit-based induction of quality human resource and establishing a third-party validation mechanism at the NDMA, and assured of the government's support and funding for the staffers' training and procurement of equipment.

"This is not normal. This is not usual. This is far above normal and usual," he said and asked the federal ministers and secretaries to follow the role model to make Pakistan a great nation.

He asked the NDMA to ensure close coordination with the provinces, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and advised the procurement of equipment through coordination to avoid duplication.

"This is not an expenditure. This is an investment to save our future investments," he remarked.



ISLAMABAD: A high level delegation led by Kevin Kells, Managing Director, Google for Education, call upon the Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui.

## Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui says Govt aims to transform entire education system of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Thursday said we aim to transform the entire education system of Pakistan. He pointed out the high number of out of school children and the adverse impact it is having on the society.

He was talking to a high level delegation led by Kevin Kells, Managing Director, Google for Education, which called on him. The delegation included Farhan Qureshi, Country Director Pakistan Google, Aron Saether Jackson, CEO Allied, Umar Farooq, CEO Tech Valley amongst other senior officials of Google.

The meeting was also attended by senior officials of the education ministry led by Secretary Education Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani.

Dr. Khalid welcomed the diverse Google delegation that comprised of officials from seven different countries including USA, UK, Australia etc.

He said under his leadership, the ministry was working tirelessly to bring this number down. He said that this crisis has been given the highest priority.

He said the delegation can provide expertise and knowledge that can help us chart future plans that can enable us to resolve this issue.

Dr. Khalid urged the delegation to expand their scope of work with special regard to education in Pakistan. He assured the delegation of full support of the Ministry of Education.

The optimum use of technology is the only way to bridge the enormous gap of resources needed. Pakistan is at a critical juncture where every effort needs to be in the right direction, he said.

He reiterated his resolve of increasing the number of skilled workforce in Pakistan. Cities like Karachi have huge population and through proper technological investments its people can become more productive, he said.

The minister assured the delegation of full support from his office and said that without technological advancements our education crisis cannot be resolved. He also thanked the delegation and hoped that short, medium and long term investment plans will be implemented forthwith.

Earlier, Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Thursday inaugurated a

## Civil Hospital Quetta's Trauma Center providing health facilities to patients: Arbab

QUETTA (APP): Managing Director Trauma Center Quetta Dr. Arbab Kamran Kasi on Thursday said that Trauma Center Quetta was providing the best emergency services to the people of Balochistan beyond its capacity.

Talking to media, he said that at least 525 seriously injured were treated during the Eid-ul-Azha days.

He said 44 major operations have also been conducted along with installing six extra beds for the seriously injured in the 14-bed ICU.

Dr. Kasi said that round the clock services were provided in the triad of trauma operation theatres.

He informed that it is Balochistan's only active trauma center where severely injured people from various places of the province were shifted who were treated timely under the supervision of 24/7 experienced surgeons, doctors, and staff nurses and paramedical staff.

## Khan's political advisor abducted

LAHORE (INP): Ghulam Shabbir, the political advisor to former Prime Minister and founder of PTI, Imran Khan, has been reported kidnapped, sparking concerns and investigations in Lahore. Authorities confirm that a case of kidnapping has been filed at Kahana police station based on a complaint lodged by Ghulam Shabbir's son, Bilal. Ghulam Shabbir, who is also the elder brother of Shahbaz Gul, was reportedly abducted by unknown individuals two days ago while en route from his home to Islamabad.



QUETTA: People carrying coffin of Head of Kasi tribe Arbab Abdul Zahir Kasi for burial after funeral prayer.

## Amid intense heat Salik hails Saudi Govt for exemplary arrangements of Hajj

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhry Salik Hussain has applauded the Saudi Government for its exemplary arrangements for pilgrims even amidst intense heat.

During a consultation meeting at the Pakistan Hajj Mission in Makkah, Chaudhry Salik Hussain highlighted that the Saudi authorities had implemented various measures to alleviate the adverse impact of heat, including installing water sprinklers and organizing a system to distribute cold water and beverages.

He also mentioned that mobile health units and dispensaries had been set up at key locations to safeguard the pilgrims' health.

According to a press release, he said hundreds of volunteers and Saudi forces were deployed at multiple sites to facilitate over 2 million pilgrims to smoothly perform the Hajj.

## Owais seeks Naqvi's help over protests at grid stations in KP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Energy Owais Leghari has written a letter to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi asking for help on the incidents at grid stations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Leghari has written a letter to the Interior Minister that "influential individuals" in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are leading protests on the premises of grid stations.

The minister highlighted that provincial assembly members and others had unlawfully directed grid station staff to restore electricity, exacerbating line losses and electricity theft issues at affected feeders. This situation not only jeopardizes grid station security but also poses risks to safety of the staff.

He said that KP police were not registering cases against individuals involved in these incidents.



# PRINT OR PERISH

## The 10% GST Threatens Free Press

- The newspaper industry is facing an existential crisis due to the 10% GST proposed on newsprint in the recent budget.
- In an environment full of fake news and disinformation, newspapers are a vital source for credible and authentic news. They play an important role in promoting democratic values and shaping informed public opinions. The imposition of this GST will push many newspapers, particularly small and regional newspapers, towards closure.
- Newspapers organisations are already subsidising the cost of their publications for their readers as they are not passing on the cost burden to the readers. Taxing the newspapers will further weaken the economies of the print media and impact the citizens' right to know.
- This tax threatens the survival of an already struggling newspaper industry. While reducing the quality and quantity of news coverage, the tax will increase production costs, endanger jobs, restrict the ability for the industry to pay competitive and timely salaries and will make it impossible for print media organisations to implement the government mandated Wage Board for newspaper employees.

**We urge the government to reconsider and withdraw this tax to ensure the survival and continued contribution of newspapers to an enlightened society.**