

# Independent

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## Pakistan elected non-permanent UNSC member with big majority

**Pakistan garners 182 ballots in 193-member General Assembly - far more than the required 124 votes**

UNITED NATIONS (APP): After months of hectic campaigning, Pakistan Thursday was elected, with a massive majority, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, the world body's power centre, pledging to make its contribution in meeting the grave challenges facing the world.

Pakistan, which was unopposed, garnered 182 votes in the 193-member General Assembly -- far more than the required 124 votes representing two-thirds majority.

Loud applause rang out in the iconic hall of the General Assembly when its president, Dennis Francis, announced the winners of

the five non-permanent seats—Pakistan, Denmark, Greece, Panama and Somalia—to replace

Japan, Ecuador, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland whose terms end on December 31. He congratulated them on their victory.

Pakistan will replace Japan, which currently occupies the Asian seat, on January 1, 2025, to begin a two-year term, its eighth.

As an elated Munir Akram, Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN, emerged from the hall, APP correspondent asked him about Pakistan's priorities and goals as a member of the 15-member Council's.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail distributing certificate among participants during the concluding ceremony of 3rd Mid-Career Management Course held in Quetta.

## Interaction with teachers from 31 districts: Govt. determined to raise educational standard in Balochistan: Governor

**Independent Report**

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the government is determined to raise educational standard and highlight the greatness of teachers in the province.

The Governor said that teachers' respect can't be limited to any religion, race and colour.

He was interacting with the teachers from 31 districts here at a ceremony held at the Governor House on Thursday.

The Governor said that teachers are held in high esteem in every civilized society.

He said that cheating is a curse in our society due

to which, the respective degree also becomes meaningless.

He said that government is keeping a strict vigil on the education sector. The cheating can be prevented with completion of the course well in time, he added.

The Governor stressed the need to decorate the poor children of remote districts of the province.

He commended that the female teachers are performing their duties honestly despite lack of the necessary facilities.

He said that we would have to pay attention on proper upbringing and morals of the children along with their education.



LAHORE: Ambassador of UAE Hamad Ubaid Ibrahim Salem Alzaabi meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and President PML-N Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

## Govt submits photos to SC denying Imran's solitary confinement

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government Thursday debunked Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's claims regarding solitary confinement

and the lack of facilities during his incarceration at the Adiala jail.

During the hearing of intra-court appeals challenging the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) law amendments, which Khan is also attending via video link from the jail, the government submitted details about the facilities being offered to the PTI founder.

The government provided evidence, including

photographs of the facilities that Khan was benefiting from during his incarceration in response to his claims of "solitary confinement" and not receiving the provisions.

In the jail, Khan is provided an exercise bike and stretching belt for physical fitness, books, a separate kitchen, a special menu, an exclusive gallery for a walk, LED, a room cooler, and a study table. In the detailed document submitted to the court, the government not only provided photographic evidence of all the facilities, but also the names of all those who have visited him in the prison facility so far.



BEIJING: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses signing of Memorandums of understanding regarding cooperation in different fields between China and Pakistan.

## Minister of State Energy & Secretary Power Division emphasize: Balochistan Govt. & Zamindars ought to give concrete mechanism for removing concerns of federal Govt. before solarization of Agri. tube wells

**Chief Minister calls for removing concerns of federal government about agricultural tube wells and resolving resolvable matters through mutual understanding and cooperation**

**Independent Report**

QUETTA: The Minister of State for Energy, Ali Pervez Malik and Secretary Power Division, Rashid Mehmood have urged the provincial government and zamindars to give concrete mechanism for removing the concerns of federal government before solarization of the agricultural tube wells in the province.

They were in joint meeting with the high ups of the provincial government and other concerned authorities on the matter of shifting of agricultural tube wells on the solar energy here on Thursday.

The meeting reviewed the hurdles and problems in solarization of the agricultural

tube wells on directives of the Prime Minister.

The Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Minister of State for Energy, Ali Pervez Malik, provincial Ministers Mir Shoaib Nausherwani and Ali Madad Jatak, Secretary Power Division, Rashid Mehmood, Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Secretary Power Division and other representatives of the federal and provincial governments.

During the course of meeting, the federal and provincial high ups briefed the meeting about the related matters.

The federal authorities

expressed concern about running the agricultural tube wells on solar and power system simultaneously.

The Chief Minister emphasized on removing the concerns of federal government about agricultural tube wells and resolving the resolvable matters through mutual understanding and cooperation.

The federal government feared that the zamindars would also use the electricity of QESCO after solarization of the agricultural tube wells in the province.

The federal authorities insisted that it must be ensured that electricity would not be taken from QESCO system after the solar energy.



QUETTA: Ambassador of South Korea Park Kijun meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

## Chief Minister invites investors of Korea to Balochistan, offers investment in different sectors

**Korean Ambassador expresses interest in making investment in different sectors of Balochistan**

**Independent Report**

QUETTA: The Chief Minister, Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has invited the investors of Republic of Korea to come to Balochistan and offered investment in different sectors of the province.

The Chief Minister assured that the conducive environment and complete protection would be provided to the Korean investors.

He was speaking to the Ambassador of Republic of Korea to Pakistan, Mr. Park Kijun, who called on him here on Thursday.

During the course of meeting, different matters pertaining to mutual cooperation and promotion of investment in tourism, information technology, live-

stock and others were discussed.

The Chief Minister and Korean ambassador were agreed on promoting mutual cooperation and partnership in different sectors.

While offering the investment to the Korean investors in different sectors in Balochistan, the Chief Minister said that there is a key role of Balochistan in national economy of future.

There are vast opportunities of investment in the long coast, fisheries, livestock, mines and minerals, besides tourism in the province.

He assured to the Korean Ambassador that every possible cooperation would be extended to the investors coming to invest in the province.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, and H.E. Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Pakistan, signs the Record of Discussions & Exchange of Notes to bolster the Human Resource Development Scholarship Program (JDS) 2024.

## Will put in our sweat and blood to make Pakistan great country by following Chinese model: PM

BEIJING (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday reiterated his resolve to make Pakistan a great nation and regain its position by following the Chinese development model through utmost hard work and a sharp focus on industrial and agricultural progress.

"If we follow the Chinese model, I have no doubt, Pakistan will regain its position in the comity of nations and will be respected like our Chinese brothers are done by friends and foes... We will follow your model, work hard untiringly, put in our sweat and blood, and make Pakistan a great country," the prime minister said addressing the 4th Pakistan-China Friendship and Business Reception here.

He told the gathering of Pakistani and Chinese business leaders that Pakistan

would follow Chinese President Xi Jinping's vision to focus on progress and prosperity by avoiding conflicts and cited immense Chinese progress and projects like the Belt and Road Initiative, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Security Initiative (GSI).

The prime minister who is in China on a five-day official visit, advised the Pakistani people against being dejected or losing hope rather than standing up and accepting the challenge to reach the level of Chinese progress within a few years or decades. He said the China-Pakistan friendship had no parallel in the world which remained unshakable and unbreakable even during the storms, wars, and earthquakes.

Recalling the Chinese

journey of swift development to become the second biggest economic and military power under President Xi's vision, Prime Minister Shehbaz said it was achieved only through hard work and untiring efforts.

"All Pakistanis will also have to pass through this thorny process. There is no other way to earn respect in the world," he remarked.

He said having come into being two years after Pakistan, China took its trade to trillions of dollars while Pakistan's hovered around \$30-40 billion in terms of exports. Besides, China has excelled in information technology and artificial intelligence. He also referred to the "wonderful" bilateral cooperation in space program as Pakistan recently sent a lunar satellite and a space satellite recently with Chinese collaboration.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over joint meeting of Federal and Provincial officials regarding solarization.

## Electricity tariff jacked up by Rs 3.33 per unit

ISLAMABAD (Online): Power tariff has been jacked up adding to miseries of people.

According to notification issued by NEPRA power tariff has been enhanced by Rs 3.33 per unit. The increase has been made under the head of monthly fuel adjustment charges.

The increased tariff will be applicable to the electricity bills of current month.

The increase made in power tariff by Rs 3.33 per unit will be charged to consumers in one month.

The hike in tariff will not apply to K-Electric and life line consumers.

## PM rejoices as Pakistan secure membership of UNSC for 2025-26

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed his delight and congratulated the nation as Pakistan has been elected as a member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the term 2025-26.

"Proud moment as Pakistan receives a resounding 182 votes and is elected to the United Nations Security Council for the term 2025-26," the prime minister wrote on X (formerly twitter).

## 2 die, over 7 injured bus catches fire

QUETTA (Online): As many as 2 persons were killed and over 7 injured when a passenger bus caught fire near Uthal in the area of Lasbella of Balochistan on national highway.

Further increase in number of deaths is feared. The passenger bus was carrying 28 commuters on its way from Karachi to Quetta when it caught fire near Lasbella on national highway. The fire engulfed the entire bus.

Deputy Commissioner told initially two persons were killed while 7 injured were rescued from bus.

## PM visit to push forward Pak-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership: Tarar

BEIJING (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar Thursday said that the visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would further deepen all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between Pakistan and China and expedite construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a pilot project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Before leaving Pakistan for the five-day visit of China, the prime minister talked highly about Pakistan-China friendship and the CPEC flagship

project, he said while talking to media here on the sideline of PM Shehbaz Sharif's visit.

This is new era of Pakistan-China friendship and the prime minister attaches great importance to this friendship and terms the friendship between Pakistan and China higher than mountains, deeper than sea and sweeter than honey.

He said that the prime minister's acknowledges positive role of China in socio-economic development of Pakistan and the future cooperation between the two countries.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Communication and Works Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa and Provincial Minister for Planning and Development Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi presiding over a meeting regarding development schemes.

## Country is under undeclared martial law, Imran tells SC

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan said that there is "undeclared martial law imposed" in the country.

He gave these remarks during the hearing of NAB amendment case in the Supreme Court on Thursday.

Imran Khan, the incarcerated founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), joined the proceedings via video link from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail.

Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa was heading the five-judge bench which also included Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi.

The former prime minister said that Arvind Kejriwal was allowed to contest the elections in India as his sentence was suspended only to allow him to run his campaign. "I was ousted from the election race just in five days by convicting me in several cases," Imran Khan said.

Justice Athar Minallah said in his remarks that it is unfortunate that he (Imran Khan) is in jail as people have many hopes associated with him.

The PTI founder said that the growth rate was 6.2 percent but his government was toppled in result of a conspiracy.

He added that the NAB chairman should be appointed by the Supreme Court.



## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Real powers

Though former president Arif Alvi seems eager to rebuild the bridges his party has burnt, he has been discovering that, in present circumstances, getting the 'real power' to the negotiating table can be like pulling teeth.

On Tuesday, in a talk with the media in Lahore, Dr Alvi, while delving into a long metaphor about guards, gardeners and renting houses, repeated that his party would only talk to "the owner of the house", before qualifying that with: "if the guard has decided to be the owner, he can say so, and we can talk". Though Dr Alvi conceded that he has had little success in getting the PTI and establishment to negotiate despite trying for the last two years, he remained hopeful about breaking the ice. "If there were no chances of success, I would have stopped trying long ago," he explained in response to a question. Dr Alvi need not be so circumspect about Pakistan's problems as he sees them. Speaking in riddles is best left to mid-tier politicians; Dr Alvi has served as the country's longest-serving democratically elected president and, as such, is entitled to speak his mind without having to worry about whom he may be upsetting. Similarly, by virtue of having been supreme commander of Pakistan's armed forces, it seems unbecoming of him to be chasing after those he wrongly considers the "owners of the house" and the "empowered". Instead, he should be reaching out to other representatives of the people, the true owners of Pakistan. Earlier this week, Dr Alvi explained that the PTI has three demands — supremacy of law, the release of PTI's founder chairman Imran Khan, and the return of the party's mandate.

There is no reason why these cannot be discussed with the other political parties, which, regardless of what their respective numerical strengths should be in the assemblies, still do represent the part of the citizenry that does not vote for the PTI. Indeed, the PTI seems to be repeating one of the biggest mistakes it made during its last tenure, when it sought to sideline its rivals while seeking a direct line with the establishment. Once again, the PTI is not representative of the entirety of the people of Pakistan: even if the PTI believes the current government has been formed with rigged results, it still does not mean that its rivals got no votes at all. If for nothing else, it must respect the other elected political parties in consideration of this fact. Unless it respects the choices of those who did not and do not vote for it, and unless it engages with the representatives elected by these people, the nation will not break free of the vicious cycle of stop-start democracy it is currently caught in.

### Healing the world

F.S. Aijazuddin

Khushwant Singh would have been delighted. The latest Khushwant Singh Literary Festival (KSLF) revived his memory over two days at SOAS in London, the city he loved as much as his birthplace, Hadali (in Pakistan).

The sessions began and ended with two Pakistanis. The keynote speaker, on June 1, had taken Khushwant's ashes 10 years ago from Delhi for interment in Hadali. The closing session included a brilliant presentation by Prof Qasim Aziz, a professor of neuro-gastroenterology, speaking on the art of healing.

The London litfest followed the pattern of previous ones held each year at Kasauli (Khushwant's summer home), a military cantonment in Himachal Pradesh. Pakistanis are not allowed there. The local commandant felt it would be tantamount to "allowing the enemy behind the lines".

London, by contrast, is apolitical. Indo-Pak-Bangladesh issues are miles away. The KSLF sessions could express opinions without invoking Chatham House rules. The only vapours of dissension came from a small group outside SOAS' Brunei Gallery, protesting against Israeli atrocities in Gaza.

Many speakers sweated the Raj out of their system. One author — the Bengali Subhadra Das — dismantled the creaking structure of colonialism. She challenged assumptions that have moulded Western images of us, and our perception about ourselves.

Some offered inspirational messages, aimed at self-improvement. Another linked distant Kolkata with the British Cotswolds in her talk on country walks through colonial Britain. Innovatively, she connected the residue of im-

perial wealth, citing buildings like the orient-inspired Sezincote in Gloucestershire.

Once, the British constructed Palladian public monuments to impress their colonial subjects with their imperial intent. Back home, they indulged themselves in private homes inspired by Indian themes and motifs, funded by the wealth they had accumulated abroad. This transfer of capital in the 19th century anticipated the mass movement of money in the 20th century, when oil-sodden Arabs, Russian oligarchs, Indian trillionaires and Pakistani politicians with unexplained cash denuded their own countries' wealth and transferred that money to buy expensive real estate in the UK. Two half-Indian sisters — Marina Wheeler and Shirin Wheeler — talked about the biographies they had written of their Indo-British parents. The theme chosen for this year's KSLF, 'Healing the World', addressed the need to repair our fractured planet — socially, and environmentally.

No session illustrated this better than the presentation by Robert Seatter, a BBC broadcaster/poet. His talk, 'The Cello and the Nightingale', took the audience back to the early, now forgotten, days of radio. He described how, in the 1920s, a young British cellist sat in a garden and practised her cello. Suddenly a nightingale joined in, trilling. This duet continued for weeks. She wrote to the then head of the BBC and suggested that it might like recording this impromptu concert.

After some initial reluctance, the BBC technicians were allowed to set up their equipment in the garden. The lady began playing her cello. For about half an hour, there was radio silence. Then, suddenly, the nightingale joined in. Nature and mankind

were in spontaneous harmony.

Uplifting accounts like these made one forget that there are ugly human realities, like general elections. One of the speakers — S.Y. Quraishi — had served as the 17th Indian chief election commissioner. He spoke on India's Festival of Democracy; timely, as the general elections were underway in India. The audience was told that 2024 is election year, with 64 countries holding elections (except China, which held them last year).

In the UK, PM Rishi Sunak sprang a surprise by announcing a general election on July 4. The British have a choice between two S's — Sunak and Starmer. Sunak came into 10 Downing Street through the back door. Starmer has been waiting on its front doorstep since 2020.

In the US, Donald Trump has no one but himself to blame for being ousted the last time, and for forfeiting the White House this year. Most leaders go from jail to the presidency. He might well be the first president to take the White House into the Jail House. Some wit said that American democracy offered choices. Its weakness was it offered only two choices. Voters in the US, and now the UK, are both confronted by this constricting duality.

Mercifully, within the hallowed halls of SOAS, discussions were non-abrasive. If only the accord that prevailed within could radiate throughout our war-riddled planet. The world's unborn owe much to the untiring commitment of KSLF's organisers — the indefatigable Niloufer Bilimoria and Khushwant Singh's Rahul — to save our finite earth from our infinite idiocies. -- Courtesy Dawn

### Wheat policy

Aijaz A. Nizamani

Wheat is the most important grain for Pakistani consumers, with, on average, over 50 per cent of their caloric dietary intake provided by the crop. The crop is equally important for farmers, with over half of all agricultural land dedicated to wheat during the Rabi season. We have recently seen the social and political consequences of the government's wheat procurement policy going wrong. The crisis offers many important lessons which must not be wasted. The biggest one is that the prevalent system of promising a minimum support price does not work.

For context, the official wheat procurement price was fixed at Rs4,000 per 40 kilogrammes in 2022, but farmers got at least 10pc above this rate in both 2022 and 2023 because international prices were higher compared to the Pakistani market due to inflation and the Ukraine war. The farmers were jubilant, but consumers paid a heavy price. This year, the tables turned: wheat could, at one point, be imported for Rs65 per kg, far less than the support price of nearly Rs100 per kg. Much blame has been traded over who is responsible for the unsold stock of Pakistani farmers' produce.

Ex-caretaker PM Anwarul-Haq-Kakar defended himself by arguing that the entire import was done by the private sector and did not involve a single rupee being spent from the treasury. More surprising was the revelation that imports continued during the current government: when harvest started in Sindh in the last week of March, at least seven ships were waiting to be offloaded

at Karachi's ports. Once the Ukraine war ends, prices may come down further to Rs50 per kg, and with the rupee improving against the dollar, the private sector will push for a liberal import policy with the rational argument that consumers should not be forced to pay double the amount for something available at half the rate in the international market.

Food security and, more importantly, the wheat market are not things that can be left to the mercy of market forces. Many advanced economies, while advocating free market capitalism, make sure that their food production and distribution policies won't cause wild swings in food prices. They provide production subsidies to farmers but leave the market to its own devices. To balance the equation, vulnerable households are provided cash support to help them purchase food. This policy generally works well for both producers and consumers.

The best our federal and provincial governments can do is to come up with a support mechanism that involves direct transfers to wheat farmers and then let the market prevail.

The question is: what is the optimum level of per-acre assistance, and should there be a ceiling? Here, it may be helpful to explore international practices. Farmers in the EU receive, on average, 250 to 300 euros per acre, with no ceiling or payment limit. Pakistan, of course, cannot afford such a blanket subsidy. As a student of agricultural economics, I propose a symbolic figure of Rs10,000 per acre, with equal contributions from the federal and provincial governments.

There also needs to be a ceiling. A farmer may have grown over 100

acres of wheat but, under this arrangement, should be entitled to maximum support for only 10 acres, which means capping support at Rs100,000 per farmer. This should be enough to achieve the policy objectives of ensuring sufficient area is under cultivation, will not burden the treasury too much, and benefit small farmers.

However, before implementing such a policy, measures must be in place to prevent fraud and abuse. This support should be managed through a tech platform that uses satellite imagery of cultivated land that is verified through Form 7 of the revenue record. The funds should be directly deposited into the farmers' accounts, ideally before the crop is harvested. As a positive side effect, the policy will encourage the updating of land records. In some cases, land records are still in the name of previous owners, or even great grandparents. This issue must be addressed if Pakistan is to progress towards a digital economy.

It is believed that of the 22 million acres of area dedicated to the wheat crop, an area of around 10m acres may qualify for such support.

This would cost around Rs100 billion to both federal and provincial governments, which is far less than what governments currently waste on wheat procurement. Once this support mechanism is in place, wheat should be subject to a liberal import-export regime. Wheat farmers will adjust accordingly, as poultry farmers, rice growers and producers of other agri commodities already do. This shift could lead to a more stable and prosperous wheat industry, benefiting both farmers and consumers. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Govt's reform measures start yielding results with reduced inflation, public debt: PM

PM invites China's NORINCO firm to invest in KCR

BEIJING (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the reform measures taken by his government had already started yielding results in the form of successfully tapered food inflation, reduced current account deficit and public debt down to a more sustainable level.

The prime minister, talking to Chairman of China Export-Import Bank (EXIM) Dr. Wu Fulin here, highlighted his government's reform agenda focused on governance, taxation, and ease of doing business to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

He appreciated the EXIM Bank's continued support for the modernization of industries, agriculture and IT sectors of Pakistan.

He also discussed the possible role of the China

EXIM Bank in financing Pakistan-China joint venture projects and trade financing as part of efforts to boost Pakistan's exports to international markets.

The EXIM Bank chairman underscored the critical role of economic and financial cooperation under CPEC phase II and China EXIM Bank's strategic partnership with Pakistan and support to advance sustainable development under the concept of 'shared prosperity'.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday invited the China Northern Industry Corporation (NORINCO) to invest in Pakistan's communications infrastructure project, particularly the Karachi Circular Railway.

The prime minister, talking to NORINCO Chairman, highlighted that

the government was taking measures to bring ease of doing business and had established the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) for the purpose.

He said that China and Pakistan enjoyed cordial and time-tested friendly relations which were strengthening with the passage of time.

The NORINCO chairman particularly mentioned Punjab and Pakistan Speed, referring to the swift completion of development projects during Shehbaz Sharif's stint as Punjab chief minister, and also appreciated him for ensuring projects' quality under his supervision.

The company head recalled that under Shehbaz Sharif's supervision, the Lahore Orange Line project was completed timely.

### OGRA organizes seminar on "Navigating the Future of LNG in Pakistan"

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) successfully hosted an insightful seminar titled "Navigating the Future of LNG in Pakistan," bringing together key stakeholders, policymakers, and industry leaders from the LNG sector.

The seminar aimed at knowledge sharing and unlocking the potential of LNG in Pakistan, especially in the context of depleting indigenous natural gas reserves. The historical significance of natural gas in Pakistan's energy mix and the benefits of LNG as a cleaner alternative with a lower carbon footprint, reducing SOx and NOx, were central themes.

The Chairman of

OGRA, Masroor Khan, welcomed all guests, particularly those from the industry. He assured attendees of OGRA's robust regulatory framework designed to support the LNG industry while respecting individual rights and protecting consumers. Member (Oil), Zain-ul-Abideen Qureshi, in his opening address, underscored the vast opportunities for new LNG project developers and highlighted the critical role of existing terminal operators in enhancing Pakistan's energy infrastructure. He reaffirmed OGRA's commitment to fostering a supportive regulatory environment to attract investment and drive innovation in the LNG sector.

### PTA conducts raid against illegal issuance of SIMs in DG Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Zonal Office, Lahore, in close collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Circle, conducted a successful raid against franchisee of Telenor located on Jampur Road, DG Khan. The franchisee was found to be involved in the illegal issuance of SIMs, said a news release. During the raid, 17 BVS devices, 1 laptop, 360 active SIMs and 1000 scanned soft images of finger/thumb impressions from laptops were seized as evidence. Two persons were apprehended on the premises by the FIA, which is currently investigating the matter further.



A representative delegation of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industries calls on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House Peshawar.

### Aamir Ibrahim says Pakistan: A digital goldmine for foreign investors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan, with over 192 million cellular mobile subscribers and 133 million mobile broadband users, is rapidly becoming a prime destination for foreign investment, particularly in the technology sector said Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz.

Addressing investors from different parts of the world at the VEON Capital Markets Day 2024 in Dubai he said, the average monthly data usage per subscriber is nearly 9 GB, reflecting a highly engaged user base.

The country's fintech landscape, he said, is also burgeoning, with around

115 million mobile wallets in use. Coupled with an emerging, youthful, and tech-savvy population, Pakistan presents a compelling opportunity for investors looking to tap into a dynamic and growing market, said a news release.

Citing examples from Jazz, Aamir informed the audience that it took three decades to reach 72 million cellular mobile customers, but just five years to serve 67 million users monthly across all its digital platforms. The major ones include Pakistan's leading fintech, JazzCash; the country's largest OTT platform, Tamasha; the largest onshore cloud and

cybersecurity platform, Garaj; and the largest local lifestyle app, SIMOSA.

Despite significant progress, he said, that over 100 million adults remain unbanked, and mobile broadband penetration is only around 55%. This highlights the vast potential for economic growth and social progress by closing this digital divide.

"As Pakistan's leading digital operator, with investments exceeding US\$10.6 billion since inception, Jazz is strategically positioned to be a key driver of the country's digital transformation," he said.

### Indonesian embassy officials in Pakistan visit SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): The Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) extended a warm welcome to Chargé D'affaires Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma and First Secretary of Political Affairs Ferry J. Murtiansyah from the Indonesian Embassy in Pakistan.

Their visit was aimed to bolster engagement with the Sialkot business community and explore avenues for enhanced trade collaboration between

Pakistan and Indonesia.

In his welcome address, Senior Vice President (SVP) SCCI Wahub Jahangir underscored the longstanding historical and cultural ties between the two nations.

He emphasised the importance of forging connections between the Indonesian private sector and Sialkot's businessmen, noting the potential for Indonesian companies to procure high-quality Pakistani products.

### Rupee sheds 09 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Thursday witnessed a devaluation of 09 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.39 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.30. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.25 and Rs 279.9 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 09 paise to close at Rs 302.72 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.63, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

### Aleem apprises Chinese investors about business prospects in Pak economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairman of the Chinese Group of Companies Li Qiwang in Beijing and apprised him that the investment process in Pakistan for domestic and foreign investors is being made easier, said a press release. Abdul Aleem Khan said that special incentives and facilities for investment from China in Pakistan will also be given, including special economic zones, maximum facilities at ports and special banking packages for import and export.

Abdul Aleem Khan along with Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a meeting with



SIALKOT: H.E. MR. Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma Charge D'Affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia addressing to Business Community at Chamber of Commerce.

### Minister says: Govt. strategy ensured transparency in wheat procurement process

The meeting was told that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government introduced online application to ensure transparency and efficiency in wheat procurement. Local farmers of KP and other provinces were registered through the app and wheat was procured on a first-come and first-served basis. The meeting was informed that 22 procurement centers across the province were monitored through CCTV cameras and a five-member committee was formed to assess the quality of wheat.

The meeting was held at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government introduced online application to ensure transparency and efficiency in wheat procurement. Local farmers of KP and other provinces were registered through the app and wheat was procured on a first-come and first-served basis. The meeting was informed that 22 procurement centers across the province were monitored through CCTV cameras and a five-member committee was formed to assess the quality of wheat.



## Afghan delegation discusses issues with Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): An Afghan delegation headed by Afghan Consul General in Peshawar, Hafiz Muhib Ullah Shakil called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday and discussed with him matters relating to the various issues faced by the Afghans here.

A statement from the Governor House said the delegation and governor

talked about removing obstacles in obtaining visas for Afghan students and easing the trade crossing on the border.

Both sides also discussed the allocation of special seats for Afghan students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa universities and the extension in the expiry date of Afghan identity cards issued by Pakistan.

The governor on the

occasion said Afghanistan was a brotherly neighboring country and its prosperity and development were prime desires. "The cultural and traditional values of the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan were the same adding that Afghans were our brothers.

and we welcomed them into our country from the bottom of our hearts", he added.



Afghan Consul General in Peshawar Hafiz Muhibullah Shakil calls on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at Governor House.

## Rawalpindi E-Bus service to be functional next year: Bilal Akbar

RAWALPINDI (APP): The E-Bus service in Rawalpindi will be functional next year. The projects aims to resolve commuting issues being faced by the citizens. There will be six routes including, one from Taxila, Wah Cantt, IJ Principal Road to Octori 26, and another connecting Daultala with Rawalpindi. Maintenance work on Metrobus tracks will be carried out from June to December this year.

This was disclosed by

Provincial Transport Minister, Bilal Akbar Khan during a press conference here on Thursday. He informed that he was regularly paying visits to Rawalpindi on the special instructions from Chief Minister Mariam Nawaz Sharif to solve prevailing issues of transportation and traffic management in the city. He said that consultation with the members of the national and provincial assemblies was also underway in that regard.

## ANF recovers 373 kg drugs in 7 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover 373 kg drugs and arrested 15 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday.

He informed that 117 kg hashish and 36 kg opium were recovered from three suspects arrested near M-1, Attock.

121.2 kg hashish and 26.4 kg opium were recovered from five accused netted in Faisalabad.

In two operations near M-1 Islamabad, 31.2 kg hashish was recovered from five suspects.

## SHC allows court's proceedings reporting

KARACHI (Online): Sindh High Court (SHC) has allowed the court reporters all over the country to conduct court's reporting on the petition of PFUJ. The court remarked Supreme Court's guidelines and the respective laws be kept in view during court's reporting. The guidelines issued by Supreme Court (SC) for reporting court's proceedings be implemented. PEMRA can take action on violation of SC guidelines.

## Former Governor KP calls on CM KP, discusses socio-economic issues

PESHAWAR (APP): The former governor and Mayor Peshawar briefed the Chief Minister about the socio-economic situations in the province, especially Peshawar.

Haji Zubair Ali informed about the steps being taken by the city metropolitan government to alleviate the public problems despite severe shortage of funds.

He said that the provincial government should patronize the elected local body representatives so that the basic problems of the people can be solved at their doorsteps.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Health and Emergency Services Salman Raifque enquiring about the health of Punjabi Poet Tajamul Kaleem.

## Govt to give subsidies for transport, food, agri sectors in budget

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Finance Minister Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman met US Consul General Christine Hackens here on Thursday and discussed with her reforms in transport, food and agriculture sectors.

He told the US envoy that in the upcoming budget, subsidies would be given for transport, food, and agriculture sectors. Public-private partnerships would be utilised to ensure quality education in government schools. The government's focus would primarily remain on education, healthcare, agriculture, and environmental conservation sectors. Efforts will be made to provide modern teaching equipment to students and alleviate travel difficulties.

He said investment would be made in solar systems to reduce electricity bills, and private sector investment would be encouraged for mega projects. The minister said there would be no increase in taxes burdening the poor in the budget.

The provincial minister informed the consul general that the Punjab government would not impose any tax on net wealth.

Instead of increasing property tax rates, changes would be made in the tax base, he added. A reasonable increase in property tax rates was proposed after five years.



LAHORE: American Consul General Kristin K Hawkins meeting with Punjab Minister for Finance Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman.

## In-laws allegedly kill woman by setting her on fire; IGP takes notice

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): The in-laws allegedly killed the married woman by setting her ablaze in the jurisdiction of Jatoi police station.

According to a police spokesman, the incident took place last night in Basti Bulali Mouza Jungle Tehsil Jatoi, in which the in-laws allegedly poured petrol over the married woman, Samina Bibi, and set her on fire after subjecting her to severe torture.

Police have registered a case against the woman's husband, father-in-law, and three brothers-in-law. It has been reported that Samina Bibi had been married for two years, and there were frequent disputes in the house.

The victim's family blamed the in-laws for

torturing and burning her to death.

Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, has taken notice of the incident and sought a report from the Regional Police Officer (RPO) DG Khan division. He directed the District Police Officer (DPO) Muzaffargarh to oversee the investigation personally. "Violence against women is intolerable, and those responsible for setting the woman on fire must be arrested immediately.

Police started raids for the arrest of the accused," he emphasized.

Meanwhile, Jatoi police registered a case against the accused on the application of the woman's brother, namely Wajid Iqbal.

## Two shot dead in Swabi

PESHAWAR (APP): At least two people were killed when unknown armed men fired at them in Kala Kandao area of Swabi district, police informed on Thursday.

Police said two men identified as Ishtiaq and Asim were on their way to market on a motorcycle when they were fired at in Kala Kandao.

The assailants escaped the area after committing the crime while police shifted both bodies to a hospital for post-mortem. Police said the incident resulted from an old enmity between the two families adding that investigation.

## Rescue 1122 mock exercise held

SIALKOT (APP): Rescue 1122 conducted a joint mock exercise with the district administration to deal with the flood situation in Marala Ravi Link Canal at Sahuwala.

According to rescue spokesperson, on the special instructions of Secretary Punjab Emergency Service Dr. Rizwan Naseer, Rescue 1122, under the leadership of District Emergency Officer (DEO) Engineer Naveed Iqbal, conducted the exercise.

## KP Minister lauds role of MTRA in prevention of illegal human organ transplantation

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah on Thursday lauded the role of the Medical Transplantation Regulatory Authority (MTRA) in the prevention of illegal human organ transplantation activities in the province.

Addressing a ceremony on the occasion of World Transplant Day here, he said that the authority has started registration of transplant hospitals having international standard facilities.

He also appreciated the cooperation of police and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in curbing illegal transplantation in the province, adding that with the cooperation of the police and FIA, the authority has been able to stop illegal organ transplants and organ sales. He said that at present the trend of kidney and liver transplants was increasing, noting that kidney failure occurs mainly due to diabetes and high blood pressure for which timely diagnosis and treatment were imperative.

## International News

## Putin says Russia could use nuclear weapons, 'if threatened'

Monitoring Desk ST PETERSBURG: President Vladimir Putin cautioned the West on Wednesday that Russia could use all available means, including nuclear weapons, to defend itself if its sovereignty or territorial integrity were threatened.

Putin said that the West had repeatedly accused Russia of nuclear sabre-rattling, but said this was wrong, and pointed out that it was the United States which had used nuclear weapons against Japan in World War Two.

Putin was speaking to senior editors of foreign news agencies on the sidelines of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum. He said that

Russia's nuclear doctrine permits nuclear weapons to be used in response to a number of threats.

"For some reason, the West believes that Russia will never use it," Putin said. "We have a nuclear doctrine, look what it says. If someone's actions threaten our sovereignty and territorial integrity, we consider it possible for us to use all means at our disposal. This should not be taken lightly, superficially."

In reply to a question about the Taliban government in Afghanistan, the Russian president said Moscow should "build up" relations with it.

"We have always believed that we need to deal with reality. The Taliban

are in power in Afghanistan... We have to build up relations with the Taliban government."

Putin's comments came hours after a Taliban delegation arrived in St Petersburg to attend the economic forum.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had said last week that Moscow planned to take the Taliban off its list of banned terrorist organizations, nearly three years after the group seized power from a US-backed government.

"They are the real power" in Afghanistan, Lavrov said at the time, speaking during a visit by Putin to Uzbekistan. The Taliban were designated a terrorist organisation by Moscow in 2003.



British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Queen Camilla, Britain's King Charles, President of France Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron attend the UK national commemorative event for the 80th anniversary of D-Day, held at the British Normandy Memorial in Ver-sur-Mer, Normandy, France.

## Japan lawmakers probe UFO security 'threat'

Monitoring Desk TOKYO: UFO sightings should not be dismissed out of hand because they could in fact be surveillance drones or weapons, say Japanese lawmakers who launched a group on Thursday to probe the matter.

The non-partisan group, which counts former defence ministers

among its 80-plus members, will urge Japan to ramp up its abilities to detect and analyse unidentified anomalous phenomena (UAP), more commonly known as UFOs. Although the phenomenon is often associated with little green men in the popular imagination, it has become a hot political topic in the United States.

## IAEA board passes resolution against Iran

Monitoring Desk VIENNA: The UN nuclear watchdog's 35-nation board of governors passed a resolution on Wednesday calling on Iran to step up cooperation with the watchdog and reverse its recent barring of inspectors, despite concerns Tehran would respond with atomic escalation.

Twenty countries voted in favour and two against — Russia and China — with 12 abstentions. It follows up on the last resolution 18 months ago that asked Iran to comply with a years-long International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) investigation into uranium traces found at undeclared sites.

"The need for the board to hold Iran accountable to its legal obligations is long overdue. Iran must urgently, fully and unambiguously cooperate with the agency," Britain, France and Germany said in a statement on the resolution they proposed.



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a UNRWA school sheltering displaced people, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.

## Yemen clashes kill 18 fighters in fresh flare-up: military officials

Monitoring Desk DUBAI: At least 18 combatants have been killed in battles between Yemeni government forces and Iran-backed Huthi rebels in the country's southwest, two military officials told AFP on Thursday.

The clashes on Wednesday were triggered by a Huthi attack on a front-line area between government-controlled parts of Lahij governorate and Huthi-run parts of Ta'ez province, said Mohammed al-Naqib, a spokesman for the Southern Transitional Council, a separatist

group allied with the government.

The attack came despite a lull in fighting that has largely held since the expiry of a six-month truce brokered by the United Nations in April 2022. Yemeni government "forces succeeded in repelling the attack, but five soldiers were martyred and others wounded", Naqib told AFP.

A Huthi military official in Ta'ez told AFP that 13 rebels, including a senior commander, were also killed in the fighting. Yemen's internationally-recognised government condemned the

Huthi offensive as a "treacherous attack".

In a statement on social media platform X on Wednesday, Information Minister Moammar al-Eryani said the counterattack by Yemeni government forces "inflicted heavy losses on (Huthi) militia members", without specifying a toll. While hostilities have remained low, sporadic fighting has occasionally flared in parts of the country. In April, a surprise Huthi attack killed 11 fighters loyal to the Yemeni government in Lahij province.

## Modi readies for third term as India's PM after securing coalition

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was preparing on Thursday to be sworn in for a third term after an unexpectedly close election that forced his party into a coalition government.

Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which had ruled for the past decade with an outright majority, had been expecting another landslide win.

But results of the six-week election released on

Tuesday ran counter to exit polls, seeing the BJP lose its majority and sending it into quick-fire talks to lock in a 15-member coalition that would allow it to govern.

That grouping — the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition — announced late on Wednesday that they had agreed to form a government.

"We all unanimously choose respected NDA leader Narendra Modi as our leader," a BJP-issued alliance statement said.

## Slovenia, too, recognises Palestine state

Monitoring Desk PARIS: Slovenia has followed suit of Spain, Ireland and Norway by recognising the state of Palestine, breaking with the long-held view of Western powers that Palestinians can gain statehood "only as part of a negotiated peace with Israel". With the latest addition, 146 of the 193 UN member states now recognise a Palestinian state including most Middle Eastern, African, Latin American and Asian countries. In April, the US used its veto at the UNSC to prevent a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member state.

## Gaza officials say 40 killed in Israeli strike on Nuseirat school

Monitoring Desk DUBAI: The director of the Hamas-run Gaza government media office Ismail Al-Thawabta and a Gaza health ministry official told Reuters on Thursday 40 people were killed and 73 were wounded in an Israeli attack on the Nuseirat school in the Gaza Strip.

The two officials added that 14 children and 9 women were killed in the strike.

Earlier, UNRWA

communications director Juliette Touma told Reuters that the number of those reported killed in the Israeli offensive on the Nuseirat school was between 35 and 45, adding the number could not be confirmed at this stage.

The Israeli military said it assessed that there were 20-30 fighters located in the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency school.

## Ukraine hits Russian oil facilities as President Zelenskyy joins leaders at D-Day events in France

Monitoring Desk NEW YORK: Ukrainian drones struck an oil refinery and a fuel depot in Russian border regions, officials in the targeted areas said Thursday, in Kyiv's ongoing effort to disrupt the Kremlin's war machine and as Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy sought further Western support in Europe's biggest conflict since World War II.

Zelenskyy was due to join world leaders, including U.S. President Joe Biden, at D-Day commemorations in France on Thursday. On Friday, he was due to meet with French officials.

Zelenskyy's trip came a day after Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that Russia could provide long-range weapons to other countries so that they could strike Western targets.

lometer (620-mile) front line after more than two years of war.

Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia's Security Council, said that Putin's comments Wednesday in St. Petersburg, Russia, amounted to "a quite significant shift in our foreign policy."

"Let the U.S. and its allies feel the impact of direct use of Russian weapons by others," Medvedev wrote on his messaging app channel.

Putin deliberately didn't name potential recipient countries of Russian weapons, Medvedev said. They could go to anyone who considers the U.S. and its allies their enemies, he said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday the use of Western weapons against Russia "can't be left without consequences, and those consequences will certainly follow."

Putin claimed that using some Western-supplied weapons involves military personnel of those countries controlling the missiles and selecting targets, and therefore he said that Moscow could take "asymmetrical" steps elsewhere in the world.

That threat came after NATO allies said they would allow Ukraine to use weapons they deliver to Kyiv to attack Russian territory.

Ukraine's army is fighting to hold back a recent Russian push in eastern areas that seeks to exploit Kyiv's shortages of ammunition and troops along the roughly 1,000-ki-



## PM, CIDCA chairman discuss promotion of Pak, China pragmatic coop.

BEIJING (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met the Chairman of China International Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) Ambassador Luo Zhaohui wherein they exchanged views on the unique and enduring China-Pakistan friendship and the promotion of pragmatic cooperation driven by common development, strategic trust, and mutual benefit. The prime minister, who arrived here Wednesday on the second leg of his five-day China visit, appreciated the robust support of CIDCA for CPEC projects and Pakistan's socio-economic development, particularly the establishment of Pakistan-China Friendship Hospital, the Desalination Plant in Gwadar, and the New Gwadar International Airport. Terming the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as the hallmark of ironclad friendship between Pakistan and China, they noted that the Joint Working Group on Socio-economic Development under the CPEC had yielded positive results. They also expressed confidence that the momentum would continue in the CPEC phase II to improve the lives and livelihoods of the people. Prime Minister Shehbaz underlined that the governments and the peoples of both countries had always stood in solidarity with each other during times of natural disasters and calamities. He commended CIDCA's pivotal role in supporting developing countries particularly Pakistan during the COVID-19 pandemic, the post-2022 flood reconstruction, and the grant of polio vaccines.



BEIJING: Chairman China International Development Cooperation Agency Luo Zhaohui calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Pak, Türkiye & Indonesia call for united action to combat rising Islamophobia

NEW YORK (APP): Amid a rising tide of anti-Muslim hate, senior diplomats from Pakistan, Türkiye and Indonesia Wednesday reaffirmed their governments' collective commitment to combatting Islamophobia, while also advocating peace, tolerance, and inter-religious dialogue.

They were speaking at an event co-hosted by the consulates general of the three Islamic countries at the Turkish Consulate General in New York.

In his remarks, the Consul General of Pakistan, Aamer Ahmad Atozai, emphasized Islam's core principles of moderation, pluralism, compassion and tolerance.

He highlighted the misrepresentation of Islam by a minority of extremists and the worrying surge of Islamophobia since 9/11, encompassing hate speech, violence, and institutional

discrimination against Muslims.

Atozai also underscored Pakistan's active role, alongside Türkiye and Indonesia, in the recent adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution on "Measures to combat Islamophobia," which includes a call for the appointment of a United Nations Special Envoy on combating Islamophobia.

The Pakistani Consul General denounced Israel's genocidal actions in Gaza as a stark reflection of global Islamophobia, shedding light on prevalent Islamophobic incidents worldwide, including hate speech, targeted attacks, and discrimination against Muslims.

Atozai also drew attention to the systematic destruction of religious sites in India and other Islamophobic actions within that country.



QUETTA: Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai in a group photo with the teachers coming from different districts of the Province led by Voice of Balochistan.

## Pak, Japan ink grant worth \$ 2.1m for HR development scholarships

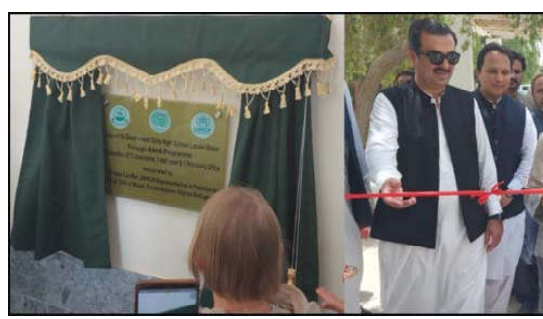
ISLAMABAD (INP): The Governments of Pakistan and Japan have signed a landmark grant agreement worth US\$ 2.1 million to bolster the Human Resource Development Scholarship Program (JDS) 2024.

In a ceremonial exchange of notes and signing ceremony convened at the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Pakistan, signed the record of discussions and exchange of notes, said a press release issued here.

Saeed Ashraf Siddiqi, Joint Secretary representing the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and Mr. Naoaki Miyata, Chief Representative of JICA Pakistan, signed the Grant

Agreement. The meeting was attended by senior officials from the ministry.

Japan, through JICA, has extended this generous grant to Pakistan, marking the 7th installment of the JDS project since its inception in 2018. This year, the grant will provide seventeen (17) scholarships for Master's programs and one (1) for a PhD/Doctorate program at prestigious universities in Japan for young Federal Civil Service and Ex-Cadre officers of Pakistan. Since 2018, six (6) batches, each comprising around 18 participants, have benefited from the JDS scholarships. This initiative has significantly enhanced the capacity and performance of young officers who play a crucial role in the socio-economic development of Pakistan.



QUETTA: Representative of UNHCR Pakistan Philippa Candler inaugurating a building of Govt. Girls High School constructed with the cooperation of UNHCR.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the members of the Gilgit-Baltistan Council calls on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## PM Shehbaz's ongoing visit proves to be milestone in development of Pak-China relations: Ahsan Iqbal

BEIJING (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof Ahsan Iqbal Thursday said that the ongoing visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China would prove to be a milestone in the development of Pakistan-China relations.

"This is the first official visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China after the establishment of new government in Pakistan early this year and the visit will prove to be a milestone in the development of Pakistan-China relations," he told APP. He said that Pakistan and China had laid the foundation of historic project of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2013 and this pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has resulted in significant social and economic development in Pakistan during the last 10 years.

The minister pointed out that a large number of achievements have been made particularly in the energy sector, adding, more than 8000 MW power projects were constructed while motorway and highways were also built. Similarly, we laid foundation of information highway through fiber optic cable and upgraded Gwadar seaport as well as work was initiated on construction of special economic zones.

But unfortunately, that momentum could not be maintained between the years 2018 and 2022 due to some political changes, Covid-19 pandemic and climate disaster in the country in the year 2022 which caused a colossal loss to the economy, he added.

Prof Ahsan Iqbal remarked that the present government has resumed work on the CPEC projects with new vigor and commitment adding, "Now we are entering in the phase-2 of the CPEC under which five new corridors have been

identified as per consensus reached between the leadership of both the countries". These new corridors include growth corridor, livelihood corridor, innovation corridor, green energy corridor and open and inclusive regional development corridor, he added.

He said in the second phase, the government is focusing to promote industrial cooperation with China through business-to-business linkages. In this regard, the Pakistan-China Business Conference was organized in coastal city of Shenzhen during first leg of the prime minister's visit to China which was attended by more than 350 entrepreneurs from both Pakistan and China. The federal minister said that agreement would be signed with China to upgrade agriculture sector as the present leadership intends to benefit from China's experience in modern agriculture and also use of science and technology in this sector.

## PPP leaders call on CM Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): Senior leaders of Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Mir Abdul Rauf Rind and Mir Zubair Rind on Thursday met with Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Khan Bugti at the CM's Secretariat.

During the meeting, various regional issues and others matters of mutual interest were discussed.

The release of scholarship program for the children of martyrs and the increase in the quota of Balochistan jobs on the federal quota and the overall situation were came under discussion in the meeting.

In the meeting, Mir Abdul Rauf Rind described the Chief Minister visit to Oxford University and the special scholarship for Balochistan students as a historic initiative.

Appreciating the revolutionary steps of the Chief Minister, he said that these steps would not only encourage the talented students and children of martyrs of Balochistan so that it would bring significant improvement in the education sector.

## Pishin DC directs Food Authority to halt tainted meat supply

PISHIN (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pishin, Juma Dad Mandokhel, directed the Balochistan Food Authority, along with Levies forces, to prevent a significant attempt to supply thousands of kilograms of spoiled and unhygienic meat from Multan-bound coaches at the Ziarat Cross.

According to details, it was revealed on Thursday that substandard meat was being supplied to Quetta city from the Multan-bound coach.

The traffic management authority took custody of the passenger coach and initiated an inspection regarding the supply of un-healthy meat.

It remained evident that the Balochistan Food Authority and relevant administrative authorities are actively engaged in action against the supply of sub-standard and unhealthy meat in coaches.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

## CM grieved over incident of fire in passenger coach in Uthal; loss of precious lives

QUETTA (APP): The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed grief and sorrow over the incident of fire in a passenger coach that claimed lives of three persons and left over a dozen injured in Vayaro area of Uthal.

The Chief Minister has directed to the concerned authorities to provide best medical treatment to the injured passengers.

He also directed to fix the responsibility after conducting thorough investigations into the tragic incident.

Besides, he directed to ensure implementation on the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for prevention of such tragic incidents and protection of the passengers in them.



QUETTA: A delegation of UN Women Balochistan meeting with Provincial Advisor Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi.

## Open court held to resolve public issues in Zhob

QUETTA (APP): On special directive of Commissioner Zhob Division, an open court (Khuli Kehchhari) was organized at the Cultural Hall to address public legal issues for provision of facilities to them in the area.

The open court was attended by officers of all departments and political and social leaders of Zhob in large numbers.

Addressing the open court, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Faisal Tareen said that the open courts were being organized at different places to solve the problems being faced by the people so that the problems of the people could be solved at their doorsteps.

He said that Commissioner Zhob Division and Deputy Commissioner

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner Lasbela, Ms. Humaira Baloch and SSP Naveed Alam reached the spot of coach accident. The DC Lasbela told that the rescue activities were started after the incident. According to the Deputy Commissioner, the passenger coach was on way to Quetta from Karachi carrying some 28 passengers.

She informed that three bodies of the deceased passengers and seven injured passengers were shifted in the local hospital after rescuing from the passenger coach. Two of the deceased persons belong to Karachi while the other hails from Hub.

The DC Lasbela said that the reasons behind the fire in coach are being ascertained.

## Investment in Gilgit-Baltistan, vital to bring economic prosperity: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): The president assured the delegation that steps would be taken to develop health, education and road infrastructure to provide basic facilities to the people of GB at their doorsteps.

He highlighted the need to expand the airport in Gilgit, besides finding new ways and means for the GB's development.

He said that GB was the gateway to China, having immense vast economic potential that needed to be fully capitalized upon for the people's benefit.

President Zardari assured the delegation that the issue of compensation to the affectees of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam would be taken up at the appropriate forum.

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bers informed the president that the discontinuation of the Sehat Sahulat Programme was causing problems as the people of GB were unable to avail health insurance services.

The president suggested that the Sehat Sahulat Programme could be included in the Benazir Income Support Programme so that the people of GB could avail of medical treatment.

The delegation members thanked President Zardari for taking interest in the GB's development and the resolution of its issues.

President Zardari assured the delegation of his cooperation and support for addressing the problems of the GB people. GB.



BEIJING: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar witnesses the signing ceremony of MoUs between the Board of Investment and several Chinese entities.

## DC directs to timely complete development projects in Ziarat

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner Ziarat Liaquat Ali Kakar on Thursday directed that the work of Development Package should be completed on time so that the people could benefit from them.

He gave direction while visiting the development works of old Jamia Masjid, residential colony and, various roads and sewage system in connection with Ziarat development package.

Deputy commissioner said that Ziarat was a tourist place and steps should be taken to enhance the beauty of the area.

## DC launches anti-Congo virus spray campaign in Nushki

NUSHKI (APP): Deputy Commissioner Nushki Amjad Hussain Soomro on Thursday inaugurated an anti-Congo virus spray campaign at the District Livestock Office.

As per details, he inspected various sections including the DI Lab, AI Center, CVH, and Poultry Farm. The DC also inspected the poultry farm.

Additionally, district livestock officer Dr. Syed Obaidullah Shah briefed the DC about the different departments. The event was attended by PA to DC Najeed Mangal, Dr. Shahid Nadeem, Dr. Inayatullah Mengal, Dr. Naeem Sahibzada, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, Dr. Laiq Ahmed Jan, and Stock Assistant Muhammad Ishaq.

## Change of tribunal case: EC adjourns hearing

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has adjourned hearing of case pertaining to change of tribunal set up in connection with the constituencies in federal capital. A 4-member commission headed over by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) took up the matter for hearing Thursday. Counsels for MNAs of PML-N appeared before EC. The counsels for PTI backed candidates from three constituencies also appeared in EC.

## UNHCR reviews Afghan refugee situation, opens girls' school in Loralai

LORALAI (APP): Afghan refugees in camps/RVs and engaged in discussions with local authorities. The visit aimed to review the refugee situation, identify challenges, and seek solutions while advocating for refugee rights.

During her visit, Candler toured the UNHCR's vocational training center in Loralai and met with Loralai Division Commissioner Balach Aziz and Deputy

The PPP leaders hoped that newly elected body of PBC would play their active role to address legal issues of PBC employees and development of the department.

They said that they would come up with expectation of employees of the PCB.

Thanking PPP leaders, PBC's Quetta President Muhammad Ali Mengal and General Secretary Munir Ahmed Shahwani said that they under central leadership would take practical steps to solve legal issues of PBC's all employees as they expected the newly elected body in this regard.

Commissioner Loralai Miran Baloch. She also inspected the historical residence of the Commissioner and DC, built during British rule.

Key activities included visiting RV Katuwa refugee camps, assessing camp conditions and facilities, and meeting separately with elders and women's groups to hear their issues and complaints.