

# Independent

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Vol. XIV No. 133 Reg. mails-B/ID-445 Friday June 07, 2024, Zeeqad 29, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

## 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 unshakeable and unreachable 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.



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



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

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday, stressing the need for a focus on the socio-economic uplift of Gilgit-Baltistan, said that investment in GB would bring economic prosperity there.

The president expressed these views while talking to members of the GB Council, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and GB, Engineer Amir Muqam, GB Chief Minister Gulbar Khan, members of the GB Council, and senior government officials attended the meeting.

The delegation apprised the president about the developmental and financial requirements of GB.

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.

members 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.

## 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.

## 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.

land 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, 2024, 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.

He said Pakistan's election "represents the confidence of the international community in Pakistan's ability to promote the purposes and principles of the UN Charter."

Pakistan, Ambassador Akram, said would actively work with other member countries of the Council to advance the shared objectives.

In this regard, he especially highlighted Pakistan's ambition to contribute meaningfully to the prevention of conflicts and their peaceful settlement in line with the UN Charter.

Pakistan's earlier terms on the Council were in 2012-13, 2003-04, 1993-94, 1983-84, 1976-77, 1968-69 and 1952-53.

Pakistan is joining the Security Council at a time of great international upheaval and challenges and plans to pay special attention to:

Promotion of peace and security in South Asia; Upholding the principle of self-determination for the people of Palestine and Kashmir;

Promotion of normalization in Afghanistan;

Promotion of equitable solutions to the security challenges in Africa, and,



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

## Wrote a new chapter of Pak-China cooperation in Shenzhen; will reciprocate model in Pakistan: Dar

BEIJING (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday said that by holding the Pakistan-China Business Forum in Shenzhen, the government had written a new chapter of bilateral cooperation and in the coming months, the model would be reciprocated by inviting Chinese companies to Pakistan.

The deputy prime minister, in his address at the 4th Pakistan-China Friendship and Business event here, said that the hugely attended Business Forum aimed at tangible, targeted, substantive and result-oriented economic cooperation with a focus on attracting and facilitating Chinese investments in 13 export-oriented sectors inside Pakistan.

He told the gathering that Pakistan's Ambassador in China Ambassador Khalil Hashmi and his team successfully mobilized over 400 Chinese businesspersons and entrepreneurs who came together to network with around 120 Pakistani counterparts on a scale that was unprecedented.

"I am confident they have started a new journey of win-win partnership and joint cooperation. In the months ahead, we will reciprocate this model further and invite Chinese companies to Pakistan," the deputy prime minister remarked.

Another MoU was signed between the Pakistan Investment Board and the Institute of Structural Economics, Peking University, to promote the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

An order has been issued to this effect.

The committee will submit decisions to the federal cabinet for approval.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will be chairman of the committee while the Army Chief, Provincial Chief Ministers and National Coordinator will attend the committee meetings on special invitation.

The Prime Minister has also formed another Cabinet Committee on Immigration, Overseas Employment and Technical Vocational Education and Training. The committee will act as a central forum for all government agencies related to overseas employment and technical training and will review policies in this regard.

## PM witnesses signing of MoUs to expand Pak, China cooperation

BEIJING (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday witnessed signing of various Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to expand cooperation in different fields between China and Pakistan.

On the occasion, an MoU was signed between Pakistan and China regarding manufacturing of solar panels and YTO trackers.

The MoU was signed between Pakistan's Habib Rafique Limited and Beijing Global Hydrogen Industries Company Limited.

Another MoU was signed between the Pakistan Investment Board and the Institute of Structural Economics, Peking University, to promote the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

## Govt constitutes Cabinet Committee on SIFC

ISLAMABAD (Online): The government has constituted Cabinet Committee on Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to ensure implementation of recommendations within the contours of SIFC.

An order has been issued to this effect. The committee will submit decisions to the federal cabinet for approval.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will be chairman of the committee while the Army Chief, Provincial Chief Ministers and National Coordinator will attend the committee meetings on special invitation.

The Prime Minister has also formed another Cabinet Committee on Immigration, Overseas Employment and Technical Vocational Education and Training. The committee will act as a central forum for all government agencies related to overseas employment and technical training and will review policies in this regard.

## 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.

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



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.

## 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.



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.

## 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 lifest 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 demoted 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 the 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 the 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 disability.

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 Anwaarul-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.



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.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan on Thursday said that the government had introduced special measures like ease of doing business and a one-stop-shop to facilitate foreign as well as local investors to attract investment and promote joint ventures in the country.

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

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.



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

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru Thursday said the government has procured high quality wheat adopting a flawless and corruption free purchasing procedure.

He expressed these views in a meeting on the completion of wheat procurement target 2024. The meeting was also attended by Advisor on Information and Public Relations Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, Secretary Food, Zahir Al-Maani, Director of Food, Yasir Hassan and other relevant officials.

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.

### 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.

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 BVSS 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.

### 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).

## 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 Shakir 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.

## 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.

## SHC allows court's proceedings reporting

KARACHI (Online): Sindh High Court (SHC) has allowed the court reporters all over the country to conduct court 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): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur has held out assurance of removing difficulties faced by local government representatives and will create a favorable environment for the business community to encourage mutual cooperation for economic development of the province.

He expressed these views during a meeting with former governor KP, Haji Ghulam Ali and Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali here Thursday.

During the meeting,

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 Bulaili 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.

## 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.



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 spokesperson 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.

## 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.

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-

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 "asymmetrical" steps elsewhere in the world.



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.

## 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.

## President stresses for strengthening food safety systems

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed the need to strengthen the country's food safety systems to ensure that everyone has access to safe, clean, and nutritious food.

In his message, on the occasion of World Food Safety Day, he said "The day reminds us of the need to strengthen food safety regulations and standards that govern the production, processing, and distribution of food. We can minimize the risk of food contamination and ensure food safety by ensuring strict compliance with these standards".

He said the Day is being observed today to catalyze momentum for the alignment of governmental policies and stakeholder actions to ensure food safety.

Pakistan, he said also needs to invest in research and innovation and utilize

the latest technology to address food safety challenges.

Modern tools can enable us to identify potential hazards accurately, allowing for more targeted and effective interventions to protect public health. "We also need to create awareness among the people about food safety, and clean and hygienic food through the media."

This World Food Safety Day highlights the importance of realizing that food safety is a shared responsibility requiring the collective efforts of all stakeholders. We need to adhere to the highest food safety standards for the well-being of our nation.

In today's world, where food-borne diseases and global pandemics are becoming more prevalent, the urgency to take proactive measures to emphasize proper hygiene and protect our food system has never been greater.



Deputy Chairman Senate, Syedaal Khan in a group photo at the orientation session for the newly-elected senators held at Parliament House in collaboration with the PIPS and Muskehkam Pakistan IP/5 at Parliament House, Islamabad

## 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

visit 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 develop-

ment 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.

## Minister says: Massive teacher training in Federal Capital to begin soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, informed the National Assembly on Thursday that a massive training program for teachers, with the assistance of international institutions and local universities, will be started soon in the federal capital.

Responding to a calling attention notice regarding inadequate facilities in schools under the Federal Directorate of Education in Islamabad and the shortage of teachers, he said that the process to appoint new teachers in the federal capital will be completed soon.

Addressing the issue of out-of-school children, he said that the government is taking all possible steps to enroll children in schools. He acknowledged that poverty is a significant reason behind children not attending school.

He highlighted that providing breakfast incentives in federal capital schools has increased student attendance from 40 percent to 80 percent. If this incentive proves successful in the federal capital, it will be expanded to the rest of the country.

Regarding the Daanish schools in the federal capital, he said that work on the project has already begun. Daanish schools, initially launched by then-Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif in 2010, provide free quality education and boarding facilities for underprivileged children in Punjab.

He added that the initial allocation of 10 acres for the Daanish schools project has been increased to 30 acres.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, explores the galleries at the Pakistan Museum of Natural History Garden Avenue during the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony for new blocks.

## Govt raises wheat procurement target by 40% this year: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif took serious notice of the situation, prompting a 35 to 40 per cent increase in the target, adding that the global decline in wheat prices has affected the open market. "The government is taking several steps to support the farmers for the next planting season and is coordinating with the provinces," the minister added.

During the Question Hour in the National Assembly, the minister said that the investigations into the wheat import scandal are underway and those found guilty will be held accountable.

According to the Ministry of National Food Security, the minister informed that the Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation Ltd. (PASSCO) had procured 1.8 million metric tons of wheat as of June 2, 2024.

He said the original procurement target was 1.3 million metric tons, which was increased to 1.8 million metric tons.

The minister said that



ISLAMABAD: Art lover women are taking keen interest in a sport portrait at the Annual Members Photographic Competition & Exhibition, hosted in collaboration with Islamabad Club and Islamabad Camera Club at PNCA in the Federal Capital.

## Ministry taking steps to introduce climate friendly buildings, Romina Alam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam on Thursday said that her Ministry under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was taking steps to combat plastic pollution and collaborating with provincial governments to introduce climate-friendly buildings for enhancing urban landscapes.

Talking to PTV news channel, she said that green and sustainable building practices in the country's housing and construction sector will promote sustainable living and moderate consumption to conserve energy and limited natural resources.

She said the present government has been at the forefront of promoting sustainable construction practices in the country through various policies and regulations.

Replying to a question, she said that with the green building codes, the ministry will try to increase tree cover and improve air quality, adding, the construction of green buildings will also support in achieving certain benefits, in line with the sustainable development goals. Talking about the heatwave she said that the prime minister already notified committees with the collaboration of provincial governments, adding, NDMA and experts were also being taken on board to discuss the solutions and to move forward for urban forestation.

She said the government is committed to overcoming the challenge of growing plastic pollution and all the stakeholders concerned are being approached and taken on board to make Pakistan a plastic-free country.

Romina Alam said that plastic pollution was a major cause of environmental degradation but tackling it was a daunting challenge because of the massive use of plastic goods in the country, adding that the Climate Change Ministry also launched awareness drives in schools with the theme of 'My water My bottle to overcome the use of plastic bottles.'

## Capital's air quality moderate

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal capital residents on Thursday reported moderate air quality as the atmospheric contaminants were less than the national threshold after a repeated incidents of forest fires and gusty weather in the evening time.

The air quality was moderate as the air pollutants ratio in the atmosphere was below the permissible limits of the national environmental quality standards of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) as per its daily air quality data.

It is responsible for ensuring the protection of the environment under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997.

The hazardous air pollutant particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5), which was a hazardous atmospheric contaminant, remained 32.32 microgrammes per cubic meter on average which was lower than the national environmental quality standards (NEQS) of 35 microgrammes per cubic meter and denoted the air quality moderate.

## NIH issues advisory on Cholera

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Institute of Health (NIH) has issued an advisory for the prevention and control of Acute Watery Diarrhea (Cholera). The Center for Diseases Control (CDC), National Institutes of Health (NIH) Islamabad issued this advisory urging healthcare providers and the public to be vigilant in preventing and controlling the spread of Acute Watery Diarrhea (cholera).

Cholera is an acute diarrheal illness caused by infection of the intestine due to bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*. Pakistan like other Asian countries is endemic to cholera with cases being reported from different parts of the country.

Poor personal hygiene and lack of safe drinking water provide more favorable conditions for the pathogen to cause outbreak in the vulnerable areas.

## IG Islamabad chaired Police Executive Board for reforms of police units

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: According to the details, Inspector

IG Islamabad also reviewed the shortage of personnel in the police force.



General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, chaired meetings with senior police officers at the Central Police Office and Safe City Islamabad.

IG Islamabad chaired the Police Executive Board for reforms of police units, the Recruitment Committee, an orderly room, and Safe City meetings. He reviewed the reports submitted by the Police Executive Board on reforms for the police units and made important decisions considering the suggestions.

He instructed senior police officers with important responsibilities regarding future recruitment. He directed the officers to ensure that the recruitment process is full of merit and transparency to incorporate educated youth into the police force.

IG Islamabad presided over the meeting organized in connection with the re-organization of Safe City. He reviewed the ongoing work for the establishment of a women's virtual police station, a women's safety

app, and data protection. He directed Safe City officials to increase the number of cameras with surveillance and artificial intelligence capabilities.

He emphasized that no area in Islamabad should be hidden from the eye of the camera. Data protection should be ensured in Safe City, and the capabilities of the cybercrime wing of the Islamabad Police should be further improved.

IGP Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi holds an orderly room at Central Police Office Islamabad. Officers of Islamabad Police attended the orderly room.

During the orderly room, police officers brought forth both personal and official concerns before the DIG Headquarters. Immediate directives were issued for the resolution of pressing matters, while directives were given to senior officers to address remaining issues promptly.

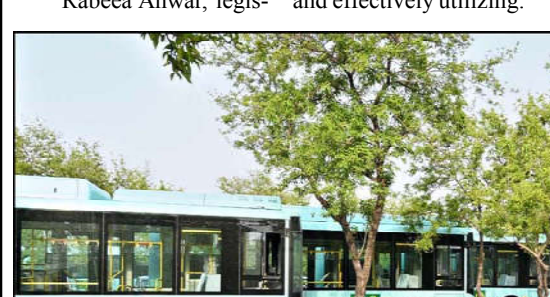
## PDU, PIPS organize orientation program for newly elected senators

ISLAMABAD (APP): An orientation program was organized by Senate Secretariat's Parliamentary Development Unit (PDU) and Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS) to familiarize the newly elected senators with critical parliamentary processes and tools essential for their legislative duties.

Deputy Secretary Legislation, Senate of Pakistan, Muhammad Azam Sulehri, conducted an informative session on the various parliamentary oversight tools available to senators said a news release issued here on Thursday.

These include Questions, Motions under rule 60, calling attention notices, Motions under rule 218, adjournment motions, Zero hours, and resolutions.

He emphasized that these tools are crucial for maintaining transparency and accountability in government operations, enabling senators to hold the government accountable and ensuring it acts in the best interests of the people.



ISLAMABAD: Electric Buses parked at Convention Centre. A fleet of 8 electric buses arrives in the federal capital, bringing the total to 30 out of 160 buses. 22 buses arrived in the city with a charging point established at Jinnah Convention Center.

## 'Custodial killings have become a norm in IIOJK'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lives of people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir are at the mercy of brutal Indian troops and even custodial killings have become a norm in the territory.

According to a report released by Kashmir Media Service, today, a Kashmiri youth, Imtiyaz Ahmad Pala, was tortured to death by Indian police at Litter Police Station in Pulwama.

It said thousands of youth have perished in Indian army-run interrogation centers in the last 34 years in IIOJK.

Indian troops, under the protection of draconian laws, have killed 96308 Kashmiris, including 7336 in custody, since 1989.

The report said custodial killings in occupied Jammu and Kashmir meant to create fear psychosis among the Kashmiris, adding the people of Kashmir are witnessing fake encounters and extrajudicial killings every now and then in the territory.

## CDA chairman orders immediate electricity supply to Park Enclave

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa Thursday ordered for immediate supply of electricity to Park Enclave Phases II and III.

He directed the establishment of a separate grid station for Park Enclave to guarantee an uninterrupted power supply.

The Chairman directed the Member Finance and Member Engineering of CDA to promptly contact officials from the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO).

Muhammad Ali said the final date for submitting dues for Park Enclave Phase-I has been set as June 30.



ISLAMABAD: A trailer loaded with CNG Rickshaws heading towards destination on Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Road in the Federal Capital.

## Masood congratulates US govt, people for joining cricket-loving nations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States Masood Khan has extended his sincere congratulations to the International Cricket Council (ICC), host nations USA and West Indies, all participating teams, and devoted fans on the monumental event in the cricketing world.

"I believe this tournament will showcase exceptional athleticism and provide an exciting experience for cricket enthusiasts worldwide," the Ambassador said in his post on X.

Highlighting the role

of sports in uniting diverse cultures and enhancing diplomatic relations, he emphasized that sports serve as a bridge bringing cultures, nations, and individuals closer, and have historically been a vital tool in diplomacy. He also wished Pakistan and the USA for an exciting game of cricket.

Team Pakistan will be starting its World Cup campaign against the talented hosts, the United States at Grand Prairie Stadium, in Dallas Texas where a large crowd is expected to cheer for both teams.

## PIC orders to disclose private hospital's negligence inquiry report

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) on Thursday has ordered to public inquiry report concerning the alleged negligence and mistreatment of doctors at a renowned private medical hospital Rawalpindi, which purportedly led to the death of 26-year-old Zahoor Ahmed's son.

This directive comes after the Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) withheld the information, citing confidentiality under the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017.

According to details, Zahoor Ahmed, a resident of Gujjar Khan, Rawalpindi, filed a complaint with IHRA in July 2021, accusing the hospital's doctors of negligence resulting in his son's death.

A citizen Nadeem Umer filed an information request to the IHRA on February 14, 2024, seeking the current status and a copy of the inquiry report.

Umer's request was denied by the public body, leading him to appeal to the PIC.

Upon receiving the appeal, the Commission issued a notice to the IHRA.

The IHRA, represented by a law officer, maintained that the information was confidential and exempt from disclosure under section 7(h) of the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017, which pertains to personal treatment records.

However, the Commission disagreed with this exemption claim while citing section 5 of the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017, highlighted that inquiry and investigative reports, once finalized, must be proactively published by public bodies.