

# Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

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Pakistan Army is sole target of digital terrorists

## A massive, illegal political mafia trying to sabotage Azm-i-Istehkam operation: DG ISPR

**Lt Gen Chaudhry says Azm-i-Istehkam to target anti-state mafias for ensuring peaceful environment; It is not military operation, but comprehensive, integrated campaign against terrorism; There has been increase in anti-army propaganda, lies, misinformation through organized campaign; It's time for nation to 'stand up against militants, digital terrorists; Any leverage to May 9 perpetrators will further foment chaos; Army had conducted over 22,000 intelligence-based operations in the ongoing year to eliminate terrorism in the country; A total of 398 terrorists have been killed while 137 officials were martyred; DG shows videos of attack on Bannu Cantt**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General, Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR), Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif on Monday brushed aside misconceptions over Azm-i-Istehkam Operation and stressed that it was a comprehensive counter-terrorism drive that had been launched after national consensus.

He said it was not just a military operation as portrayed by some disgruntled elements, rather a comprehensive drive to flush out anti-state individuals and mafias, hell bent upon to disrupt peaceful environment in the country.

In a press conference at the General Headquarters,

the ISPR DG specifically highlighted major aspects of the operation in the wake of an organized campaign against state institutions, based on fake and baseless news.

Lieutenant General Sharif gave the breakup of counter-terrorism drive during the current year as some 22,409 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) were conducted that resulted in elimination of 398 terrorists. On average 112 IBOs were done on daily basis by the army, police and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) that helped in elimination of 31 high value targets (most wanted terrorists),

he added. During these counter-terrorism activities, 137 officers and soldiers embraced martyrdom in 2024 whereas the armed forces paid tribute to the families of these martyrs.

"Amid growing propaganda and lies, it is imperative to hold regular media briefings to debunk false news," he added. He pointed out that a massive, illegal political mafia was trying to sabotage the state's Azm-i-Istehkam (Resolve for Stability) operation.

Replying to a query regarding the displacement, he said crucial issues were being targeted just for po-

litical gains, adding that Azm-i-Istehkam was one such example.

Last month, the federal government approved the operation to counter due to terrorist attacks across the country, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, after the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

"A narrative is being built that the operation would displace people but the purpose of the operation was only to reinvigorate the already in-place National Action Plan (NAP)," the DG ISPR said,

adding that the policy document of the operation clearly mentioned this aspect.

"A massive, illegal, political mafia rose to sabotage the operation and its first move was to make the operations controversial," he said and added that a "very strong lobby" had a "vested interest" because of which it didn't want the NAP to succeed. He said the entity in question was "receiving a lot of money" to subvert the operation.

He said if Operation Azm-i-Istehkam was properly implemented, it would not only eliminate terrorism but also lead to societal and national uplift.



Questioned about an audio leak of TTP chief Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud, the DG ISPR questioned what brand of religion the militant was preaching that involved blowing up schools, colleges, hospitals, and homes.

"[Such narratives and actions] will be taken to their logical end," he said, adding that they "only strengthen our resolve that Azm-i-Istehkam is imperative and necessary" for the country's stability and security.

He said kinetic operations were "underway in a splendid manner" with "four to five operations in

every hour". He said it was decided in 2014 and 2021 that Counter-Terrorism Departments would be established at the provincial levels and they would be responsible for leading operations against terrorism.

The DG ISPR said the National Action Plan also talked about the regularisation and registration of religious seminaries but only a bit over 16,000 were done and thus the status of 50 per cent was unknown. "Is this the responsibility of the army?" he questioned.

On violence during a

peace rally in Bannu, the DG ISPR mentioned last week's terrorist attack on Bannu Cantonment that martyred eight military personnel.

He said the locals had demanded carrying out a peace march the next day and it was agreed that there would be no negative sloganeering. "But when the peace march commenced, some specific negative elements joined to sabotage the gathering," he added.

He said the rally marched through the point of the terrorist attack and "chanted anti-state slogans and pelted stones".



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on increase in investment and capacity of federal government Ministries.

## Gilani for PUIC's proactive role in advancing sustainable development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Monday called upon the Parliamentary Union of OIC Member Countries (PUIC) to play a proactive role in advancing sustainable development agendas through legislative measures and science diplomacy. He was addressing the 25th IAS Scientific Conference, titled "Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus for the Security of OIC Countries," as chief guest here at the Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS).

The conference, organized jointly by the Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS) and the PAS, gathered distinguished scientists

and researchers to discuss critical issues facing OIC countries.

Speaking on the occasion, he also emphasized the importance of scientific innovation and collaboration in addressing the interconnected challenges being faced by OIC countries vis-à-vis water, energy, food, and ecosystems security. The Chairman Senate acknowledged the vital role of IAS and PAS in fostering scientific excellence as a pivot to address and resolve socio-economic issues.

He also highlighted the high-profile patronage of IAS by leaders, including His Royal Highness Prince El-Hassan bin Talal of Jordan and President

Asif Ali Zardari and called it indicative of the significant political support for scientific progress.

Chairman Senate Gilani underlined that national security now encompasses a broader range of issues beyond traditional military threats. He pointed out that these challenges are particularly acute in OIC countries due to rapid population growth and environmental degradation.

He drew attention of the participants towards Pakistan's own efforts to tackle these issues, including the national tree plantation campaign and comprehensive climate change policies introduced during his tenure as prime minister.

## DG ISPR's presser reflects government's failure: PTI Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General and Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan criticized the current government, labelling the Director-General of the Inter-Services Public Relations' (DG ISPR) recent press briefing as a sign of political failure.

Speaking alongside PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar on Monday, Ayub addressed the media in Islamabad, emphasizing the dire economic situation and the alleged misuse of power by the authorities.

"DG ISPR's press briefing is a clear indicator of the political government's failure," Ayub asserted.

He highlighted a police raid aimed at collecting affidavits from PTI members, accusing intelligence agencies of unfairly targeting the party.

Ayub pointed out that under PTI's leadership, the economy was growing at six per cent, while under the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government, it had declined.

When PTI left office, the economy was growing at six per cent. Under the PDM government, the growth went negative," he stated.

## Global firm hired to invest and improve the efficiency of government institutions

ISLAMABAD (Online): The services of a global firm have been acquired to increase investment in Pakistan and improve the efficiency of government institutions.

An important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif regarding increasing investment and improving the efficiency of government institutions, in which a briefing was given by the Public Private Partnership Authority that increasing the efficiency of federal ministries and improving investment.

Consultancy firm Kearney has been hired to hire experts. In the briefing, it was mentioned that Kearney is an internationally renowned firm with operations all over the world, especially in the Middle East.

Addressing the participants of the meeting, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that increasing investment in the country is the first priority of the government. The government is taking all possible steps to provide a business friendly environment to traders and investors. He directed to take immediate effective

measures for investment and government efficiency improvement projects that are likely to yield results soon.

Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Planning Hsain Iqbal, Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervez Malik, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jahanzeb Khan, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal and relevant senior officials were present in the meeting. Officers attended.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani addresses as chief guest at 25th conference of the Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS) in Federal Capital.

## Pakistan calls for immediate implementation of ICJ's advisory opinion on Israeli occupation in Palestinian territories

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Monday welcomed the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Israel's unlawful policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and called for its immediate and full implementation.

It said the ruling clearly established that Israel's unlawful policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were in breach of Israel's obligation to respect the right of Palestinian people to self-determination.

"Israel is under an obligation to end its unlawful occupation; cease its illegal settlement activities; and to make reparation for the damage caused," it was asserted.

The ICJ had ruled on the "Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem."

"It may be recalled that

Pakistan had made a written submission to the ICJ on the case in July 2023, and later also shared a rejoinder with the Court. Pakistan also participated in the oral public hearing held by the ICJ on the case in February 2024. In its submissions to the ICJ, Pakistan reiterated its strong and unwavering support for the right to self-determination of the Palestinians and highlighted the illegality of the Israeli occupation," Foreign Office Spokesperson, said in a press statement.

The spokesperson further said that they hoped that the Court's ruling would be an important step towards ending the Israeli occupation, realization of the inalienable right of the Palestinians to self-determination, and creation of a viable, secure, contiguous and sovereign State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.



ISLAMABAD: Admiral Andre Luiz Silva Lima De Santana Mendes Chief of Staff Brazilian Navy called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters in the Federal Capital.

## PM condemns Israeli attack on Khan Younis, calls it inhumane act

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday vehemently condemned the Israeli forces' violent attack on Khan Younis in Gaza, describing it as an inhumane act, particularly following the evacuation of refugees.

The prime minister, in a statement issued by PM Office, described the aggressive attack on the Khan Younis area of Gaza shortly after the instructions to the unarmed Palestinian refugees to evacuate as a mockery of humanity according to .

The prime minister stated that it had become clear that the Israeli forces had been pursuing a genocidal agenda against Palestinians, noting that unarmed Palestinians had been denied the opportunity to evacuate.

## Govt to reverse policy decision of suspending passport issuance to asylum seekers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Monday chaired a high-level meeting to discuss the matters related to the welfare of overseas Pakistanis wherein it was decided to reverse the policy decision of suspending the issuance of passports to Pakistani nationals seeking asylum abroad.

"The meeting discussed in detail the recent policy decision that was taken vide circular dated 5 June 2024 for not issuing passport to any individual who had sought asylum or already living on asylum abroad. It was decided to reverse the policy decision with immediate effect and to withdraw the circular of 5 June 2024," according to a press release.

The meeting was attended by the foreign secre-

tary, interior secretary, Director General of Immigration and Passports (IMPASS) and senior officers of the foreign ministry.

The meeting also discussed the issues relating to delays in the issuance of passports to Pakistanis living abroad.

The interior secretary and Director General of IMPASS briefed the deputy prime minister about the ongoing efforts to streamline the process.

It was decided that the Ministry of Interior and IMPASS will take immediate necessary steps to upgrade the infrastructure and equipment within the next 45 days and to accelerate the clearance of the entire backlog relating to the issuance of passports to overseas Pakistanis.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, chairs high level meeting on the welfare of overseas Pakistanis.

## Brazilian Chief of Staff visits NHQ

ISLAMABAD (APP): Brazilian Chief of Staff Admiral, Andre Luiz Silva Lima De Santana Mendes visited Naval Headquarters (NHQ) and called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf here on Monday.

Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, the visiting dignitary was received by Chief of the Naval Staff. A smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Navy also presented Guard of Honour.

## Imran admits giving call for protest outside GHQ before arrest

RAWALPINDI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan admitted that he had asked the party workers to stage a peaceful protest outside GHQ before his arrest.

In an informal conversation with journalists in Adiala Jail where he has been detained for months in multiple cases, the former prime minister said he would ask his party's lawmakers in Centre and

provinces to observe hunger strike.

He alleged that approvers were being found against him in the May 9 cases. Talking about rising electricity prices, he said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had signed expensive contracts with the independent power producers (IPPs), leading to hike in power tariff. He lamented over economic crisis in the country.

## 3 terrorists killed during infiltration attempt at Pak-Afghan border in Dir

RAWALPINDI (INP): Three terrorists were killed by security forces during an infiltration attempt at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dir district, the military's media wing said on Monday.

A statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the movement of three terrorists was detected by security forces in the district on the night between Sunday and Monday.

"The infiltrators were surrounded, effectively engaged and after an intense fire exchange, all three ter-

rorists were sent to hell," the ISPR said.

It said Pakistan was consistently asking the interim Afghan government to ensure effective border management on its side of the border, adding that the neighbour was expected to fulfil its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by terrorists for perpetrating acts of terrorism against the country.

"Security forces of Pakistan are determined and remain committed to securing its borders and eliminating the menace of terrorism from the country."



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Population calamity**

Pakistan's population bomb is not ticking anymore; it has already exploded. The detailed results of the 2023 digital census published by the government after a year's delay reveal that the population increased from 207.68m in 2017 to 241.49m in 2023, at one of the world's highest growth rates of 2.55pc. There have been reservations expressed by some political parties as well as the Sindh government on the way the census was conducted. Many suspect that the 2023 census understates the total population.

If allowed to increase unchecked at the present rate — over thrice as fast as the global average growth rate of 0.8pc — Pakistan's population might double by 2050. Some conservative estimates, such as the one by the UN, forecast that the numbers will surge to 403m. This will have far-reaching implications for the economy and society, putting an enormous strain on food security, socioeconomic infrastructure and public services. Hence, the urgent need for steps to reduce population growth.

There are two contrasting opinions about the country's burgeoning population: one views it as a case of rampant poverty and a growing strain on the state's capacity for public service delivery, while the other touts the increasing numbers as a demographic dividend that can be harnessed to drive faster economic growth, since 67pc of the population is below the age of 30, and 80pc below 40.

The reality is that it is proving to be more of a bane than a boon, as it is a big strain on our already stretched resources, and has made eradication of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy a lot more difficult than it should have been. This fact is brought home by Pakistan's poor ranking on the UNDP's Human Development Index. With extreme weather events, including destructive floods and droughts, which turn large areas of land uncultivable and uninhabitable and force communities to migrate, disregarding population control is no longer an option.

Pakistan's exponential population growth may be attributed to several factors: religio-cultural beliefs, social taboos, poverty, female illiteracy, lack of access to birth control and family planning services, etc. However, many other countries facing similar impediments have successfully overcome their high population growth problem. For example, Bangladesh, which faced a high fertility rate and a rapidly growing population in the 1970s, has brought down its fertility rate to less than two births per woman, and the population growth rate to just above 1pc.

Likewise, India's growth rate has dropped to 0.8pc. Countries such as Türkiye and Iran have also reduced their fertility rates to 2.1pc and 2.3pc, compared to Pakistan's 3.2pc.

Their success shows that Pakistan can also control its growth rate by following the examples of its peers and implementing functional family planning programmes and campaigns.

**Restricting women**

Huma Yusuf

A woman following the news these days can be forgiven for wondering what century she is in. Sexist policies are proliferating globally, and the political discourse in many countries is defined by increasingly regressive messaging about women. This trend should not be dismissed as a niche women's rights issue. Instead, it must be understood as a warning sign of democratic erosion.

Anti-women narratives are appearing in various guises: growing calls for state control over reproductive rights; laws with weak or poorly enforced punishments for sexual harassment and violence; policies that stymie women's ability to work or vote; and the promotion of women's traditional roles within families, particularly as mothers, reframed as a strategic response to demographic crises facing some developed countries.

Those following the US election know that even after former US president Donald Trump's failed assassination attempt, the fight over reproductive rights arguably remains the key electoral issue.

On the other side of the world, China's Third Plenum last week highlighted the country's gender inequality challenges, largely through the absence of women in the Communist Party's leadership. The failure to mention the role that women's economic participation can play in boosting GDP was notable. China under Xi Jinping has suppressed women's rights, both through crackdowns against feminist movements and softer messaging encouraging women to stay home and procreate.

The return of women's issues to the political centre stage is not surprising. Women's bodies have long been political battlegrounds, their rights an easy frame through which to consider

contentious politics. In the context of intense political polarisation, a position on gender matters becomes shorthand for a broader political narrative or value system signalling, which can help populist candidates win the allegiance of disparate constituencies that may disagree on material issues but are united in patriarchy.

Women's bodies become politicised because women themselves continue to be excluded from the political space, including in supposedly evolved democracies such as the US, where the poorest women and those from marginalised backgrounds face rampant disenfranchisement.

But anti-women political narratives are not only about gender exclusion, they are also a litmus test for democratic resilience. Research conducted by Erica Chenoweth and Zoe Marks in 2022 identified a correlation between increasingly authoritarian regimes (Xi in China, Putin in Russia, Trump in the US) and an uptick in patriarchal oppression.

Chenoweth and Marks argued that as pro-democratic social movements (often with high female participation) arose to push back against authoritarian figures, a "patriarchal backlash" became a key way to prevent mass movements from mobilising. Marks explained that "they seek to minimise women's equal rights as citizens and frame it as niche 'opposition' or identity politics; and they centre masculinity and male breadwinners' status as the key indicator of the nation". In sum, where women's issues are politicised, authoritarianism likely lurks.

More prosaically, the more you hear about women, the less you hear about other issues that matter: cost-of-living crisis, public service delivery, eco-

nomie growth, social welfare, climate resilience, etc. Politicians talk about women's bodies because they have little to offer on the substantive issues. This creates a credibility gap that itself breeds more distrust in the democratic system.

Toxic anti-women narratives also breed a vicious cycle that will further weaken democracies, possibly irreparably. Here's why: women's participation in the democratic process (through voting or political participation) is known to strengthen democracies. This is not only because women's participation is fundamentally inclusive.

It is also because when women vote, they tend to prioritise issues, such as education, healthcare and social welfare. As Hina Shaikh put it in a blog on Pakistan's 2024 elections for the International Growth Centre, "when more women vote, it can lead to growth in welfare and redistribution expenditures by the government. Women's participation ... is fundamental to the functioning and legitimacy of democracy".

Sadly, for decades, the governance and management of HEIs in Balochistan has faced a crisis, with the recent financial collapse revealing the ineptitude of the relevant authorities. Besides, the HEIs were always far too reliant on aid and grants. While much was spent on new construction and salaries, not a penny went towards profit-making endeavours, human development, research and advancement. The latter would have kept the HEIs safe from such a dismal monetary state, making them self-reliant and able to contribute to broader social well-being, resulting in research-based and informed decision-making.

The rapid academic and structural disintegration of the HEIs was eclipsed by the protests and uproar against employees' financial predicaments. The responsibility for this collapse rests with all stakeholders—from lawmakers and policy engineers to administrations and university associations.

Moreover, the shortsighted, unimaginative mindset of our

**Education crisis**

Nazir A. Jomezai

Finally, the Balochistan government has taken a much-needed decision: it has increased the budget for higher education institutions (HEIs). This is likely to resolve many long-standing issues which had hindered the progress of these facilities, such as providing relief to employees who have endured months of delayed salaries. In addition, the announcement about granting full scholarships under the Benazir Bhutto Scholarship Programme for PhD students from Balochistan to study in 200 leading universities worldwide, will also go a long way in supporting the youth to find fulfillment.

After the Covid-19 pandemic, HEIs worldwide merged departments to foment efficiency and lower costs. Pakistan, on the other hand, continues to follow an outdated policy — expand departments into divisions and inaugurate more universities and satellite campuses. One must ponder over the questions of whether we need all those enrolled in HEIs, especially when there are no jobs for graduates, as well as whether every district has a university. Higher education has become more of a symbol than a forum for the contributions of scientists, entrepreneurs, philosophers, and historians.

The crisis is deep; it needs astute leadership to set a direction, empower others and create synergy. It is also time that HEIs' leadership took responsibility and devised a strategy to repair the damage. Moreover, rational resource utilisation and academic management have to become a priority, with a focus on profit generation and curtailed expansion schemes in far-flung ar-

reas. All academic associations must become more proactive in promoting quality education in their manifestos. Salvation also lies in multiple interventions — integrating departments, closing satellite campuses, collaboration with post-graduate colleges, and capacity building. A shift towards inclusive disciplinary methods — subjects which enable communal engagement and are relevant to Balochistan's socioeconomic landscape — and an equitable tuition fee structure, whereby the wealthy pay a higher fee and the poor get a subsidy, are a necessity.

The Higher Education Commission has played a disappointing role, especially in the context of the 18th Amendment. It still takes key decisions — from determining the norms for recruitment, to programmes of study, to other administrative affairs.

Financial support and academic freedom in HEIs should be a provincial obligation. While it must be acknowledged that the HEC has guided higher education institutes in Balochistan, the dynamics have changed. It ought to give up its powers so that the institutions assume responsibility for managerial excellence as well as debates.

The establishment of a functional provincial HEC should be a priority, with the province operating its HEIs within its budget and in line with the needs of the people. More importantly, utilising Balochistan's human capital, as opposed to recruiting expensive foreign scholars, will make the provincial HEC more sustainable, relevant, and effective. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**Pak, Kuwait agree for further promoting bilateral trade**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Kuwait on Monday agreed for further promoting friendly and bilateral trade relations between the two countries by moving forward in a more integrated manner, besides enhancing business to business and government cooperation.

The meeting discussed various proposals regarding the promotion of trade activities from Kuwait and expressed his willingness to cooperate for various projects on the basis of "Business to Business" and "Government to Government".

Abdul Aleem Khan said that he wanted progress for investment from Kuwait to Pakistan for which substantial results could be obtained, especially from the private sector.

Ambassador of Kuwait to Pakistan, Abdul Rehman Jay. Al-Mutiari assured the minister that his government would provide all possible support in the strengthening of Pakistan's economy and projects of mutual cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kuwait to Pakistan, Abdul Rehman Jay. Al-Mutiari called on Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a virtual meeting with the Representatives from Fitch Ratings.

**PSX transitions to the efficient & convenient one-share marketable lot**

KARACHI: Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) has successfully transitioned to a One-Share Lot system for investor transactions on the regular market, aligning with international best practices for stock market investments. Previously, the minimum marketable lot sizes for listed companies varied from 20, 50, 100, and 500 shares based on their prices. To enhance investor convenience and streamline stock market transactions, this change has been enacted. PSX as a frontline regulator is committed to

add value to its customer experience and facilitate investors and stakeholders. The transition to the One-Share Lot began on April 19, 2024, and was executed in multiple phases on a weekly basis, to ensure a smooth and efficient transition. The conversion was based on a comprehensive evaluation conducted by the Exchange.

The new lot size is expected to offer numerous benefits to investors, facilitating seamless, systematic, and efficient transactions in the capital market. Key advantages of the One-Share Lot include increased retail participation, as the smaller standard lot size makes high-priced stocks more affordable for retail investors, resulting in higher liquidity and improved trading volumes. Additionally, this change allows investors to build more balanced portfolios, as those with limited capital can now afford a wider range of stocks. The new lot size also eliminates the need for investors to trade in odd lot markets at a discount, promoting accessibility.

**Contracts with IPPs, should be revise and made public: Atif Ikram**

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that it is necessary to review the agreements with IPPs. The government should bring the agreements with IPPs to the public. Expensive contracts are the cause of electricity crisis today, people and business circles have suffered severe problems due to expensive electricity bills, he expressed these views

while talking to a delegation of the business community. Federation President Atif Ikram said that the reason for the high electricity bills is the agreements made with the IPPs.

The power plants of the PPPs are running at less than 10% capacity and the government is paying the full amount. On one hand, the circulating debt is increasing, on other hand, the public is being burdened.

**Govt to encourage private seed companies: Minister**

PESHAWAR (APP): The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and private seed company Akora Seed Company here on Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to ensure supply of quality seeds. Chief Executive Officer of Akora Seed Company Muhammad Siddiq and Javed Marwat, Secretary Agriculture, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organizations. Provincial Minister Major

Retired Sajjad Barkwal participated in the ceremony as the chief guest. On this occasion, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Industries Abdul Karim Tordhir and senior officials of the Agriculture Department were also present. Talking to the representatives, the provincial minister assured them that the government would provide all the facilities to the seed companies in the supply of quality seeds.

**NA Committee on Privatization expresses concerns over delay in PIACL privatization process**

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Standing Committee on Privatization on Monday expressed concern over the delay in the process of privatization of Pakistan International Airlines Company Limited (PIACL) and directed to provide a detailed working paper on the entities privatized during the last

10 years. The committee, which met here under the chairmanship of Farooq Sattar noted that the delay in the privatization process of PIACL resulted in an increase in its losses, and liabilities from Rs 200 billion in 2015 to Rs 800 billion in 2024 and recommended transparently expediting

the process. The committee also urged to protect the rights of the employees during the process which was assured by the Minister for Privatization, said a press release. The Secretary Ministry of Privatization gave a briefing on the overall working and performance of the Ministry.

**Internship program revolutionize agriculture sector: DG**

FAISALABAD (APP): Director General (DG) Agriculture (Extension), Chaudhary Abdul Hameed has said that the one-year internship program announced by the CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif will revolutionize the agriculture sector in Punjab province. According to a spokesperson, DG agriculture said that the last date to receive the applications is August 5, 2024 (Monday). Under the agriculture transformation plan, 1000 agriculture graduates would be provided internships.

**Commerce minister holds preparatory meeting for FoodAg Expo**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Monday conducted a zoom meeting to review preparations for the second International Food and Agriculture Exhibition (FoodAg 2024) to be held in Karachi from August 9 to 11th. The minister emphasized the importance of top-notch arrangements and foolproof security for the international delegates expected to attend, said a press release issued here.

During the meeting, Jam Kamal directed that significant efforts be made towards the branding and promotion of the event to ensure its success. The exhibition will feature several key components including a Trade and Investment Conference, an Exhibition Display, a Cuisine Show and an Inauguration Dinner at Mohatta Palace. Additionally, various sideline activities such as B2B seminars, chef table talks, and city tours organized by the Provincial Tourism Department and PTDC are planned to engage participants. Over 1,000 buyers have been recommended to attend, with 484 confirmed by missions from 74 countries.



## Governor KP stresses on upholding law, ethics for national progress

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi here on Monday emphasized the critical role of law and ethics in national advancement and asserted that it was the collective responsibility to bolster faith in the justice system. Addressing the convocation ceremony as the chief guest at a private college, the Governor highlighted the escalating challenges posed by the disregard for legal and ethical standards, attributing them to increasing immorality. He lamented the consequences

eroding confidence in the judiciary, asserting that it is the collective responsibility to bolster faith in the justice system. The Governor underscored the significance of the day for students and the institution alike. Faisal Karim Kundi urged the graduating students to embrace heightened responsibilities, stressing that safeguarding the supremacy of law and constitution is paramount for national progress and prosperity. He emphasized that democracy hinges on the enforcement of law,

cautioning that nations forsaking legal integrity risk losing their identity. He called upon Pakistanis to champion the cause of legal supremacy, urging a spirit of sacrifice for the nation's welfare. Acknowledging the post-pandemic surge in online activities, he highlighted the growing importance of the digital sector. The convocation was attended by Vice-Chancellor Hazara University Professor Dr. Mohsin Nawaz and Vice-Chancellor Abbottabad University of Science and Technology Professor Dr. Majid.

## Three cases of May 9 dismissed related to PTI founder's interim bail

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) dismissed all three applications related to interim bails in 3 cases of former Prime Minister Imran Khan on the basis of withdrawal. During the hearing, Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh inquired that while we are hearing this case, is Imran Khan in custody? The PTI lawyer told yes, he is currently in custody. The lawyer further said that on July 9 our bails were rejected by the Anti-Terrorism Court, we filed an application in the Lahore High Court on July 13. On this, Justice Anwar

ul-Haq remarked that we have to see from the official record when the applications were filed, Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh said that it is not proved from the record that application was filed on July 13. On this PTI Lawyer said that we want to withdraw these applications. Later, the Lahore High Court dismissed the petitions on the basis of withdrawal. It should be remembered that Imran Khan had challenged the Anti-Terrorism Court's decision to reject the bails in the Jinnah House, Shadman Police Station and Askari Tower attack cases.

## Police seize 3,000 liters of smuggled fuel

RAJANPUR (APP): Rajanpur Police claimed to have successfully foiled an attempt to smuggle fuel and seized 3,000 liters of oil here Monday. Following the instructions from District Police Officer (DPO) Dost Muhammad, a crackdown against smuggling is in progress across the district. SHO Sadar Police Station Asad Abbas, along with his team, conducted the operation which resulted in the seizure of a tanker filled with smuggled diesel. One suspect involved in the smuggling was arrested along with the vehicle. DPO Captain (Retd.) Dost Muhammad has issued directives to all SHOs in the district.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Rafique chairs meeting to review projects under Marri Development Plan.



ABBOTABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi addressing media persons during his visit to Abbotabad Press Club.

## Punjab govt facilitating religious minorities: Arora

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs, Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, visited Multan and attended a reception held at the local Poyam Church in Razaabad. The provincial minister highlighted practical steps taken by the Punjab government to realize Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's vision of a "Minority-Friendly Punjab." He stated that for the first time, the Punjab government has increased minority funds by 200% in the recent budget, which will provide more resources

for the welfare of minorities. He mentioned that the government had allocated a 5% job quota and a 2% quota in universities for minorities to provide employment and educational opportunities to the minority community. Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora said that a significant amount has been allocated in the development fund for minorities in South Punjab, and the Punjab government is issuing special grants on occasions like Christmas, Easter, Holi, and Diwali.

## Minister reviews progress in 27 schemes for Murree

LAHORE (APP): Progress in 27 schemes under the Murree Development Plan was reviewed in a meeting held at the Civil Secretariat, which was presided over by Punjab Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafiq on Monday. Secretary Local Government Shakeel Ahmed Mian, Special Secretary Asia Gul, Additional Secretary Maria Tariq and others participated. The Deputy Commissioner Murree briefed the meeting on the development plan

through video link. The minister said that on the direction of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, it has been decided to start projects including upgrading of the water network in Murree. "Drainage and streetlight services will also be upgraded in the main tourist hub of Punjab", he said. He elaborated that the water schemes for Murree would be completed in three phases and short-term scheme would be started first.

## CM meets PA Speaker, discusses assembly affairs

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan to discuss affairs of Punjab Assembly and overall political situation in the country. She also had a detailed discussion on various development projects of the government in the province. The CM said the Punjab government was focused on providing maximum relief to the poor people. She added, "We want to bottle up inflation and bury it forever." Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan appreciated the steps taken by the Punjab government to rid people of artificial inflation.

## Heatwave hits Jacobabad, dozens hospitalized

JACOBABAD (APP): Dozens of people were admitted to the hospital after fainting and humidity due to extreme heat and humidity in Jacobabad on Monday. According to rescue sources, many people became unconscious and had to be admitted to the hospital due to the severe heat and humidity.

## All stakeholders should work together to promote inter-faith harmony in the country

LAHORE (Online): Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly, Anthony Naveed and Deputy Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Zaheer Iqbal called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore today. Pastor Daniyal Saleem also accompanied Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly Anthony Naveed. Both the Deputy Speakers congratulated Sardar Saleem Haider Khan

on assuming the office of Governor of Punjab and expressed best wishes to him. In the meeting, ways to promote inter-provincial relations was discussed. Speaking on the occasion, Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that all stakeholders should work together to promote inter-faith harmony in the country. He said that everyone has to play a positive role in the development of country.



LAHORE: Deputy Speaker Sindh Assembly, Anthony Naveed called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

## Tarakai directs EMA to focus on facilities provision in schools

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education, Faisal Khan Tarakai has directed the authorities of the Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) to focus on the provision of facilities, including the attendance of teachers, students and ongoing academic activities in schools.

He said that according to the data of the authority, policy level decisions are made for schools and students and the achievement of all important goals has been ensured due to the excellent performance of the monitoring authority. The minister said that the monitoring of double shift schools programmes and complete details of the girls' community schools and monthly visits to schools have also been entrusted to the authority. He said that all the employees of the authority have worked very diligently in provision of furniture free textbooks to schools, details of enrolment campaign and vacancies, which is appreciable.

## International News

### Israel sends tanks back into Khan Younis area, 49 killed after new evacuation order

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: Israel sent tanks back into the greater Khan Younis area and at least 49 Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire, Gaza medics said on Monday, after ordering evacuations of some districts it said had been used for renewed attacks by militants. The Palestinians were killed by tank salvos in the town of Bani Suhaila and other towns fringing the eastern side of Khan Younis, with the area also bombed by air, they said. Residents of the densely built-up area of southern Gaza said the tanks advanced for more than two kilometres into Bani Suhaila, forcing residents to flee under fire. "It is like doomsday," one resident, who only identified himself as Abu Khaled, told Reuters via chat app. "People are flee-

ing under fire, many are dead and wounded on the roads." The Gaza health ministry said the dead included several women and children and that at least 186 other people had been injured by Israeli fire. The Gaza ministry does not distinguish between militants and civilians in its death tallies. Around 400,000 people are living in the targeted areas and dozens of families have begun to leave their houses, Palestinian officials said, adding they were not given time to get out of harm's way before the Israeli strikes began. Some families fled on donkey carts, others on foot, carrying mattresses and other belongings. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said two of its clinics located in eastern Khan Younis had been knocked out of operation because of

the new Israeli offensive. At Khan Younis Nasser Hospital, some people stood outside the morgue to bid farewell to dead relatives. "We are tired, we are tired in Gaza, every day our children are martyred, every day, every moment," said Ahmed Sammour, who lost several relatives in bombings of eastern Khan Younis. "No one told us to evacuate. They brought four floors crashing down on civilians... and the bodies they could reach, they brought to the refrigerator (morgue)," Sammour added. There was no immediate Israeli comment on the strikes on the eastern side of Khan Younis, whose population initially fled their homes when Israeli tanks stormed in several months ago, before returning after they withdrew to rebuild their lives.



A Palestinian woman sits on a wheelchair as she and others flee the eastern part of Khan Younis after they were ordered by Israeli army to evacuate their neighborhoods, amid Israel-Hamas conflict, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

### Russian troops mount pressure on Ukrainian logistics hub of Pokrovsk

Monitoring Desk KYIV: Ukraine's top commander said on Monday that Russian forces were staging relentless assaults to try to advance towards the town of Pokrovsk, a logistics hub in the east and that there was active fighting taking place along the entire front. Nearly 29 months after the full-scale invasion, Ukraine has stepped up its mobilisation effort to address its manpower shortages and been reinforced by supplies of Western artillery shells, but Russian troops have continued to

inch forward. "The enemy pays no attention to their fairly high level of losses and continues to push through towards Pokrovsk," Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskiy said in a statement from the eastern front. Pokrovsk is less than 25 km (15 miles) from Russian-occupied land, according to open-source intelligence battlefield maps, and lies at an intersection of roads and a railway that makes it an important logistics point for the military and for civilians in the east.

### UK's Rwanda asylum scheme has cost 700 million pounds

Monitoring Desk LONDON: Britain's now-scrapped plan to deport migrants who arrive illegally on British shores to Rwanda has cost taxpayers 700 million pounds (\$904 million), new interior minister Yvette Cooper said on Monday.

### Harris calls Biden's record 'unmatched' as she launches her presidential campaign

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris lauded President Joe Biden for his service to the country in her first public appearance on Monday since he abruptly abandoned his reelection bid and endorsed her as his successor. "Joe Biden's legacy over the last three years is unmatched in modern history," Harris said at a White House event to honor college athletes. "Every day, our president, Joe Biden, fights for the American people and we are deeply, deeply grateful for his service to our nation." Harris did not specifically refer to her new status as the leading Democratic candidate for president, after Biden stepped aside on Sunday under growing pressure from fellow Democrats. Campaign officials and allies have already made hundreds of calls on Harris' behalf, urging delegates to next month's Democratic Party convention to join in nominating her for president in the Nov. 5 election against Republican Donald Trump. Biden's departure was the latest shock to a White House race that included the near-assassination of former President Trump by a gunman during a campaign stop and the nomination of Trump's fellow hardliner, U.S. Senator J.D. Vance, as his running mate. Harris said in a post on X that she would visit what had been the Biden campaign headquarters in Delaware - now the Harris campaign headquarters - on Monday afternoon. She said Biden, who tested positive for COVID-19 last week, was feeling better. Virtually all of the prominent Democrats who had been seen as potential challengers to Harris have lined up behind her, including Governors Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan.

half, urging delegates to next month's Democratic Party convention to join in nominating her for president in the Nov. 5 election against Republican Donald Trump. Biden's departure was the latest shock to a White House race that included the near-assassination of former President Trump by a gunman during a campaign stop and the nomination of Trump's fellow hardliner, U.S. Senator J.D. Vance, as his running mate. Harris said in a post on X that she would visit what had been the Biden campaign headquarters in Delaware - now the Harris campaign headquarters - on Monday afternoon. She said Biden, who tested positive for COVID-19 last week, was feeling better. Virtually all of the prominent Democrats who had been seen as potential challengers to Harris have lined up behind her, including Governors Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan.

### China and Philippines reach deal to avoid clashes at disputed reef

Monitoring Desk MANILA: China and the Philippines have struck a deal aimed at stopping the two countries from clashing over the fiercely disputed Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea, the Philippine government said Sunday. In the past year, the territorial standoff at the reef has flared and came to a head in mid-June when Chinese forces seized and damaged two Philippine navy boats with machetes and improvised spears. Several Filipino navy personnel were injured in the incident. China and the Philippines reached a deal they hope will end confrontations at the most fiercely disputed shoal in the South China Sea, the Philippine government said Sunday. The Philippines occupies Second Thomas Shoal but China also claims it, and increasingly hostile clashes at sea have sparked fears of

larger conflicts that could involve the United States. The crucial deal was reached on Sunday, after a series of meetings between Philippine and Chinese diplomats in Manila and exchanges of diplomatic notes that aimed to establish a mutually acceptable arrangement at the shoal without conceding either side's territorial claims. Two Philippine officials, who have knowledge of the negotiations, confirmed the deal to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity and the government later issued a brief statement announcing the deal without providing details. "Both sides continue to recognize the need to deescalate the situation in the South China Sea and manage differences through dialogue and consultation and agree that the agreement will not prejudice each other's positions in the South China Sea."

### Australia warns of malicious websites after cyber outage

Monitoring Desk SYDNEY: Australia's cyber intelligence agency said on Saturday that "malicious websites and unofficial code" were being released online claiming to aid recovery from Friday's global digital outage, which hit media, retailers, banks and airlines. Australia was one of many countries affected by the outage that caused havoc worldwide after a botched software update from CrowdStrike. On Saturday, the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) - the country's cyber intelligence agency - said: "A number of malicious websites and unofficial code are being released claiming to help entities recover from the widespread outages caused by the CrowdStrike technical incident". On its website, the agency said its cyber security centre "strongly encourages all consumers to source their technical information and updates from official.

### Bangladesh student group suspends protests over death toll

Monitoring Desk DHAKA: The Bangladeshi student group leading demonstrations that have spiralled into deadly violence suspended protests on Monday for 48 hours, with its leader saying they had not wanted reform "at the expense of so much blood". What began as demonstrations against politicised admission quotas for sought-after government jobs snowballed into some of the worst unrest of Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina's tenure. A curfew has been imposed and soldiers are patrolling cities across the South Asian country, while a nationwide internet blackout since Thursday has drastically restricted the flow of information to the outside world. "We are suspending the shutdown protests for 48 hours," Nahid Islam, the top leader of the main protest organiser Students Against Discrimination.

### Netanyahu to face US Congress amid Gaza tensions

Monitoring Desk JERUSALEM: Facing intense pressure to quickly cut a ceasefire deal with Hamas in Gaza, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is to deliver a landmark speech to the US Congress on Wednesday. While Netanyahu will become the first foreign leader to address a joint meeting of the two chambers four times, pulling ahead of Britain's Winston Churchill on three, an expected meeting between Netanyahu and US President Joe Biden is still not confirmed.

### Hezbollah says fires rockets, drones at Israel

Monitoring Desk BEIRUT: Lebanon's Hezbollah said it fired Katyusha rockets and drones at Israel on Sunday after strikes which the Israeli army said targeted Hezbollah weapons storage facilities. Hezbollah has traded near-daily cross-border fire with Israeli forces in support of Hamas since the Palestinian militant group's October 7 attack on southern Israel triggered war in the Gaza Strip. Six people were wounded in the overnight Israeli strike, according to the official Lebanese National News Agency. In retaliation, Iran-backed Hezbollah, an ally of Hamas, said in separate statements that on Sunday it targeted two Israeli military positions in northern Israel with Katyusha rockets and drones. An earlier statement by the group had said its fighters also struck the Dafna area with Katyusha

rockets "in response to the Israeli enemy's attacks that targeted civilians in the town of Adloun, injuring several of them". Israel's military had said its air force "struck two Hezbollah weapons storage facilities in southern Lebanon, containing rockets and additional weaponry" overnight Saturday to Sunday. Hezbollah on Sunday also said that three of its fighters had been killed in southern Lebanon. The Lebanese army also reported that two of its soldiers were wounded "moderately" on Sunday when Israeli fire hit a watchtower in the south of the country. The violence since October has killed at least 518 people in Lebanon, according to an AFP tally. Most of the dead have been fighters, but they have included at least 104 civilians. On the Israeli side, 18 soldiers and 13 civilians have been killed, according to Israeli authorities.





ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari chairing a meeting on saving Karachi from urban flooding, environmental degradation and promoting sustainable water resource development at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Romina Khurshid says: Tackling plastic pollution vital for environmental sustainability, public health

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam Monday said that plastic pollution has emerged as a serious concern for Pakistan, which has aggravated further the environmental degradation problem being faced by the country with significant economic and health crisis.

"Plastic waste, if not managed properly, degrades our ecosystems, affects public health, and hampers our sustainable developmental goals," the PM's aide warned while

addressing as a chief guest at a high-level roundtable discussion on plastic waste management in the country, organised by the Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, the roundtable discussion aimed at sharing knowledge, showcasing successful interventions, and exploring opportunities for collaboration.

The discussion was attended by various stakeholders including top key government officials, representatives of national and international non-governmental organization, academia, researchers, students and media.

Highlighting the present government's plastic waste management policy measures, Romina Khurshid Alam informed the participants, "We have established a robust regulatory and policy framework to control the transboundary movement of plastic waste in line with the Basel Convention."

The Basel Convention establishes standards for the transboundary movement of hazardous waste, solid waste, and municipal incinerator ash, including notice to and written confirmation from the receiving country prior to export, she explained.

## IHC disposes off plea regarding recovery of PTI's activist

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday disposed off a petition regarding the recovery of PTI media coordinator Ahmed Janjua after he was produced before anti-terrorism court.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard a petition moved by Farhana Barlas, the wife of Ahmed Janjua, seeking recovery of her husband.

The petitioner has adopted the stance that some persons have forcibly lifted her husband from their house on July 20. The court attorney general of Pakistan and police officials

to answer on the matter.

After a recession, Additional Attorney General Munawar Dogal appeared before the court. Prosecutor General Islamabad informed the court that an FIR under Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) was registered against Ahmed Janjua and the concern court had granted his seven-day physical remand.

The bench remarked that the police had disclosed the arrest of Ahmed Janjua and now the petitioner could move to the relevant forum for relief. The court allowed the wife of Mr. Janjua to meet him and disposed off the petition.

## Sale of 51 to 100 per cent shares in PIA has been proposed, NA body told

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Assembly's (NA) Standing Committee on Privatization was told on Monday that the financial adviser had suggested the sale of 51 per cent to 100 per cent shares in the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), whose privatization had started on June 7, 2024.

In a briefing given to the committee, which met here with Dr. Farooq Sattar in the chair, on the PIA's privatization, it was informed that it was the federal cabinet, which had to decide how many shares of the airline would be sold.

It was also told that on July 1 meetings were held with six parties for bidding and that after the privatization, parties would spend an amount ranging between \$400 million and \$500 million on the national flag carrier since the government did not have that much amount.

It was told that the cabinet had so far approved the privatization of 24 state-owned entities, including that of power producing and distribution companies.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam addressing at a high-level roundtable discussion on plastic waste management in Pakistan.

## Barrister Gohar, Rauf Hasan arrested

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad Police arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Barrister Gohar and Information Secretary Rauf Hasan.

A heavy contingent of police headed by SSP Hasan Jahangir Wattoo raided the secretariat of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in Islamabad.

Police arrested PTI leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Information Secretary Rauf Hassan and took them to unknown place.

Important documents and laptops were also taken away from the office of the party secretariat, but it is not known on what charges the police arrested the two PTI leaders.

It has also been reported that a heavy contingent of police has surrounded the PTI Secretariat in Islamabad.

## Police starts physical tests of candidates for recruitment

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police started the physical

Sarfraz Virk, and other senior police officers at these centers.

IGP Islamabad also visited the physical test center established at F-9 Park and Police Lines Headquarters in Islamabad. He



tests for executive staff recruitment, a public relations officer said.

The physical tests were conducted for candidates at recruitment centers in the federal capital Islamabad, Multan, and Quetta.

The physical testing phase was completed under the supervision of DG Safe City Malik Jameel Zafar, AIG Establishment Abdul Haq Umrani, SSP Security Zeeshan Haider, SSP Traffic Mohammad

reviewed the arrangements and facilities provided for the aspirants at the recruitment centers.

He emphasized that the recruitment process must uphold transparency and merit to safeguard the rights of all candidates, ensuring a 100% merit-based completion of recruitment.

He directed the police officers to treat all aspiring candidates with respect, provide necessary facilities, and ensure transparency and merit.

## 23 brands of bottle water declared unsafe for human consumption

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) has declared 23 brands of bottled water unsafe for human consumption due to microbiological or chemical contamination.

For the 2nd quarter of year 2024 (April to June), 209 samples of mineral/bottled water brands were collected from 21 cities and out of which 23 brands were found unsafe for human consumption, said a press release issued here Monday.

Four brands (Aqua Qismat, Vivo Water, Ruyaal Silver, Smart) were found to be unsafe due to presence of higher levels of sodium, three brands (Still,

Starlite Water, Premium Safa Purified Water) were found unsafe due to presence of high level of Arsenic than the permissible limit, while, one brand (Smart Pure Life) was found to be unsafe due to presence of higher levels of Potassium.

Fifteen brands (Fijji, Asha Premium Drinking Water, Water Plus Premium Drinking Water, Neo Health Drinking Water, Clif Water Healthy drinking water, Dream Pure, Samar Indus drinking water, Splash water, Crystal Pure Life, Buxton, Kohinoor, BRO H2O, Oriol, Parvaz Water, Masafi) were found contaminated with bacteria and thus were unsafe for drinking purpose.

## 2 wanted members of snatcher gang held: valuables and weapons recovered

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police Noon police station team arrested two wanted members of a criminal gang involved in looting citizens and snatching activities and recovered motorbikes, mobile phones, cash and weapons from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police has intensified the crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime in the city.

Following these directions, the Noon police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending two wanted

members of a snatcher gang who were involved in several incidents of looting citizens at gunpoint.

The accused were identified as Muhammad Amir and Zulfiqar. The police team also recovered motorbikes, cash, mobile phones and weapons from their possession. Case was registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza said that Islamabad Police is taking all possible measures to protect the lives and property of citizens, ensuring no criminal element disturbs the peace. Citizens are urged to cooperate with police and report any suspicious activity or information through the emergency helpline "Pucar-15" or the "ICT-15" app.



QUETTA: Chairman PM Youth Program Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan addressing a ceremony of cheque distribution of interest free loan among students of Madaris in collaboration with PPAF and BRSP

## Despite challenges, Balochistan youth excelled in all fields: Rana Mashood

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Program, Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan on Monday said that Pakistan could integrate 1 to 1.5 million youth into the global market.

"Despite challenges, the youth in Balochistan have excelled in various fields, serving as role models. The government, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is striving hard to equip youth of Balochistan with latest technology and skills."

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held at BUITEMS on "Accessible Social Entrepreneurship for Balochistani youth, organized with the support of PPAF, NIC, BUITEMS

and other institutions. Kashif Irshad from the National Heritage and Culture Division and CEO of Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) Nadir Gul Bareech, were prominent among others who attended the event.

The Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program said the government has decided to establish a National Youth Council to address the issues faced by the youth, involving them in decision-making process. He noted that the federal government was providing interest-free loans through the Prime Minister's Youth Program, benefiting millions of families to initiate small and medium business. He highlighted the importance of unity and the role of youth in facing con-

spiracies against Pakistan as saying by engaging youth in healthy and educational activities, the propaganda against the country could be shun effectively.

The IT industry's current volume is PKR 2.5 billion and government aims to expand it to PKR 25 billion to meet the global demand and provide streams to the unemployed and skilled youth of the country, he said.

Rana Mashood pointed out that climate change, despite Pakistan's minimal contribution, brought severe floods, yet global assistance was lacking.

## BISP reflects Benazir Bhutto's vision for welfare of poor: Rubina

KOHIKISTAN (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid on Monday said that the BISP reflects the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto for the welfare of poor women in Pakistan.

Mohtarma laid the foundation of this program during her exile in Dubai and it was later implemented by President Asif Ali Zardari in 2008.

Speaking at public gatherings in Tehsil Batera, Pattan, and Palas, Senator Rubina Khalid reiterated the commitment of BISP to uphold the dignity of deserving women by ensuring full disbursement of funds without deductions as directed by President Asif Ali Zardari and Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

BISP chairperson further mentioned that under the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif, scholarships are being given to children of deserving families.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary Ministry of Education Mohiuddin Wani addressing a consultation meeting on assessment framework.

## Education Ministry executes recruitment drive in fair manner

ISLAMABAD (APP): To address the teacher shortage in federal government schools and colleges, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has launched a transparent recruitment drive.

An official source told on Monday that the Ministry advertised 237 positions for Elementary School Teachers (EST), which included 102 male

and 135 female roles during the month of March.

The Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) conducted the screening test through an AI based assessment system developed in partnership with National University of Science and Technology (NUST) for 21,564 candidates.

Following this, ap-

proval was secured from the Establishment Division to establish four interview committees.

Each committee, led by a BS-20 officer and including four members from educational institutions and MoFEPT, carried out interviews from May 28 to June 05.

The process was designed to ensure transparency and to avoid any external influence.

## ICT admin cracks down on price hikes, ensure fair practices

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, the Assistant Commissioners of Islamabad have intensified their efforts to control price hike in the Federal Capital in a bid to tackle rising prices.

According to the Spokesman of ICT's Administration, Assistant Commissioner Nilore led by district administration teams inspected markets at Khanna Pul area, where offenders were nabbed for overpricing and failing to display price lists.

On the occasion, he also visited shopping malls where he also checked licences of security guards.

Additionally, an anti-encroachment operation cleared 15 carts blocking pathways.

In another action, Assistant Commissioner Industrial Area targeted price violations in I-9 area. During inspection, the AC arrested 10 persons and imposed fines to several individuals for not displaying price lists and using polythene bags.

## ATC grants 7-day physical remand of Janjua

ISLAMABAD (APP): An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Islamabad on Tuesday approved a seven-day physical remand of the arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Coordinator Ahmed Waqas Janjua. Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra heard the case. During the hearing, Ahmed Waqas Janjua was presented before the court who was arrested in a case registered in police station CTD. The court was informed that explosive materials were found with Janjua at the time of his arrest.



ISLAMABAD: Motorcyclists stands under the shade of Zero Point Bridge during heavy rain late night in the Federal Capital.

## Wani emphasizes collaborative efforts to improve edu. standards

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary of Education and Professional Training, Mohiuddin Wani, has called for coordinated efforts between federal and provincial governments to address challenges in the education sector.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of a two-day consultative workshop organized by the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) on Monday, Wani highlighted the need to simplify assessment reports, including the National Achievement Test by PIE, for teachers, students, and stakeholders. He emphasized that making these reports more accessible will enhance their utility and understanding.

Wani also advocated for the use of advanced technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), in

assessments. He believed that incorporating such technologies will not only improve the quality of assessments but also enable effective cross-validation.

The Federal Secretary stressed the importance of making all assessment reports from the Pakistan Institute of Education easily understandable, which will contribute to improvements in teaching methods, curricula, and teacher training.

In his address, Wani underscored that training programs like this are essential for elevating educational standards to international levels and advancing educational objectives.

He stated that such efforts are crucial for enhancing the quality of education for children.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Dr. Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur, Chairperson Senate Functional Committee on Devolution presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.