

# Independent

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## ECP notifies 39 MNAs as PTI members following SC order

39 lawmakers contested Feb 8 elections as independent candidates and later joined SIC; Asad Qaiser, Sher Afzal, Latif Khosa, Zartarj Gul among notified MNAs; ECP uploads notification on website to declare MNAs' affiliation with PTI

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday declared 39 lawmakers — who contested the February 8 elections as independent candidates and later joined the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) — as members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in line with the Supreme Court's July 12 verdict in reserved seats case.

The ECP uploaded the notification on its website to declare 39 NA lawmakers as the former ruling party's members who had shown their affiliation with the PTI in their nomination papers for the February 8 nationwide polls.

The decision was taken in a key session held under the chair of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja today in which they reached a conclusion to upload the notification of 39 lawmakers' affiliation with the Imran-founded party.

In the notification, Shandana Gulzar, Sher Ali Arbab, Asif Khan, Syed Shah Ahad Ali Shah, Shahid Khan,

Naseem Ali Shah, Sher Afzal Marwat, Osama Ahmed, Shafiqat Abbas, Ali Afzal Sahi, Rai Hyder Ali Khan and Nisar Ahmed were declared PTI candidates.

Also, Mehboob Shah, Junaid Akbar, Ali Khan Jadoon, Asad Qaiser, Shahram Khan, Mujahid Ali, Anwar Taj, Fazal Mehmood Khan, Arbab Ameer Ayub have been declared as successful candidates of PTI.

Moreover, according to the Election Commission notification, Rana Atif, Changaiz Ahmed Khan, Muhammad Ali Sarfaraz, Khurram Shehzad Virk, Latif Khosa, Rai Hassan Nawaz Khan, Aamir Dogar, Zain Qureshi, Rana Muhammad Faraz Noon, Mumtaz Mustafa, Shabbir Ali Qureshi, Anbar Majeed, Awais Haider and Zartarj Gul have also been declared successful candidates of the PTI.

The PTI MNAs who have been notified by the ECP were those who had shown their party affiliation with the Imran-founded party in their nomination papers before the 2024 general elections.



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Secretary General of ECO H.E. Khusrav Noziri called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



BEIJING: Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue and Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister for Energy (Power Division) in a bilateral meeting with Chinese Minister of Finance Lan Fo'an.

## China reaffirms support to Pakistan's economic growth

BEIJING (APP): China has reassuring continued support to Pakistan's economic development.

The assurance was given by China's Minister of Finance Lan Fo'an during his meeting with Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb and Minister for Energy Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari in Beijing. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb underscored the special significance of China-Pakistan financial and banking cooperation in the all-weather and iron-clad strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries. He thanked the Chinese side for its invaluable economic and financial support to Pakistan in time tested way.

The Minister informed the Chinese side about the Government's economic reform agenda, including the efforts to strengthen tax revenue generation, energy and SOE

reforms and achieve sustainable growth.

The Minister for Energy outlined the ongoing reforms in the energy sector. He emphasized the government's resolve to successfully overcome the operational and organizational challenges.

The Minister of Finance of China appreciated Pakistan's resolve for a strong economic recovery. He explained the Chinese experience of structural reforms over the last thirty years and suggested that this could be a good example for Pakistan to emulate.

He emphasized that both countries have a longstanding partnership.

Later, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb and Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari also held a useful meeting with the President of China Export and Credit Insurance Corp at its Headquarters and discussed the latest reform agenda of the government of Pakistan.



Secretary General ECO, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Islamabad.

## Pakistan welcomes "Declaration of Unity" by Palestinian factions; lauds China's role

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday welcomed the 'Declaration of Unity' signed by the Palestinian political factions in Beijing while recognizing and commending China's role in bringing the factions together for meaningful negotiations.

"Unity amongst the Palestinian people is of paramount significance in view of the ongoing war crimes against the Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza, and the blatant disregard for international law by the Israeli occupation forces," Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said at her weekly press briefing.

Calling upon the international community to intervene immediately to

bring an end to the ongoing illegal and incessant aggression in Gaza, she reiterated Pakistan's support for the realization of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, their right of return to Palestine and the establishment of an independent state of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Regarding the periodic report of the Human Rights Committee in Geneva on India, she said during the proceedings, important questions were raised about arrests under draconian laws like Public Safety Act and Public Security Act, and frequent suspension of mobile internet service in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

## PM to attend new Iranian president's inauguration on July 30

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is scheduled to visit Tehran to attend the inauguration of President-elect of Iran Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, being held on July 30. The prime minister will attend the ceremony on the invitation of the Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf. Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch announced at the press briefing.

## LHC sets aside physical remand of PTI founder in 12 cases

LAHORE (APP): A Lahore High Court (LHC) division bench on Thursday set aside the physical remand of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder in 12 cases related to the May-9 riots.

The bench also canceled the notification for the video-link attendance of the PTI founder.

The division bench, comprising Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh and Justice Anwarul Haq Pannun, announced the reserved verdict on petitions, filed by the PTI founder challenging his 10-day physical remand in 12 cases of the May-9 riots.

## Gilgit Khunjrab Motorway game changer for China, Central Asia; Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan has directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to setup priorities for the construction of highways and identification of new projects. He observed that there would be no compromise on the quality of construction of highways and roads so Chairman NHA should depute honest and competent officers for the

projects.

Chairing a high-level meeting of the NHA here Thursday, the federal minister said that the real problem was the funds as just spending money was not a miracle so the Government departments have to take steps to raise their income. He further said that the officers of the NHA should take advantage of their abilities and expertise to develop a model of working on projects in other countries as well so that

the annual income of the Authority could be increased.

Regarding the construction of highways and roads in the northern region, Abdul Aleem Khan said that the construction of the Gilgit-Khunjrab Motorway could prove to be a game changer by providing access to China and Central Asian States similarly land connectivity through road and rail up to Gwadar is of very important.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment, Abdul Aleem Khan chaired a high-level meeting of the National Highway Authority.

## Secretary General ECO calls on him PM reaffirms Pakistan's support to ECO in boosting intra-regional trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday reaffirmed his commitment that Pakistan would continue to lend its full support to Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in enhancing intra-regional trade among ECO countries as well as on the ECO reforms agenda.

He was talking to Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Amb. Khusrav Noziri who called on him at the PM House.

He highlighted the significance of "ECO Vision 2025", signed during the 2017 ECO Summit in Islamabad under then Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, as an important document for the ECO.

The outgoing Secretary General apprised the Prime Minister about ECO's initiatives and activities as well as his reform agenda to revitalize ECO during his tenure.

The prime minister appreciated the Secretary General's efforts and contributions to promote ECO as a regional platform for co-operation and extended best wishes for his future endeavors.

He noted with pleasure that Amb. Noziri was a graduate of Pakistan's Foreign Service Academy. The prime minister also conveyed his warm wishes for President Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan.

The prime minister also stated that Pakistan was proud that the incoming Secretary General of ECO would be Dr. Asad Majeed Khan, former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan. The Secretary General conveyed his gratitude for Pakistan's consistent support to him during his tenure as Secretary General ECO.

## KP Apex Committee vows to not tolerate terrorism, take strict action against terrorists

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur on Thursday chaired the Apex Committee meeting to address the current security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, focusing on recent terrorist incidents and formulating strategies to maintain law and order.

The meeting saw participation from key civil, military, and law enforcement officials, underscoring the need for unified efforts against terrorism.

The committee decided uncompromising action against terrorism and sectarianism. The provincial government will take strict action against individuals and groups involved in terrorism and sectarian hatred. The Chief Minister has directed all departments to

ensure no leniency is shown.

The law enforcement and intelligence agencies will strengthen coordination to effectively monitor and counter terrorist activities through increased surveillance and intelligence-sharing.

Citizens are encouraged to report suspicious activities to law enforcement agencies. The Chief Minister ordered the police to crackdown on armed groups and individuals.

The administration will ensure public safety and protect lives and property of the citizens.

The committee also decided to request a judicial inquiry into the Bannu incident, while the government will conduct its own inquiry to determine individual responsibilities.

## Rs 1.6 billion dues of media industry paid in transparent manner: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar informed the Information Standing Committee of the National Assembly on Thursday about clearance of Rs 1.6 billion in dues to the media industry by the government in a transparent manner, which would eventually help them to pay every media worker salary in time.

The minister disclosed the details about the dues' clearance in the committee meeting which was presided over by Pullain Baloch and briefed about the functioning of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and its attached departments. Pointing out a halt in advertisements to certain media channels on favoritism basis in the past, Attaullah Tarar confirmed seamless distribution of the ads to the chan-

nels on merit and in accordance with the criteria.

He said there were presence of the dummy newspapers which were being printed only for the sake of ads, describing the practice a major challenge for the ministry that has been taking concrete measure to address the issue.

The minister said there was a proposal in the budget 2024-25 to impose a 10 percent tax on newspaper industry, but the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting opposed the idea that could deal a big blow to the industry which ran through the imported paper.

He, during the meeting vowed, more incentives for the newspaper industry.

The body was informed that the Information Ministry had been discharging its duties under the Rules of Business 1973 efficiently and its attached departments

performance was satisfactory.

The minister said that the restructuring of PTV was being done through various administrative measures. Besides, editorial policy had been reviewed to ensure coverage of all the political parties. He informed that the PTV's income had increased substantially after the launch of the PTV Sports channel. Recalling the past glory of the PTV, he said in the past, its teleplays were watched all over the world, and its past dramas were still popular today.

Tarar acknowledged that currently there was a need to improve the drama section in the PTV.

The minister said that the PTV Entertainment would be brought under public-private partnership in the near future as part of the initiatives to reform and improve the PTV.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting Mr. Pullain chairing the committee meeting at Parliament House.

## Terrorist killed, arms, ammunition seized in Hoshab IBO: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (INP): One terrorist was killed and two others injured in intelligence-based operation (IBO) of security forces in Hoshab district of Balochistan, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

The military's media wing said on Thursday that an intense fire exchange took place between the Army troops and the terrorists during the operation.

A terrorist identified as Ali Jan was killed while two others were injured in the operation.

The ISPR said that weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in multiple terrorist activities in the area including kidnapping and target killing of innocent civilians.

## Court acquits Qureshi in May 9, incidents case

ISLAMABAD (APP): A lower court on Thursday issued order for acquittal of former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and other accused in cases pertaining to the incidents of May 9. The court said that Mr Qureshi was accused of provoking the protesters. It said that penal code 109 couldn't be applied on accused until he was found clearly involved in crime.

## PTA, NADRA ink MoU to streamline identity verification process

ISLAMABAD (APP): To streamline the identity verification process for telecom service providers, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and NADRA Technologies Limited (NTL) signed an agreement on Thursday. This collaboration is yet another step towards 'ease of doing business' in Pakistan, especially for prospective telecom service providers.

The signing ceremony was attended by the Chairman PTA Major General Hafeez Ur Rehman and Chairman NADRA Lieuten-

ant General Muhammad Munir Afsar. Member Finance PTA Muhammad Naveed and Member Compliance & Enforcement PTA Dr. Khawar Siddique Khokhar along with senior officials from both PTA and NADRA were also present on the occasion, said a news release.

As part of the new process, PTA will create a profile for each applicant, applying for a PTA license.



Once the applicant receives their tracking ID, they will visit the nearest e-Sahulat outlet and present the tracking ID for biometric verification. The verification result will then be securely transmitted to PTA.

The collaboration between PTA and NADRA is a significant step towards improving the efficiency and transparency of telecom services licensing process in the country.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Bad measures

The ongoing tussle between the current regime and PTI will only end up causing lasting harm to Pakistan. This much can be expected when all rules and laws have been set aside, and politics is being dictated by individuals' egos rather than the greater good. After a long campaign of coercion and intimidation, which has yielded nothing of import, the regime is now insisting on dismantling the country's largest political party on arguably frivolous charges.

However, doing so will only provoke the PTI's large support base and further deepen the distrust between it and the state. Meanwhile, in foreign lands, PTI leaders are working single-mindedly on internationalising their party's suffering by approaching different lawmakers to share their grievances. They do not seem to realise that engaging foreign interests in Pakistan's domestic political affairs may weaken their country's standing and make it much more difficult for it to assert its position in its international dealings.

It is most unfortunate that matters have come to this, and both sides deserve equal blame. The state has already taken its intimidatory tactics too far in its campaign of arrests and abductions. There is no reason why it should now also seek to rob millions of Pakistanis of their right to be represented by the PTI.

Its desperate moves are only provoking those at the receiving end to more and more extreme measures as they attempt to reassert themselves. It should realise that it is actively creating the conditions for more civil unrest, instead of finding solutions to the challenge.

Likewise, it defies understanding why, after its long campaign against foreign interference during the cipher saga, the PTI is now inviting international pressure on the Pakistani state. The party may be battling the might of the state, but this fight must be fought in Pakistan, not on foreign soil. It also seems unjustified for the PTI to be taking the fight abroad without exhausting all its options within Pakistan. It cannot get what it most desires without first making sacrifices, yet the party has barely tried to forcefully assert itself. Political victories cannot be achieved without mobilising a party's support base, but the PTI seems least interested in doing this. Just like the regime, it, too, seems to be making the fatal flaw of completely disregarding ordinary citizens. This brings us back to the first point: Pakistan's political crisis has turned into a tug-of-war between a handful of individuals fighting for very narrow objectives. They do not seem to have realised that they have put the country's best interests at risk. Both sides must de-escalate and agree to keep within their lanes. The law and the national interest must be respected. Pakistan cannot afford this domestic cold war any longer.

## Crooks together

F.S. Aijazuddin

Either Thomas Crooks — the 20-year-old sniper who shot Donald Trump during the recent election rally in Pennsylvania — was an excellent marksman and nicked only Trump's ear deliberately, or he missed his target's head by accident.

Gradually, more and more details are emerging of that portentous incident which could have changed modern history. Crooks had been meticulous in his preparation. He chose the rooftop location for its uninterrupted view of the podium where Trump would stand. He flew a drone over the rally site hours before the event began. (The police have since recovered the drone.)

Crooks used an AR-15 style high-powered rifle. His first shot "came less than a quarter of an inch from entering [Trump's] head, and struck the top of his right ear". Having mis-identified Trump, Crooks fired multiple shots, killing a firefighter and injuring two spectators.

Lessons learned from J.F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963 came into play. A Secret Service counter sniper reacted swiftly. Although he could see "only Crooks' gun scope and the top of his eye and forehead", he fired and in a "one-in-a-million shot" killed Trump's would-be assassin.

Who was this young not-so-sharp shooter, fresh out of high school? A fellow student in Bethel Park high school described him as smart and friendly, "definitely nerdy for sure", but he "never gave off that he was creepy or like a school shooter". And in a phrase used years ago by Alfred Hitchcock with chilling effect about the villain Norman Bates in his horror movie Psycho, the student added: "He seemed like he wouldn't hurt a

fly."

Conspiracy theories have already begun to swirl about this event. Why did the Secret Service not reconnoitre the venue with more professional thoroughness? How did Crooks aiming from his more advantageous machan fail with repeated firings when the Secret Service man succeeded in a "one-in-a-million shot"?

Did Trump know when to duck? (Many might recall president Ronald Reagan's riposte to his wife Nancy after the assassination attempt on him in 1981: "Honey, I forgot to duck!"). Was Crooks a fall guy like Lee Harvey Oswald, a casualty of murky, murderous US politics?

One wonders whether there will be a second Warren-style Commission to obfuscate the truth.

By not killing Donald Trump, Crooks has gouted Donald Trump's nomination as the Republican presidential candidate.

Interestingly, Trump has recovered faster than the painter Van Gogh did after his ear wound.

The November elections are only a few months away. Harried Democrats have been demanding a change in leadership. Biden has answered their prayers by withdrawing and proposing his obedient Vice President Kamala Harris as his substitute. Biden ought to have heeded the advice of a Republican predecessor — Abraham Lincoln: "Never change horses in midstream."

It is a truism that the US presidential elections have a seismic effect on almost every country in the world. A left-wing Keir Starmer may take over in the UK. An ornamental Ursula von der Leyen may return as a second term president of the European Commission. Emmanuel Macron may continue in a presidency with a built-

in expiry date. None matter except for China and Russia in international geopolitics. The president of America always will.

Ever since 1945, the US has been involved perpetually in a war, somewhere. The Cold War is now a "Warm War". For 20 years, Af-ghanistan was in. Hamid Karzai and his de-signer chogha are now out. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and his commander T-shirts and false fatigues are in. Peace summits are out.

According to the German Kiel Institute, since 2022, the US and the Euro-pean Union have pledged or provided "more than \$380 billion" in military, fi-nancial and humanitarian aid to Ukra-ine. Even innocuous Azerbaijan has supplied bombs, but via Sudan. Pakistan, not to be left behind, decided to provide Ukraine with Kamikaze drones and Man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADS) surface-to-air missiles. The Afghan war lasted 20 years and cost \$3 trillion. Who can predict how long the Ukrainian war will last? Probably as long as it takes to bleed Russia dry, or America's allies run out of patience, or a re-elected President Trump decides that enough is already too much.

The pattern of EU elections has raised an interesting possibility. When 27 disparate European countries can hold "free and fair elections" to elect a president, isn't there an argument for countries affected directly by the decisions of a US president to be allowed a say in his (or her) appointment? After all, their destinies are involved, their stability affected by the whims of one man chosen by 170m or so insular American voters. It is a frightening thought that Crook's single bullet, not a mass ballot, has already decided the fate of the free world. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Urban flooding

Dr Noman Ahmed

Taking precautionary steps to minimise the damage wreaked on life and property seems high on the agenda of the various tiers of government in Karachi. The chief minister has held several meetings with the relevant authorities regarding effective preparations to cope with the expected rains and flooding. The president called on the chief minister, mayor and others to take swift action to prevent flooding in Karachi neighbourhoods.

The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation has the mandate to manage the main storm drains that fall under its jurisdiction. But it is unfair to expect a lot from KMC, given its limited financial strength and technical capacity. As Karachi is likely to receive torrential rains in early August, it is time for swift action.

One reason for urban flooding is uncoordinated real estate development, as seen in suburban Karachi. Construction has also been going on in areas strictly recommended for livestock rearing, urban farming, forestation, etc. The so-called anti-encroachment drives, in part to enable water to drain properly, have proved largely ineffective.

Much of Karachi's development took place under the overall framework of plans and schemes carried forward from pre-independence times. The British had brought in a municipal system to plan and develop urban infrastructure. Storm drains were an essential feature. Through land surveys and the use of available means to assess rainfall and the surrounding terrain, Karachi was protected as rainwater was effectively drained. The measures were also meant to enable Karachi to withstand torrential

rains. The sewerage system was planned in conjunction with a drainage plan, though both functioned independently.

Periodic maintenance, repairs and an effective monitoring process made the system dependable. Manuals, SOPs, and projections were diligently prepared. Engineering wisdom and sound urban planning logic enabled the administration to manage Karachi well. The system became distorted when these practices were not institutionalised after independence.

Some quarters are talking about using the sewerage system for rainwater disposal. This must be reconsidered. Karachi has many informal settlements located along the edges of major nullahs. Various settlements in Lyari, Orangi, Malir and the central parts of the city are examples. While life and activities benefit from convenient access for disposing domestic waste water, urban flooding becomes a threat.

Until around three decades ago, Karachi's storm drains, natural and manmade, helped mitigate flooding. Not anymore. The hydrology of the drains is impacted by illegal sand mining that continues relentlessly along natural water courses. Many formal outfits have also encroached upon these nullahs, creating obstacles for the free flow of water.

The parking area of a major judicial office in Karachi has apparently been constructed on a drain. Unrestricted dumping of solid waste and construction debris directly into the nullahs also reduces the carrying capacity of the water flows.

Unsuitable repairs raise the level of main roads, allowing rainwater to gush into the streets. This is found in almost every neighbourhood in

Karachi. A thriving informal sector uses nullahs and rivers as sites of waste recycling enterprises. With the connivance of municipal staff, much of this waste is regularly brought to the nullah sites where recyclable items are separated and organic or worthless waste is made to settle on the river beds. Thus the silt content continues to expand.

Several sites in Lasbela along the Lyari river are linked to recycling. They can be connected to the city waste management system to prevent the random disposal of solid waste in nearby water bodies. When Karachi faced torrential rains a decade ago, locations along the river and nullah were severely flooded as the water could not find a proper path for outward flow. Meanwhile, it is not clear whether mega transportation projects such as the Red Line BRT and Yellow Line BRT are synchronised with the drainage network.

With rains predicted, the local and provincial governments must identify unsafe locations across the city, and urge the public to take precautionary measures. Personnel to assist people in safeguarding life and property must be deployed without delay.

In the meantime, the longer view ought to be kept in mind. Regular cleaning of roadside drainage channels, putting a stop to the dumping of solid waste into drains/ water bodies, strengthening embankments, dredging river and nullah beds, repairing sewerage schemes and separating them from drainage, creating voluntary resettlement options for nullah dwellers and accelerating the natural absorption of water through sound floodwater retention strategies should be expedited. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Stake-holders meeting to address issues faced by KP and other Ports

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level meeting was convened at the Ministry of Maritime Affairs here on Thursday to address the pressing challenges faced by the Karachi Port Trust (KP). The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission from the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Mohammed Jehanzeb Khan.

This crucial gathering included key stakeholders such as the Secretary Maritime Affairs, Syed Zafar Ali Shah, Secretary Railways, Secretary Commerce, Secretary Communication, the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, the Chairman of Karachi Port (KP) and Port Qasim Authority

(PQA), the President of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Ambassador at Large for Investment, the President of the Stevedore Conference, representatives from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the CEO of the Trade Development Authority (TDA), and the Chairman of the National Shipping Corporation.

The primary objective of the meeting was to align all stakeholders towards resolving the challenges faced by KP, instituting necessary reforms, and upgrading infrastructure to meet international standards. Additionally, the session aimed to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure the full operational

capacity of KP and all other ports thereof.

In this context, the Chairman of KP was directed by the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission to clearly identify the challenges at KP and present a matrix of possible solutions and key stakeholders for resolution. A detailed presentation was delivered, highlighting the following critical issues: Delay in clearance of cargo; Identifying bottlenecks in the customs clearance process; Uncleared goods; Addressing the backlog of goods that remain uncollected; Cargo transportation; Enhancing the efficiency of cargo movement within and outside the port.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, EF Amma, Ceylon Breeze, Xin Hai Tong and Bateleur scheduled load/offload Container, Cement, Coal and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose-2 & 4 Terminals and Sui Southern Gas Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Gulf Diamond and Epic Sunter scheduled to load/offload Rice and LPG are also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on today early morning. A total of seven ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, EF Emma, Hafnia Seine and Al-Thakira left the port on today morning while another ship "Fisher" is expected to sail on today afternoon. Cargo volume of 53,395 tonnes, comprising 42,570 tonnes imports cargo and 10,825 tonnes export cargo carried in 315 Containers (315 TEUs Imports).



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain presided over a meeting of the Sugar Advisory Board (SAB).

### Pakistan's diplomatic missions in EU briefed on ease of registering companies

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) as part of its objective to facilitate foreign investments in Pakistan, conducted an online session for Pakistan's diplomatic missions and consular offices in European Union.

The session, collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) was attended by representatives from 27 of Pakistan's missions/consulates in Europe, including Brussels, Hauge,

Dublin, Athens, Paris, Rome, Madrid, Lisbon, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Prague, Berlin, Vienna, Warsaw, Sofia, Sarajevo, Tunis, Bern, Budapest, London, Minsk, Baku, Oslo, Ankara, Bucharest, Moscow, Kyiv and Belgrade.

Officials from SECP provided an overview of the most recent changes made with the intention to streamline the online incorporation procedures in Pakistan. Moreover, counselors were informed that since all processes are now fully digitalized and

completed online, potential investors can register their companies and easily manage post-incorporation filings from overseas.

Requirements, particularly those pertaining to international investors, such as the attestation of registration documents through embassies or apostilization in accordance with the Hague Convention were explained in detail and recent measures implemented to support entrepreneurs in the country were also highlighted.

### Pakistan, Saudi Arabia to enhance ties in IT & Telecom sector

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja met with Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy on Thursday.

Matters of mutual interest and enhancing ties in IT and Telecom sector between the two countries were discussed in the meeting.

She said that Saudi Arabia is attractive market for Pakistani tech companies, urging Saudi Arabia to facilitate Pakistani IT companies registered with Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), in getting visa and travelling for Saudi Arabia. Shaza Fatima said that Pakistan also wanted jointly work with Saudi Arabia in the field of cybersecurity. Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy said that Saudi Arabia will fully cooperate with Pakistan in the field of IT and Telecommunication.

### Rana Tanveer directs to open fertilizer model centers in every district

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday directed the fertilizer companies to establish model centers in every district to facilitate farmers and ensure the availability of fertilizers at fair prices. This decision was made during a meeting of the Fertilizer Review Committee chaired by the minister, which aimed to review the availability and prices of fertilizers in the country. In this regards, he said the farmers would be

able to buy fertilizer at the original price at the centers and this initiative would end the manipulation of agencies and dealers.

He said Fuji Fertilizer Company established a few model centers last week whereas the minister directed Engro Fertilizer Company to share proposals for establishment of model centers on a priority basis.

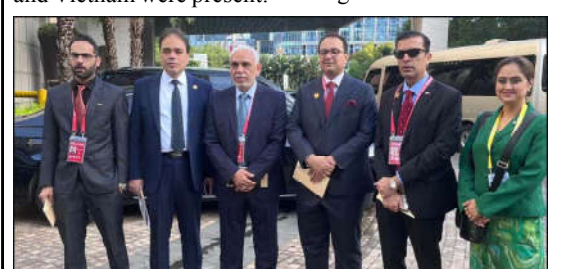
"The government is committed to protecting farmers from exploitation by middlemen and agencies."

### 8th Kunming Fair in China Pakistan declared theme country: Atif Ikram Sheikh

INDEPENDENT REPORT KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has expressed his gratitude that Pakistan has been honored as it was declared as the Theme Country — where Governor of Yunnan Province, China, was the Chief Guest and either ministers or presidents of national chambers from huge economies like China, India, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam were present.

of global significance — is underway in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China. The expo welcomed over 2,000 local, regional and international exhibitors from 82 countries from all regions of the world.

It is pertinent to note that Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, lead the Pakistani delegation to attend the high-profile 8th China — South Asia Expo in Kunming, China. The delegation includes the



Additionally, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar were also in attendance.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh stressed that the importance and strategic nature of Pakistan — China economic relations manifested in the fact that their bilateral trade has crossed \$20 billion psychological mark.

8th South Asia Expo (CSAE) — a six-day event



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a meeting with Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy.

### Pakistan's regional exports increase 20% in FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 20 per cent during the fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

"The country's exports to the regional countries including

Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$4334.467 million, which is 13.94 per cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$31,090.229 million during July-June (2023-24)," State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

## Murad directs Minorities Affairs dept to utilise Rs 1bn for financial assistance to minorities' families

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed the Minorities Affairs department to utilise Rs 1 billion meant for financial assistance, medical treatment, scholarship, Jahez/Marriage assistance, natural calamity, and Yatra assistance for deserving and needy people of minorities.

Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto was pressing hard to strengthen minorities by providing financial assistance, scholarships and other facilities to their deserving people. This is why we have started two girls' hostel projects in Karachi to house poor girls coming to pursue their education.

This he said while presiding over a meeting of the Minorities Affairs department here at the CM House. The meeting was attended by Minorities Affairs

MPA Mukesh Chawla, Special Assistants to CM Lal Chand Ukrani, Rajveer Singh, Secretaries Minorities Affairs Anjum Iqbal, XEN Minorities Sanjay Dodani, and others.

The CM said that 4157,880 people or 10,000 households of minorities were economically and socially segregated. Of them, 460,000 are Christian, 3,592,500 Hindus, and 105,380 others. "The minorities affairs department mandate is to safeguard and promote minorities' welfare," he said and directed the department to launch welfare work, including financial assistance and scholarship programs.

To a question, the CM was told that there were 911 religious places, including 734 Mandirs, 141 churches, 23 Gurdwaras, one Pasi place, and others. Murad Shah directed the Minorities

Affairs department to get the decaying buildings repaired and where overhauling or expansion works were in progress, get them expedited. Shah said that he has allocated Rs 366.463 million to install CCTV cameras at 253 sensitive Mandirs and other religious institutions. He directed the department to speed up the project. The CM said that his government has allocated Rs 1 billion for the welfare of the Minorities, but distribution has not been made so far. At this, Mukesh Chawla told the CM that a 17-member Non-Muslim Welfare Committee had been constituted under him.

The Committee would scrutinize the cases for financial assistance. Mukesh Chawla said that Rs 580 million has been allocated for repair & maintenance, Rs150 million.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a meeting of the Minorities Affairs Department held at CM House in Karachi.

## Punjab Governor says: Pak and China always enjoyed fraternal relations based on love and trust

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Chinese Consul General in Lahore, Zhao Shirin met with Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore. During the meeting, ways to further strengthen bilateral relations and ongoing development projects under CPEC were discussed.

Talking on this occasion, Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, said that Pakistan and China always enjoyed fraternal relations

based on love and trust. He said that people of both countries were also bound in a close bond. The Governor of Punjab said that the work on China Pakistan Economic Corridor Project was progressing rapidly, however, there was need to further ramp up the speed. He said that the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor project is beneficial for both Pakistan and China. Punjab Governor said that the CPEC Project will bring development and prosperity in Pakistan. He

further said that the reforms and rapid development of the Communist Party of China for the betterment of the country was exemplary.

Chinese Consul General, Zhao Shirin said that work was underway on various development projects in the backward areas of Punjab province with the cooperation of China. The Chinese Consul General appreciated President Asif Ali Zardari's dynamic role in the mega project of China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

## Senior minister says: 27 acres of land retrieved in Faisalabad

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Mairiyum Aurangzeb has said in a statement that 27 acres of land in Chak No. 534 GB in Faisalabad has been retrieved from the illegal occupants.

An official nursery has been established on the retrieved five acres of land immediately. She said that in order to find a permanent solution to smog, plantation has been launched on the remaining 22 acres of land.

Senior Provincial Minister said that on the

direction of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Forest department is establishing a forest for the livestock and ecosystem after retrieving government land from the illegal occupants.

She said that growing new forests will help significantly in getting rid of smog and air pollution.

She acknowledged that Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif is taking important steps for the protection and growth of forests.



LAHORE: Chinese Consul General in Lahore, Zhao Shirin called on Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

## Punjab takes major step towards digital healthcare records

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department Khawaja Imran Nazir announced a groundbreaking initiative on Thursday to digitalise birth and death records at the primary healthcare level, marking a significant milestone for the department.

The announcement was made during a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony with the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), held at the PSHD committee room here. The MoU aims to integrate digital record-keeping at all Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health Centres (RHCs) across the province. This

joint initiative between P&SHD and NADRA is set to enhance birth registration processes, making Punjab the only province sharing this data directly with NADRA. This integration allows citizens to obtain birth certificates promptly, streamlining the process and ensuring accuracy.

Khawaja Imran Nazir emphasized the vital role of Lady Health Workers (LHWs) in raising awareness among the public about this new system. He highlighted that the digitization initiative, including the record-sharing with NADRA, will facilitate a transition to a paperless system. He said that this move extends to government hospitals.



LAHORE: Punjab Finance Minister Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman addressing a press conference at Punjab Assembly in the Provincial Capital.

## Solid measures stressed for resolving women's problems in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): A prominent advocate for women's rights Haroon Sarab Diyal and Women and Youth Rights Activist Raveen Mehak Diyal have urged the UN Women Pakistan and the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) to take immediate action to address issues faced by minority women especially living in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) merged areas. In a joint press release issued here on Thursday, they said despite efforts to promote women's economic empowerment, minority women in these regions continue to face significant challenges due to limited access.

## 10 dead, 1,239 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 10 people were killed and 1,239 others injured in 1,152 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 546 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 693 others with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

The data analysis showed that 688 drivers, 44 underage drivers, 149 pedestrians, and 412 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. The statistics showed that 241 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 256 persons, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by Faisalabad with 79 accidents and 74 victims, and at third Multan with 79 accidents and 85 victims.

## Minister holds meeting to discuss Hindu marriage registration process

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora Thursday presided over a consultative meeting regarding registration of the Hindu marriages in the Punjab province.

The purpose of the meeting was to make the process of legal registration of Hindu community marriages easier and more effective. Secretary Human Rights Ali Bahadur Qazi, deputy secretary minorities, President Pakistan Hindu Mandir Management Committee Krishan Sharma, Professor

Minhaj University Sabir Naz and other relevant persons were present.

The provincial minister said, "We understand the problems of Hindu community and will provide full support to facilitate their marriage registration process. The Punjab government believes that there should be no hindrance in the provision of their fundamental rights to all minorities."

In the meeting, the leaders of the Hindu community presented their proposals and discussed the current issues in detail.

## ANF seizes 721 kg drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover 721 kg drugs and arrested 10 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday.

He informed that 2.7 kg ice was recovered from two parcels booked for Australia at a courier office in Karachi. 668 grams cocaine was recovered from a passenger coming from Doha at Lahore Airport.

5.5 kg ice was recovered from a parcel booked for New Zealand at a cargo office at Lahore Airport.

# International News

## Thousands fill Washington's streets to protest Israel's war in Gaza during Netanyahu visit

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Thousands of protesters against the war in Gaza converged on Washington on Wednesday to condemn Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit, chanting "Free, free Palestine" as they marched toward the Capitol before police deployed pepper spray on some in the crowd.

Demonstrators calling for an end to the war that has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians filled several blocks as they weaved through the streets of the nation's capital carrying Palestinian flags and signs with messages such as "arrest Netanyahu" and "end all U.S. aid to Israel." Outside Washington's Union Station, protesters removed American flags and hoisted Palestinian ones in their place to massive cheers in the crowd.

Throngs of demonstrators rallied near the Capitol before starting their

march ahead of Netanyahu's joint address to Congress, but police blocked them from getting close to the building. Police said they used pepper spray after some protesters became "violent" and "failed to obey" orders to move back from the police line.

Before Netanyahu's speech, some protesters tried to block his route to the Capitol but were removed from the street by police. After being turned away by officers near the Capitol, protesters wound through the Capitol Hill neighborhood for several blocks before gathering in front of the nearby rail station.

Nine people were arrested across Washington, including four people on charges of assaulting a police officer outside Union Station.

Outside of Union Station, protesters shouted, "Let them go!" at officers

who formed a circle around several people who were arrested.

One person grabbed at a police officer's riot shield and then raised his fists in a fighting stance. An officer was seen grabbing a Palestinian flag from a woman and tossing it aside. At least one protester appeared to be overcome from the effects of pepper spray.

Cheers rang out as a fire burned what appeared to be a papier-mache likeness of Netanyahu. Protesters spray painted graffiti on a monument to Christopher Columbus, including the words, "Hamas is coming" in large red letters. "Free Gaza" was scrawled in green.

Among the protesters was a group of artists from Baltimore displaying a massive papier-mache sculpture meant to depict President Joe Biden with blood on his hands and devil horns.



Riot police confront pro-Palestinian demonstrators as they protest near the US Capitol as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses a joint meeting of Congress.

## Israeli raids displace thousands in Gaza

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Israeli forces carried out new raids in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, hours before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was due to address the US Congress.

The latest Israeli attacks destroyed homes in towns east of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza and thousands of people were forced to head west to seek shelter, residents said.

The Palestinian Civil Emergency Service said it had received distress calls from residents trapped in their homes in Bani Suhaila, east of Khan Yunis, but were unable to reach the

town.

Medics later said two Palestinians had been killed in an airstrike on Bani Suhaila, where Hamas said fighters had detonated a bomb against an Israeli army personnel carrier.

The Israeli military said it had been operating in areas from which fighters had been able to fire rockets into Israel and attack Israeli troops. Gaza health officials said Israeli military strikes in the past 24 hours had killed at least 55 people, the latest casualties in fighting that health authorities in the enclave say has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians.

## Death toll from Ethiopia landslides could jump to 500, UN says

**Monitoring Desk**  
ADDIS ABABA: The death toll from landslides in Ethiopia earlier this week has risen to 257 and is expected to almost double, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) said on Thursday. Heavy rains triggered a landslide burying people in the Gofa Zone of southern Ethiopia on Sunday night and a second one on Monday engulfed those engaged in rescue efforts.

## Kenya's president Ruto nominates Douglas Kanja to head police service

**Monitoring Desk**  
NAIROBI: Kenya's President William Ruto has nominated Douglas Kanja to be vetted for the post of inspector general of police, Ruto's office said on Thursday. Kanja had been acting in the same position since mid-July, when the previous holder, Japhet Koome, resigned after intense criticism of officers' conduct during anti-government protests the previous month in which at least 39 people had been killed.

## US President Joe Biden says time to pass torch to 'younger voices'

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden told Americans on Wednesday that he quit the 2024 election to unite the country, saying in a historic Oval Office speech that it was time to pass the torch to "younger voices."

"I revere this office. But I love my country more," the 81-year-old said in an elegiac prime-time address to the nation urging his divided country to embrace democracy and shun hatred.

"The defence of democracy, which is at stake, is more important than any title," Biden said. "I have decided the best way forward is to pass the torch to a new generation. That is the best way to unite our nation."

In his first televised address since his stunning decision, Biden also hailed his Vice President Kamala

Harris, 59, who is set to be the new Democratic presidential nominee. "She's experienced. She's tough. She's capable," Biden said in just the fourth address of his presidency from behind the Resolute Desk — and likely his last.

Biden bowed out of the race later than any other president in US history, giving in to weeks of pressure from Democrats after a disastrous debate performance against Donald Trump raised concerns about his age.

Speaking in a hushed voice after a Covid infection, Biden used the powerfully symbolic setting to insist on his achievements — while admitting it was time to move on.

He said there was a "time and a place for new voices, fresh voices — yes, younger voices. And that time and place is now."

## Russia, China turn to digital payments as sanctions hamper bilateral trade settlements

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: The increased use of digital assets in cross-border settlements between Russia and China is easing bilateral payment issues, digital platform Qifia told Reuters, as some settlements directly through banks are taking months to clear due to sanctions.

Qifia, founded in 2013 and Chinese-owned, initially focused on importing Chinese consumer goods to Russia. This year, however, it launched bilateral trade, tapping into surging trade between the two countries even as the threat of secondary U.S. sanctions on Chinese banks complicates payment flows with more stringent compliance procedures.

The dwindling pool of banks in China willing to risk possible sanctions retribution has caused payment bottlenecks and increasingly complex steps to avoid delays, including a

workaround using small, regional Chinese banks, that can operate below the radar.

Facing those hurdles, Qifia, which operates out of Beijing and Moscow and will soon list on the Moscow Exchange, has turned to digital asset and cryptocurrency settlements that can happen in a single day.

Qifia founder Sun Tianshu said the company was closely monitoring legislation on both sides of the border and was already facilitating cross-border payments using tether (USDT) — a so-called 'stablecoin' that retains a steady value in dollars. Russia allows settlements using some digital financial assets that can bypass the banking system such as tether. The Russian parliament is also considering a bill that would legalise all cryptocurrencies as a means of payment in foreign trade.

## Harris plans to continue to build presidential momentum in speech to teachers union

**Monitoring Desk**  
HOUSTON: Vice President Kamala Harris is slated to continue her days-old presidential push by speaking Thursday to the American Federation of Teachers, the first labor union to formally endorse her candidacy.

Having emerged as the likely Democratic nominee after President Joe Biden exited the race, Harris plans to travel aggressively to spread her message and rally voters. The outreach occurs as the former and retooled Biden campaign, now under Harris' control, figures out its strategy for generating turnout and maximizing her time in a 100-plus day sprint to the November election against Republican Donald Trump.

But in Trump, Harris is up against the survivor of a recent assassination

attempt with tens of millions of loyalists who are devoted to putting him back in the Oval Office.

Just as Harris is trying to draw a contrast with Trump, he is trying to do the same with her. Trump went on the offensive against Harris at a Wednesday rally in North Carolina, telling his crowd of thousands that she is a "real liberal" who is "much worse" than Biden. The former president said Harris had misled voters about the health of the 81-year old Biden and his ability to run for the presidency.

"For three and a half years, Harris shamelessly lied to the public to cover up Joe Biden's mental unfitness, claiming that 'crooked Joe' was at the absolute top of his game," Trump said.

## Volunteers help migrants reverse water trauma in Spain's Canaries

**Monitoring Desk**  
SPAIN: Smiling broadly, perhaps to hide their nervousness, dozens of young African migrants wearing swimming goggles took their first strokes and exhaled into knee-deep water on a Tenerife beach, led by Spanish volunteer instructors. Many are suffering from water trauma after a perilous crossing to the Canary Islands from countries such as Senegal or Mauritania crammed into precarious boats. Some barely survived and others lost family members or friends to the ocean.

"There are people who come with a terrible fear that you see when they get into the water holding your hand as if clinging to life," said Jorge Balcazar.

## India and China agree to approach border issues with urgency

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on Thursday in Laos, where the two leaders agreed to resolve border issues as soon as possible. The two countries share a long Himalayan border, much of it poorly demarcated, and relations between them have been sour since a military clash in July 2020 when at least 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese troops were killed.

Jaishankar met Wang on the sidelines of the Southeast Asian bloc ASEAN summit in Laos, just three weeks after their last meeting in Kazakhstan, India's foreign ministry said on Thursday.

"Agreed on the need to give strong guidance to complete the disengagement process. Must ensure full respect for the LAC (Line of Actual Control) and past agreements," Jaishankar said in a post on X. After their last meeting in Kazakhstan.

## PM meets with KP lawmakers, assures development, relief measures in province

ISLAMABAD (APP): Members of the National and Provincial Assemblies from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Thursday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the PM House.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs Eng. Ameer Muqam, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, and other high-rank-

ing officials. In the meeting, the prime minister assured the lawmakers that the development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly the merged districts, was the top priority of the government.

He said the PMN-N government had always prioritized worked for the development of the merged districts.

Assuring the provision of standard health and education facilities in the merged districts, the prime

minister said the government would establish Danish Schools in the area to provide international standard quality education to the local students.

The prime minister also emphasized the need to stop electricity theft, promote solar energy, and provide relief to the poor and middle class.

He said the government was converting agricultural tubewells to the solar energy across the country that would help in development of the agricul-

ture sector, increase the cultivation land and save billions of dollars in term of imported fuel.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said recently the government had announced big relief for poor and middle income people in electricity bills.

On the occasion, he also announced the formation of a committee, chaired by the Deputy PM, to find sustainable solutions to the problems faced by the elected representatives of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the members of KP Assembly called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, Former Speaker National Assembly, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla and parliamentarians cutting cake to celebrate birthday of President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari at Parliament House.

## Gilani praises President Zardari for strengthening democracy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Thursday praised President Asif Ali Zardari for strengthening democracy and upholding the constitution.

At a ceremony organized by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance, on the 69th birthday of Asif Ali Zardari, he also appreciated the dedication and sacrifices of the Pakistan People's party (PPP) leadership.

He said, "Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto not only made Pakistan a nuclear power but also made its defense impenetrable. For the prosperity of

the people and the country, Shaheed Bhutto gave the gift of the Constitution" he added.

He added that the PPP leadership has tirelessly worked for the strengthen democracy in the country, upheld the constitution, empowered women, and brought uplift of the public. Endless sacrifices of the leadership of PPP are commendable, he said.

After Bhutto's martyrdom, Benazir Bhutto followed in her father's footsteps, strengthening of democracy, upholding the constitution, and fostering public service.

Following Benazir Bhutto's assassination, President Asif Ali Zardari

took over the reins of the country, gifted the 18th Amendment, ended the exploitation of the provinces, and ensured the provision of equal rights to all provinces. He also acknowledged the efforts of the current PPP Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, in advancing the country's progress and prosperity.

He credited Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's tireless work for the fact that both President Asif Ali Zardari and he himself hold their current positions.

With two provincial governments and two governorships, the PPP remains committed to its constitutional and public welfare struggles.

## 'Over 70,000 complaints of overseas Pakistanis redressed during the current year'

**Independent Report**

ISLAMABAD: Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has instructed all departments dealing with the overseas Pakistanis to redouble their efforts for early resolution of their problems. He directed the NADRA authorities to set up its offices in Bahrain and Baghdad and asked the Airport Security Force (ASF) to issue entry passes to the OPF officials performing duties at the "One Window Facilitation Desks".

The Wafaqi Mohtasib observed that the Overseas Pakistanis were the backbone of Pakistan's economy and they were a major source of foreign exchange in the country and deserved to be facilitated in all respects. He gave these instructions on receipt of a report with regard to the Overseas Pakistanis with special reference to the problems being faced by

them. It may be pointed out that the Secretary, Wafaqi Mohtasib Office, Mr. Afzal Latif yesterday chaired a meeting of senior officials of the Ministries and Government Departments dealing with the Overseas Pakistanis, which considered ways and means to reach out to the Overseas Pakistanis and improve the delivery of services to them.

During the meeting, the Grievance Commissioner for the Overseas Pakistanis gave a detailed presentation on the problems being faced by them. He said that over 70,000 complaints received so far during the current year have already been addressed.

It may also be mentioned that a full-fledged office of the Grievance Commissioner for the Overseas Pakistanis has already been working in the Wafaqi Mohtasib's office.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting with Federal Minister of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam at his Office.

## PIMS incinerator continues spewing health hazardous dark smoke

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Hospital incinerator established to get away with hazardous hospital waste through incineration and safe management of its remains has become a nuisance for the residents of F-8, G-7 and G-8 sectors facing dark smoke with an increased ratio of pollutants being spewed since last quarter of the year.

An incinerator is a highly capital-intensive infrastructure developed to convert solid or liquid waste of both hazardous and non-hazardous nature into gas or ash, reducing to less bulky, less toxic or less harmful material.

The major products, of incineration of waste, are carbon dioxide (CO2), wa-

ter, and ash, whereas the items of serious concern are compounds containing sulfur, nitrogen, and halogens that are highly detrimental to health and the environment. The incinerator is operated at a high temperature ranging from 850°C to 1200°C that helps convert waste into flue gas CO2 and water as end products.

When contacted, the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA), the official informed that the matter was already in the notice of the Agency and the matter was being taken as per the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997. Suleman Bilal, a local area resident told APP that it is a usual practice during morning and evening durations when the incinerator starts working.

## DIG Islamabad holds khuli katchery to address public grievances

**Independent Report**

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Ali Rizvi, the DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza said that the Islamabad Police is committed to resolve public issues on priority.

He said this while listening to the complaints and issues of the public as well as police officials during the Khuli Kachehri held at his office. Senior police officers were also present on this occasion.

During the Khuli Kachehri, he listened to the complaints of the citizens and marked their applications to the concerned officers for timely action on merit. He also directed them to send reports to his

offices in the given time frame.

He further said that strict action will be taken against officials involved in bribery or corruption and a zero tolerance policy will be adopted in this regard.

He emphasized that Islamabad Police would not leave any stone unturned to secure the lives and property of the citizens. "Such interaction would be continued in future to provide maximum relief to the citizens," he added. He said that, interaction during "Khuli Kachehri" would help to promote friendly policing and will also ensure self-accountability, immediate resolution of citizens' problems. The protection of life, property and self-respect of citizens comes first, he maintained.

## Senate education body for resolving degree attestation issue by HEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training Senator Bushra Anjum Butt on Thursday committed to addressing the widespread challenges of attestation and equivalence faced by students across all regions, including students involved in the pending cases.

Chairing the Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, she expressed her dedication to youth empowerment through education.

She emphasized the need to collectively resolve these issues without dwelling on past grievances,

stressing that politics should not be played at the stake of the future of the nation's youth.

Senator Butt acknowledged the concerns of the HEC's chairman and expressed readiness to collaborate towards resolution. Consequently, the committee decided to convene a detailed session at HEC to outline the way forward on attestation matters. They also resolved to handle each case individually for fair treatment, and proposed a checklist on the HEC website outlining mandatory attestation and equivalence document requirements from universities. Butt reiterated that a rigorous monitoring will

have to be taken place in order to prevent issuance of fraudulent degrees, along the process, safeguarding the nation's integrity. Additionally, universities facing issues were invited to an upcoming meeting to discuss their challenges.

The committee members unanimously prioritized student welfare, emphasizing swift resolution of students cases.

Addressing concerns about fraudulent degrees and attestation, Senator Butt highlighted the HEC's responsibility to identify and mark universities issuing fake degrees, advocating for clear public messaging and awareness campaigns.

## CM GB calls on Federal Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & GB and SAFRON Engr Amir Muqam on Thursday said that government would take all possible measures for the development of Gilgit-Baltistan. In a meeting with Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan, he said Gilgit-Baltistan had vast tourism potential which had not fully been exploited, said a press release. He said that Prime Minister would soon visit Gilgit-Baltistan.

Amir Muqam said that government was taking steps for the welfare of Gilgit-Baltistan people.

## Increased literacy essential for achieving developed nation status: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday highlighted the importance of increasing the literacy rate in the country to achieve national development and prosperity.

"There is not a single country in the world that has progressed without achieving a 90 per cent literacy rate," he said while

Open University (AIOU) Vice Chancellor Secretariat.

As per the data of the 7th Digital Census-2023, he regretted that Pakistan's literacy rate stood at around 61 per cent, stressing the need for improvement to enable the younger generation to compete in the era of digital revolution and rapid innovation that has transformed all fields.

"In today's world, the competition has shifted from pen literacy to digital literacy, intellect and capability in research and development," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Member Parliament from Opposition benches stage hunger strike camp outside Parliament House in the Federal Capital.

## CDA resumes death, birth registration services

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Thursday resumed death and birth registration services suspended by National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) due to outstanding dues.

CDA chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa timely intervention into the matter led to restoration of vital services in the capital.

Randhawa, upon receiving notice of the suspension of services contacted Chairman NADRA to resolve the issue.

Following his instructions, the Municipal Corporation Islamabad (MCI) immediately settled all outstanding payments to NADRA, leading to the restoration of services.

To prevent future disruptions, Chief Commissioner Randhawa directed authorities to take permanent measures to ensure timely payment of NADRA's dues. He emphasized that no shortcomings would be tolerated in facilities provided to Islamabad's citizens.

## Ministry all set to amend govt accommodation allotment rules

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Housing and Works is all set to modify government accommodation allocation rules to facilitate federal government employees. "A proposed amendment to modify the Allocation Rules, 2002 is under consideration which will be implemented as soon as possible, sources in the Ministry told APP.

They mentioned that the ministry plans to eliminate Rule 20 of Government House Allotment. This rule currently allows

a government house allocated to a retired federal employee to be assigned to their employed son or daughter. The sources said the waiting list employees are of the view that the rule is based on injustice to transfer the government house from father to child on retirement as it deprives the right of senior employees who have been waiting for a long time. They said the officers and employees get their son or daughter recruited before retirement and the house is allotted to them.

## Police committed to resolve public issues on priority: SP Khan Zaib

**Independent Report**

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, SP Security Operations Khan Zaib said that the Islamabad Police is committed to resolve public issues on priority.

He said this while listening to the complaints and issues of the public during the Khuli Kachehri held at his office. Moreover police officers were also present on this occasion.

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He said that interaction during "Khuli Kachehri" would help to promote friendly policing and will also ensure self-accountability, immediate resolution of citizens' problems. The protection of life, property and self-respect of citizens comes first, he maintained.

## Ali Pervaiz Malik urges national unity for country's prosperity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Finance, Revenue, and Power Ali Pervaiz Malik urged 'national unity' and slammed the opposition's pursuit of self-interest, warning that their actions are hindering the country's economic recovery.

Talking to a private news channel, he has made a passionate appeal for national unity, urging all stakeholders to put aside their differences and work together for the country's prosperity.

Malik warned that the opposition's self-serving agenda is not only hindering the government's efforts to address economic issues but also threatening the country's stability and progress.

Responding a query related to opposition call for protest, he made it clear

that the government is not afraid of opposition's protests, but emphasized that any demonstrations or gatherings must be conducted in accordance with the law and through proper legal channels, including obtaining necessary permissions.

In a bid to maintain public order and ensure the smooth functioning of democratic processes, the government urges protesters to adhere to established protocols and procedures, he mentioned.

The government has made it clear that protecting state interests is our top priority, he mentioned.

He stressed that the government's primary responsibility is to serve the people and ensure the country's progress and stability, and it will not be swayed by political pressure or vested interests.



ISLAMABAD: A dedicated teacher instructs children from surrounding slums in a makeshift school near F-6 in the Federal Capital.

## Senate's Interior committee seeks details of 1200 "Ghost Employees of CDA"

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Standing Committee on Interior on Thursday sought details of 1200 ghost employees of Capital Development Authority (CDA) and recent allotments of plots to its employees.

The Committee was briefed by the Chairman CDA on its recent initiatives. Chairman CDA informed that the government is committed to making CDA a robust and essential organization with a more digitalized presence. He highlighted that CDA recently digitalized its Human Resource department and identified 1200 ghost employees.

Additionally, CDA signed an MoU with Baku team for the beautification of Islamabad and launched a city-wide plantation campaign. Furthermore, CDA signed an MoU with the Punjab Land Record Authority for the digitalization of land records, expected to be completed this year.

The Committee instructed CDA to provide details on ghost employees and recent allotments to employees. The Senate Committee passed the Bill titled "The Fatal Accidents (Amendment) Bill, 2024". Senator Shahadat, the bill's mover, stated that the bill seeks to ensure speedy justice and enable legal heirs of the victims to receive compensation in case of death due to fatal accidents.

The Committee also passed the Bill titled "The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2024". The Bill seeks to insert section 59A in the CRPC and amend sections 431 and 431A. Senator Shahdat Awan, the bill's mover, stated that the aim of the bill is to make it obligatory for law enforcement agencies under section 59A to inform the accused of the charges under which they have been arrested.

## IRSA releases 314,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 314,500 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 337,100 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1516.36 feet and was 118.36 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 202,000 cusecs and 190,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1198.45 feet, which was 150.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 22,600 cusecs and 12,000 cusecs respectively.

## CDA chairman inspects Park Road Extension Project, directs timely completion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, conducted a surprise visit to the Park Road Extension Project, stressing the need for swift completion of the construction work.

During the visit, Chairman Randhawa directed the project team to expedite work on all sections of the project, ensuring round-the-clock presence of the Project Director to oversee the progress. He also instructed the team to collaborate with traffic police to minimize inconvenience to citizens due to the ongoing construction. Randhawa warned that no further delays would be tolerated, emphasizing the importance of completing the project without any additional hindrances. Despite the warnings, the Chairman expressed satisfaction with the progress made in the last two months.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Faisal Saleem Rehman, chairman senate standing committee on interior presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.