

# Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 06. No. 162 Muharram 19, 1445 AH Friday July 26, 2024 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

## 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, Zartari 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 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.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a meeting to review progress on the BRT Red Line Project held at CM House in Karachi.

## Murad calls for shifting of utilities, speeding up work on BRT Redline

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, presiding over a meeting to review the progress of the BRT Redline project, has directed all utilities-providing agencies to shift their installations within a month so that the work on the project can be sped up, meanwhile, the traffic police would properly manage the traffic to reduce public inconvenience which has become unbearable.

The meeting was held at the CM House, and was attended by Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon, PSCM Agha Wasif, Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, MD SSWMB Imtiaz Shah, Secretary Transport Asad Zamin, DIG Traffic, MC KMC Afzal Zaidi, KE Representatives Sadia Dada, Harris Siddiqui and project director of the BRT Redline.

Senior Minister Transport Sharjeel Memon briefing the CM said that there were two Lots of civil

works of the BRT Redline project. Lot 1 starts from Malir halt and ends at Mosmiyat and Lot-2 from Mosmiyat to Numasih. The physical progress of Lot-1 has been achieved by 9.46 per cent and lot-2 by 15.3 per cent.

Memon told the CM that work on Lot-1 and Lot-2 would be completed by March 2026 and June 2026 respectively.

The CM said that in the entire area of the Red Line Corridor, there were serious traffic issues, therefore people in the areas were in distress.

"I want you to speed up the work on the project so that public distress can be alleviated," he told the transport dept.

Minister Transport told the CM that work on mixed traffic lanes, delineators, Tipu Sultan Underpass, Hydrant Underpass, Kind Cottage Underpass, King Cottage Station, and Safoora Pile caps were in progress.

The CM said that overall effective coordination from all utility agencies was essential through a dedicated focal person to resolve project issues promptly. He directed the KMC to coordinate with the Transport dept to develop the existing Nullah Crossing along the BRT Red Line.

Shah directed SSWMB to carry out regular cleaning and waste removal from the Right of Way along the corridor placement of waste bins at the jointly identified points.

The CM directed K-Electric to shorten the procurement procedure, currently five to six months.

The CM directed KE to shift the utilities for which the PD of the BRT Redline has already paid 80 per cent of the amount. At this, the KE representatives told the CM that they had not been given the right of way for shifting their cables.

## Secretary General ECO calls on PM 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 cooperation 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.



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

## Rana optimistic about country's prosperous future; highlights business-friendly policies

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of the PM Youth Development Programme, Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan, expressed optimism about the country's future, stating on Thursday that it is on the right path and will achieve prosperity with a stable economy in the near future.

He made these remarks during an Insurance Policies Issuance Ceremony hosted by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) at a local hotel.

Rana Mashood highlighted the business-friendly policies of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the current Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. He noted that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has a vision to boost the country's exports, implementing various initiatives with the aim of reaching an export target of \$60 billion.

He commended the PPAF's efforts to empower the nation's youth, recognizing their significant role in the country's development.

At the event, 25 insurance policies were distributed to small and medium enterprises from 22 districts in Sindh and Balochistan. These policies, part of the European Union-funded Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) program, are designed to protect crops and livestock in the agricultural sector from climate-related risks.

The EU-funded GRASP program is dedicated to empowering rural SMEs by facilitating their access to financial services. It has established connections between SMEs and financial institutions to support this goal. The event was also attended by Senator Nihal Hashmi, CEO of PPAF Nadir Baloch, and various representatives from SMEs.



KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) Leaders, Farooq Sattar, Mustafa Kamal and others addressing to media persons during press conference held at Pakistan House in Karachi.

## Religious Affairs Minister pays surprise visits to shrines

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Aqaf, Religious Affairs, Zakat and Ushr, Riaz Hussain Shah Shirazi, on Thursday paid surprise visits to several shrines in Karachi.

Accompanied by Parliamentary Secretary for Aqaf Shazia Karim Sanghar, Aqaf Administrator Karachi Ayaz Soomro, Haji Hanif Memon, and other relevant officials, the minister laid ceremonial chadars on the shrines and offered prayers.

The provincial minister visited Dargah Muhammad Shah Dulha Sabzwari, Alam Shah Bukhari, and Miran



ISLAMABAD: Chairman PTA Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman and Chairman NADRA Lieutenant General Muhammad Munir Afsar witnessing sign an agreement ceremony between Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and NADRA Technologies Limited (NTL) at PTA Headquarters.

## Sharjeel inaugurates Route-8 of People's Bus Service in Karachi

Independent Report KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon inaugurated Route 8 of the Yusuf Goth to Tower People's Bus Service in Karachi on Thursday.

The inaugural ceremony was held in Yusuf Goth and attended by Pakistan People's Party MPA

Asif Ali Zardari, Faryal Talpur, the Chief Minister of Sindh and the elected representatives to the people are being fulfilled."

He said that the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party was working day and night to provide maximum relief to the people. In the last four days,



Liaquat Askani, former MNA Qadir Mandukhel, and People's Party leaders Habib Jadoon, Faisal Jamot and others.

Addressing the ceremony, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said, "Today is a very important day as the route of the People's Bus Service from Yusuf Goth to Tower is starting. The promises made by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, President

new buses have been deployed, and new routes have been started by the Sindh government. Millions of people will benefit from these new routes, he added.

The senior minister said that in this era of inflation and intense heat, the government of Sindh was providing air-conditioned buses at minimum fares, ensuring that people could easily reach their destinations.

## US urges respect for democracy, equal treatment of all political parties in Pakistan

WASHINGTON (INP): US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller on Wednesday said that United States urges respect for democracy and equal treatment of all political parties in Pakistan.

Briefing the media in Washington, Matthew Miller said: "Internal political matters in Pakistan are something that we do not take a position on. We urge respect for democracy, respect for human rights, and treatment of all political parties equally."

Replying to a question, Matthew Miller said that Biden administration has requested to Congress for \$101 million to Pakistan to strengthen democracy and fight terrorism.

He further said that we would use that \$101

million 'multi-purpose aid' for the types of programmes to strengthen democracy and civil society, to counter terrorism and extremism, to support economic reforms and debt management.

Matthew Miller said: "We have made similar budget requests and similar budget authority — received similar budget authority from Congress in the past and made — and invested, used the funds that were appropriated by Congress to invest in our partnership with Pakistan."

And we would use funds, should they be appropriated by Congress, to invest in similar programs as we have in this fiscal year and in previous ones."

## PM commends armed forces for Hoshab anti-terror operation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday commended the armed forces for their successful operation against terrorists in District Hoshab, Balochistan.

The prime minister stated that the soldiers of the Pakistan Army successfully carried out the operation and sent the terrorists to hell, according to a statement issued by Prime Minister's Office.

## PM Shehbaz 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.

"The visit attests to the commitment by the two countries to strengthen leadership level engagement and bilateral cooperation."

## 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.

It said that the crime was not proved to the extent of Shah Mehmood Qureshi.



KARACHI: Chairman of the PM Youth Development Programme, Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan addressing an Insurance Policies Issuance Ceremony organized by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) at a local hotel.

## Nasir inaugurates 7th ISEM Pakistan Solar Exhibition

Says Sindh govt to distribute two lac solar panels in August

Independent Report

KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Energy and Planning, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, inaugurated the 7th ISEM Pakistan Solar Exhibition and

sustainable energy practices and it has drawn the participation of various leading solar companies showcasing their innovative products and solutions.

Nasir Shah, speaking



Conference at the Expo Centre Karachi on Thursday.

The 3-day exhibition is aimed at promoting awareness, fostering industry collaborations and driving the adoption of solar energy technologies across Pakistan with a focus on

at the inaugural ceremony, highlighted potential to catalyze growth and development in the renewable energy sector and reiterated government's commitment towards creating an enabling environment for sustainable energy initiatives.



KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan leader, Khawaja Izhar-ul-Hassan along with other talks with media persons during press conference outside Supreme Court Karachi Registry building in Karachi.

## PPP's Kaira opposes ban over a political party

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan People's Party leader Qamar Zaman Kaira has said that the country's system not being run according to the law and principles.

In an interview with a private TV channel on Thursday, seasoned PPP leader endorsed the defence minister's statement about constitutional meltdown and said, when a tug of war witnessed, it is the constitutional meltdown. "An accident could happen when things not run in a proper way," he said.

He said Khawaja Asif has been a seasoned politician, his reference of constitutional meltdown has been his understanding of matters.

People's Party leader while signaling back door contacts with the founder of the PTI, also opposed ban on a political party. He

## Administration takes effective steps to enforce ban on swimming in sea

KARACHI (APP): Deputy Commissioner Kemari Junaid Khan submitted a report to Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi regarding the enforcement of ban on swimming in the sea, stating that the district administration Keamari has taken effective measures to strictly enforce Section 144.

The police arrested 15 individuals from the beach and registered cases against them under Pakistan Penal Code 188, sections 177/24 and 178/24, said a statement on Thursday.

The Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi directed the Deputy Commissioner to ensure strict action to protect citizens' lives.

According to details, Mari Pur Police arrested the youths at sunehra Beach and Paradise Point, including Gul Ahmed, Umair, Rehan, Sher Ali, Abid, Ubaid, Asad, Hussain, Dad Muhammad, Muhammad Zahir, Rahman Sheraz, Munir, and Fahad.

## 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 with 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. Engine-ering 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.

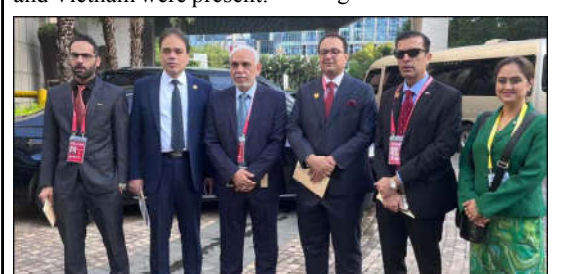
"The government is committed to protecting farmers from exploitation by middlemen and agencies."

### 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.

likes of Mr. Shabbir Mansha, former VP FPCCI & Chairman of FPCCI's Pak — China Business Council (FPCCI-PCBC); Mr. Karzem Aziz Malik, Chairman Capital Office FPCCI & former VP FPCCI; Mr. Adeel Siddiqui, former VP FPCCI & President of Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) and Sahibzadi Mahin Khan, President of Korangi Women Chamber.



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.

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.

## 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.



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 (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.



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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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

## 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.

## Sindh gov't improves agro-economy by introducing climate-resilient crops, industry, tourism: CM

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has asked the civil servants to be honest, dedicated and hardworking to solve the public problems as per their capacity wherever they are posted.

He was talking to the probationers of the 7th Civil Service Training Program (CSTP) who called on him here at the CM House here Thursday. They have completed pre-service training at the Training, Management & Research wing (TMR). The delegation was led by Secretary TMR Saeed Awan.

The meeting was attended by PSCM Agha Wasif, DG TMR Issa

Memon, chief instructors Aftab Memon and Asad Abro, Director Nousheen Usman and DD Khalil Shaikh.

The CM told the officers that they had a long career to reach the climax, and it was up to them to shape their career with an impressive track record of service, honesty, and dedication. "I will advise you to make your career impressive and full of service, fraught with public prayers you'll encounter in your [service] career," he said.

Replying to their question, the chief minister said that climate change had changed the dynamics of planning and development

in which climate-resilient development, economy and policies were being developed. "We are going to launch a massive stormwater drain system to combat urban flooding in the city," he said and added he has also restored old waterways discharging into the LBOD system.

Syed Murad Ali Shah said that he was working to improve the agro-economy of the province by introducing new climate-resilient crops, developing tourism in PPP mode, and promoting the industrial sector.

The CM extended his best wishes to the newly inducted and trained officers.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah in a meeting with a 31-member delegation of Probationers 7th Civil Service Training Program (CSTP) of the Training Management and Research Wing (TMR) held at CM House in Karachi.

## Rs 1.6 bn 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 Purnell 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 channels on merit and in accordance with the criteria.

## Taxes, other charges in domestic electricity bills challenged in SHC

KARACHI (INP): A citizen has challenged legal position of taxes and other charges in K-Electric's bills for domestic consumers, in the Sindh High Court (SHC). A resident of Karachi's Gulistan-e-Jauhar has submitted petition in the high court.

The high court has served notice to respondents and summoned their reply over legality of the charges in domestic electricity bills. Federal Ministry of Water and Power, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) and Karachi's sole power utility, the K-Electric, have been made respondents in the case. It is to be mentioned here that another petition against the power company has also been under hearing in the Sindh High Court on load shedding and unannounced power outages.

## Karachi markets to remain closed in protest against inflated electricity bills

KARACHI (INP): The Traders and Business community of Karachi announced the closure of the markets to register the protest against the inflated electricity bills.

Faheem Noori of the All Sadr Alliance of Market and Mall Association stated that the markets will be closed from 12 PM to 3 PM as a form of protest. If the situation does not improve, they plan to escalate their protests to include demonstrations outside the markets after a week.

The decision follows an earlier announcement by the All Sadr Alliance Market and Mall Association to close Sadr markets in response to soaring electricity and capacity charges.

## Man dies after overturned oil tanker crushes car in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): One member of a family, in a car, on which an oil tanker had fallen after it overturned near a flyover in Karachi's Baloch Colony on Thursday morning has died.

Talking to the media, Fire Officer Zulfiqar said that the rescue operation has been completed. "We have managed to pull the body of one of the family members out of the car."

On the other hand, the police have said that the deceased has been identified as 40-year-old Asad Zaidi," he has said, adding the body has been shifted to Jinnah Hospital.

He has further said that the district administration has been told that it is difficult to remove the oil tanker from the site until and unless it is completely emptied. "As long as the tanker is there, the fire brigade staff will remain at the site," he has informed.



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.

## 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.

## 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 Lieutenant General Muhammad Munir Alsar. 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.

Chairman PTA in his welcome note termed the partnership as a positive step towards efficient and transparent licensing procedure which will create ease for telecom service license applicants.

On the occasion, Chairman NADRA said that NTL will provide biometric verification services through its nationwide network of NADRA e-Shahulat franchisees to verify the identities of concerned officials and staff of telecom service providers and other related entities.



LARKANA: Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University (SMBBMU) Larkana Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nusrat Shah and Muhammad Dittal Kalhoro, CEO of Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) witnessing the MoU signing between SMBBMU and SRSO during the ceremony held at VC Secretariat in Larkana.

## Korean delegation visits SAU, reviews PKNC project activities

HYDERABAD (APP): A Korean delegation, linked with the Pak-Korea Nutrition Center (PKNC) project, visited Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tandojam. During the visit, the delegation was informed that the Institute of Food Sciences and Technology (IFST) at SAU will soon be upgraded to faculty status, and a new degree program in Human Nutrition will be introduced.

The delegation comprised Prof. Dr. Jaehan Kim, Project Manager and Dean of the College of Human Ecology at Chungnam National University, Korea Prof. Dr. Seoung Woo Lee, Prof. Dr. Ji Yun Hwang, Ms. Young Yeon Rou, Ms. Soyeon Park and Adnan Wadood from Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Pakistan. Their visit focused on reviewing the PKNC

project activities and obtaining feedback from trainees and other secondary beneficiaries. The delegation also toured various departments, including the IFST.

According to the SAU spokesperson, the delegation met with the Vice Chancellor Dr. Fateh Mari, who outlined the university's ongoing research and academic efforts related to food security and nutrition. Dr. Mari revealed plans to elevate IFST to faculty status and launch a degree program in Human Nutrition. He assured the delegation of the university's full support for the project and expressed a commitment to further collaboration to establish a new department of human nutrition. "This initiative aims to tackle malnutrition in the province with backing from the Sindh government," he added.



KARACHI: An oil tanker overturned at the Baloch Colony flyover, rescue workers and other officials are seen standing at the spot.

## PM orders strategy for youth to get equitable job access

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the relevant authorities to prepare a comprehensive strategy with respect to provision of employment opportunities to the youth of the country on equal basis. Calling the youth as the assets of Pakistan, the prime minister said the country's development was linked with their welfare and progress.

Chairing a meeting regarding Prime Minister's Youth Programme at the PM House, he said, with their immense talent, the youth could change the fate of the country if they were provided with the required resources.

## Omar Ayub urges nation to prepare for new elections

RAWALPINDI (INP): Opposition Leader in National Assembly Omar Ayub says the incumbent government has failed and the nation should prepare for the new elections.

Talking to media on Thursday, the PTI leader emphasised that all CCTV footage from the May 9 incidents and Zaman Park should be disclosed, and deleting such footage constitutes a crime. Ayub said he met Imran Khan in a pleasant atmosphere at Adiala Jail.

"The PTI is the biggest political party in the country, and the nation should prepare for new elections for growth and development," he highlighted.

## Two killed in separate violent incidents

KARACHI (INP): Two people including a woman were killed and another injured in separate incidents of violence in different localities of the metropolis, police said on Thursday.

According to details, the first incident took place in Sachal Goth area where motorcyclists after exchange of hot words with employees of petrol pump opened straight fire.

Petrol pump employee Zeeshan was killed in the firing while another sustained critical injuries and assailants sped the scene.

A drug addict person identified as Ashiq stabbed his wife to death over domestic disputes in Sarjani Town area of Karachi. Police arrested the accused with murder weapon.

## Child drowns in Sukkur canal, two rescued

SUKKUR (INP): A child drowned in Nara Canal of Sukkur while two others were rescued alive here on Thursday.

According to details, three children while taking bath in canal in village Riabzabad of Saleh Pat went into deep water.

The local people managed to rescue two children alive while another drowned.

## Abducted girl recovered

KARACHI (INP): The Docks Investigation Police have successfully recovered a young girl who was reported missing and abducted, along with her stolen jewelry and cash, in just 24 hours.

According to SSP Investigation District Kemari, P-Lt @ Azhar Javed, a case of kidnapping was filed on July 23 at the Docks police station under Section 365 of the Criminal Code (Case No. 24/373). The report also included the theft of one thousand rupees, 20 tolas of gold jewelry.

## China reaffirms support to Pakistan's economic growth

BEIJING (APP): China has reaffirmed its 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.



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.

## Akhtar Ali Sohiro says Information Department plays vital role in promoting govt. developmental activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director Press Information Akhtar Ali Sohiro presides over orientation session for newly appointed officers under the Sindh Public Service Commission.

Addressing the officers, Director Press Information Akhtar Ali Suri emphasizes the department's crucial role in promoting government's developmental activities.

He urges officers to utilize social media to disseminate government's plans to the public in a timely manner. Newly appointed officers pledged to perform their duties with honesty and dedication.



## Commissioner chairs divisional enforcement Committee meeting

NAWABSHAH (APP): A review meeting of the Divisional Enforcement Committee for Electricity Theft Prevention was held in the committee room of the Commissioner's Office under the chairmanship of Nawab Shah Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Division Syed Muhammad Sajjad Haider.

Commissioner said that FIRs should be filed against the people involved in electricity theft and non-payment of electricity bills for a long time while the collection of electricity bills should also be speeded up.

Directing officers, Commissioner said that FIRs should be filed against defaulters and all those involved in electricity theft and the report should be submitted to the commissioner's office by this evening, while the dashboard should also be updated on a daily basis. He asked to share details of loss feeders and asked DC Nausheero Feroze to supervise the recovery of electricity bills in the district while ensuring the participation of SEPCO officers who did not attend the meeting in the next meeting.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Badin are holding protest demonstration against kidnapping of a girl and demanding recovery of her as soon as possible, at Hyderabad press club.

## Sindh Rescue 1122 receives 5000 calls per day

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Emergency Rescue Services (SERS) Rescue 1122 ambulance service receives 5000 calls per day for medical related emergencies and rescue operations.

This was revealed during the "Safe Karachi Conference: Strengthening Urban Resilience" conference organised by K-Electric in collaboration with Institute of business Administration, held to hold a dialogue on strengthening urban resilience for a safer Karachi.

During the conference at the IBA City Campus hosted by analyst Zarrar

Khuhro, the speakers discussed a vision for a safer Karachi and its preparedness for disasters including monsoon flooding and heat waves. The event discussed public threats including regulatory enforcement and safety hazards and other challenges facing the city.

Speaking during the conference, Brigadier (Retd) Tariq Lakhair, Chief Executive Officer, Sindh Emergency Rescue Services (SERS), said Rescue 1122 Sindh was launched in 2021, has gradually spread to 30 districts and 1280 locations across the province.