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## 2 soldiers martyred, 3 terrorists killed in Harnai operation: ISPR

Lead vehicle was targeted by an IED, resulting in martyrdom of Major Muhammad Haseeb along with Havildar Noor

RAWALPINDI (APP): Security Forces killed three terrorists in an operation at Harnai District while two security personnel including a Major embraced martyrdom.

"On reported presence of terrorists, planning to target innocent civilians in Harnai District, security forces under Major Muhammad Haseeb were immediately mobilized to sanitize the area," said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release.

"Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location and resultant three terrorists were sent to hell. However, during the operation, an improvised explosive device exploded on the lead-

ing vehicle of security forces, resultant, Major Muhammad Haseeb (age: 28 years, resident of District Multan), a brave officer, who was leading his troops from the front, along with Havildar Noor Ahmed (age: 38 years, resident of District Barkhan), having fought gallantly, made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat," it further said.

Security forces of Pakistan, in step with the nation, remain determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan, and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

Meanwhile President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid tribute to Pakistan Army's Major Muhammad Haseeb and Havildar Noor Ahmed for embracing martyrdom during an operation against terrorists in district Harnai.

The entire nation is thankful to the martyrs for sacrificing their lives in defence of their motherland, the president said in a statement issued by the President House Press Wing.

He also lauded the security forces for killing three terrorists during the operation.

PM Shehbaz Sharif, in a statement, said that the sacrifices of the officers and soldiers of Pakistan Army in war against terrorism will never go in vain.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M) and Federal Minister PD&SI Ahsan Iqbal carrying coffin of Major Muhammad Haseeb Shaheed who embraced martyrdom while defending the motherland in Harnai district

COAS says

### Nation stands in solidarity with armed forces in fight against Fitna al Khawarij

Sacrifice being made by the valiant officers and soldiers exemplify the unwavering dedication towards defending the country against the menace of terrorism

RAWALPINDI (PR): The funeral prayer for Major Muhammad Haseeb Shaheed (aged 28, resident of District Rawalpindi), who embraced martyrdom while defending the motherland in Harnai district, Balochistan, was held at Chaklala Garrison, Rawalpindi.

General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff, Mr Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister PD&SI along with senior military and civil officials, officers, soldiers, and family members of the

Shaheed, attended the ceremony.

The Chief of Army Staff expressed that the sacrifice being made by the valiant officers and soldiers exemplify the unwavering dedication towards defending the country against the menace of terrorism.

He highlighted that the nation stands in solidarity with the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies in the fight against Fitna al Khawarij and all those who hold their

### PM appeals nation to observe Namaz-e-Istisqa

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday appealed to the nation to offer Namaz-e-Istisqa (prayers for rain) and pray to Allah Almighty for His mercy in the form of rain.

The prime minister said that the federal and provincial governments should arrange Namaz-e-Istisqa in the mosques across the country.

He especially urged the scholars and religious leaders to play their role in organizing Namaz-e-Istisqa. In a statement issued by the PM Office Press Wing, the prime minister emphasized that rainfall will improve the environment and can significantly help in mitigating the diseases.

The prime minister stressed that in the current situation, there was an urgent need for Baran-e-Rehmat (rain).

He called for seeking special prayers from Allah Almighty so that the human life may be relieved from the hardships.

### Terrorists deserve no leniency: Deputy Chairman Senate

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan on Thursday said that terrorists deserve no leniency and can never weaken Pakistan's resolve against terrorism.

During his visit to those injured in the recent Quetta railway station attack at CMH Quetta, he offered prayers for their swift recovery and extended heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyrs.

Syedaal stressed that terrorists will not succeed in their malicious objectives and vowed that they would soon face justice.

He affirmed the government's commitment to prosecuting all those who threaten national sovereignty, commending the vital role of security forces in combating terrorism.

### GoB spokesman refutes report

QUETTA: The spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind has refuted reports about directive of the provincial government to any international institution for halting its services in the province.

In a clarification statement issued here on Thursday, the spokesman said that the provincial government has not directed to any international institution to stop its services in the province. Similarly, no directive has also been issued for non provision of security to any international institution.

In this regard, the Provincial Home Department has also not issued any directive. He said that wrong information is being spread on the social media.

## Feedback from stakeholders key to develop effective system: CJP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi on Thursday said that feedback from all stakeholders would be essential to developing a responsive and effective system. As a part of commitment to strengthen service delivery and broaden access to justice, the Chief Justice convened a meeting at the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

The meeting was attended by the academia from Pakistan's leading universities and prominent development experts and advocates including Dr. Ali Cheema, Vice Chancellor of Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS); Dr. Aftab, Rector, FAST University; Prof. Dr. Fazal Khalid, Rector, Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology (GIKI); Dr.

Rizwan Riaz, Pro-Rector, National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST); Rauf Ata, President Supreme Court Bar Association (SBCA); Advocate Mansoor and Sher Shah, a noted development expert to lay the groundwork for comprehensive justice sector reforms.

At the outset of the meeting, the Chief Justice welcomed the participants and highlighted the challenges being faced by Pakistan's justice system. He underscored that these reforms would encompass every tier of the judiciary, beginning at the Apex Court and extending through to the lower courts. Emphasizing a collaborative approach, he stated that feedback from all stakeholders—judges, lawyers, liti-

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KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited various departments including media cell, monitoring room and news section, at Bilawal House in Karachi.

## Bilawal accuses PML-N of not upholding political agreements

PPP chairman upset over government's failure to adhere to agreements, particularly during constitutional reforms; says I withdrew my name from JCP in protest as govt did not fulfil promise

KARACHI (Agencies): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed frustration with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), accusing the party of violating agreements and failing to provide PPP with respect in the federal government.

Addressing the media at Bilawal House in Karachi on Thursday, Bilawal stated that the issue was not about personal grievances but about honour and political integrity. "Politics is about respect, not resentment. If the judiciary had representation from rural Sindh, we would have demanded equality," he remarked, referring to Pakistan's Supreme Court.

Bilawal highlighted the government's failure to ad-

here to agreements, particularly during constitutional reforms, citing discrepancies in policy implementation. "During the constitutional reform process, the government made promises but then backtracked, adopting different approaches for Sindh compared to the rest of the country," he added.

The PPP leader also criticised the lack of consultation in key governance decisions, particularly the approval of projects like the canals under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

"We had agreed on consultation, but instead, decisions were made without proper dialogue," Bilawal said, expressing disappointment at the government's actions.



QUETTA: Provincial Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Nausherwani meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

## Chairman JCSC calls on Deputy PM, Defence Minister of Qatar

RAWALPINDI (APP): General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, NI (M), Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) who is on an official visit to State of Qatar, called on Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan bin Ali Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of Qatar.

The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee also held a separate meeting with Chief of Staff, Qatar Armed Forces, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release on Thursday.

During the interaction, both sides discussed evolving regional dynamics and expressed mutual commitment for enhancing bilateral

cooperation between both countries. The Chairman JCSC highlighted strong brotherly relations between Islamic Republic of Pakistan and State of Qatar, and reaffirmed commitment to further strengthening military-to-military cooperation in defence and security domains. Qatari leadership acknowledged the positive role of Pakistan in ensuring regional stability and appreciated the professionalism and sacrifices of Pakistan Armed Forces in fight against terrorism.

Earlier upon arrival at Qatar Armed Forces Headquarters, smartly turned out military contingent presented "Guard of Honour" to the Chairman JCSC.



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a meeting to review progress on development projects.

## CM directs to expedite pace of work on development projects, complete within stipulated time ensuring high standard

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti has directed to the concerned authorities to expedite pace of work on the development projects and complete them within stipulated time maintaining high standards of work.

The Chief Minister said that the allocated resources for the development projects are the taxes money of the general public, the wastage of which is not tolerable.

He issued orders to release the funds from the Finance Department direct

to the executing department.

He said that as a Chief Executive of the province, he is ready to take every kind of political pressure, just the officers should ensure merit.

He also directed to end the unnecessary and long process after release of the funds by the Finance Department.

The Chief Minister was chairing review meeting about implementation and progress of the approved development projects here on Thursday. The administrative sec-

retaries of the concerned provincial government departments briefed the meeting about the development projects.

The meeting decided to end the unnecessary and long process after release of the funds to the departments from Finance Department.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister insisted that we have to look into as to where the delay is occurring in progress of the development projects and what comes the hurdles in the way of implementation.

## Jam Kamal highlights Balochistan's challenges, vision for progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday highlighted the need for strategic development in Balochistan at Margalla Dialogue



2024.

He emphasized the importance of addressing human security and governance in Balochistan, stressing the need for a comprehensive and consistent policy framework, said a press release issued here. He highlighted Balochistan's unique landscape and socio-political challenges, including its high poverty rate, with 45% of the population living below the poverty line, and low literacy rate of 45%, far below the national average.

Continued on page 1

## Another polio virus case reported from Balochistan increasing province's tally to 24

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health in Islamabad has confirmed the detection of another wild poliovirus (WPV1) case from Pakistan.

The lab confirmed the polio case from Jaffarabad district of Balochistan, bringing the number of total cases in the country to 49 this year.

Genetic sequencing of the virus isolated from col-

lected samples indicates it is genetically linked to WPV1 detected in Pishin in April 2024.

This is the first polio case from Jaffarabad which shares a border with Nasirabad and Jhal Magsi districts in Balochistan and Jacobabad and Kambhar districts in Sindh, all of which have reported WPV1 in sewage samples or human cases in recent months, indicating wider circulation of the virus.

## Governor Balochistan meets Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law & Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar Thursday met with Governor of Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail and MNA Jamal Shah to discuss legal and political issues of the province.

The meeting focused on Balochistan's legal framework, welfare of the legal community, and a range of regional matters impacting the province's development and stability.

## Armed men attack Rest House of Sardar Khetran

QUETTA: The unknown armed men attacked the Rest House of Provincial Minister Public Health Engineering (PHE) Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran in Barkhan on Thursday night.

According to Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, more than 20 unknown armed men attacked his Rest House in Barkhan. However, no loss was caused in the attack.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over meeting regarding Schools department



ISLAMABAD: Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail meeting with Federal Minister for Law Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

## Pays homage to Major Haseeb & Havildar Noor: CM appreciates successful operation of security forces against terrorists in Harnai

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti has appreciated the successful operation of security forces against terrorists in Harnai.

In an official statement issued here on Thursday, the Chief Minister paid homage to the brave soldier of security forces including Major Muhammad Haseeb and Havildar Noor Ahmed who embraced martyrdom while neutralizing the terrorists.

The Chief Minister said that the martyr Major Haseeb commanded the

force in the operation with courage and bravery and eliminated three terrorists.

During the operation, Major Haseeb along with Havildar Noor Muhammad embraced martyrdom.

He said that the nation is proud of its brave jawans, who rendered sacrifice of their lives for the country while taking the terrorists to their logical end.

He also said that the whole nation is under debt of blood of their martyrs. The great sacrifices of the martyrs would always be remembered, he added.

## Implementation on Provincial Action Plan started: 90 habitual absentee teachers suspended in Dera Bugti

Chief Minister asserts action would be taken against absentee teachers without any discrimination; no compromise to be made on education

Independent Report

QUETTA: The implementation on Provincial Action Plan (PAP) has been started from the home district of Chief Minister, Dera Bugti with action taken against the absentee teachers there.

According to an official hand out issued here on Thursday, in all 90 habitual absentee teachers were suspended in Dera Bugti.

In this regard, an inquiry committee has been formed, as mentioned in the official hand out. The process of dismissal from service would be started after completing the necessary action against the absentee teachers, it was further mentioned.

It may be mentioned here that Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti presided

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AJK President seeks raising Kashmiris voice for their right to self determination in more vibrant manner at all forums

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has urged for the need of raising voice in support of Kashmiris' right to self-determination in a vibrant manner and at all relevant international platforms.

and amicable settlement of the Kashmir dispute. He, however, maintained that implementation of the UNSC resolutions, which guaranteed the right to self-determination to the people of Kashmir, was the only way forward to resolve the lingering dispute peacefully.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal delivers a keynote address at the WECON2024 Conference at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST).

Pakistan can join leading economies with active youth, women participation: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday expressed confidence that Pakistan could join the ranks of the world's leading economies by 2047 through the active participation of youth, especially women entrepreneurs.

"The country's progress and prosperity are closely linked with the development of youth and women entrepreneurs. Their active role and participation in national development can make it possible for Pakistan to join the world's top economies by 2047," he said.

Jam Kamal highlights...

Continued from page 1 Jam Kamal Khan argued for decentralization of power and merit-based appointments, noting that coalition governments have long dominated Balochistan due to its small political party structure, which he said limits policy continuity.

education and social services, noting that the province's literacy rate of 40% lags significantly behind the national average of 59%.

Feedback from...

Continued from page 1 gants, and citizens—would be central to developing a responsive and effective system.



Short films are being evaluated during inter-university short film competitions arranged by NAB (Balochistan) at Alhamd Islamic University, Quetta.

NAB organizes Inter-University Competitions to Raise Awareness on Anti-Corruption

QUETTA: NAB holds Inter-University competitions annually as part of NAB's commitment to raise awareness and promote prevention strategies against corruption. In line with the Chairman NAB's directives, such initiatives form an essential component of NAB's annual plan for awareness and prevention activities, emphasizing its role in combating corruption.

90 habitual...

Continued from page 1 over a meeting on the implementation on proposed PAP the other day. In backdrop of this, the Chief Minister asserted that action would be taken against the absentee teachers without any discrimination.

He also called for an economic consensus to address underdevelopment, pointing to the province's rich mineral resources and the strategic Gwadar Port. While Gwadar's development under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) offers economic opportunities, he warned of challenges posed by external influences.

He called for transparent and mutually beneficial agreements with international partners to ensure that Balochistan's people directly benefit from trade and investment opportunities, with a focus on job creation and sustainable development.

Throughout the session, the participants engaged in constructive discussions, individually stressing the importance of building IT capacity and conducting a thorough Business Process Analysis of the judicial system.



QUETTA: Pakistani Bodybuilder Syed Bilal talking to media after reach and win Gold medal in World Bodybuilding and Physique Championships, held at Maldives.



QUETTA: Mir Akbar Mengal meeting with Chief Executive Officer QESCO Engr. Shafqat Ali at QESCO Headquarters.

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER. The Undersigned invites sealed percentage rates based on composite schedule of rates 2024 Government of Balochistan and item rates from interested contractors/Firms for the works mentioned below.

TENDER NOTICE. TSE-242511589493 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, it is Mandatory for All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL. TSE-242511588574 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, it is Mandatory for All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB.

## President, PM vow to provide better health facilities to masses

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif have said the government is fully committed to controlling the escalation of diabetes.

In their separate messages on World Diabetes Day on Thursday, they reiterated the commitment to provide health facilities to all. In his message, President Asif Ali Zardari has called for collaboration between media, civil society and the private sector to raise awareness about the risks of diabetes to ensure early prevention and reduce the burden of the silent killer disease.

"The disease can be controlled—and even prevented—through proactive measures by adopting a healthier lifestyle, regular exercises, balanced nutrition and maintaining a healthy weight," the president said.

He said that this year's theme, "Diabetes and Well-being," underscored the importance of addressing the growing global diabetes cri-

sis and its profound impact on health and well-being.

The president said that increasing cases of diabetes were primarily linked to sedentary living, poor dietary habits, and a lack of education about the disease. He also emphasised strengthening Pakistan's healthcare infrastructure to ensure that all individuals have access to affordable and effective diabetes care.

President Zardari said that by working together with both national and international partners, "we can improve our healthcare systems, implement preventive measures and provide cost-effective treatment to those living with diabetes." "On this World Diabetes Day, we reaffirm our commitment to tackling the challenge of diabetes by raising awareness, and investing in prevention and treatment, we can reduce the burden of this silent killer and improve the lives of millions of Pakistanis," he remarked.

In his message, Prime Minister Muhammad

Shehbaz Sharif said the government was fully committed to controlling the escalation in diabetes and delivering well-being to diabetic population.

"We observe the 14th November as National Diabetes Day, with an objective to highlight awareness about diabetes, its prevention, and management. Today, Pakistan joins the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and the World Health Organization to work for the well-being of millions of people with diabetes for a better life. During 2024-26 "Diabetes and Well-being" is the global thematic area of diabetes that calls for focus on access to diabetes care and support for wellbeing," the prime minister said in a message on World Diabetes Day being observed on November 14.

The prime minister said the government had launched significant health reforms to tackle non-communicable diseases, with a significant prioritization of diabetes.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal addressing a launching ceremony of Pak-UK Education Gateway (Phase-II) at HEC H-9 Sector.

## Ahsan stresses universities' role in national development as 'hotbeds' of innovation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday highlighted the importance of quickly catching up with the pace of the digitalization revolution taking place worldwide to achieve the national goals of progress and prosperity. "Our universities must become hotbeds of innovation so that the investments made so far in this sector can be materialized on a durable basis," he said while addressing a ceremony to launch the Pak-UK Education Gateway Phase-II.

He emphasized that the future of nations would not be determined in the libraries and laboratories of top universities where high-quality research was conducted to produce pat-

ents, rather than through conventional methods on battlefields. "How fast and what quality of innovation any country produces will decide its future," he added.

The minister said today, Pakistan has thousands of Ph.Ds in the fields of science, technology, and engineering, thanks to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) initiative, the "Teachers Researchers Overseas Scholarship Scheme," which was launched in 1998 under Vision-2010. At that time, the number of Ph.D. holders in the S&T field was only around 350.

He explained that under the scheme, the government had offered 5,000 overseas and indigenous scholarships to brilliant students, resulting in a significant increase in human

resource development, particularly in the S&T and engineering sectors.

The minister emphasized the need for the effective utilization of these capabilities to find solutions to the country's challenges, urging the engagement of these experts in university laboratories.

He cited examples of developed nations, including the United States, Britain and European countries, which have relied on addressing both corporate and national issues through research in university laboratories under the guidance of professors. Ahsan Iqbal mentioned that the country faced numerous challenges related to agriculture, health and climate change, and that universities should regularly generate ideas from their labs to address these issues.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani participating in Walk to prevent diabetes and promote health on eve of World Diabetes Day.

## Senator Rubina says: Joint initiatives bring positive change to marginalized communities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Thursday affirmed that collaborative efforts can improve the lives of disadvantaged people, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to national development.

Addressing the South-South Cooperation event, Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted that BISP is Pakistan's flagship social protection program, embodying the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and established in 2008 by then-President Asif Ali Zardari. She emphasized the mutual benefits of this study tour, allowing Pakistan and participating countries to exchange knowledge for the socio-economic upliftment of underprivileged groups.

Rubina Khalid outlined BISP's life cycle ap-

proach, focusing on initiatives like Benazir Kafalat, Taleemi Wazaif, and Nashonuma programs, which play crucial roles in providing social security to deserving individuals.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary BISP, Amer Ali Ahmad, expressed that BISP is committed to the economic empowerment of 9.3 million deserving families across Pakistan, selected solely based on socio-economic need.

He expressed gratitude to international development partners, including the World Bank, ADB, WFP, and UNICEF, for their financial and technical support in enhancing education, health, and payment services for BISP beneficiaries.

"It is a matter of pride that BISP is viewed as a role model globally, and we are continuously striving to improve our program," he added.



ISLAMABAD: A development project is underway as heavy machinery is being used in the construction work at the PTCL Chowk Underpass, aimed at improving traffic flow and infrastructure in the heart of the Federal Capital.

## Modi regime has turned IIOJK into open prison, war zone: APHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has condemned the intensified human rights violations in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that the Modi-led Indian government has transformed the territory into an open prison and cantonment war zone.

According to Kashmir Media Service, APHC leaders, in a meeting held in Srinagar, decried ongoing cordon-and-search operations, mass arrests, property seizures, and other violations carried out under the banner of Hindutva ideology. A statement issued by APHC spokesperson Abdul Rashid Minhas after the meeting emphasized that despite extreme repression, the commitment and sacrifices of Kashmiri detainees and martyrs would eventually compel India to relinquish its illegal hold

over IIOJK. "The day is not far," said Minhas, "when Kashmir will be free from Indian hegemony."

The meeting sought the intervention by international human rights organizations to prevent the Indian government led by Modi and Amit Shah from sealing properties of the Kashmiri people, especially those demanding peace and freedom in the occupied territory. They urged the world major powers to stop India from carrying out ethnic cleansing of the Kashmiris in the territory. The APHC reiterated that the Indian government's attempts to subdue the Kashmiri people will not succeed, as the struggle for a fair and internationally recognized plebiscite continues. The meeting further maintained that the occupation regime is deliberately endangering the lives of Kashmiri detainees.

## SC dismisses review petition against Justice Isa

ISLAMABAD (APP): A constitution bench of Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed the review petition filed against the former chief justice Qazi Faez Isa.

A six-member constitutional bench headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan heard a review petition regarding the appointment of Justice Qazi Faez Isa as Chief Justice Balochistan High Court (BHC).

During the course of proceeding, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail remarked that this is a review petition, the case cannot be reopened.

Justice Musarrat Hilali said that this forum is not for political speeches and back talking, they cannot deviate from the law. Justice Amin ud Din asked the petitioner's lawyer to give reference from law that how consultation with the Chief Minister was necessary regarding the appointment.

Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail said that he would request the head of the bench to refer the matter to the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC).

## Rank pinning ceremony honors 15 newly promoted ITP officers

ISLAMABAD: A distinguished ceremony was held Thursday at the Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) Headquarters to honor the promotion of 15 officers from Constable to Inspector.

The event was organized by the Chief Traffic Officer (CTO), Muhammad Sarfraz Virk in recognition of their exemplary dedication and commitment to their duties, a public relations officer told APP.

The newly promoted officers were acknowledged and congratulated by CTO Islamabad.

Addressing the officers during the ceremony, the CTO Virk emphasized the increased responsibilities that accompany their new ranks.

Punjab Minister has instructed pharmaceutical companies to increase production of critical medications to address the surge in smog-related illnesses, adding that this proactive approach aims to prevent shortages and guarantee uninterrupted supply in government hospitals.

The minister also revealed the establishment of special counters in govern-

## Tighten noose around gang members to eliminate crime: DIG

ISLAMABAD: The DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza held a meeting with Islamabad Police investigation officers, a public relations officer said.

During the meeting, DIG Islamabad issued directives to the officers to ensure the arrest of missing members of criminal gangs and to compile data of accused released in property

cases over the past three months. He further directed that the released accused in property cases should be monitored, and if they commit any other crime, they should be immediately arrested.

He emphasized that the protection of citizens' lives and property is our top priority, and any negligence in this regard will not be tolerated.

## Health minister unveils plan to boost medication supply for smog-affected citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab Minister for Health Khawaja Imran Nazir Thursday said the government formulated a comprehensive plan to tackle the worsening smog situation in the province and ensured citizens for essential medications and quality healthcare to address the surge in smog-related illnesses.

In an exclusive interview with a private news channel, he said the Punjab government under the strict directions of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif has taken bold steps to tackle the smog crisis with support from pharmaceutical companies.

Punjab Minister has instructed pharmaceutical companies to increase production of critical medications to address the surge in smog-related illnesses, adding that this proactive approach aims to prevent shortages and guarantee uninterrupted supply in government hospitals.

The minister also revealed the establishment of special counters in govern-

ment hospitals to handle emergency cases efficiently. "Our hospitals are equipped to provide immediate care to those affected by smog," he assured.

These dedicated counters will streamline patient flow, reduce wait times and provide timely treatment, he added.

Additionally, he said the health department has set up flu filtration clinics in all THQ hospitals to combat respiratory issues.

By taking these decisive steps, the Punjab government demonstrates its commitment to protecting citizens' health and well-being amidst the smog crisis, he added.

He said we are actively promoting measures and awareness drives to combat the smog crisis.

He also urged citizens to wear masks to protect themselves from the hazardous air quality. But that's not all - the government has also taken concrete steps to tackle the issue.

He also directed, to ensure the arrests of accused involved in car and motorcycle thefts, and also ensure the arrest of wanted absconder and proclaimed offenders.

Effective investigation of cases, timely submission of challan, and effective prosecution can ensure the conviction of accused, he added. Additionally, the working reports of investi-

gation officers should be made to assess their performance.

He emphasized that the protection of citizens' lives and property is our top priority, and any negligence in this regard will not be tolerated.

## Pak-Lebanon shares historical relations: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Thursday expressed hope that peace would be restored soon in Lebanon.

During a meeting with the Lebanese Ambassador Ghassan El Khatib to discuss various initiatives and collaborations aimed at empowering the youth of both countries, he said that Pakistan and Lebanon shared a history of friendly and cooperative relations rooted in shared cultural and religious values. He emphasized his long-standing commitment to youth affairs, having served in this domain since 2002. He added that though Lebanon was currently experiencing a difficult period, the miseries of the Lebanese people would soon be resolved.

Mashhood said that Pakistan attaches special importance to Lebanon and that both countries enjoy excellent cooperation.

## SC dismisses plea seeking ban on foreign asset holders from contesting elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed the petition seeking a ban on those holding foreign bank accounts and assets from contesting elections.

A six-member constitutional bench headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan heard the case.

During the proceeding, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail said that it was the right of Parliament to introduce legislation. How the election commission could introduce a law on foreign accounts and assets, he said.

He remarked that the court couldn't ask the Parliament to introduce legislation. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar said that the petitioner neither gave a legal reference in the case nor mentioned the names of people.

The petitioner's lawyer said that the people holding foreign bank accounts and assets shouldn't be allowed to contest elections.

## NAB requests IHC to remand back toshakhana-I case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Thursday requested the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to remand back the toshakhana-I case to the trial court against PTI founder and Bushra Bibi.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the appeals of two accused against their sentences in toshakhana-I case.

The court granted time to defense lawyer Barrister Ali Zafar to answer the NAB request and said that if they opposed the proposal of NAB then the court would announce the verdict on merit while keeping aside the weaknesses in the trial.

Earlier, during the hearing, Barrister Ali Zafar said that he was filing one time exemption from attendance on behalf of Bushra Bibi. He said that the accountability court announced its verdict on January 31, in which the two accused were awarded 14 years jail term along with Rs787 million

fine. NAB's special prosecutor Amjad Pervaiz said that the statements of 11 witnesses were not recorded in the case. He prayed the court to terminate the sentences of the accused and remand back the case to the trial court.

Barrister Ali Zafar said that it was a jail trial, the accountability court abolished the right of cross examination on January 29, and it recorded the section-364's statement of Bushra Bibi at 11:00pm on January 30, and on the next day a questionnaire was shared with the PTI founder.

Justice Miangul Hassan remarked that there are two options either the defense accepts the proposal of NAB for remanding back the case or the trial would be restarted in the accountability court from the indictment phase. If the defense wouldn't admit these options then the court wouldn't go towards technical weaknesses in the trial and announce its verdict on merit, he said.



Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Ambassador of Lebanon Ghassan El Khatieb Islamabad

## CDA chairman reviews progress on development projects across Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, on Thursday convened a meeting to assess the progress of various development projects across the federal capital.

During the meeting, Chairman Randhawa highlighted the necessity of maintaining high standards, insisting on zero compromise on the quality of development work.

He underscored the importance of effective coordination and rigorous monitoring to ensure projects stay on schedule and directed all teams to promptly address obstacles hindering progress. "Timely completion is paramount," stated Chairman Randhawa, reiterating the importance of adhering to project timelines.

The chairman received an update on the CDA's integrated solid waste management initiative.



ISLAMABAD: Artist performing during Lok Mela at Lok Virsa in the Federal Capital.

## Pakistan to have 62 mln diabetics by 2045; experts call for urgent policy action

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health experts agree that the consumption of ultra-processed foods lurking with industrially produced trans fats, sugar and salt are major contributing factors to the diabetes surge in Pakistan. Referring to the data, they noted that Pakistan is on the way to making 62 million people diabetic by 2045. The number of people living with diabetes in Pakistan increased from 6.3 million in 2011 to 33 million in 2021 and approximately 36 million in 2024, with an additional one million as pre-diabetic.

The sharp surge of diabetes has ranked Pakistan a number one country globally in terms of the prevalence rate of diseases where every third of adult Pakistanis is diabetic. If no immediate policy action is taken, the situation will further deteriorate.

They expressed these views during a walk organized jointly by Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH), Heartfile, Pakistan Youth Change Advocates, Center for Peace and

Development Initiative (CPDI) and others in front of National Press Club Islamabad on World diabetes day, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

Country Coordinator Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI), Munawar Hussain said that sweet drinks are the largest source of the intake of sugar in the diet. He said that the liquid sugar in sweet drinks alters the metabolism of the body, and promote excess calorie intake which leads to type 2 diabetes and many other fatal diseases.

He said that several research studies indicate that consumption of sugary drinks has clear link with type 2 diabetes. The regular consumption of sweet drinks may increase the risk of diseased by 30 percent, which could be cut down by reducing its consumption, he added.

He said that due to the negative health effects of ultra-processed food and beverage products, several countries have taken effective policy measures to reduce their consumption.



Senator Irfan-ul-Haq Siddique, Chairman Senate Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs in a meeting with the members of the Parliament delegation of Senate Affairs Committee of the Kingdom of Spain at Parliament House, Islamabad.

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**China security ties**

After a slightly turbulent patch, during which officials publicly used uncharacteristically direct language, Pakistan-China ties appear to have returned to cordiality. While speaking to the media on Monday, the Chinese foreign ministry's spokesperson reiterated Beijing's desire to strengthen bilateral ties with Pakistan. He said China would help Pakistan in its fight against terrorism, while resolving to "foil any attempt" to destabilise ties. The relationship has mainly been tested by the targeting of Chinese personnel in Pakistan by terrorists. Two major deadly attacks have occurred this year — last month in Karachi and in March in KP.

While reacting to unguarded comments by the foreign minister at an Islamabad seminar in October, the Chinese ambassador reiterated the need for Pakistan to take steps to safeguard the lives of his compatriots working in this country. Matters were further complicated after the Foreign Office termed the ambassador's remarks "perplexing". However, the latest comments from Beijing indicate that this incident may be behind us. Yet the fact remains that Beijing remains concerned about the security of its nationals in Pakistan, and if this matter is not addressed satisfactorily, it may affect bilateral ties. Some media reports have stated that China wants a joint security mechanism with Pakistan. These reports say the Chinese proposal involves the deployment of their own security personnel in this country. Pakistani officials are reportedly not comfortable with this suggestion, and no one in Islamabad or Rawalpindi has publicly commented on these plans.

While training of local forces and intelligence-sharing can be considered, putting Chinese boots on the ground in Pakistan is not a good idea. In fact, having any foreign armed force present in the country should be discouraged. Security should solely be the prerogative of Pakistan's military and civil armed forces. The Chinese concerns cannot be dismissed, as the relationship with Beijing, particularly in view of CPEC, is a key pillar of our foreign and economic policy. It is also a fact that lapses on Pakistan's part have allowed terrorists to target Chinese nationals. Yet instead of allowing foreign forces to operate on Pakistani soil to protect their nationals, closer CT cooperation with Beijing should be pursued. A dedicated division to protect CPEC schemes — manned by thousands of personnel — already exists. Capacity-building of this division, such as the provision of modern equipment and improvement in intelligence-gathering capabilities, should be the state's priority to ensure the security of Chinese nationals and projects. If Pakistan is serious about attracting foreign investment, the state must improve the security situation so that investors feel safe in bringing their citizens here. Moreover, foreign projects should prioritise the hiring and training of locals in their areas of operation to bring jobs and prosperity to underdeveloped and economically deprived regions.

**Shahab Usto**

On the International Day of Democracy in September, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif extolled the virtues of democracy, calling it the "cornerstone of a just and progressive society" and stressing continued efforts to strengthen it.

But soon after, his government pushed through a slew of amendments to the Constitution and laws widely seen as destructive to judicial independence — which is a cornerstone of democracy.

The government's legal wizards are suggesting further changes in the laws on the pretext of combating terrorism and anti-state elements.

Why is the government reshaping the legal and constitutional framework to drastically tilt power in favour of the executive, virtually relegating the judiciary to the status of an attached department? Why is it instilling more repression and divisions in the polity at a time when the country desperately needs stability and the rule of law to win the confidence of foreign and local investors? The short answer is: survival. This requires further elaboration.

Historically, Pakistan's civilian governments have faced challenges from a combination of forces, including the political opposition, the judiciary, and the establishment. In fact, the establishment has been a key factor in the induction and removal of governments, while the judiciary and political opposition have generally played a complimentary or 'enabling' role in the making or unmaking of a political system. The current dispensation has also been confronting threats to its legitimacy and endurance from its 'questionable' inception, given the controversial elections and resulting litigations which could drastically reduce the number of seats 'unfairly' claimed by the coalition government. In short, the government's fate hangs in the balance.

But this time around, the judiciary — at least a substantial part of it — refused to fall in line. In fact, a new breed of judges sitting in the high courts not only resisted the extraneous pressures, but also hit back by exposing the powerful intelligence agencies' strong-arm tactics against them to get the 'desired results.' There-

fore, it was in the interest of both the government and its powerful backers in the security establishment to 'tackle' the increasingly independent-minded judiciary, before it was too late.

In fact, much more was at stake. Had the judiciary rectified the electoral wrongs allegedly committed by the Election Commission of Pakistan in collusion with the powerful forces, it would have impacted the political system in three critical ways. First, the PTI's narrative of elections being rigged would have been vindicated, which could have toppled the government, delegitimised the ECP, and, perhaps for the first time, made the powerful establishment — a guarantor of the current system — uneasy.

Second, by rectifying the electoral results and returning duly elected members to their respective legislatures, the judiciary would have emerged in the eyes of people as the ultimate and creditworthy arbiter, which, in turn, would have substantially restored the public's confidence both in the judiciary and the resilience of the constitutional machinery.

Third, the undoing of a

politically engineered system single-handedly by the judiciary would have dented the hitherto establishment-dominated matrix of power. Possibly, the political system would have seen a new alignment of forces within the state organs, driven by the common intention of building a much-needed firewall against the intrusion of undemocratic forces.

Of course, the traditional wielders of power and their opportunistic political allies would have never allowed the judiciary to disturb the long-existing power axis, or to crystallise its institutional resistance into a permanent countervailing force. As a result, the Constitution was drastically amended — and, that too, in the most questionable, if not utterly detestable, manner — in order to weaken, divide, and dominate the judiciary in general, and the Supreme Court, in particular.

But unfortunately, the enactments go against the very concept of a modern democratic judicial system, which features three essential components — independence, integrity, and efficiency. Thus, the new law is tailored so as to reward

the malleable and opportunistic elements in the judiciary and punish the independent and fair-minded ones.

Moreover, it compromises judicial independence by allowing parliamentarians (read: politicians) to meddle in its internal administrative and disciplinary affairs, including fixing the benches and monitoring and evaluating the performance of judges. And finally, the induction of judges to the higher judiciary and the 'selection' of the chief justice of Pakistan would also be largely tempered by narrow political considerations in order to bring in judges seen as 'pliable', rather than those known for their efficiency and character.

Historically, whenever a democratic constitutional order or one of its organs has come under attack, it is saved by a confederacy of pro-democracy forces — lawyers, judges, civil society, academia, political opposition, and the media. Indian democracy was also derailed during the 1970s by the then-prime minister Indira Gandhi, who imposed an internal emergency. She amended

the constitution and laws to crush the opposition and rush through her controversial 'socialist' agenda. As much of the opposition leadership was behind bars, the judges took up the cause of saving democracy. Assisted by some able lawyers, the Indian supreme court passed a string of judgments developing the doctrine of 'basic structure' that built a guardrail around fundamental rights.

We also had a round of judicial struggle when judges, lawyers, civil society and political workers came together to save the judiciary against the onslaught of a military dictator. But it is a sad reflection on our current polity that it is miserably missing the pro-democracy confederacy while the judiciary is being 'subjugated'.

The judiciary is divided and leaderless; the bars have become too politicised to put up a common front; civil society is largely disillusioned with the squabbling and judges seen as 'partisan'; and political forces are pitted against each other leaving much ground for the establishment to stay the course. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Protecting Chinese investments****Khurram Husain**

There are two critical dialogues taking place between the governments of China and Pakistan. One of them concerns the rescheduling of payables owed to Chinese project sponsors by the government of Pakistan. The second revolves around protection of Chinese investments and nationals in Pakistan in the wake of deadly attacks.

There is now a string of statements from Chinese officials, going back a few years in time, stressing how important it is for them that the state of security for their nationals living and working in Pakistan be improved. Recently, we had a joint statement released on Oct 15, after the visit to Islamabad by Chinese premier Li Qiang for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which spoke of the need to "jointly create a safe environment" for Chinese investments and personnel in Pakistan.

That statement came couched heavily in diplomatic language. The security concerns expressed by the joint statement were mild compared to other statements, such as a vexed

retort by the Chinese ambassador to Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar's off-the-cuff remark that Pakistan is unique to the Chinese in that they are willing to invest here despite the security risks their personnel face, or earlier statements following the March attack on Chinese workers on the Dasu hydropower project.

However, the matter is far more serious. On Monday, for example, two things happened around this question. One was a routine press conference by the Chinese foreign ministry in which the Reuters correspondent asked specifically about "recent attacks on Chinese nationals in Pakistan" and received another diplomatic answer with no specifics, using language like "China will continue to support Pakistan in fighting terrorism".

But on the same day, almost at the same time, Pakistani officials in the city of Karachi hosted a press conference in which they provided minute details of the terror attack on Oct 6 outside Karachi airport that took the lives of two Chinese nationals and one Pakistani citizen.

The level of detail shared during that presser

on the sequence of events that led up to the actual attack was impressive. Through the presser, hosted by the IG Police and the home minister of Sindh, the authorities seemed to be conveying an important message: we are getting to the bottom of this, our investigation is producing results.

The next day, Reuters put out a story saying "Beijing is pushing Pakistan to allow its own security staff to provide protection to thousands of Chinese citizens" working in Pakistan. The push by Beijing came after the October attack, which the story said has "angered China, which has pushed Pakistan to begin formal negotiations for a joint security management system". The story was sourced to "five Pakistani security and government sources with direct knowledge of the previously unreported negotiations".

The following day, another article in the Financial Times, written from Taipei and Islamabad, carried the same message. Beijing was unhappy with the security situation in Pakistan and was demanding a greater role for itself

in securing its nationals from attacks. The demand to allow Chinese authorities to protect Chinese investments and nationals was originating from within the managements of the enterprises already operating in Pakistan, according to the FT article, which cited a number of Chinese executives in Pakistan.

To some extent, the request had been granted. In some cases, cited by the article, Chinese security engineers were already on the ground to set up the security plan, hire local guards, run background checks, and "gather intelligence". But pressure is apparently mounting to grow this role. A subtle change in approach seems to have come about in how the Chinese are dealing with Pakistan when stressing their security concerns for their investments and personnel here. In previous cases, official Chinese announcements made their displeasure with the security situation explicit, and generally downplayed other aspects of the relationship. But now that equation has been reversed.

The joint statement issued after the last SCO, for example, talks at great length

about "consolidating" and "deepening" and "promoting practical cooperation". It lists some areas where this cooperation will be deepened, such as the ML-1 railway upgradation and Karakoram Highway realignment, but points to issues to be worked out in the financing arrangements for these critical projects. And the language containing the security concerns is muted and couched in the language of overall cooperation. The same happened on Monday, when Beijing was asked specifically about the security concerns and responded by talking more about cooperation.

Privately, though, things are different, as most recently evidenced by the Reuters and FT articles, but also by numerous other off-the-record interactions that people have had with Pakistani and Chinese officials. Privately, the Chinese are raising the deteriorating security situation repeatedly, and are demanding a more intrusive role for themselves in safeguarding this security.

This presents a very slippery slope. Where would such a role end? Would Chinese guards be used? Will they be armed? Under what conditions will

they be authorised to use lethal force? Will they have the power to conduct surveillance, "gather intelligence", flag suspects, apprehend people, detain them, question them, and so on? More importantly, Chinese security guards means more Chinese personnel in the country, which means more targets for the militants. Who will guard the guards?

The Pakistani authorities have done the right thing to not grant the request for an expanded Chinese security presence in the country. But for their part, it seems the Chinese are finding out that Pakistani authorities have a performative approach to solving problems. They say things, do things, and look busy, all the while letting the problem in question fester while trying to keep it out of sight. This is how economic problems have been allowed to fester, problems like inadequate government resources, liquidity constraints in the foreign exchange markets, low savings to finance investment with, and so on. But now the time has come to solve the security problem. And the performative approach is reaching its limits.

**Time to find out****F.S. Aijazuddin**

How could 74.5 million Republican voters in the US have got it right, and the rest of the world got it wrong?

Nothing in recent history can match Donald Trump's dramatic re-entry into the White House. Adolf Hitler's success in the federal German elections of 1933 offers a pale parallel. Hitler's impact though was local, European, until it exploded across the globe. Trump's effect is ab initio international, with domestic undertones such as immigration and jobs.

Hitler never disguised his intentions. They were apparent in his incendiary manifesto Mein Kampf, published in 1925-26. (It sold 5.2m copies.) Hitler had written: "All great cultures of the past perished only because the original creative race died out from blood poisoning." He declared that it was "the sacred mission of the German people ... to assemble and preserve the most valuable racial elements ... and raise them to the dominant position."

Trump, too, has made no secret of his abrasive nationalism. America First. America uber alles. Trump claims that he has never read Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf. His first wife Ivana reportedly told her attorney that "Trump kept a book of Hitler's speeches in a bedside cabinet."

Trump may not have owned or read Mein Kampf. He has — as if by osmosis — absorbed its vitriolic xenophobia. In December 2023, at a campaign rally in Iowa, he asserted that "illegal immigrants inside the US are poisoning and destroying the blood of America". (Iowa voted loyally for Trump in 2016, 2020, and in 2024.)

Hitler, once in power, consolidated his authority by legislating

the Enabling Act, which gave him dictatorial powers. Trump has secured the White House, a majority in the Senate, and expects a majority in the House of Representatives. If he appoints two more judges to the US Supreme Court (he put three in during his first term), he will have a majority of five to four there as well. Such unbridled power should come with self-restraint.

Almost a century ago, in 1937, Jawaharlal Nehru (elected president of the Indian National Congress for a third time) wrote an anonymous essay warning himself against the dangers of cultism.

Published under the pseudonym Chana-kya, Nehru cautioned his public persona: "Men like Jawaharlal, with all their capacity for great and good work, are unsafe in democracy. He calls himself a democrat and a socialist, and no doubt he does so in all earnestness, but every psychologist knows that the mind is ultimately a slave to the heart, and logic can always be made to fit in with the desires and irrepressible urges of a person."

He continued: "A little twist and Jawa-hartal might turn a dictator sweeping aside the paraphernalia of a slow-moving democracy. He might still use the language and slogans of democracy and socialism, but we all know how fascism has fattened on this language and then cast it away as useless lumber."

Such brave self-analysis was cremated with Nehru. Modern elected autocrats, once in power, regard voters as "useless lumber", firewood to be used only to stoke the next election.

Leaders most beholden to the United States — Great Britain's Keir Starmer, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu and Ukraine's Volodymyr

Zelensky — were quick off the block to congratulate president-elect Trump. Our message of congratulations was not amongst Trump's top 20.

We need to admit that our relationship with the United States has slipped down many notches. That happened when the US re-hyphenated us, replacing Indo-Pak with Af-Pak. With Afghanistan off the US radar, we have little relevance on our own.

There was a time when the Shah's Iran was used as the conduit for America's policies in the region. Today, that role has been subverted to Saudi Arabia. Only a fly on the wall will know what was discussed between our COAS (whose tenure has been extended by three years) and Saudi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman, meeting so soon after Trump's re-election.

Outsiders see Pakistan as a multi-headed gorgon, with many power centres. As Dr Henry Kissinger once famously asked: "Who do I call if I want to call Europe?" Who does PM Narendra Modi call if he wants to parley with Pakistan over Jammu & Kashmir, or the Indus Waters Treaty, or to discuss cross-border pollution? The Sharifs, and if so, which? The establishment, and if so, with whom and how?

We should not expect equivalence with India. It has over \$650 billion in foreign exchange reserves. We have \$15bn, mainly rotating deposits provided by 'friendly countries'. A nuclear-tipped peace is our only affordable option.

Our concern, and the world's, should now be how to handle President Trump. Should his harangues be taken literally, but him seriously? We all have the next four years to find out. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Optimising COP29****Gulmina Bilal Ahmad**

The global demand for skilled workers in green technologies is growing. This is important for Pakistan, where climate change and environmental degradation are urgent concerns. Green Technical and Vocational Education and Training is vital for developing skills needed to make key industries sustainable. However, substantial challenges remain in fully integrating Green TVET into the national development framework.

With COP29 in Baku focused on climate action and sustainable workforce development, Pakistan has an opportunity to formalise Green TVET strategies. Indeed, the country's vulnerability to climate change underscores the need for Green TVET. Pakistan is among the top 10 countries most affected by the impact of climate change. It accrues an annual loss of \$3.8 billion due to extreme weather events. The industrial and agricultural sectors, contributing more than 40 per cent of GDP and employing over 60pc of the workforce, are heavily reliant on obsolete, environmentally damaging practices, thus making it critical to transition to eco-friendly methods.

However, in adopting Green TVET, Pakistan will face several structural and economic hurdles, one challenge being the absence of a comprehensive national policy connecting green economic goals to vocational training. Although environmental concerns have been partially addressed in the National Climate Change Policy, the latter does not prioritise workforce development for green sectors. This indicates an institutional

disconnect with organisations that are attempting to bridge the gap by integrating green skills into their programmes.

Incorporating green skills requires strategic focus and institutional coordination. For instance, the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission has introduced some foundational green skills, aimed at building awareness of sustainable practices. However, these efforts require substantial expansion.

At COP29, where global leaders are discussing climate action and workforce development, Pakistan can advocate for Green TVET on an international platform. Efforts of organisations, such as the NAVTTC, could benefit from aligning with frameworks emerging from the climate conference, potentially securing commitments for funding and support from international partners. Such alliances could enable them to expand Green TVET programming and help Pakistan achieve both its climate and economic objectives.

There is also not much awareness of or demand for green skills among employers. Many industries lack an understanding of the benefits of green skills; their motivation to adopt sustainable practices is thus reduced. Critical sectors, including the construction industry and agriculture, still depend on resource-intensive methods, as they perceive the transition costs to be high. For instance, the construction sector, which contributes over 2pc to GDP, often resorts to energy-inefficient practices, while agriculture — the largest employment sector — has been slow to adopt climate-smart techniques.

These challenges deter TVET institutions from investing in green

training programmes as industry demand for these skills remains low. Creating awareness and a demand for green skills within industries requires focused outreach and partnerships to educate employers on the long-term economic benefits of sustainable practices.

Many vocational institutions also lack modern equipment, which is essential for teaching technologies, such as those related to solar panel installation or sustainable agriculture practices. Nearly half our TVET institutions are under-resourced, highlighting an immediate need to upgrade facilities to meet the demands of a green economy. Securing these up-grades is challenging as budget allocations are limited.

Pakistan's TVET sector receives around 2.5pc of the national education budget, which would need to be scaled up in order to match countries that prioritise vocational training. Private sector investment in green skills training is also minimal, and although international funding options, such as the Green Climate Fund, exist, Pakistan has to do much more to access these resources.

Investing in Green TVET can speed up both economic growth and environmental resilience. By establishing cohesive policies, raising industry awareness, securing funding, and promoting TVET, Pakistan can build a workforce capable of supporting sustainable development in core sectors of the economy. This shift will not only reduce Pakistan's environmental footprint but also position the country as a proactive participant in the global green economy, aligning with COP29's objectives and working towards a more sustainable future. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Governor KP for constitution of special committee to address merged districts issues

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday said that constitution of a special committee has been requested to the Prime Minister of Pakistan to address the issues and grievances of the merged tribal districts.

This initiative aims to alleviate the sentiments of discontent that have emerged following the integration of these areas into the provincial framework, the Governor said during a meeting with a delegation from the Mamozai National Alliance of Orakzai District, led by President Muhammad Zaman and General Secretary Muhammad Hanif.

The delegation visited the Governor House to discuss various concerns with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, including the plight of temporary displaced persons (TDPs), compensation for the destruction caused by military operations, and other pressing issues. Former Federal Minister Sajid Hussain Tori was also present during the meeting.

Governor Kundi emphasized that the solution to the province's unrest and challenges lied in the hands of its own people. He said, "Only we, the residents of this region, can correct our situation. No one else will resolve our issues. When peace is restored, tourism will flourish, businesses will grow, and our province will become the most prosperous in the country."

The Governor also highlighted concerns regarding the funds allocated to the merged districts after the merger of FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He pointed out that, instead of being spent on the merged districts, these funds have been diverted to the settled districts of the province, leading to the deprivation of tribal areas' rightful share. "I request the Prime Minister to form a committee to ensure that the funds meant for the merged districts are utilized within those areas," Kundi said.

Additionally, the Governor assured the delegation that he would personally engage with relevant authorities to address issues related to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and other concerns, and work towards their resolution.

Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, in a meeting with Jalal Hussain Bangash, Secretary of Anjuman-e-Hussainia has emphasized the importance of sincere efforts to resolve the situation in Kurram district and ensure lasting peace in the area.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi called on by Mamozai Qaumi Ittehad representative delegation at Governor House.

## CM Maryam denies cancer diagnosis; confirms parathyroid condition instead

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has addressed recent rumours about her health, categorically denying claims that she has cancer.

In a social media statement, she clarified, "There are vlogs and rumours circulating on social media suggesting I have cancer, but I want to make it clear that I do not have cancer. I am dealing with a parathyroid condition."

The clarification comes amid widespread speculation, particularly from vloggers and YouTubers, who claimed that the CM was suffering from a fatal illness.

They also pointed to a family history of cancer, referencing her mother, who tragically passed away due to the disease.

CM Maryam Nawaz's statement aims to dispel these rumours and provide an accurate update on her health.

Expressing her thoughts in London, CM Maryam said: "The country has always witnessed the prosperity during the Nawaz Sharif-led government.

The PML-N is having a track record of steering the country towards stability."

She said, "I had undergone the operation of parathyroid from Geneva last year."

CM Maryam said, "The hospital comprised of 1,000 beds is being built in Lahore, which will be the first state-of-the-art hospital in the public sector."

"The medicines are being dispatched to the patients' houses. The 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' scheme had also been launched in the entire Punjab," she said.

She made it clear that the meritocracy was prevailing in Punjab, saying, "The recruitment is being made in Punjab through meritocracy."

## CM KPK inaugurates School of Paramedical Sciences & Technology Park in Haripur

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, visited the P a k - A u s t r i a Fachhochschule Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology in Haripur on Thursday, where he formally inaugurated the newly established School of Paramedical Sciences and the Technology Park.

Opposition Leader in the National Assembly, Umar Ayub Khan, provincial ministers Meena Khan Afridi and Arshad Ayub, and other officials accompanied the Chief Minister.

The School of Paramedical Sciences, established at a cost of Rs283 million with the support of the provincial government, currently offers 38 bachelor's, 18 master's, and 8 PhD programs in various health education fields.

Additionally, it provides diploma courses in 20 different disciplines. The Technology Park, developed at a cost of Rs992 million, was also inaugurated during the visit.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Minister announced a Rs300 million grant for the School of Paramedical Sciences. He



KARACHI: Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab casting his vote at a polling station during Local Bodies Election, at Gizri area in Karachi on Thursday, November 14, 2024. Polling is underway for the by-elections in 18 districts across Sindh, including Karachi.

## Lahore police fully alert for security of Sikh pilgrims

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Police have made elaborate arrangements for comprehensive security for Sikh pilgrims visiting Pakistan. In a statement issued on Thursday, CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamayana reiterated the police's commitment to safeguarding Sikh pilgrims, who traveled from around the world to perform religious observances. He emphasized that a robust security plan has been put in place specifically to protect these visitors during their stay.

Kamayana highlighted that security around the religious and sacred sites of Sikhs in the provincial capital has been further strengthened. Lahore police were committed to providing the best security, not only in crime prevention, but also to all religious minorities. The Sikh pilgrims were our esteemed guests and no effort will be spared in ensuring their safety.

The CCPO has also directed divisional officers to personally oversee the security arrangements, advising on-duty staff to remain fully vigilant and closely monitor the field situation. He further emphasized the importance of effective screening at entry and exit points, with duty staff actively ensuring this. Instructions were also given to Dolphin Squad, Police Response Units and Elite Force teams to conduct continuous patrolling.

## UAE eyeing investments in Sindh's desalination, transport, construction

KARACHI (INP): A spokesman for the chief minister Sindh Thursday said that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was interested in investing in a desalination plant in the port city of Karachi as well as in transport and construction projects.

The spokesman said CM Murad was also arranging meetings between Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and the UAE Consul General in Karachi, Bakht Atiq Al Rimithiki, on the occasion of the National Day of the Emirates.

The UAE is one of Pakistan's largest trading partners and a major source of foreign investment, valued at over \$10 billion in the last 20 years, according to the UAE ministry of foreign affairs. The UAE-Pakistan trade volume rose to \$7.9 billion in 2023, up 12 percent from 2022.

"Discussions were also held on the investment of UAE companies in various projects in Karachi," the CM's office said. "UAE companies are interested in investing in Karachi's desalination plant, transport and road and bridge construction sectors."

In May this year, Prime Minister Shehbaz said the UAE had committed \$10 billion to invest in promising economic sectors in Pakistan.

Earlier this month, Pakistan signed four MoUs with the AD Ports Group, a major investor in Pakistan, to explore opportunities in the maritime, air and rail sectors as well as in logistics and digital services.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanging views with Bakheet Ateeq Al Romaiti, Consul General of UAE during meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

## Transparency ensured in medical universities' finances: Kh Salman

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique emphasised his commitment to transparency in the financial affairs of medical universities while presiding over a syndicate meeting at Rawalpindi Medical University on Thursday.

The meeting reviewed the agenda items presented by the concerned officers. Khawaja Salman Rafique said that Rawalpindi Medical University had been directed to organise a meeting of allied health professionals soon, underlining the government's focus on advancing quality research in Punjab's medical universities. He added that the Punjab government is committed to providing quality education in government medical universities and directed improvements in sanitation arrangements in public hospitals.

During the meeting, the syndicate approved the introduction of a Social Sciences curriculum in Medicine at Rawalpindi Medical University, along with various Ph.D. programs.

The session was attended by Special Secretary Syed Wajid Ali Shah, Deputy Secretary Budget Hamad Al Arab.

## KP govt fully alert to deal with smog: Saif

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Advisor for Information, Muhammad Ali Saif on Thursday stated that smog had not yet reached the dangerous level in the provincial capital, however the provincial government was fully ready to take precautionary measures to deal with any emergency situation.

In a statement issued here, he said that the Chief Minister Ali Amin was closely monitoring the situation and had issued necessary directives to all the line departments to remain high alert.

Saif also noted that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was providing daily reports, and the current air quality index (AQI) in Peshawar stood at an average of 112, which was satisfactory.

He urged the public to avoid misinformation regarding AQI statistics and reiterated that there was nothing to be worried about.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit, Excise Taxation and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses to media persons during press conference, in Karachi.

## Work underway on 1787 projects with Rs. 87b in S. Punjab

MULTAN (APP): Work underway on 1,787 projects across South Punjab, under the Annual Development Programme, with an allocation of Rs. 87 billion, out of which Rs 66.6 billion has been released.

The funds utilisation ratio on these projects stood at 31 per cent. It was told in a briefing during a performance review meeting chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab, Fuad Hashim Rabbani here on Thursday. All the Secretaries and Special Secretaries of South Punjab attended the meeting.

ACS South Punjab Fuad Hashim Rabbani directed the timely completion of development projects, instructing all secretaries to actively monitor project progress. He emphasized adherence to project timelines and warned that relevant officers would be held accountable if budgets lapse.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider Khan participating in a public awareness event organized by the Internal Society of Internal Medicine regarding World Diabetes Day at Governor House Lahore.

## Punjab Governor says: All health centers of Punjab should have free sugar test and treatment facility

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider Khan attended a public awareness event organized by the Internal Society of Internal Medicine regarding World Diabetes Day at Governor House Lahore today.

Addressing the ceremony, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that it is the responsibility of the government to provide health and education facilities to every citizen. He said that due to lack of resources in the villages, people cannot get diabetes treatment. Governor Punjab said that all the health centers of Punjab should have free sugar test and treatment facility. He said that it is possible to avoid diabetes by adopting a healthy lifestyle. Governor Punjab said that for a healthy body, at least one hour should be allocated for exercise every day. Governor Punjab also requested Professor Dr. Javed Akram to provide free treatment to the diabetic government employees of the Governor House from one to ten scale. On this occasion, the Governor of Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan led a walk to raise awareness about diabetes prevention.

Prof. Dr. Javed Akram and Prof. Dr. Ayaz and other doctors also addressed the ceremony. Vice Chancellor King Edward Medical University Mahmood Ayaz, Vice Chancellor Fatima Jinnah Medical University Khalid Masood Gondal, former provincial Health Minister & President Pakistan Society of Internal Medicine, Javed Akram.



ABBOTTABAD: Motorway Officials putting flowers on grave of Sub-Inspector Shabbir Ahmed, Who died during duty on Hazara Motorway.

## PEF, PYIMS sign MoU to promote IT based education

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) and Pakistan Young Innovative Minds Society (PYIMS) Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to cooperate in the field of IT based education.

The MoU was signed by MD PEF Shahid Farid and President of PYIMS, Prof Dr. Fareeda Tahir. The agreement aims to encourage an innovative approach, promote IT-based quality education, and enhance problem-solving skills among PEF students. The pilot phase of this project will start in the districts of Lahore, Sheikhpura, Kasur, Nankana Sahib, Rawalpindi, Attock, Jehlum and Chakwal. Under this agreement, middle, secondary, and higher secondary students from PEF-affiliated schools will be prepared for the Young Innovative Scientists Competition (YISC). PYIMS will also provide PEF's master trainers and staff with awareness on modern educational concepts, through training and orientation sessions. Additionally, students will receive advanced STEM education. Furthermore, as per the MoU, PEF-affiliated students will gain access, guidance, and training for international tournaments. PYIMS will also extend technical assistance to PEF's IT department to develop an Aptitude Test Software. MD PEF, Shahid Farid, stating that it will provide PEF students with excellent educational opportunities to showcase their talents on both national and international platforms. He highlighted that Punjab Education Foundation is a leading organization in the educational sector under the Punjab government, providing free and quality education to nearly 03 million students.



PESHAWAR: Activists of Mutahida Transport Workers Association hold protest outside PPC.

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations recovered over 41 kg of drugs worth Rs 4.4 million and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Thursday. He informed that 1 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused arrested in Baldia Town.

## Govt aims to provide affordable, nutritious food to every citizen: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR) celebrated World Food Day on Thursday at the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) in partnership with the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the International Trade Centre (ITC).

Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, attended as Chief Guest, alongside prominent figures such as UN Resident Coordinator Mohamed Yahya and FAO Representative Florence Rolle. The event drew government officials, academia, UN agency representatives, and students.

In his address, Minister Hussain reiterated Pakistan's commitment to food security, emphasizing a need for cooperative efforts with both national and international organizations.

He stated, "Our commitment to national food security is unwavering, as we aim to implement inclusive policies that ensure every citizen has access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food."

Highlighting this year's theme of food as a fundamental human right, Mohamed Yahya noted the

urgency, as 40% of Pakistan's population experiences food insecurity.

Florence Rolle emphasized the importance of sustainable practices and community-driven policies to foster resilience. "With over 783 million globally facing food insecurity, collaborative efforts bring us closer to a future where everyone's right to adequate food is realized," she stated.

The nationwide campaign concluded with activities involving students, local farmers, and community members, underscoring a multi-sector approach to food security through equitable resource distribution and support for vulnerable communities.



Secretary Board of Investment, Rahim Hayat Qureshi and Additional Secretary Amreen Iftikhar at the Public-Private Dialogue on Regulatory Reforms in Islamabad.

## OGRA hosts workshop on track and trace technology for OMC's

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant move to enhance transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency in Pakistan's oil sector, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has organized a workshop focused on implementing effective track and trace technology. This event, conducted in collaboration with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), the Oil Companies Advisory Council (OCAC), and the Oil Marketing Association of Pakistan (OMAP), brought together renowned solution providers from across the country to present potential digital solutions for the sector.

In his opening remarks, the Chairman of OGRA highlighted the critical role a robust track and trace system could play in preventing financial leakages, enhancing accountability, and promoting economic stability.

"Implementing a comprehensive tracking system is essential, especially in challenging economic times, to protect the national exchequer, curb illegal activities, and boost the industry's overall integrity," he noted.

The Director General of FBR (Reforms and Automation) addressed participants, underscoring the need for a track and trace solution for the oil sector akin to systems already implemented in other industries.

He shared that FBR and customs authorities have intensified efforts against smuggling and illegal trade by leveraging advanced technology and have recently closed over 1,200 illegal fuel pumps.

He also emphasized strict enforcement, including penalties of up to Rs. 10 million and seizure of illicit products for those engaged in illegal activities.

## Turkish envoy meets Industries Minister, discusses bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Irfan Neziroglu on Thursday met with the Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain and discussed bilateral relations and areas mutual interests.

Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in the agricultural and industrial sectors, according to a news release.

Rana Tanveer highlighted the historic and brotherly relation between Pakistan and Turkey, emphasizing the need to increase trade volume between the two countries.

He also invited Turkish companies to invest in Pakistan's electric vehicle manufacturing sector.

Both sides expressed their commitment to working together to further strengthen bilateral relations.



Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Irfan Neziroglu called on the Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain in Islamabad.

## APEC gathering seen as gateway for trade between China, Latin America

BEIJING (APP): The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation will remain vital for globalization, with the group's meetings in Peru aiming to highlight its role as the gateway for trade and investment from China and Asia to Latin America, experts said.

Michael Walsh, Executive Director of the Pacific Basin Economic Council, an organization of CEOs and business leaders, said this year's gathering serves as a pivotal platform for fostering inclusive economic growth across the Asia-Pacific region, especially against the backdrop of changing political winds with regard to trans-Pacific trade.

In the face of economic challenges and the attack on free trade, APEC is seeking to reinforce regional cooperation and globalization while supporting a sustainable recovery, he said.

The priorities for this year's meetings include trade and investment for inclusive and interconnected growth, innovation and digitalization to promote the transition to the formal and global economy, and sustainable growth for resilient development.

"We anticipate that the discussions will lead to actionable strategies that facilitate efficient implementation initiatives and interoperability in cross-border trade, allowing for a more equitable redistribution of resources and opportunities throughout the region," Walsh added.

Alejandro Indacochea, president of law firm Indacochea Asociados, said the APEC gathering is a significant event for Peru, which could become the hub of Latin American integration with Asia, China Daily reported.

"The 21st century belongs to the Pacific Basin, where the fastest-growing economies are found," said Indacochea, who is also founding professor of the Centrum Business School at Pontifical Catholic University of Peru.

## MCCI urges govt to make tax reforms

MULTAN (APP): Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) President Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Shaikh has demanded the government to carry out reforms in the existing tax system and reduce electricity tariffs, in light of the high inflation rate, the energy crisis, and severe economic challenges facing the business community and the general public.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, he stated that the tax deficit of over Rs 180 billion in the first four months of the current fiscal year makes it essential for the government to take timely and balanced measures to avoid placing further burden on the public.

He emphasized that instead of continually increasing taxes in new and different ways, the government should implement tax reforms that would improve the performance of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and address the weaknesses in policies.

The FBR should expand the tax base to avoid placing more pressure on existing taxpayers through new taxes, he said, adding that through tax reforms, sectors earning extraordinary profits should be brought into the tax net to ensure a fair distribution of the tax burden, which would contribute to peace, economic stability, and the promotion of ease of doing business in the country.

He added that given the current situation,

## Gold prices dip by Rs.5,500 to Rs.266,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.5,500 and was sold at Rs.266,400 on Thursday against its sale at Rs.271,900, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also went down by Rs.4,716 to Rs.228,395 from Rs.233,111 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold decreased to Rs.209,362 from Rs.213,685.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3250 and Rs.2,786 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$55 to \$2,552 from \$2,607, the Association reported.

## OICCI highlights the critical role of the private sector for climate resilience at COP 29

**Independent Report**  
KARACHI: The Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) underscored the essential role of public-private collaboration in tackling Pakistan's climate challenges at COP 29.

The OICCI, which is part of the Pakistan delegation at COP 29, organized a dialogue titled "Unlocking Pakistan's Climate Future with Public-Private Partnerships," at the Pakistan Pavilion and brought together prominent industry leaders, government officials, and global climate experts to discuss financing strategies that can drive climate resilience and green investments in Pakistan.

OICCI's participation in COP 29 reflects its dedication to promoting sustainable business practices and supporting policies that encourage climate finance. As Pakistan continues its path toward meeting its climate objectives, OICCI remains committed to mobilizing resources and fostering collaboration to build a climate-resilient future. Through these initiatives, OICCI aims to lay the groundwork for a sustainable, climate-smart Pakistan.

Rob Cameron, Global Head of ESG Engagement at Nestlé, highlighted Nestlé Pakistan's role in water regeneration, "Preserving water resources and regeneration is part of Nestlé's legacy and under the Caring for Water - Pakistan initiative, drip irrigation and smart soil moisture sensors have been operational across 128 acres in Punjab and 183 acres in Sindh and with these efforts, Nestlé is advancing regenerative agriculture across its value chain."



KARACHI: Woman selecting and purchasing dry fruit from ship before selling after change weather in Provincial Capital.

## SECP reports robust growth with registration of 2,477 new companies

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 2,477 new companies in October 2024. This brings the total number of companies registered in the country to 233,587, reflecting growing confidence in Pakistan's corporate sector and its continued expansion.

The SECP's ongoing drive towards digitization continued to be a success with 99 percent of the new company registrations processed through its efficient online system. This marks another step in the Commission's efforts to provide a seamless, tech-driven regulatory environment that promotes transparency and supports ease of doing business in Pakistan, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

Of the total new registrations, the majority were private limited companies, which accounted for 57 percent of the total, while single-member companies represented 41 percent. The remaining 2 percent included public unlisted companies, not-for-profit organizations, trade organizations, and limited liability partnerships (LLPs).

A closer look at sectoral growth reveals strong activity across a range of industries.

The Information Technology and E-commerce sectors saw the largest increase, with 556 new companies.

## Ambassador Jemal urges RCCI to participate in Single-Country Exhibition in Addis Ababa

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Envoy, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) in Pakistan, Dr Jemal Beker Abdula on Thursday urged the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) to take part in the Single-Country Exhibition, scheduled for May next year in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Presiding over the Pakistan-Ethiopia business forum along with RCCI President Usman Shaukat at the RCCI, the ambassador said it is high time for the business community of Pakistan to enter and operate in Africa through Ethiopia which gives a seamless and swift access to the continent of over 1.4 billion people.

He said the Ethiopian Airlines had already started its operations in Pakistan, boosting its connectivity with the whole Africa which is a continent of hope, brimming with lucrative business, trade and investment opportunities. The ambassador said Ethiopia is the fastest growing economy in Africa, registering an economic growth of 8.1 per cent in the last year, and aiming for 8.4 per cent in the current year. Ethiopia gives a comparative advantage to the business community of Pakistan in terms of cheap, clean and green energy and quality human resource, he added.

## Pak total liquid foreign reserves \$ 15.96b

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 15,965.5 million as of November 08, 2024 while the forex reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan increased to \$ 11,258.6 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that total liquid foreign reserves held by the central bank increased by \$ 84 million to \$ 11,258.6 million during the week ended on November 08, 2024. Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were recorded as \$ 4,706.9 million during the week under review, it added.

Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on November 01, 2024.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman presides over the meeting of Kissan Card Steering Committee at Civil Secretariat.

## PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 836 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 836.47 points, a positive change of 0.90 percent, closing at 94,191.89 points as compared to 93,355.43 points on the last trading day.

A total of 1,084,344,207 shares were traded during the day as compared to 807,067,924 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 32.680 billion against Rs.31.688 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 465 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 262 of them recorded gains and 147 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 56 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 177,393,273 shares at Rs 1.38 per share, Hascol Petrol with 59,224,094 shares at Rs 8.21 per share and Tree Battery Limited with 47,940,702 shares at Rs.15.81 per share.

## Rupee gains 11 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Thursday appreciated by 11 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.74 against the previous day's closing of Rs 277.85.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.40 and Rs 278.90 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by Rs 1.53 to close at Rs 293.07 against the last day's closing of Rs 294.60, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs 1.78, whereas a decline of Rs 1.42 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 352.43 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 353.85.

## Kissan cards provided to 485,000 farmers

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Agriculture Secretary Iftikhar Ali Sahoo said on Thursday that till now more than 485,000 farmers had been given Kissan Cards. He said this while briefing the Kissan Card steering committee meeting which was presided over by Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman at Civil Secretariat on Thursday. The secretary said that in last 20 days, through Kissan Card, farmers had purchased seeds and fertilizers worth Rs 18 billion.

Under kisan card a facility of purchasing agriculture inputs on interest free loan from registered dealers for cultivation of wheat had been given to farmers across the province, he added.

The meeting also discussed to give the facility of withdrawal of 30 per cent cash along with the purchase of agriculture inputs through Kissan Card. Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman also directed the relevant authorities to complete the issuance process of Kissan Card at the earliest.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had ordered to increase the number of Kissan Cards from 500,000 to 750,000.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Seven ships, MSC Positano, Mol Presence, Maersk Cairo, CMA CGM Pelleas, White Fin, Amir Gas and Crimson Delight scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice, LPG and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Sui Southern Gas Terminal and Multi-Purpose Terminal 3-4 respectively on Wednesday.



KARACHI: A labourer busy in work on clay pots workplace outskirts of the Karachi city.

## LCCI Executive Committee discusses key strategies for economic revival

LAHORE (APP): In its first meeting, the Executive Committee of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has shown full trust in the leadership of LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad.

The Executive Committee Meeting which continued for over three hours, here Thursday, discussed all issues including smog, electricity winter package for industry, market closure times, EPA and FIA notices, upcoming auto policy, exporters refunds, freight forwarders issues and massive impounding of vehicles in the wake of any possible protests.

The LCCI Senior Vice President Engineer Khalid Usman and Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry gave doable proposals on the economic challenges being faced by the business community.

The LCCI Executive Committee emphasized the severe smog crisis that is impacting Lahore and the broader Punjab region. Smog has not only created health hazards for residents but has also hindered business operations due to reduced visibility and forced closures in some sectors. To address this environmental emergency, LCCI proposed a collaborative and solution-oriented approach.

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad said that the traffic is the main reason of smog with a contribution of more than 83 percent therefore the businesses should not be targeted.

He called for more flexible market closure hours saying that extended operational hours would not only boost trade activity but also accommodate consumer needs.



LAHORE: People are busy buying warm clothes in a Landa Bazaar at Haji Camp area, in the Provincial Capital.

# Iran tells UN nuclear chief it won't negotiate under 'intimidation'

## Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Thursday that Iran will not negotiate under "intimidation" as he held crunch talks with the UN nuclear chief weeks before US President-elect Donald Trump takes office.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi said achieving "results" in nuclear talks with Iran was vital to avoid a new conflict in the region already inflamed by Israel's operations against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

His visit comes just days after Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said Iran was "more exposed than ever to strikes on its nuclear facilities" giving Israel "the opportunity to achieve our most important goal".

Grossi said Iranian nuclear installations "should not be attacked" but Trump is expected to give Israel a far freer rein

after he takes office in January. The IAEA chief described his meeting with Araghchi as "indispensable" in a post on X.

Araghchi was Iran's chief negotiator in talks that led to a landmark 2015 nuclear deal with major powers, abandoned three years later by Trump.

Araghchi posted that their meeting was "important & straightforward". He said Iran was "willing to negotiate" based on the "national interest" and "inalienable rights," but was not "ready to negotiate under pressure and intimidation".

"We agreed to proceed with courage and goodwill. Iran has never left the negotiating table on its peaceful nuclear programme," he said. Grossi also met the head of Iran's atomic energy organisation, Mohammad Eslami.

Eslami told a joint news conference that Iran would take "immediate countermeasures" against

any sanctions from the IAEA's board of governors. "Any interventionist resolution in the nuclear affairs of Iran will definitely be met with immediate countermeasures," Eslami said.

Grossi's visit is his second to Tehran this year but his first since Trump's re-election.

During his first term in the White House from 2017 to 2021, Trump adopted a policy called "maximum pressure" which reimposed sweeping US economic sanctions that had been lifted under the 2015 deal.

In response, Iran started to gradually roll back its commitments under the deal, which barred it from enriching uranium to above 3.65 per cent.

The IAEA says Iran has significantly expanded its stocks of uranium enriched to 60pc, a level that has triggered international alarm as it is much closer to the 90pc level needed for a nuclear warhead.



Iran's head of the Atomic Energy Organisation Mohammad Eslami and the United Nations nuclear chief Rafael Grossi hold a joint press conference in Tehran.

# Human Rights Watch accuses Israel of war crimes in Gaza Strip

## Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: Human Rights Watch said in a report released Thursday that Israel has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip, including massive forced displacements that amount to ethnic cleansing.

A new report released by the New York-based rights group said people have been killed while evacuating under Israeli orders and in Israeli-designated humanitarian zones, where hundreds of thousands are crammed into squalid tent camps.

The report said the

widespread, deliberate demolition of homes and civilian infrastructure in Gaza—some of them to carve a new road bisecting the territory and establish a buffer zone along Israel's border—was likely to "permanently displace" many Palestinians.

"Such actions of the Israeli authorities amount to ethnic cleansing," Human Rights Watch said.

The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the report. Israel's blistering campaign in Gaza has killed over 43,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children.

# Russia launches drone, missile barrage on Kyiv

## Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Russia escalated its attacks on Kyiv early Wednesday, launching waves of drones and missiles in its first combined aerial assault on the capital in more than 70 days, authorities said. The attacks came as Washington and Seoul echoed warnings from Ukraine that North Korean troops had begun "engaging in combat operations" alongside Russian forces on the border between the warring countries.

Ukraine's air force said its units had downed four missiles and 37 drones launched by Russia.

# Man kills himself with blasts outside Brazil's Supreme Court after failing to get inside

## Monitoring Desk

SAO PAULO: A man who failed in an attempt to break into Brazil's Supreme Court killed himself in explosions outside the building Wednesday that forced justices and staff to evacuate, authorities said.

The two strong blasts were heard about 7:30 p.m. after the day's session finished and all the justices and staff left the building safely, Brazil's Supreme Court said in a statement.

Local firefighters confirmed one man died at the scene in the capital Brasilia.

# Six Israeli troops killed, deadly strikes in Lebanon

## Monitoring Desk

JERUSALEM: Israel suffered one of the deadliest days of its ground offensive against Hezbollah in Lebanon on Wednesday when six of its soldiers were killed in combat near the border.

The soldiers "fell during combat in southern Lebanon", the army said in a statement. Their deaths mean 47 Israeli troops have been killed in combat with Hezbollah since September 30, when Israel sent ground forces into Lebanon.

The army's announcement came after new Israeli

Defence Minister Israel Katz said there would be no easing up in the war against Hezbollah. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on social media platform X shared an image of the "Golani" Brigade symbol—the unit the soldiers killed belonged to—a green olive tree against a yellow background, with a broken heart emoji.

Since September 23, Israel has stepped up its bombing campaign in Lebanon, mainly targeting Hezbollah strongholds in south Beirut and the east and south of the country.



Displaced Palestinians make their way after fleeing the northern part of Gaza amid an Israeli military operation, in Gaza City.

# Republicans win House of Representatives, securing hold on US government

## Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: Republicans have won enough seats to control the US House, completing the party's sweep into power and securing their hold on US government alongside President-elect Donald Trump.

A House Republican victory in Arizona, alongside a win in slow-counting California earlier Wednesday, gave the GOP the 218 House victories that make up the majority. Republicans earlier gained control of the Senate from Democrats.

With hard-fought yet thin majorities, Republican leaders are envisioning a mandate to upend the federal government and swiftly implement Trump's vision

for the country.

The incoming president has promised to carry out the country's largest-ever deportation operation, extend tax breaks, punish his political enemies, seize control of the federal government's most powerful tools and reshape the US economy. The GOP election victories ensure that Congress will be onboard for that agenda, and Democrats will be almost powerless to check it.

When Trump was elected president in 2016, Republicans also swept Congress, but he still encountered Republican leaders resistant to his policy ideas, as well as a Supreme Court with a liberal majority. Not this time.

# Sara Sharif's father admits beating her to death with a cricket bat

## Monitoring Desk

LONDON: In a dramatic turn of events at the Old Bailey, Urfan Sharif confessed to the murder of his 10-year-old daughter, Sara Sharif, admitting in court that he "takes full responsibility" for her tragic death.

Sharif detailed the brutal treatment he inflicted upon the girl, acknowledging he beat her with a cricket bat and metal pole, leading to her death on Aug 8, 2023, days before her body was discovered in their Surrey home.

The confession came during cross-examination by Caroline Carberry KC, who asked him bluntly if he had killed her by beating. "Yes, she died because of me," Sharif responded. He revealed that he had struck Sara "severely" over several weeks.



A police officer checks the voter slip of a woman as she arrives to vote on the day of the parliamentary election, in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

# Nine tonnes of methamphetamine seized in Turkiye in two weeks

## Monitoring Desk

ANKARA: Turkish officials have seized nearly nine tonnes of methamphetamine, half of it at the Iranian border, in the last two weeks, the interior minister said on Thursday.

Ali Yerlikaya said 4.16 tonnes of methamphetamine were seized during this period, including 3.5 tonnes in Istanbul and the rest in other cities including Izmir in the west and Hakkari near the border with Iran and Iraq.

According to Turkish

customs, more than 4.5 tonnes were found at the beginning of November in three trucks crossing into Turkey from Iran. Turkish police confiscated nearly 22 tonnes of methamphetamine last year, a sharp increase over previous years, according to official figures.

Methamphetamine is a stimulant whose effects are two to five times more intense and long-lasting than amphetamine, with greater addictive potential, experts say.

# CIA official charged in leak of Israel plans to strike Iran: report

## Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: A CIA official has been charged in connection with a leak of classified US intelligence documents about Israel's plans for a retaliatory strike on Iran, The New York Times reported Wednesday.

Asif Rahman, who worked abroad for the Central Intelligence Agency, was arrested in Cambodia by the FBI and was to appear in a federal court in Guam on Thursday, the newspaper said. It said Rahman, who held a top secret security clearance, was indicted in Virginia last week with two counts of willful retention and transmission of national intelligence information.

# India's toxic smog hides Taj Mahal, delays flights

## Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Toxic smog obscured India's famed monument to love, the Taj Mahal, as well as Sikhism's holiest shrine, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, and delayed flights on Thursday, becoming too thick to see through in several places.

The city of Lahore in neighbouring Pakistan ranked as the world's most polluted in winter's annual scourge across the region today, worsened by dust, emissions, and smoke from fires burnt illegally in India's farming states of Punjab and Haryana.

In the city of Agra, the Taj Mahal was barely visible from the gardens in front of the 17th-century monument, while dense fog wreathed worshippers at the

Golden Temple in Punjab, television images showed. Delhi flights faced delays, with tracking website Flightradar24 showing 88% of departures and 54% of arrivals were delayed. Officials blamed high pollution, combined with humidity, becalmed winds and a drop in temperature for the smog, which cut visibility to 300 m (980 ft) at the city's international airport, which diverted flights in zero visibility on Wednesday.

More patients flocked to hospitals, particularly children. "There has been a sudden increase in children with allergies, cough and cold... and a rise in acute asthma attacks," Sahab Ram, a paediatrician in Punjab's Fazilka region.

# Suspect wanted by India arrested on gun charges in Canada: report

## Monitoring Desk

VANCOUVER: A man wanted for murder in India, who is also an alleged associate of a prominent Canadian Khalistan activist, has been arrested in Canada on gun charges, a local broadcaster said on Wednesday.

Arshdeep Singh Gill, 28, was one of two men arrested in late October in Milton, Ontario and charged with the illegal discharging of a firearm after showing up at a local hospital, CTV News said.

# Palestinians say north Gaza destruction is widespread as rights group warns some may never return

## Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: Palestinians displaced from northern Gaza said Israeli forces had inflicted widespread destruction on their home districts in their latest six-week-old offensive and a rights group raised concerns Israel might put some areas permanently off-limits.

Jabalia, one of the largest of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps, as well as the towns of Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun and nearby villages, were among the first targets of Israel's ground offensive in October 2023 after Hamas militants attacked Israel.

Tanks have gone in several more times in what Israel says are necessary operations against militants there who still

pose a threat. On Thursday, it said its troops had killed dozens of "terrorists" and found a large quantity of weapons.

Former construction contractor Abu Raed, who was displaced from Jabalia, said Israeli forces were blowing buildings up remotely after booby-trapping them or sending in robots.

"The destruction before Oct 5, 2024 was big, but what happened in the past month can't be described in words.

Most of the camp was destroyed this time," he told Reuters via chat app.

"I have friends and relatives in Beit Hanoun, there are hardly any building standing there, Beit Lahiya also," the 75-year-old said.

# Biden, Xi arrive in Peru ahead of face-to-face at Asia-Pacific summit

## Monitoring Desk

LIMA: US President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping arrive Thursday in Lima for an Asia-Pacific summit overshadowed by the prospect of a world embroiled in trade wars under Donald Trump.

Saturday's face-to-face will likely be the last meeting between the sitting leaders of the world's largest economies before Biden and Xi will likely "take stock of efforts to responsibly manage competition," a senior US administration official told reporters Wednesday ahead of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit.

APEC, created in 1989 with the goal of regional trade liberalization, brings together 21 economies that jointly represent about 60 percent of world GDP and over 40 percent of global commerce.

Xi and Biden will meet on the second and final day of the summit that will also bring together leaders and senior officials from Japan, South Korea, Canada, Australia and Indonesia.

The summit program was to focus on trade and investment for inclusive growth and innovation for its members' common good. But uncertainty over Trump's next moves now clouds the agenda—as it does for the COP29 climate talks under way in Azerbaijan, and a G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro next week. "All that... the APEC leaders and G20 leaders will be talking about is the one world leader who is not there—and that is Donald Trump," Victor Cha of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank said this week.

The summits will be "about one thing," he told reporters in Washington: "What to expect from the next Trump administration on trade, alliances."

# French weapons system found in Sudan is likely violation of UN arms embargo, says Amnesty

## Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: Armored vehicles manufactured by the United Arab Emirates and equipped with French defense systems have been captured by the Sudanese army during the civil war in Sudan, Amnesty International says. The rights group said in a report on Thursday it had identified the UAE-made armored personnel carriers (APCs) in various parts of Sudan, including the Darfur region, where they were used by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in its fight with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

It added that the presence of the military vehicles on the battlefield "likely constitutes a violation" of a United Nations arms embargo that prohibits the transfer of weapons to

Sudan. The civil war broke out in April 2023 after simmering tensions between the RSF and the Sudanese army escalated to intense fighting across the North African country, where rampant human rights violations were committed.

More than 20,000 people have been killed in the conflict, according to the U.N., while 11.6 million have been forcibly displaced, including 8.3 million people internally and 3.1 million people who fled to neighboring countries. Allies providing Sudan's warring parties with weapons are "enabling the slaughter," UN official says. Sudan's claim that the UAE has been supplying the RSF with weapons that prolonged the 18-month war with the army has been denied by the UAE.

# Sri Lankans vote with issues of welfare, economic reforms at stake

## Monitoring Desk

COLOMBO: Sri Lankans began voting on Thursday in a snap election to decide if the Indian Ocean island will give its new leftist president greater strength to help the poor as it recovers from a financial meltdown.

Just over 17 million Sri Lankans are eligible to elect lawmakers to the 225-member parliament for a five-year term. A record 690 political parties and independent groups are in the fray across 22 electoral districts.

"I think we are seeing the first signs of a positive political change in Sri Lanka after the president was elected and we should give him the chance to continue that change," said Umesh Perera, 32, who queued to vote in a Colombo suburb.

The president, Marxist-leaning Anura Kumara Dissanayake, 55, was elected in September but his National People's Power (NPP) coalition had just three of parliament's 225 seats, prompting him to dissolve it and seek a fresh mandate.

Voting was proceeding smoothly, a police spokesman said, after more than 7,000 officers fanned out to

more than 13,400 polling stations nationwide to keep the polls free and fair.

"The military is also on standby to assist the police but we do not expect any incidents," the spokesman, Nihal Thaldawa, added.

People trickled into temples, schools and other public buildings being used as polling stations soon after polls opened. Votes will be counted soon after polling closes on Thursday, with results set for Friday.

Analysts say Dissanayake's coalition is expected to draw significant support, while a victory for a rival could lead to a policy logjam the country cannot afford.

A political outsider in a country dominated by family parties for decades, Dissanayake backs policies to fight poverty, such as bigger welfare schemes, as well as battle graft.

Sri Lanka typically backs its president in general elections, especially if they are held in quick succession. The president wields executive power but Dissanayake still requires a parliamentary majority to appoint a fully-fledged cabinet and deliver on key election promises to cut taxes.

# Ben & Jerry's says parent Unilever silenced it over Gaza stance

## Monitoring Desk

LONDON: Ice cream brand Ben & Jerry's said in a lawsuit filed on Wednesday that parent company Unilever has silenced its attempts to express support for Palestinian refugees and threatened to dismantle its board and sue its members over the issue.

The lawsuit is the latest sign of the long-simmering tensions between Ben & Jerry's and consumer products maker Unilever.

A rift erupted between the two in 2021 after Ben & Jerry's said it would stop selling its products in the Israeli-occupied West Bank because it was inconsistent with its values, a move that led some investors to divest Unilever shares.

The ice cream maker

then sued Unilever for selling its business in Israel to its licensee there, which allowed marketing in the West Bank and Israel to continue. That lawsuit was settled in 2022.

In its new lawsuit, Ben & Jerry's says that Unilever has breached the terms of the 2022 settlement, which has remained confidential. As part of the agreement, however, Unilever is required to "respect and acknowledge the Ben & Jerry's independent board's primary responsibility over Ben & Jerry's social mission," according to the lawsuit.

"Ben & Jerry's has on four occasions attempted to publicly speak out in support of peace and human rights," according to the lawsuit.

# Iran activist kills himself after demanding release of prisoners

## Monitoring Desk

TEHRAN: Human rights campaigners on Thursday paid tribute to an Iranian activist who killed himself hours after warning he would do so if four inmates seen to be political prisoners were not freed.

Kianoosh Sanjari, an opponent of the Iranian clerical authorities, warned in a message on X late Wednesday that he would die by suicide if the release of the two men and two women did not take place. He then took his own life, according to multiple rights campaigners and organisations.



Sikh protesters attack an effigy of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi outside of the Consulate General of India, days after Canada expelled six Indian diplomats including the high commissioner, linking them to the murder of a Sikh separatist leader and alleging a broader effort to target Indian dissidents in Canada, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

# FO refutes reports of sending security team by China for protection of its citizens in Pak

**"We would not allow any effort to derail Pakistan-China strategic partnership," FO spokesperson asserts**

ISLAMABAD (Online): Foreign Office (FO) while refuting the reports of sending security team by China for the protection of its citizens has said such reports are part of propaganda to harm the friendship between the two countries. "fool proof security arrangements are being made for the safety of Chinese nationals. Dialogue continue to occur on the safety of Chinese nationals. The old standing relations between US and Pakistan are based on non interference in each other affairs, this was said by Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch during her weekly press briefing here Thursday. Pakistan will protect

Chinese nationals and institutions at every cost, she added. Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said this is an established fact that the terror groups receive support from India. She recalled that Pakistan arrested an Indian Naval Officer a few years back who was the mastermind of support for espionage and terror activities in Balochistan.

The spokesperson urged the Afghan authorities to take action against the terror groups and do not allow the use of their soil against Pakistan or any other neighboring country. She said Afghanistan should take Pakistan's repeated requests seriously and not test the patience of

Pakistani people. Responding to a question, the spokesperson said Pakistan will continue to work with China for the safety and security of Chinese nationals, projects and institutions in the country. She said Pakistan and China have a robust dialogue and cooperation on a range of issues including counter terrorism and security of Chinese nationals. She said this dialogue is based on mutual respect, mutually beneficial cooperation and respect for each other's sovereignty. As Iron brothers and strategic partners, the two countries have the resolve and capability to foil any attempts aimed at harming this relationship.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal chairing a meeting to review the progress and challenges of two major national projects: the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHPP) and the Diامر Bhasha Dam.

## Gilani calls for increased collaboration between Pak, Spain in diverse sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani Thursday called for increased collaboration between Pakistan and Spain in diverse sectors as the two countries share commonalities and both have a shared vision for peace and sustainable development.

The Chairman Senate expressed these views in a meeting with 4-member parliamentary delegation of the Spanish Senate said a news release.

Welcoming the delegation, the Chairman Senate termed the relations between Pakistan and Spain as historic, however, he observed that there is still a huge scope for further deep-

ening the mutual collaboration in diverse sectors.

The Chairman Senate recognized the longstanding diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Spain, rooted in mutual respect and shared values and emphasized that this visit marks a valuable opportunity to further deepen these bonds and explore avenues for productive collaboration.

He recalled his visit to Spain in 2010 as Prime Minister and said that productive dialogue with Spanish and EU officials regarding Pakistan's textile industry, led to the EU's special trade package to boost Pakistani textile exports.

He further mentioned the visit to WTO head-

quarters, and the fruitful discussions on expanding Pakistan access to international markets and strengthening trade relations, which aligned with Pakistan broader economic goals.

He emphasized that the EU trade concessions were a milestone, facilitated by support from Spain, which provided significant economic benefits to Pakistan's textile industry.

The Chairman Senate also highlighted importance of inter-parliamentary relations in strengthening bilateral ties. He commended the Spanish Senate for prioritizing diplomatic outreach with Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani exchanging views with members of the Parliamentary delegation of senate affairs committee of the kingdom of Spain at Parliament House.

## Provincial Ombudsman visits SKBZH, seeks report of absentee medical staff

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Provincial Ombudsman, Nazir Muhammad Baloch visited the Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Hospital here on Thursday. The Provincial Ombudsman went round of different sections of the Hospital and inspected the facilities for patients there. He also visited the booth of Balochistan health Card Programme and inquired about the health of patients treated in the hospital.

Also present on the occasion was Executive Director of the hospital, Dr Noorul Amin Zehri, who briefed the Ombudsman about overall functioning of the hospital.

The ombudsman also inspected different equipment and machinery available at the hospital besides seeking report about the cleanliness.

Meanwhile, he checked the attendance of hospital staff and paramedics. He also sought report of the absentee medical staff of the hospital.

## Two children killed in NW house blast

PESHAWAR (APP): At least two children were killed and their parents sustained injuries when the roof of a room collapsed after a blast inside a house in North Waziristan on Thursday morning. Local police said an apparent explosive material blast caused the roof of a room to cave in in Tabbi village of North Waziristan, killing two children. The father and mother of the children were also injured in the blast and shifted to hospital. Police said an investigation into the blast incident has been initiated to sort out.

## BPPRA's Council reaffirms commitment to sustainable procurement practices

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (BPPRA) hosted a pivotal

KPK PPR, and GB BPPRA also participated remotely.

The meeting focused on the implementation of

and Structured Training Programs: Building capacity through targeted training initiatives.

Development of Sustainable Procurement Policies: Establishing forward-thinking strategies to integrate sustainability into procurement processes.

Challenges in the Oversight Role of PPRAs: Identifying bottlenecks and seeking actionable solutions to strengthen oversight.

A key highlight of the meeting was the recognition of BPPRA's pioneering efforts in the e-procurement domain. PPRAs from across the country lauded BPPRA's achievements in improving the procurement regime and establishing itself as a leader in innovation and transparency. BPPRA was commended for its role as a trailblazer in e-procurement.



PPRA's Advisory Council Meeting at its headquarters here on Thursday.

Chaired by the Managing Director of BPPRA, Mr. Afzal Khoshti, the meeting brought together representatives from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Federal PPR, Punjab PPR, and AJK PPR. Sindh PPR,

the E-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System (E-PADS) across federal and provincial frameworks. Discussions highlighted several critical topics, including: Institutional Arrangement and Adequacy of Resources within PPRAs: Strategies to enhance capacity and efficiency. Professionalization



BAKU: Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam posing for a group photo with federal minister for finance, Muhammad Aurangzeb and representatives of Founder Acumen, Green Climate Fund and USAID in an event on Acumen's Climate Action Fund for Pakistan at Pakistan Pavilion COP29 Summit.

## Int'l community should honor its commitments regarding climate change: Tarar

BAKU (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Thursday called upon the international community to honor the commitments made in the Paris Agreement and on the occasions of COP27 and COP28.

"The international community should honor their commitments so that the lives and property of people could be protected by building climate resilient infrastructure," said the minister while talking to the media during his visit to the Pakistan's Pavilion at COP29 in Baku.

Flanked by Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam and a young climate activist, Zunaira, Atta Tarar said the climate change is the biggest threat

to the lives and property of the people in Pakistan and the government has been taking concerted measures to protect the people and culture from its affects.

The minister cited the recent flash floods due to heavy monsoon rains in Pakistan, and melting glaciers due to the global warming as an example. "The climate change is affecting our people, rendering their shelter less and damaging their crops and livestock," he added.

He said Pakistan has only been contributing 0.5 per cent to the carbon emissions, while there were other countries that had major contribution in this regard.

As regards the Pakistan's pavilion, he termed it vibrant which has been receiving people of international stature who

were being sensitized about the damage unleashed by the climate change on Pakistan, and also about the need for establishing the climate finance fund for the country.

To a query, he said every country should have climate finance strategy which would enable donor agencies and developed countries to fund the vulnerable countries as per the existing structure.

The Minister also introduced to the media the young climate activist from Balochistan, saying Zunaira is a voice of Balochistan.

He said Zunaira has been highlighting climate change effects on education in Balochistan. She is an accomplished individual who has contributed to policy paper of the United Nations.



QUETTA: Director National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) Lashkar Khan presiding over a meeting at QESCO Headquarters.

## Reservoirs of gas decreasing in Pakistan: Gas supply for Sindh and Balochistan decreased to 700 MMCFD: GM SSGC

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The General Manager Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC), Farooq Khan has stated that the total requirement of gas for Sindh and Balochistan is 1200 to 1250 MMCFD, however, we are getting supply of 700 MMCFD, this means there is a gap between demand and supply, which is increasing.

He said that the demand of gas is more and supply is less.

The General Manager SSGC was speaking to the media persons on launch of awareness campaign about the careful use of sui gas here outside the SSGC main office on Thursday.

Also present on the occasion were other senior officials and employees of

SSGC. The General Manager SSGC maintained that the reservoirs of gas are decreasing in the country. Due to this, the gas supply issue is mounting with every passing day, he added.

To a query, he mentioned that the sui gas load shedding is not observed by the SSGC, rather only load management is done.

He said that gas related mishaps are occurred due to the use of sub-standard pipes, heaters and compressors, so these must be avoided.

Referring the awareness campaign of SSGC, the GM said that it is aimed at making the general public aware about proper use of the gas and precautionary measures in this regard.

## SC seeks report from provinces regarding steps against pollution

ISLAMABAD (APP): A constitutional bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday sought reports from all provinces regarding measures against environmental pollution.

A six-member bench headed by Justice Amin ud Din Khan and comprising Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Nasir Ali Khan, Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan heard the case.

During the course of proceeding, Justice Mandokhail remarked that environmental pollution was not only an issue of Islamabad instead it is the problem of entire country.



QUETTA: Asghar Khan Achakzai, Dr. Ishaq Baloch, Ghulam Nabi Marri, Mabat Kaka and others sitting in protest camp of student organizations in front of Press Club.

## PAC expresses concerns on delays in completion of small dam projects

QUETTA (APP): The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Balochistan Assembly has expressed serious concern over delays in the completion of small dam projects across the province.

During a recent session chaired by Asghar Ali Tareen, committee members noted that the Irrigation Department had been assigned the construction of 100 small dams, originally scheduled for completion by 2020.

Despite work starting in 2017-18, only 11 dams have been finished, leading to significantly increased project costs and substantial losses to the national exchequer.

Members of the committee, including Rahmat Saleh Baloch of the National Party, Zabeth Ali of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, and Fazal Qadir Mandokhail,

also directed Irrigation Department officials to submit detailed reports on other major projects, such as the Kachhi Canal and other infrastructure initiatives.

Expressing concern over these prolonged delays, the committee members underscored the importance of completing these projects to support water management and agriculture in Balochistan.

Additionally, the committee scrutinized the Lasbela Industrial Estate Development Authority (LIEDA) for its outstanding dues to the Irrigation Department.

Despite charging industrial units in Hub Industrial City Rs250 per 1,000 gallons of water, LIEDA has only been paying Rs7 per 1,000 gallons to the Irrigation Department, a rate unchanged since 1994.

## Pak, Russia for enhanced coord. among regional countries for peaceful Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Russia on Thursday called for enhanced coordination among the regional countries for a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

The Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation on Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Kabulov paid a day long visit to Pakistan.

He called on Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch and later had detailed discussions with Additional Secretary (Afghanistan and West Asia), Ambassador Ahmad Naseem Warraich.

The two sides exchanged views on relations with Afghanistan and called for enhanced coordination among the regional countries for a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

## Diامر Bhasha Dam: Ahsan calls for immediate land transfer to WAPDA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday chaired a meeting to review the progress and challenges of two major national projects: the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHPP) and the Diامر Bhasha Dam.

The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary Planning Kamran Rehman Khan, Secretary Ministry of Water Resources, Chairman WAPDA, Member Infrastructure Waqas Anwer and other key stakeholders to discuss updates and next steps, a news release said.

The 969 MW Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project, located near Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, holds great importance for Pakistan's energy needs.

Since its start in 2018, it has produced over 20,030 million units of electricity.

However, recent structural problems in the

project's Head Race Tunnel (HRT) have led to temporary power stoppages.

To resolve these issues, an international panel of experts, including a prominent Pakistani geologist, was appointed to identify the causes and suggest solutions.

The experts recommended steps to fix blockages and structural damages inside the tunnels.

Minister Ahsan Iqbal directed the concerned authorities to expedite repair work and develop a detailed plan based on scientific studies that could be able to justify the costs spent on the projects. He stressed that the remedial work must provide a sustainable solution, ensuring long-term stability and value for the investment. The meeting also focused on the Diامر Bhasha Dam, a key project on the Indus River.

This dam will store water for irrigation, help manage floods, and generate 4,500 MW of electricity.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Privatisation and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan presides meeting of NHA.

## Zero tolerance for corruption: Aleem orders cleanup, 6-lane expansion for key motorways

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan on Thursday has adopted a zero-tolerance policy within the National Highway Authority (NHA), directing for taking strict and indiscriminate action against corrupt officers and officials. In this regard, the NHA Chairman has been given a one-week deadline to initiate necessary measures. Aleem Khan emphasized that the cleanup effort would tolerate no leniency or influence ('Sifarish'), stressing that only qualified, honest, and capable officers should occupy all positions, according to a press release.

During a high-level meeting of NHA here, Abdul Aleem Khan outlined a comprehensive plan to enhance the efficiency and capacity of Pakistan's motorway network, which includes increasing the Lahore, Sialkot, and Kharian-to-Islamabad Motorway to six lanes to accommodate growing traffic demands.

Aleem Khan further directed the NHA to work towards removing barriers on motorways and introducing electronic toll plazas to prevent lengthy queues.

Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that all highways and motorways should be connected to cameras and CCTV's so that every vehicle can be monitored.

In addition to these modernization efforts, the meeting addressed the construction of critical highway projects.



QUETTA: Sui Southern Gas Company holding an awareness and protection rally during winter.

## CM launches major road improvement project in Quetta

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, launched a major road improvement project to upgrade Quetta's infrastructure, ensuring smoother and safer travel for citizens.

With an investment of Rs. 225.438 million under the Communication Works, Physical Planning, and Housing Department, key roads across the city are being carpaced in multiple phases.

This initiative aims to bring modern, long-lasting improvements to Quetta's roadways, enhancing convenience and mobility for all.

## Budget of Rs. 1.5 bn allocated for provision of books in Govt. educational institutions

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chairman, Balochistan Text Book Board, Dr. Gulab Khan Khilji has stated that the budget of Rs. 1.5 billion has been allocated for provision of the books in the government educational institutions.

He said that the Director of Schools would ensure formulation of the mechanism of timely supply of the books in all districts of the province.

He said that the modern research based curriculum would be taught to all children of the province so that they may compete the students of Islamabad and Lahore.

He said that the educational reforms of the present government under leadership of the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti have been appreciated in other provinces of the country.

With this, Rs. 750 million were saved to the government kitty, he added.

The Chairman Text Book Board said that it is his endeavour to provide books timely in all government schools of the prov-