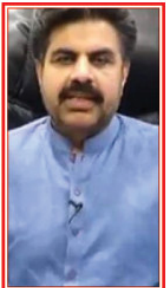


# REGIONAL TIMES

Uniting People Every Day



**K-Electric Has Overbilled 20 Billion Rupees In 10 Years: Nasir Shah**



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## PTI Accuses Establishment Of Exerting Pressure On State Institutions Following Delay In Iddat Ruling

ISLAMABAD: A delay in the ruling on the un-Islamic nikah case has apparently shattered Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) hopes of the early release of its founder Imran Khan from prison.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday, PTI Information Secretary Raouf Hasan said state institutions were trying to keep the party founder behind bars despite him securing bail in several cases.

"Establishment's pressure on state institutions is piling up," he stated while reacting to the delay in the announcement of a reserved verdict in the iddat case against the PTI founder and his wife Bushra Bibi by an Islamabad sessions court earlier today.

The Islamabad court had reserved the verdict last week on appeals filed by the PTI founder and his wife against their conviction in the iddat case.

However, District and Sessions Judge Shahrukh Arjumand sought his recusal from the case because it would not be appropriate for him to announce the verdict owing to repeated expression of no-confidence by Khawar Maneka, Bushra's ex-husband and the petitioner in the case.

In the presser today, the



PTI spokesperson said the party has been witnessing "murder of justice" for the last two years and expressed fears that the former prime minister would have to spend more time in jail.

Khan, the deposed premier, has been behind bars since August last year after he was convicted in the Toshakhana case.

Although, the PTI founder was granted bail in the case, he remains incarcerated owing to his conviction in other cases including un-Islamic marriage and eptier.

He said the PTI founder should have been released from jail after his sentence was suspended in the Toshakhana case.

"We fear that more cases will be lodged against the PTI founder soon," the party's spokesperson said, claiming that iddat and other cases against him were

## Supreme Court Rejects British Envoy's Comments On February General Elections

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has severely criticised British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott's recent speech targeting the South Asian nation's general elections in 2024, calling on the UK to learn from past mistakes and move on.

In a speech during the Asma Jahangir conference last month, Marriott while quoting British Foreign Secretary David Cameron raised concerns about Pakistan's February 8 elections.

"...not all parties were formally permitted to contest the elections and that legal processes were used to prevent some political leaders from participation, and to prevent the use of recognisable party symbols," Britain's top diplomat had said.

She then noted that Pakistan's government, civil society, and global players should work to nurture an "open society" and "vibrant democracy" as open societies are transparent.

The top court's registrar, in a letter to the envoy, said that her criticism of a certain political party being sidelined by stripping it of its symbol was unfounded as it did not follow the law.

The letter, drawing attention to the court's role, said elections were required to be held within 90 days of the completion of the tenure of the national and provincial assemblies.

However, they did not



take place because then-president Arif Alvi and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) were at odds regarding who was empowered to announce the election date.

"The matter was resolved in just 12 days by the Supreme Court, and general elections were held through-out Pakistan on 8 February 2024," the registrar said.

Previously, it mentioned, that many wanting to contest elections in Pakistan faced a lifetime ban because they were not considered honest and trustworthy (Sadiq and Ameen) by the Supreme Court.

However, a larger seven-member bench overruled the earlier decision, it said, holding that it did not conform to the Constitution and the law.

The registrar said that the law enacted by Parliament (Elections Act, 2017) requires democracy within political parties via the holding of periodic intra-party elections, to forestall autocracy or even dictatorship within them.

To ensure compliance with this democratic princi-

"It was gratifying that your Excellency had repeatedly stressed the importance of open societies' which you stated are necessary for vibrant democracies. You will be pleased to learn that the Supreme Court has recognised the right to information and vigorously applied it to itself, a copy of its decision is attached as D".

"Persisting in the violent undemocratic mistakes of the past condemns present and future generations, and perpetuates cycles of violence. Let us embrace truth, which sets us free," it added.

Raising some questions, the top court's letter read: "Should the overthrow of the elected democratic government of Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953, to capture Iranian oil, not be revealed after over seven decades of cover-up? Will this not prove therapeutic for the perpetrator and the victim? Will it not engender trust, possibly friendship, and peace?"

"Ceding to what it described as Jewish Zionist aspirations, the British government wrote to an individual, its own citizen, on 2 November 1917 convening its decision to establish a settler-colonial state. This decision was not voted upon by the people of the area who were impacted by it, nor even by your own. The British government, and not Parliament, unilaterally decided it. The Balfour Declaration became the foundation on which an ethnic state was established. Those who had always lived there were excluded from this ethnic state, contained in ghettos, humiliated, deprived, brutalised, maimed and killed."

Let us step back from the precipice of settler-ethnic superiority. Deaths of thousands of children and many thousands more innocents may unjustifiably come to define a people, which would be an abomination. Let us all stand up and be counted for equality, peace and humanity, the apex court stressed.

"Let us be honest and acknowledge past mistakes in the spirit of openness, advocated by your Excellency. And, jettison the unholy concept of ethnic superiority, and its concomitant humanity — an inferior humanity."

"The Supreme Court of Pakistan has acknowledged the mistakes made in its past, addressed them in detail, and taken steps to ensure that they are not repeated. Since the Government of His Majesty King Charles III has stressed the need for open societies and democracy, and offered criticism on the decisions of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, reciprocity would presumably be acceptable — This letter is written on instructions of the Chief Justice of Pakistan, who extends to you and the people of your country his yearning for openness and democracy, and his best regards," it concluded.—RT/Agency

## 28 Dead As Bus Overturns In Balochistan's Washuk

WASHUK: At least 28 people, including women and children, were killed after a passenger bus turned turtle and plunged into a ditch in Balochistan's Washuk district on Wednesday morning.

According to rescue and Levies officials, about 22 people sustained injuries in the accident and have been moved to the Civil Hospital in Basima.

The accident took place after the tyre of the passenger bus burst, said the rescue officials. The bus was travelling from Gwadar to Quetta.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his condolences over the incident, praying for the departed souls.

The premier also directed the authorities concerned to provide assistance to the injured.

Balochistan's Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti offered his condolences over the loss of lives in the horrific accident and prayed for those who were wounded.



In two similar incidents in May, 13 people belonging to the same family were killed and nine others got wounded as a truck plunged into a ditch in Punjab's Khushab district.

The accident occurred because of a brake failure on Panj Pir Manawan Road in Khushab, consequently, the truck driver lost control of the vehicle and it fell into the ditch.

The deceased of the ill-fated crash included women, too, and the family was going to Khushab.

Meanwhile, 20 people lost their lives while 21 sustained injuries after a passenger bus veered off a narrow mountain road and plummeted into a ravine in a remote area of Diamer district, Gilgit Baltistan.

The mishap took place at the Yashokhal area on the Karakoram Highway in Diamer early Friday morning at around 5:30am, according to police. The bus was on its way from Rawalpindi to Gilgit. Meanwhile, the police said there were at least 38 passengers on board.—RT/Agency

## Petrol Expected To Decrease By Rs5 In Upcoming Review

ISLAMABAD: Petrol and diesel prices are expected to decline by up to Rs5 per litre in the upcoming fortnightly review, sources told media on Wednesday. The Petroleum Division sources said on Wednesday that the per litre price of petrol is likely to go down by Rs5 while diesel is expected to be slashed by Rs4 per litre. However, they said the next two days are important regarding any change in the fuel prices as the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) will forward its summary to the Finance Division on May 31. The final decision on the petroleum products prices will be made following the Ministry of Finance's consultation with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. If approved, this will be the third consecutive



reduction in fuel prices. Earlier this month, the federal government had approved a massive cut of Rs15.39 per litre in the petrol price and the price of diesel was reduced by Rs788 per litre. Currently, petrol is available at Rs273.10 per litre while diesel is being sold at Rs274.08 per litre. The prices of petroleum products are revised every 15 days in Pakistan adjusting them to the trend of global oil prices and the rupee's exchange rate to the dollar. The Pakistani rupee has held steady recently. About 85% of Pakistan's oil needs are imported, and the country has been struggling with a balance of payments problem and skyrocketing inflation, which was recorded at 17.3% year-on-year in April.—RT/Agency

## Imran Challenges Punjab Cabinet's Decision On New Cases In LHC

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan petitioned the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday, challenging the Punjab cabinet's decision to register additional cases against him and other PTI lawmakers.

The former prime minister's petition, filed through prominent party counsel Sardar Latif Khan Khosa, argued that the cases are "unlawful and unconstitutional," asserting that he and his party members are being falsely accused. On May 24, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's cabinet approved the initiation of 'fresh legal action' against Imran and other party leaders for their purported involvement in crafting a 'narrative of hate' against state institutions, especially the army. The petition stated that PTI Maryam's cabinet approved a request from the home secretary to register new cases



against PTI members. Imran, through his counsel, requested certified copies of agenda item 11 from the May 24 cabinet meeting, along with the minutes and recommendations. However, he has not received the requested information. In his petition, Imran stated that numerous cases against him stemmed from events on May 9, when he was arrested at the Islamabad High Court (IHC), leading to widespread unrest and damage in various cities, including Lahore's Corps Commander House. He emphasised that approximately 10,000 PTI workers and nearly all party leaders were detained, with many still imprisoned a year later. In response to these detentions, Imran filed a writ petition in the LHC seeking a declaration that the charges against him in multiple FIRs are illegal and beyond jurisdiction. The court admitted the petition on July 7 and ordered on July 14 that no coercive action could be taken against Imran in cases where he is not named until further hearings.—RT/Agency

## International Consensus Wanes As Russia Hints At Recognizing Taliban

ISLAMABAD: When Kabul fell to the Afghan Taliban in August 2021 without firing a single shot, there was a near-international consensus among the big powers as well as regional players on the future of Afghanistan.

All major powers, including the US, China, Russia, and regional players such as Pakistan, Iran, and others, agreed the Taliban had to fulfil certain conditions before their de facto government was recognised. Those conditions included forming an inclusive government, respecting women's and human rights, and not allowing Afghan soil to be used again by terrorist groups. Pakistan was one of only three countries that recognised the Taliban's first rule from 1996 to 2001, but this time it aligned with the international consensus on the question of recognition.

The understanding



among the major players and stakeholders remained in place for a good two years before the international consensus started falling apart. The first sign of rupture came in March when China accepted the full-time ambassador appointed by the Taliban regime. Though Beijing never officially recognised the Taliban government, its move to accept a full-time ambassador was seen as tacit recognition. Now, another major power and stake-

## Farooq Naik Calls For Withdrawal Of Amendments In NAB Law

ISLAMABAD: People's Party leader Farooq H. Naik has demanded withdrawal of recent amendments in the NAB law made by an ordinance, media reported on Wednesday.

He called the NAB (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 a draconian law.

He said the PDM had made three amendments in the NAB law. "Now this new ordinance has come to force, which was not taken before the parliament. This practice should not be followed," he stressed.

He said more than 14 days' remand period negates the law. "Why the officer involved in registering fake cases should not be convicted," he questioned while com-

menting on the amended NAB law.

"While the NAB accused getting 14-14 years sentences from courts," he said.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) can now detain the individuals accused in cases under the anti-graft watchdog for 40 days after acting President Yousaf Raza Gilani signed the NAB (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 into law.

The new ordinance has extended the period of remand accused in NAB cases from 14 days to 40 days. Moreover, the sentence duration for the officer convicted for framing cases based on ill will, has been reduced to two years from five years.—RT/Agency

## PTI Lawyers Accused Of Assaulting Khawar Maneka

ISLAMABAD: In an unpleasant turn of events, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawyers Wednesday attacked former first lady Bushra Bibi's ex-husband Khawar Maneka in the premises of the court as he appeared for a hearing of the un-Islamic nikah case in a district and sessions court in Islamabad.

During the hearing of appeals filed by Bushra her husband and PTI founder Imran Khan against conviction in the iddat case, Judge Shahrukh Arjumand went into his chamber without announcing the verdict.

Following the development, PTI lawyers hurried into the courtroom which prompted Maneka's lawyers to escort him out. However, while being escorted out, a PTI lawyer then attacked Maneka within the



court premises after which he fell to the ground.

The court, on May 23, reserved the verdict on the appeals which was to be announced today.

Maneka, in January, had moved the court challenging Khan and Bushra Bibi's marriage and terming their nikah as fraudulent, stressing that the marriage was solemnised during her iddat (the time a woman goes into isolation after a divorce or her husband's death).

The trial court then handed down a seven-year sentence to the couple in February and imposed a fine of Rs500,000 each on the duo. In its 51-page detailed verdict, the court maintained that the record proves that both of the accused, Khan and Bushra, were in relation before the 2018 "fraudulent" nikah.—RT/Agency

# THE HEARTLAND



## SUC's District President Zawar Sabir Hussain Wadho visits different Talukas of Kamber-Shahdadkot

SHAHADKOT: Zawar Sabir Hussain Wadho, the District President of the Shia Ulama Council (SUC) Kamber-Shahdadkot, undertook a significant tour across various Talukas within the district on Wednesday.

In a noteworthy development, Wadho presided over a pivotal meeting at the revered Jamia Mosque Imam Hassan Mujtaba (AS) in Qubo Saeed Khan. The gathering saw the participation of eminent leaders representing diverse units within the region.

During his address, Zawar Sabir Hussain Wadho extended his gratitude to the party's leaders and dedicated workers for their unwavering commitment in fortifying the SUC's presence across urban landscapes. He reiterated his



solemn commitment towards advocating for the nation's rights and contributing to its developmental endeavors, firmly under the sagacious guidance of Allama Syed Saif Ali Naqvi. The occasion witnessed the esteemed presence of notable figures including Syed Ghazi Shah, Mashooq Brohi, Mukhtiar Ali Solangi, Khadim Hussain Jagirani, Zulfiqar Ali Mirjat, among others, who further enriched the discourse with their invaluable insights.

Zawar Sabir Hussain Wadho's visit serves as a testament to the SUC's unwavering dedication towards fostering communal harmony, societal welfare, and progressive development within the Kamber-Shahdadkot district.—RT

## Indus Youths organize a heatstroke camp in Tando Jam



By Irfan Khushk

TANDO JAM: In response to the scorching temperatures gripping Tando Jam, the Indus Youth Organization has taken proactive measures by setting up a heatstroke camp along the Hyderabad-Mirpurkhas Road near Naka Stop. Led by Abdullah Veesar, the organization has pledged to extend support to the community amidst the prevailing heatwave.

Acknowledging the urgency of the situation, Abdullah Veesar emphasized the organization's commitment to serving the people during this challenging period. The heatstroke camp aims to provide relief and assistance to individuals and travelers facing the brunt of the intense heat.

At the inauguration of the camp, citizens and passengers of buses and coaches were offered cold drinking water, ensuring hydration and comfort amid rising temperatures. The initiative underscores the collective efforts of the Indus Youth Organization to safeguard the well-being of the community during adverse weather conditions.

As the heatwave continues to pose threats to public health, the establishment of such camps serves as a beacon of hope, demonstrating solidarity and resilience in the face of adversity. The Indus Youth Organization remains dedicated to its mission of serving the people and mitigating the impact of extreme weather events on vulnerable populations.

## Khairpur Journalists' Alliance demands justice and security for Sindh's journalists

By Sajjad Chang

KHAIRPUR: The Khairpur Journalists' Alliance convened the All Sindh Journalists Convention at the District Council Hall in Khairpur on Wednesday, drawing a significant turnout of journalists from across the province.

The convention, led by the leaders of the Khairpur Journalists' Alliance, served as a platform to address pressing issues facing journalists in Sindh, particularly the need for justice and security.

Several prominent figures, including Shoukat Noonari, Zulfiqar Khaskheli, and Anjad Khan Mahesar of JSQM, addressed the convention, expressing concern over the threats faced by journalists in Sindh. The demand for justice and security resonated throughout the gathering, with attendees vowing to continue their journalistic duties without fear or bias to help the people of Sindh informed about their surroundings.

In a bold declaration, participants announced plans for a long march from Khairpur to Mirpur Mathelo to demand



the arrest of those responsible for the murder of Shaheed Nasrullah Gadani. Naimat Khuroo emphasized the unity among journalists in Sindh, emphasizing the collective struggle for their rights and safety.

Several prominent figures, including Shoukat Noonari, Zulfiqar Khaskheli, and Anjad Khan Mahesar of JSQM, addressed the convention, expressing concern over the threats faced by journalists in Sindh. The demand for justice and security resonated throughout the gathering, with attendees vowing to continue their journalistic duties without fear or bias to help the people of Sindh informed about their surroundings.

awards were presented to the family members of deceased and martyred journalists, honoring their sacrifices in the pursuit of truth and justice. Among those recognized were Shaheed Azz Memon, Shaheed Ashiq Mangi, and Shaheed Makhdoom Rafiq, among others. The convention served as a powerful testament to the resilience and determination of journalists in Sindh, who remain steadfast in their commitment to upholding the principles of journalism despite facing numerous challenges. As calls for justice and security reverberate, the convention underscored the unwavering resolve of journalists to continue their vital work for the betterment of society.

## DC Dr. Syed Muhammad Ali distributes Zakat cheques amongst Ghotki's poor and needy

By Shad Mahar

GHOTKI: Deputy Commissioner Ghotki, Dr. Syed Muhammad Ali, demonstrated compassion and solidarity with the underprivileged by distributing Zakat cheques to deserving women at his office on Wednesday. Over 50 deserving women in the district were recipients of cheques aimed at facilitating their permanent rehabilitation and providing dowries.

In a gesture of empathy and support, Dr. Syed Muhammad Ali personally handed over the cheques to the beneficiaries, reaffirming the commitment of the district administration to serve the marginalized segments of society. Stressing the importance of transparency and accountability, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the Chairman of the Zakat Committee to ensure the judicious distribution of Zakat funds to deserving individuals across the district.



Recognizing the vital role of grassroots committees in addressing the needs of the impoverished, Dr. Syed Muhammad Ali underscored the necessity of activating committees at the Union Council level. By enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of these committees, the administration aims to alleviate the hardships faced by the less fortunate.

Chairman Wasatullah Khan provided updates on the distribution process, highlighting that in accordance with the Sindh government's policy, 28 women received 5,000 rupees each under the permanent rehabilitation program, while 35 deserving young women were given 30,000 rupees each for dowries. He assured that this initiative would continue in adherence to established policies, ensuring sustained support for those in need.

The distribution of Zakat cheques reflects the administration's commitment to promoting social welfare and inclusivity, providing tangible assistance to vulnerable segments of the community. Through collaborative efforts and transparent governance, the district aims to uplift the underprivileged and foster a more equitable and just society.

## Government clerks rally for their demands in Larkana

By M Rafique

LARKANA: In response to a provincial call by APCA, a peaceful protest was taken out by APCA District Larkana against rising inflation, lawlessness, and political interference in institutions. The protestors demanded a 200% increase in salaries, a medical allowance of 15,000, and a 200% increase in house rent allowance to alleviate the anxiety among employees. They also called for the provision of time scale promotions, group insurance, and the implementation of online salary payments for local government employees.

The protest was led by Rafiq Ahmed Jatoti, Muhammad Farooq Jالباني, Mubeen Burro, Zamir Chandio, and Muhammad Bux Kunbar. Clerks and employees from various units of APCA District Larkana wore black armbands and carried black flags, gathering in large numbers for a peaceful protest rally. The rally traversed various streets of the city and ended outside the Larkana Press Club, where the protestors staged a sit-in. The clerks and employees chanted slogans in favor of the APCA's charter

demands submitted to the Sindh Government. They also staged a pen-down strike, leaving their offices to protest on the streets. The leaders welcomed Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's statement supporting the employees' rights and appealed to him to ensure that acceptance of their demands. They warned that if their demands were not met, APCA would hold strikes in front of press clubs across Sindh on June 3, 2024. If the demands remain unaddressed, further protests would be staged on June 6-7 in front of the Parliament House in Islamabad and on June 10 outside the Chief Minister's House in Karachi. The peaceful protest included APCA leaders Nasrullah Jagirani, Muhammad Sharif Umri, Sher Khan Shaikh, Abdul Rasool Channa, Munawar Ali Mairi, Hazar Khan Jatoti, Abdul Nabi Dayo, Azhar Ali Tunio, Liaquat Ali Mangi, Liaquat Ali Kalhor, Attaullah Meerjat, Basheer Ahmed Bhatti, Muhammad Ilyas Abro, Shams Ali Jatoti, Jawad Hussain Laghari, Zahid Channa, Liaquat Ali Bhatti, Nazir Aheer, Bashir Chandio, Zavar Riaz Hussain Siyal and others.

## Retired government teachers protest for their rights in Tando Allahyar

By Afaq Khanzada

TANDO ALLAHYAR: The Government Retired Teachers' Association Sindh (GRTA) staged a spirited protest outside the Tando Allahyar Press Club, led by district leaders Muhammad Nazim Qaimkhani and General Secretary Jalaluddin Dars. Despite sweltering temperatures, the protesters fervently voiced their demands, brandishing banners and placards to highlight their grievances.

In a poignant display of determination, retirees, some as old as sixty, stood united to demand the prompt disbursement of their Group Insurance Benevolent Fund. Despite a directive from the Sindh High Court instructing the provincial government to release the funds, retirees have yet to receive their rightful dues.

Expressing their frustration, protesters called for the



restoration of pensions for teachers' children and the provision of health cards to retired employees. These demands, they argue, are essential for safeguarding the well-being and dignity of retired educators who have dedicated their lives to public service.

The protesters underscored the urgency of their demands and warned of escalating their agitation if their grievances remain unaddressed. They emphasized the need for immediate action by the authorities to ensure the fulfillment of retirees' rights and vowed to intensify their protest if their demands are not met.

The impassioned demonstration by the GRTA reflects the deep-seated frustrations and challenges faced by retired employees in accessing their entitled benefits. As retirees continue to advocate for their rights, their unwavering resolve serves as a reminder of the importance of upholding dignity and justice for all members of society, regardless of age or status.

## Newborn found dead in Tando Adam

By Mumtaz Ali

TANDO ADAM: Shock and dismay gripped residents of Tando Adam as the lifeless body of an infant was discovered abandoned in a street on Wednesday. Disturbed by the tragic sight, locals immediately attempted to summon police assistance by dialing the emergency helpline 15. However, their efforts were thwarted as the line remained incessantly busy, impeding their ability to seek prompt intervention.

Despite the distressing discovery, the corpse of the infant remained unattended, awaiting proper handling and investigation. As of the time of reporting, no action had been taken to transport the deceased infant to the hospital for examination and further procedures.

The incident underscores the urgent need for an efficient and responsive emergency response system to address such distressing situations promptly. The community's inability to promptly reach law enforcement authorities highlights a concerning gap in emergency services accessibility, potentially compromising timely intervention in critical scenarios. As investigations into the circumstances surrounding the infant's death unfold, authorities are urged to address the systemic challenges hindering effective emergency response mechanisms. The tragic discovery serves as a poignant reminder of the vulnerability of the most marginalized members of society and the collective responsibility to ensure their protection and well-being.

## JSQM Umerkot demands justice for Shaheed journalist Nasrullah Gadani

By MM Faissal

KUNRI: The JSQM (Jeay Sindh Quami Mahaz) District Umerkot staged a protest demanding the immediate arrest of the perpetrators responsible for the tragic killing of journalist Nasrullah Gadani in Kunri. Led by Ramzan Khaskheli, organizer of JSQM District Umerkot, dozens of workers rallied outside the press club in Kunri to voice their grievances.

Nasrullah Gadani, a courageous journalist, was brutally martyred in Mirpur Mathelo, sparking outrage and calls for justice across the region. Addressing the gathering, speakers highlighted Gadani's unwavering commitment to truth and his dedication to advocating for the rights of the people of Sindh. "Shaheed Nasrullah Gadani epitomized the spirit of fearless journalism. He fearlessly pursued truth and stood as a beacon of hope for the people of Sindh," remarked one of the speakers



during the protest. "His untimely demise is not just a loss to journalism but to the entire province of Sindh."

The protesters urged the authorities to expedite the process of apprehending the culprits responsible for Gadani's murder, emphasizing the need for swift and impartial justice. They warned that failure to deliver justice would prompt further escalation of their protests. The demand for justice echoed throughout the demonstration, with participants ex-

pressing solidarity with the bereaved family and calling for accountability. The JSQM reaffirmed its commitment to fighting for the rights of journalists and upholding the principles of freedom of expression. As the quest for justice continues, the protest served as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by journalists in the pursuit of truth and justice. The JSQM vowed to persist in its efforts until justice is served for Nasrullah Gadani and his family.

## Jacobabad in the grip of a severe heatwave

By Hashim Brohi

JACOBABAD: Jacobabad is currently experiencing extreme heat and an ongoing electricity crisis, which has disrupted daily life and led to the temporary relocation of hundreds of families to cooler areas, particularly Quetta. The migration, primarily involving families from rural areas, is a seasonal

occurrence, but this year the number of people relocating has significantly increased due to the intensifying heat.

Many families have shared their struggles due to the unbearable heat and power outages, which have brought their businesses to a standstill and labor difficult. Those who have relocated to Quetta, where

the weather is not as hot, they can work comfortably and their families can live in peace.

The relocation typically lasts for three to four months until the weather changes, after which they return. This pattern highlights the severe impact of the heat and electricity crisis on the livelihoods and daily lives of Jacobabad's residents.

## FIA Larkana summons varsity officials over irregularities

By Saleem Soomro

LARKANA: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Circle in Larkana has issued summonses to several individuals affiliated with Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University (SMBBMU), Chanda Medical College (CMC), and Ghulam Muhammad Mahar Medical College (GMMMC) Sukkur for an investigation scheduled on May 30th. In a letter addressed to the Registrar of SMBBMU, the FIA summoned six individuals, including five senior and one

junior clerk associated with CMC, Asifa Dental College, and GMMMC Sukkur, as well as a former principal. The officers summoned by the FIA include Dr. Nadeem Baloch, Deputy Director of Pharmacy at SMBBMU, Dr. Om Kash, Head of the Pathology Department, Waheed Zaman, Administrator of Chanda Medical College, Professor Muhammad Rafiq Memon, former Principal of Ghulam Muhammad Mahar Medical College Sukkur, Prof. Dr. Qaim Din Shaikh of Asifa Dental College, and Junior Clerk Riaz Ahmed Hulo. Additionally, a day prior to this, Registrar Dr. Saifur Shaikh of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Medical University was also summoned by the FIA for the same investigation. The summonses indicate a significant development in ongoing investigations, although the nature and specifics of the investigation were not disclosed in the statement. It is anticipated that the summoned officials will cooperate with the FIA in the investigation process to ensure transparency and accountability within the medical institutions under scrutiny.

# METRO KARACHI



## Murad Bans Transfers/Postings And New Recruitments In Local Councils

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has imposed an immediate ban on transfer/postings and new hiring in local councils to enhance transparency and efficiency.

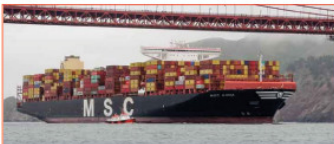
At a meeting attended by Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani, Minister of Planning & Development Nasir Shah, and other officials, Shah emphasized the need to streamline the workings of local councils. He requested details of employee transfers/postings in the last five years to assess proper appointments.

Additionally, Shah directed Minister Ghani to implement the SAP system for salary payments to prevent ghost employee salaries and instructed councils to out-



source municipal functions if facing staff shortages. Shah also urged an increase in the local bodies' budget and directed Minister Ghani to propose a raise for inclusion in the next financial year's budget. Furthermore, he requested a proposal for the formation of the Provincial Finance Commission.—RT

## World's Largest Cargo Ship Docks At Karachi Port



KARACHI: The world's largest cargo ship, MSC Anna, has reached Karachi port on Wednesday, marking a significant milestone in the port's history.

The colossal vessel, which arrived from India's Port Mundra, anchored at Karachi port.

According to the port administration, MSC Anna boasts impressive dimensions, measuring 400 meters in length and having a capacity of carrying 19,638 containers.

The ship is carrying 19,638 containers, and after fulfilling the regulation process, the unloading of containers from the ship will start, KPT spokesperson said. The ship will unload its cargo and is scheduled to depart after a one-day stopover.

The port administration has organised an arrival ceremony for MSC Anna. This event will celebrate the ship's arrival and underscore the importance of Karachi port in international maritime trade.—RT/Agency

## Residents of Pipri and Shah Town protest against excessive load shedding

By Asif Qureshi



KARACHI: Residents of Pipri and Shah Town held a protest in front of the K-Electric office against unannounced load shedding and increased bills, staging a sit-in at the main gate. They chanted slogans against the K-Electric administration, complaining that unannounced load shedding and higher bills have made life unbearable. According to details, residents from the Malir areas of Pipri and Shah Town protested and staged a sit-in in front of the K-Electric office at Joggi Morr Bin Qasim. The protesters raised slogans against the K-Electric administration. On this occasion, UC Pipri Chairman Azmatullah Lund, Vice Chairman Ali Muhammad Gabol, Councilors Salahuddin Gabol, Javed Lala, Dost Muhammad Pathan, Rasool Bakhsh Tagar, and many other local residents participated. The protesters stated that electricity is unavailable for 16 to 18 hours in the mentioned areas. Despite this, cutting off electricity during the summer season is sheer cruelty. They have complained to the K-Electric administration about the issue of heavy bills. Instead, they should unannounced load shedding and hefty bills, but no one is willing to listen. That is why they are protesting in front of the K-Electric Bin Qasim office. They demanded an end to unannounced load shedding and the provision of electricity, along with stopping the issuance of hefty bills. Instead, they should send fair bills so that poor people can pay for the electricity they actually use. If their demands are not met, they will expand the scope of their protest.

## Bakheet Ateeq AlRemeithi and Sindh Minister Zulfiqar Ali Shah discuss bilateral tourism and cultural activities between the UAE and Sindh

KARACHI: Provincial Minister of Tourism, Culture, Antiquities, and Archives Sindh, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, visited the UAE Consulate and met with Consul General H.E. Bakheet Ateeq AlRemeithi to discuss bilateral tourism and cultural activities. They also talked about promoting tourism through public-private partnerships. Muhammad Isa Al Tahiri, CEO of U Bank, was present at the meeting.



UAE Consul General H.E. Bakheet Ateeq AlRemeithi highlighted the significant social, historical, and cultural ties between the UAE and Pakistan, emphasizing the need to enhance tourism and cultural collaboration to strengthen bilateral relations. He stated that joint efforts will be made to attract investment through public-private partnerships, along with easing visa procedures for tourists.



During the meeting, Provincial Minister Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah discussed the recent changes in cultural relations between the two countries. He expressed Pakistan's eagerness to strengthen cultural and public relations with the UAE and proposed joint cultural activities to solidify these ties. Shah noted the numerous in-

vestment opportunities and favorable environment in Sindh, suggesting that both countries would benefit from increasing the export of handicrafts. Shah also mentioned the significant role of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the founder of the People's Party, in the es-

## FIA Arrests Passenger Traveling On Fake Documents

KARACHI: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Immigration wing has arrested a passenger at Karachi Airport for traveling on fake documents, media reported.

As per details, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) spokesperson said that a passenger, Samir Rehman, who arrived on flight OD135, was arrested for possessing a fake Malaysian visa on his pas-

port.

The initial investigation revealed that the accused had obtained the visa from an agent in Kuala Lumpur for a sum of 6,000 Malaysian Ringgit. The accused, a resident of Karachi, has been shifted to the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Karachi for further legal action and further investigation is underway.—RT/Agency

## CTD Arrests Eight Suspects In Operations Across Sindh

KARACHI: The Sindh Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), in collaboration with Pakistan Rangers Sindh, the Special Branch and local police conducted targeted search operations across various cities in the province, media reported.

According to a CTD spokesperson on Wednesday, data of 435 individuals was reviewed using the Talash app during these operations. Additionally, around 200 vehicles were inspected and searched.

The operations resulted in

the detention of eight suspects linked to criminal activities, who were subsequently handed over to the local police for further action.

Senior officers from the CTD, Rangers, Special Branch, and local police actively participated in these coordinated efforts.

Earlier, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) Sindh and intelligence agencies arrested a wanted Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan terrorist (TTP) in Karachi.—RT/Agency

## Sardar Manzoor Kakar expresses grief over loss of precious lives in Washuk incident

KARACHI: Sardar Manzoor Ahmed Khan Kakar, President of the Al Kakar Tribes' Federation and Secretary General of the Balochistan Youth Front, expressed deep sorrow over the tragic bus accident that occurred in Washuk. In his condolence statement, he expressed profound grief over the loss of more than 27 lives, including Professor Dr. Naimatullah, Dr. Amir Zaid, and medical student Chiragh Baloch, as

well as women and children. He extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, stating that he shares in their sorrow. Sardar Manzoor Kakar criticized the government's incompetence, pointing out that the road remains a single lane, leading to frequent accidents and the loss of precious lives. He demanded that the road be doubled and that better medical facilities be provided to the injured.—RT

## Country is on the path of progress under President Asif Ali Zardari's leadership: Ayaz Ali Siyal

By Asif Qureshi

KARACHI: PPP leader, Ayaz Ali Siyal, has stated that the PPP can genuinely govern the country effectively. Under the presidency of Asif Ali Zardari, the country is on a path of progress and the economy is improving. He expressed these views while talking to the media at the District Press Club Malir. Ayaz Ali Siyal mentioned that, for the first time in Karachi's history, PPP's supporters have been elected as Mayor and Deputy Mayor, which has caused unrest among their opponents. A comprehensive strategy has been developed to provide basic amenities to the people of Karachi, and it is now the duty of these elected repre-



sentatives to serve the public better and solve their problems. On this occasion, PPP leaders Ayaz Ali Siyal and Hanif Siyal also extended their condolences to senior journalist Raja Baloch over the sad demise of his brother-in-law and to Sajjad Chhajo on the passing of his brother. The President of the District Press Club Malir, Hanif Soomro, presented the guest with a traditional 'Lungi' as a gift. Present at the event were Press Club General Secretary Syed Rahim Shah, UC Pipri Vice Chairman Ali Muhammad Gabol, Jamil Chandio, Ayaz Bhagat and other journalists.

## ADB Announces \$180 Million Project For Sindh's Environmental Restoration

KARACHI: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has unveiled a \$180 million initiative aimed at rejuvenating forests, drains, and roads in Sindh's coastal regions.



In collaboration with the Sindh Ministry of Irrigation and Food, the project seeks to safeguard coastal areas, generate employment opportunities, and foster sustainable economic growth. During a meeting with the ADB delegation, led by Team Leader Dr. David Freulich, Sindh's Irrigation and Food Minister emphasized the importance of environmental protection and agricultural development.

The project will prioritize the restoration of drains, roads, and forests in Thatta, Sujawal, and Badin, areas severely impacted by recent rains and floods. Project activities include a comprehensive survey, design, and mapping of the Indus Delta. Additionally, proposals to enhance the capacity of key drainage systems like Kero Gondro and Shakoor Drain were discussed.

Funded by the ADB's \$180 million loan, the initiative is poised to deliver significant socio-economic and environmental benefits to the region.—RT/Agency

## PTI Karachi Continues Hunger Strike Outside KPC



KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Karachi maintained their symbolic hunger strike outside the Karachi Press Club for the third consecutive day, demanding the immediate release of their leader, Imran Khan.

Led by PTI Karachi Division President Raja Azhar and General Secretary Arsalan Khalid, the protest drew participation from party figures and workers, including Dr. Masroor Sial and Rashid Abbasi.

Azhar reiterated their demands for Imran Khan's release and restoration of their perceived "stolen mandate," criticizing police actions during the strike's onset and vowing to expand protests nationwide.

He accused the current government of economic mismanagement and condemned violence against citizens, highlighting recent journalist murders.

Azhar also denounced the May 9 incident as a premeditated conspiracy, demanding accountability and emphasizing PTI's commitment to peaceful protest amidst rising street crime in Karachi.—RT/Agency

## Sindh CM Prioritizes Teachers' Training And Data Bank For Students

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed the School Education Department to strengthen teacher training, establish a comprehensive data bank of students, and recruit teachers for the upcoming session.



Presiding over a meeting at CM House, Shah emphasized improving the educational environment and ensuring well-trained teachers to produce a well-educated new generation. He stated, "We are committed to improving the educational atmosphere in the classroom and ensuring teachers are properly trained."

Education Minister Syed Sardar Shah briefed the CM on the status of 43,027 schools, noting that 19,808 were damaged by recent floods, yet classes continue in makeshift arrangements.

The CM assured that reconstruction would be supported by donor agencies and the federal government in the next financial year.

The CM directed the Education Department to maintain a detailed data record of teachers from appointment to promotions. He also stressed developing a data bank for students from pre-primary to higher secondary levels based on their B-form for accurate tracking and to address dropout rates effectively.

Shah highlighted the importance of accurate data for school-going children and out-of-school children to incentivize education. The meeting revealed 30,000 vacant teaching positions, and the CM instructed the department to provide recommendations for filling these positions in the next budget.

Additionally, the CM ordered regular inspections and upgrades of science labs, libraries, and workshops in high schools, extending these facilities to up-graded primary and elementary schools.—RT

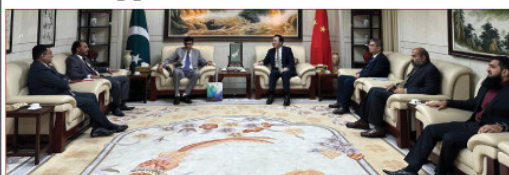
## ACE Intensifies Investigation Into Massive Irregularities In KWSC

KARACHI: The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) has stepped up its investigation following the revelations about massive corruption in the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC), it is learnt.

The ACE has reportedly called for the submission of record pertaining to the KWSC's Anti-Theft Cell as well as its expenses and activities.

It has also sought the personal record of KWSC officers Muhammad Dilwar, Zaheer Sheikh and Mirza Obaidur Rehman.

## Former Sindh Minister Noman Saigal and FPCCI members discuss bilateral trade opportunities with Chinese CG



KARACHI: Muhammad Noman Saigal, former Sindh Minister for Health, Environment, and Information Technology, and Convener of the Standing Committee of Horticulture FPCCI, met with the Honourable Chinese Consul General Mr. Yang Yundong and Mr. Li Yong, Commer-

cial Counsellor in Karachi, on Friday, May 24, 2024. The meeting included notable members of the delegation such as Mr. Jameel Peerzi of Omega Kitchen Aluminium Ware, Mr. Ghulam Nabi of GN Trading General Mr. Chang Yundong Agricultural Product Exporter, and Mr. Fazal Abbas

Jack Wala of Akbar Ali and Sons, an importer of construction equipment in Pakistan, along with his son. Various issues were discussed during the meeting, focusing on enhancing bilateral trade relations and exploring opportunities for collaboration in different sectors.—RT

## Envoy Urges Diversification Of Pakistani Exports To Oman



KARACHI: Consul General of Oman, Eng. Sami Abdullah Al Khanjari, emphasized the need for Pakistan to diversify its exports to Oman during a visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI). Al Khanjari highlighted Oman's reliance on Pakistani rice and urged for the expansion of trade in other agricultural products like onions, potatoes, lentils, and mangoes.

He encouraged bilateral collaborations to enhance trade between the two countries, noting the potential need for Pakistan to diversify its exports to Oman. He also advised Karachi's business community to address trade obstacles and stressed the importance of regular expos to foster better understanding and explore trade opportunities. President of KCCI, Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh, welcomed the initiative, emphasizing the need to reduce trade barriers and promote SMEs for economic integration between Pakistan and Oman. He highlighted the potential for energy sector collaboration and urged for investments in Pakistan's coastal ecosystem to further bilateral economic development.—RT

# EDITORIAL

Founders: Late Kazi Saeed Akbar, Late Kazi Jawad Akbar, Editor-in-Chief and Publisher: Kazi Sajjad Akbar

Thursday, May 30, 2024



## The removal of harassment and corruption will lead to more tax compliance

The recent move to unblock over 7,000 SIM cards following the submission of income tax returns is a welcome development in Pakistan's ongoing efforts to broaden its tax base. This innovative approach by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has demonstrated that out-of-the-box solutions can yield tangible results, as evidenced by the filing of 7,167 new tax returns. However, while this initial success is commendable, the journey to bring a significant number of citizens into the tax net is far from over.

The FBR's strategy of leveraging mobile connectivity to enforce tax compliance is clever, yet it also underscores the need for deeper reforms

within our tax system. The current cumbersome tax filing process must be streamlined to encourage voluntary compliance. One significant barrier



is the pervasive fear of harassment by tax authorities, which deters many from filing returns. To address this, the introduction of a fixed tax scheme with a no-questions-asked policy could be a game-changer. Such a scheme would reassure taxpayers that they will not be subjected to undue scrutiny or corrupt practices, potentially increasing compliance rates. Moreover,

the government must lead by example. If we are to instill a culture of tax compliance, it should be mandatory for every parliamentarian, officeholder, bureaucrat, and even non-civilians to file their taxes annually, including the rejection of zero returns when applicable. This would not only set a precedent but also build public trust in the tax system. And while blocking SIM cards has yielded positive results, sustainable progress will require comprehensive reforms. Simplifying the tax process and ensuring that all public officials lead by example are crucial steps. Only then can we hope to significantly increase tax compliance and secure a fair contribution from all citizens towards national development.



## DC Naveed Rehman Larik visits Civil Hospital Umerkot



**By Muhammad Bachal**

UMERKOT: Deputy Commissioner Umerkot, Naveed Rehman Larik, led a comprehensive inspection at the Civil Hospital Umerkot, underscoring the administration's commitment to ensuring quality healthcare services for the community. Accompanied by Assistant Commissioner Umerkot - Rajab - Ali Setho, District Health Officer Dr. Lashman Das, Tehsil Dar Health Officer Dr. Isar Das, and General Physician Dr. Madan Malhi, DC Larik visited various departments of the hospital to assess facilities and patient care standards.

The delegation toured key areas of the hospital, including the Heatstroke Ward, X-ray unit, Laboratory, Emergency Ward, Maternity Ward, General Ward, and Main Outpatient Department (OPD). Engaging with medical staff on duty, they gathered insights into patient conditions and the operational status of medical services. In an effort to maintain high standards of cleanliness and hygiene, Deputy Commissioner Larik instructed the Medical Superintendent (MS) to prioritize sanitation efforts and ensure the presence of adequate medical personnel at all times. Attention was also directed towards re-

## Joint death anniversaries of former Federal Secretary Gul Muhammad Rind's parents observed in Sakrand



**By Zeeshan Soomro**

SAKRAND: The solemn occasion of the joint death anniversary of the esteemed parents of former Federal Secretary and founder Chairman of Hamdard Organization, Gul Muhammad Rind, was observed with reverence and heartfelt remembrance in Sakrand.

Floral wreaths were respectfully laid upon the graves of the departed, followed by prayers, recitations of Naats, and charitable endeavors to honor their memory. Reflecting on the significance of the day, Gul Muhammad Rind shared poignant reflections, highlighting the remarkable coincidence of both his mother and father passing away on the same date, May 28, albeit with a 25-year gap between their departures.

Expressing his profound gratitude, Rind conveyed that his upbringing, education, and the affection bestowed upon him by his parents have shaped his character and contributed to his achievements. He acknowledged the profound impact their guidance had on his life's journey, emphasizing the invaluable lessons learned from their exemplary lives.

During the commemoration, Qazi Javed Sanai, Chairman of Hamdard Support Program, paid heartfelt tribute to the late Haji Ghulam Nabi Rind and his esteemed wife, Gul Bibi, lauding their legacy of kindness, generosity, and service to humanity.

The event witnessed the presence of distinguished personalities from the region, including District Administrator Nabi Bux Rind, Ghulam Sarwar Rind, Faheem Khan Pahi, Nazir Hussain Rind, Abdul Ghani Magasi, Kamal Rind, Iqbal Rind, Mir Hassan Rind, Abdul Ghani Rahimoon, and numerous other notable figures, who joined in paying homage to the departed souls and offering condolences to the bereaved family.

The commemoration served as a poignant reminder of the enduring influence of parental love and guidance, inspiring all present to cherish and uphold the values imparted by their elders.

## National pride and Pakistan's tallest person Naseer Soomro's health continues to improve



**By Munawar Chandio**

JAMSHORO: Naseer Soomro, renowned as one of the tallest individuals in the world, has been battling respiratory distress for a considerable period. Undergoing treatment at Dar-ul-Sehat Hospital in Gulistan Johar, Karachi, Soomro's health condition has shown signs of improvement, thanks to the dedicated medical care provided by the hospital staff.

The #SIEHS1122 Ambulance was deployed to transport Naseer Soomro from his residence in PIA Township for his routine checkup at Dar-ul-Sehat Hospital. Following thorough examination and consultation with consultants, it has been decided to transfer him back to his hometown in Shikarpur district for further care and recuperation.

Acknowledging the critical role played by Dar-ul-Sehat Hospital in his treatment, Naseer Soomro expressed gratitude for the medical attention and support he received during his stay. The hospital's efforts have contributed significantly to his recovery process.

As part of the transition back to his hometown, the #SIEHS1122 Ambulance has been arranged to facilitate Soomro's safe transfer. During the journey from Karachi to Shikarpur, the #SIEHS1122 Hyderabad Regional Team extended a warm welcome to Soomro and inquired about his health condition in Jamshoro.

Naseer Soomro's journey exemplifies the collaborative efforts of healthcare professionals and emergency re-

## Awami Tehreek slams Sindh's poor law and order situation



**By Javed Laghari**

DADU: As preparations are underway for the sixth anniversary gathering commemorating the esteemed leader of Awami Tehreek, Rasool Bux Palijo, the party's central leadership has intensified its call for the restoration of the rule of law in Sindh. Lal Jarwar, President of Awami Tehreek central, alongside Noor Ahmed Katiar, Central General Secretary, District Dadu President Advocate Najeeb Mahesdar, and Riaz Pechhuo, visited Dadu Press Club to rally support from political, social, and literary figures, as well as journalists, for the upcoming event.

Addressing the gathering, Lal Jarwar voiced grave concerns over the escalating lawlessness in Sindh, attributing it to a calculated conspiracy aimed at replacing the rule of law with a regime of banditry. He lamented the deteriorating security situation, particularly in Sukkur and Larkana divisions, which he described as becoming safe havens for criminal elements.

Jarwar did not mince words in his criticism of the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP), accusing its feudal lords and chiefs of col-

## Help demanded for ailing Nauabad journalist Rahim Shah



**By Hakim Baloch**

JAM NAWAZ ALI: The journalist community in Sindh is rallying together to support veteran journalist Rahim Shah, who is currently battling a severe illness. Rahim Shah, known for his unwavering dedication to journalism, has served tirelessly for many years, notably contributing to the daily Daily Ibrat newspaper in the small town of Nauabad.

Presently, Rahim Shah is undergoing treatment in Hyderabad, where he is bravely fighting for his life against his ailment. Recognizing his invaluable contributions to the field of journalism and his critical condition, various journalistic organizations and members of the journalist community in Sindh, alongside concerned citizens, have come forward to appeal for assistance.

The collective plea has been directed towards the Sindh Government, the Provincial Minister of Information, and elected representatives from the area, including MNA Shazia Atta Marri, Senator Qurat-ul-Ain Marri, and MPA Jam Shabbir Ali Khan. The appeal urges authorities to facilitate Rahim Shah's treatment at a reputable hospital, with the expenses to be borne by the government, and to extend financial assistance to alleviate the burden on him and his family during this challenging time.

The outpouring of support for Rahim Shah underscores the profound respect and admiration he has earned throughout his illustrious career in journalism. As efforts continue to secure the necessary assistance for his medical treatment and care, the solidarity of the journalist community and the public serves as a beacon of hope and compassion in Rahim Shah's fight against illness.

## Terminated employees of Kario Ghanwar Oil Field demand justice



**By Abdul Sattar**

TANDO MUHAMMAD KHAN: The residents of Pir Ali Shah village in the Tando Ghulam Hyder area, including Ali Asghar Shah, Muhammad Yousef Shah, and Ahmed Ali Shah, have raised their voices against injustice as they demand justice for their wrongful dismissal from the Kario Ghanwar Oil Field four years ago.

Narrating their ordeal to journalists, the aggrieved workers revealed that they were unjustly terminated from their positions at the oil field by the contractor, Noor Muhammad Bhatti, leaving them without employment. Despite seeking assistance from various local leaders, their pleas for justice fell on deaf ears, as the contractor's influence thwarted their efforts.

Faced with no other recourse, they turned to the legal system, where the Civil Judge issued notices to Noor Muhammad Bhatti. However, Bhatti has failed to appear in any hearings, further prolonging their quest for justice.

Adding to their woes, the sacked workers alleged that Noor Muhammad Bhatti has initiated retaliatory actions against them, subjecting them to constant harassment and intimidation in an attempt to drive them out of the area. They highlighted instances of unwarranted attacks on their homes by Bhatti and his associates, including Khair Muhammad Laghari, Aziz Kalhero, and Hassan Mahar. Expressing concern for their safety and property, the workers fear that Bhatti's ulterior motive is to seize their 17 acres of agricultural land. In light of these threats, they are appealing to the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Tando Muhammad Khan, the Station House Officer (SHO) Tando Ghulam Hyder, and the Civil Judge to intervene, provide them with protection, and take swift action against Noor Muhammad Bhatti, including his arrest.

The plight of these sacked workers highlights the pressing need for accountability and protection of labor rights, as they continue to pursue justice against powerful interests.

# SPORTS



## Bellingham voted La Liga Player of the Season



MADRID: Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham has been voted La Liga's Player of the Season after the 20-year-old played a pivotal role in leading the club to their 36th league title.

Bellingham edged out team mate Vinicius Jr, Antoine Griezmann (Atletico Madrid), Artem Dovybyk (Girona) and Robert Lewandowski (Barcelona) in votes cast by fans, club captains and a panel of experts.

He scored 19 goals and had six assists in 28 league games this season, and tallied 23 goals and 12 assists in all competitions for the club. Bellingham, who could not attend Tuesday's ceremony in Sardinia as he was preparing for the Champions League final at Wembley against his former club Borussia Dortmund, said he was honoured to have received the award.

"I would like to dedicate it to my team mates, the coaching staff and, most importantly, to the fans of the best club in the world," he said in a message.

"It's a pleasure every time I play for this team. Hala Madrid!"

The Englishman also won the 2022-23 Bundesliga Player of the Season playing for Dortmund before moving to Real for a fee of around 103 million Euros (\$111.71 million).

Earlier on Tuesday, Dortmund sporting director Sebastian Kehl was full of praise for Bellingham. "I know how strong Jude is and I know his personality very much, so he's an amazing player, an amazing character and of course, he will do everything to win that final," he said. —Agency

## Shaheen Afridi jumps multiple spots in latest ICC T20I rankings

LAHORE: Pakistan's star pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi has jumped multiple places in the latest T20 player rankings issued by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Shaheen has improved three places and is now ranked as the 12th-best T20 bowler in the world with a rating of 631.

The list is topped by England's Adil Rashid followed by Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga and India's Axar Patel in second and third places, respectively.

No other Pakistani bowler has made it to the top 20 T20 bowlers as Haris Rauf is



ranked 25 with a rating of 574.

The list also includes Afghanistan's Rashid Khan who is ranked seventh after jumping two places.

However, in terms of top

Meanwhile, India's Suryakumar Yadav is ranked as the number one T20 batter followed by England's Phil Salt in second place.

England's captain Jos Buttler is ranked seventh in the T20 batters list after moving up one place. The all-rounder category is topped by Sri Lanka's Hasaranga with a rating of 228 followed by Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan who fell one place and is ranked second.

Pakistan's Imad Wasim has jumped four places to be ranked as the joint 12th-best T20 all-rounder along with teammate Saadab Khan who has dropped one spot.—Agency

## Lionel Messi to welcome former PSG mate in Inter Miami



Argentine star Lionel Messi is set to be reunited with his former Paris Saint-Germain teammate.

According to reports from ESPN, the Spanish Football club set to see the end of its contract with Benfica Maria has reached an agreement on finances with Lionel Messi Inter Miami.

Angel Di Maria played with his country fellow in the 2021-2022 season before leaving for Juventus. In the following season, Messi also left the Paris-based club after three years and commenced his new life chapter in the Major League Soccer in the last year.

Though the agreement is still not in the papers, there is still uncertainty over the reaching of an agreement to be officially part of Miami in the upcoming June of January 2025.

Tata Martino, who is also an Argentinian football coach of the Herons, earlier ruled out the midfielder's move to join the MLS, which is also an Argentinian football club.

The Essentially Sports quoted Martino as saying: "It would not be feasible to hire any type of player, especially regarding the conditions that could come."

Apart from the 36-year-old, Nacho Fernandez is also being considered for Inter Miami, currently centre-back at Real Madrid.

Di Maria, as per reports, has finalised that Benfica will be his last European club, and will seek retirement from the Argentine national team after this year's Copa America.—Agency

## Djokovic shrugs off troubles in winning start at French Open

PARIS: Defending champion Novak Djokovic shrugged off his recent troubles to sweep his way to the 93rd career win at the French Open, extending his run of first round Roland Garros victories to a perfect 20.



Djokovic, chasing a fourth title in Paris and record 25th Grand Slam triumph, came through against 142nd-ranked French wildcard Pierre-Hugues Herbert 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), 6-4.

The 37-year-old, who saw career-long rival and 14-time champion Rafael Nadal exit the tournament on Monday, had arrived under a cloud.

For the first time since 2018, he is without a title and has yet to reach a final this season.

He has also endured recent misfortunes being accidentally hit on the head by a metal water bottle in Rome

around the grounds.

World number two Sabalenka fired 27 winners past the 100th-ranked Andreeva and broke serve five times in a dominant display.

"I'm trying to do well on clay, it is tough conditions here but I enjoy playing here and I'm just trying to bring my best tennis every time - whatever the surface," said Sabalenka.

The Belarusian has made at least the last-four at her past six Grand Slams and is expected to be Iga Swiatek's toughest rival in the Polo's bid for a fourth French Open title.

There was better luck for Andreeva's younger sister Mirra, who went to the fourth round as a 16-year-old in 2023.

She swept past Emina Bektas of the United States in straight sets. Jennifer Lopez 'distracting' herself from Ben Affleck marital crisis.—Agency

## 'IPL form is irrelevant': Usman Khawaja on Glenn Maxwell's recent struggles



SYDNEY: Australian Test cricketer Usman Khawaja has extended his support for teammate Glenn Maxwell, expressing optimism that the all-rounder will showcase his form in the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup, despite his recent performance in the IPL.

Maxwell represented Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the recently concluded IPL, where he managed a meagre 52 runs in nine innings.

However, Khawaja backed Maxwell, calling IPL form 'irrelevant.' He expressed hope that the all-rounder will bounce back during the mega-event.

"The IPL form is absolutely irrelevant. Maxy's proven himself time and time again. Any player who's performed over a long period of time understands that you can't perform well every time you go out there," Khawaja said while speaking to the West Australian.

The experienced opener acknowledged the high-risk nature of T20 cricket, where

## LA-bound Giroud's leadership will be missed, says Milan captain

PERTH: AC Milan captain Davide Calabria said on Wednesday that the departure of Olivier Giroud to Major League Soccer will leave a leadership hole at the seven-time European champions.

Veteran French striker Giroud will play his final match for Milan in a post-season friendly against Rome in Perth on Friday in front of an expected crowd of 50,000 at the Optus Stadium.



The 37-year-old is heading to Los Angeles FC next season and will bow out of international football for France after the Euros, which begin in Germany next month.

Giroud was given an emotional farewell by the Milan fans as he signed off from Serie A with a goal in a 3-3 draw with Salernitana on Saturday.

American midfielder Christian Pulisic and winger Rafael Leao are missing from Milan's tour squad but Giroud has made the long journey to Australia.

"He's an important leader on-and-off the field, particularly off the field," Calabria told reporters in Perth on Wednesday.

Serie A triumph, the only trophy he won at the Italian club.

Giroud is not the only departure at Milan, who are looking for a new coach after coming second in Serie A but failing to mount a serious challenge to fierce rivals Inter Milan.

Stefano Pioli, who had one year remaining on his contract, left at the end of the Serie A campaign after four-and-a-half years in charge.

Reports said he will be replaced by Lille coach Paulo Fonseca, who has also been linked with Marseille.

"I don't know anything when asked by AFP if he expected Fonseca to take the reins.—Agency

## Saudi Arabia team to arrive on June 5 for FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers



ISLAMABAD: The Saudi Arabian football team is set to arrive in Islamabad on June 5 for the FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers match against Pakistan.

According to details, the team would travel from Riyadh to Islamabad on a chartered flight.

The highly anticipated match between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia was scheduled to take place on June 6 here at the Jinnah Football Stadium of Pakistan Sports Complex.

This would be Pakistan's final home match in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers Round 2.

Pakistan would play their last away match on June 11 against hosts Tajikistan. Both teams were expected to give their best performance in the game.

The FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers have generated immense excitement among football enthusiasts who would be waiting to witness the encounter at the Jinnah Stadium.—Agency

## Face of the Day



**Name: Daniyal Ahmed**  
**Location: Karachi**  
**About me: Taking selfies is my thing!**

Please email us your photo for our Model Watch and Kids' Corner section at regionaltimes10@gmail.com

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Jennifer Lopez 'distracting' herself from marital crisis with Big Ben Affleck



Jennifer Lopez is trying to stay occupied in order to distract herself from marital woes with Ben Affleck.

The 54-year-old singer spent Mother's Day apart from her husband despite living in the same city of Los Angeles.

As her latest film Atlas debuted on Memorial Day weekend and topped the Netflix charts in 55 countries, a source now tells PEOPLE that she's keeping herself busy on purpose.

"They're still living separately. She's back in L.A. for tour rehearsals. She seems okay. She's very focused on work," an insider spoke of her sci-fi movie, which attracted 28.2 million views.

Earlier in May, sources privy to In Touch claimed that Ben has "moved out" of their home.

"The writing is on the wall - it's over. They're headed for a divorce - and for once, [Ben's] not to blame!" they had claimed.

"Ben already moved out and they'll likely have to sell the dream house they spent two years searching for. They'll never stop loving each other, but she can't control him, and he can't change her. There's no way it could have lasted," the insider added further.

## Don't be desensitized to the horror endured by Palestinians: Bella Hadid



If any celebrity can be counted upon to go the extra mile to stand in solidarity with Palestinians, it is supermodel Bella Hadid. Ever since October 7, Hadid has risked her career by calling out the ongoing atrocities and being committed in the Gaza Strip, and has always openly embraced the Palestinian roots she has inherited through her father.

Having recently made a powerful statement at Cannes by boasting a keffiyeh-inspired dress, Bella took to her Instagram to pen a heartfelt, educational note in support of her fellow Palestinians.

"Palestine on my mind, in my blood and on my heart. Always," captioned the supermodel. "While I still have to go to work, even through this horror, to wear our culture makes me a proud Palestinian, and I want the world to continue to see Palestine, wherever we go."

Shedding light on those in the industry who have also supported the same causes as her, Hadid highlighted designers who have worked consistently over the years to promote Palestinian art, history, and culture. Keeping in mind the Israeli air strikes in Rafah that have resulted in yet more civilian deaths, Hadid also pointed her followers towards her Instagram stories so they could appreciate the full spectrum of the deadly humanitarian crisis engulfing the region.

"If you don't know what's happening right now in Gaza, watch my stories (and find other accounts leading to Palestinians on the ground) and please educate yourself on the ongoing occupation and genocide that is happening RIGHT NOW in Gaza," pleaded Hadid in her caption. "Do not be desensitized to the horror that is being endured by the Palestinian people." As part of her relentless campaign to educate her followers about her heritage, Hadid illustrated how the keffiyeh has come to symbolise Palestinian advocacy.

REGIONAL TIMES

# THE HEARTLAND



## Naukot family protests against police apathy after abduction of a 15-year-old girl

By Mushahid Noorio

NAUKOT: Tensions escalate in Naukot as the family of a 15-year-old girl, allegedly abducted a week ago, accuses the police of inaction and extortion, prompting a fervent protest against the perceived indifference of law enforcement authorities.

The distressing ordeal began when Shamooin Kohli, a young girl, was reportedly kidnapped from the Sonara Otaq area, falling under the jurisdiction of Kaloi Police near Naukot. Despite the family's immediate report to the authorities, including the detention of one suspect, Kanji Kohli, by Kaloi Police, Shamooin remains missing.

In a harrowing turn of events, the family alleges that instead of earnestly pursuing Shamooin's recovery, the police are now demanding a bribe for their assistance. Krishan Kohli and Ganga Bai, parents of the abducted girl, expressed their anguish during a protest, highlighting the ordeal their family has en-



Shamooin Kohli, a young girl, was reportedly kidnapped from the Sonara Otaq area, falling under the jurisdiction of Kaloi Police near Naukot.

dured since Shamooin's disappearance. According to the family, the police detained Kanji Kohli initially but subsequently relocated him to an undisclosed location. They accuse the Kaloi Police of exploiting their vulnerability, demanding money purportedly for fuel and other expenses associated with their search operation.

Amidst their anguish, the family decries the deteriorating law and order situation in Thar, expressing profound concern for Shamooin's safety in the hands of influential kidnappers. They implore the Senior Superintendent of Po-

lice (SSP) Tharparkar to ensure Shamooin's safe return within 24 hours, failing which they threaten to stage a sit-in protest on the Naukot-Mithi road, disrupting traffic as a last resort to amplify their grievances.

The family's desperate plea for justice underscores the broader challenges faced by marginalized communities in accessing effective law enforcement and protection of their rights. As their anguish reverberates through the streets of Naukot, the urgency to address their plight and ensure Shamooin's safe return becomes increasingly apparent.

## Livestock trader shot and injured in Jacobabad robbery

By Hashim Brohi

JACOBABAD: Jacobabad's law and order situation has deteriorated significantly, with incidents of robbery, theft, and dacoity becoming commonplace, leading citizens to feel increasingly unsafe. On Wednesday, within the jurisdiction of Civil Lines Police Station and just a few steps away from the Madagar Police Center, five unidentified armed individuals robbed livestock trader Jaffar Khan Talani and Amanullah Pathan, a resident

of Peshawar, at gunpoint, stealing 2.4 million rupees. The armed men injured Jaffar Khan Talani when he resisted and then fled easily. The injured trader was taken to Civil Hospital, where his condition is reported to be out of danger. Jaffar Talani recounted that they were heading to the livestock market after withdrawing money from the bank when five unknown armed individuals intercepted them on Shikarpur Road, attempted to snatch the money, and shot him during his resistance before fleeing.

## Government clerks rally for acceptance of their demands in Nawabshah

By Samad Ayaz

NAWABSHAH: Clerks in Nawabshah took to the streets in a fervent protest rally organized under the banner of the All Pakistan Clerks Association (APCA) Sindh, pressing for the acceptance of their long-standing demands. Led by prominent leaders including Akbar Zardari, Arz Muhammad Chaudhry, Amir Bakhs



Clerks in Nawabshah took to the streets in a fervent protest rally organized under the banner of the All Pakistan Clerks Association (APCA) Sindh, pressing for the acceptance of their long-standing demands.

Burdi, Allah Bachayo Qureshi, Dhani Bakhs Malah, and Badal Shar, among others, the rally commenced from HM Khoja and traversed designated routes before culminating at the Nawabshah Press Club. Amidst passionate chants and spirited slogans, the leaders articulated a comprehensive charter of demands, advocating for substantial improvements in the working conditions and welfare benefits of clerical staff. Chief among their demands was a 200% increase in salaries, along with a call to elevate medical allowances to 15,000 PKR and house rent

allowances to 30,000 PKR. Furthermore, the clerks urged for the regularization of temporary employees, a boost in conveyance allowances to 15,000 PKR, the provision of time scales for non-promotional posts, and the confirmation of accounts clerks in grade 15. They also stressed the need for a 100% increase in pensions and underscored the importance of directing salaries and pensions of local government employees in Sindh through the treasury.

Warning of escalated action if their demands remain unaddressed, the leaders declared their intention to stage a sit-in protest outside the Karachi Press Club and the Chief Minister's House on June 10. Emphasizing the urgency of their plight, they urged authorities to heed their legitimate grievances and take prompt measures to alleviate the hardships faced by clerical staff across the province. The rally serves as a powerful testament to the resolve and unity of clerks in Nawabshah, as they continue their struggle for equitable treatment and fair representation in the workforce. With their sights set on meaningful reform, the clerks remain steadfast in their pursuit of justice and dignity in the workplace.

## DC Muhammad Yousif Shaikh fixes rates of rotis in Matiari

By Sajjad Ali Abbasi

MATIARI: Taking a proactive stance to address consumer concerns, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Yousif Shaikh has issued an official notification to fix prices for Chapati, Tandoori Chapati, and Tandoori Naan in the district. As per the notification, the following prices have been established: 80 grams of Chapati for Rs 10, 120 grams of Tandoori bread for Rs 15, and 150 grams of Tandoori Naan for Rs 20.

Any deviation from these fixed rates will result in strict penalties for violators, as emphasized in the notification. In an effort to ensure compliance with these price regulations, the public is urged to report instances of overcharging by hotel owners and bread sellers to the authorities. Legal action will be taken against offenders.

under the Sindh Consumer Protection Act 2014.

Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Yousif Shaikh has directed Assistant Commissioners of Matiari, Hala, and Saeeadabad, as well as Mukhtarkars, Bureau of Supply, and Price Wing officials, to diligently enforce these price controls throughout the district.

It is noteworthy that despite recent reductions in wheat prices, the prices of bread in the district have remained unchanged. Therefore, these price controls have been implemented to safeguard the interests of consumers and ensure fair pricing practices are upheld.

The decisive action taken by Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Yousif Shaikh reflects the administration's commitment to protecting the rights of consumers and promoting transparency and accountability in pricing within the district.

## Two students faint during HSC exams in DhoroNaro due to extreme heat

By M Ismail Khilji

PITHORO: Amidst the ongoing Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations for the eleventh and twelfth grades in DhoroNaro, a distressing incident occurred as two students fainted due to the scorching heatwave gripping the region. The combination of extreme heat and prolonged power outages, particularly during exam hours, exacerbated the challenging conditions faced by students.

The incident occurred at the DhoroNaro exam center, where eleventh-grade students Rabia and Alisha Abid Hussain succumbed to the oppressive heat and lack of electricity. The absence of adequate cooling facilities exacerbated the discomfort experienced by students during the examination process.

Responding swiftly to the situation, a team from the DhoroNaro Rural Health Center rushed to the exam center to provide immediate medical assistance to the affected students.

medical personnel. On-site necessary treatment to Rabia and Alisha, who had fainted due to the intense heat and humidity prevailing in the area.

A doctor present at the scene confirmed that both girls received prompt medical attention and were treated for fainting episodes induced by the harsh weather conditions. The incident underscores the urgent need for adequate measures to ensure the well-being of students during examination periods, especially amidst challenging environmental circumstances such as heatwaves.

Authorities have been urged to take proactive steps to address the impact of heatwaves on students and facilities to mitigate the risk of such incidents recurring in the future. As students continue to navigate the academic challenges posed by examinations, ensuring their safety and comfort remains paramount.

## Hand grenade lobbed at ASP's office in Larkana

By Saleem Soomro

LARKANA: Panic gripped the city of Larkana as an unidentified assailant hurled a hand grenade outside the ASP office within the jurisdiction of Shaheed Abdul Malik Bhutto Police Station. The sudden explosion sent shockwaves through the area, prompting swift response from law enforcement agencies.

Upon receiving the distressing report, the bomb disposal squad swiftly cordoned off the area, accompanied by a significant contingent of Larkana police. Their primary objective was to secure the site, gather crucial evidence, and launch a thorough investigation into the incident. In response to the alarming situation, DIG Larkana promptly intervened, ordering SSP Larkana to furnish a detailed report on the incident. The directive emphasized the imperative of swiftly identifying and ap-

prehending the perpetrators responsible for the brazen attack. SSP Larkana, Rohail Khoso, assured the public that the investigation is being pursued with utmost diligence, utilizing advanced forensic techniques, CCTV footage analysis, geo-fencing, and other modern investigative tools. He reiterated the commitment of Larkana police to ensure the safety and security of the citizens.

Thankfully, there were no reported casualties or significant damage resulting from the blast. SSP Khoso reiterated the resolve of law enforcement agencies to thwart any attempts to disrupt peace and stability in Larkana, vowing to bring the culprits to justice swiftly. As the investigation progresses, the incident serves as a stark reminder of the need for continued vigilance and collaborative efforts to combat criminal elements and safeguard the well-being of the community.

## PHDEC's Mango Bagging Initiative Elevates Pakistan's Mango Industry

By Samad Ayaz

MULTAN: The Pakistan Horticulture Development & Export Company (PHDEC), dedicated to enhancing the horticulture sector, has launched the Mango Bagging program across Sindh and Punjab, presenting significant commercial advantages.

Approximately 70,000 bags were distributed in Sindh and 80,000 in Multan among progressive mango growers for the 2024 season. This initiative, which commenced as a pilot project in 2023 with 150,000 bags distributed, garnered positive feedback for improving fruit quality and appearance. Widely practiced in mango-producing countries, mango bagging enhances fruit aesthetics, reduces pesticide dependency, and shields against pests and insects, including fruit flies, thereby elevating overall fruit quality.



PHDEC, in collaboration with the Mango Research Institute (MRI) Multan, organized a Mango Seminar aimed at enhancing mango quality, minimizing post-harvest losses, and promoting mango bagging.

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## Speakers Advocate For Overcoming Obstacles In Oil And Gas Sector Development

By Samad Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: Participants at a conference underscored the necessity of deregulating the petroleum sector to overcome hurdles in the promotion of oil and gas industries in Pakistan. The Oil and Gas Conference Pakistan (OGCP-2024), organized by Energy Update in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) and the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), served as a platform for discussions on industry challenges and opportunities.

Chairman of OGRA, Masroor Khan, highlighted the regulatory support provided to the industry and emphasized the need to eliminate illegal petrol stations while expanding LNG infrastructure. Former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi urged decisive action to address energy crises, emphasizing the importance of deregulation for sector



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growth. Chairman of Associated Group, Iqbal Z Ahmed, called for bureaucratic hurdles to be addressed, advocating for local LPG production. MD of Attock Refinery Limited, Adil Khattak, emphasized the importance of curbing oil smuggling and investing in refinery upgrades. Muhammad Naem Qureshi, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, outlined the conference's focus on showcasing Pakistan's energy potential and exploring strategies for enhancing energy security and investment opportunities. The event featured discussions on exploration and production strategies, renewable energy integration, regulatory frameworks, and technological advancements. Speakers stressed the importance of collaboration between stakeholders and innovative decision-making to drive progress in the energy sector.—RT

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## Ahsan Receives APO Meritorious And Distinguished Award 2024

By Samad Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has been honoured with the APO Meritorious and Distinguished Award 2024 by the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO).

The award was presented during the 66th Session of the APO Governing Body in recognition of his outstanding contributions to productivity in socio-economic development through policy, strategic thinking, leadership, and management.

In his acceptance address, Prof Iqbal expressed



Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has been honoured with the APO Meritorious and Distinguished Award 2024 by the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO).

his gratitude to the APO, noting Iqbal highlighted that productivity is now at the tipping point of a new leapfrog, presenting both opportunities and challenges, particularly for developing countries like Pakistan.—RT/Agency

## Charity Does Foundation installs hand water pumps in poverty-stricken areas of Sukkur, Ghotki

By Salman Ali

SUKKUR: In a concerted effort to alleviate the water crisis plaguing impoverished communities, the Charity Does Foundation (CDF) in collaboration with Community Outreach-UK has embarked on a mission to install hand pumps in various uncivilized areas of Ghotki and Sukkur. This initiative aims to address critical issues such as health improvement, community sustainability, and hygiene enhancement.

The installation of these hand pumps signifies a ray of hope for approximately 150 families who will directly benefit from improved access to clean and safe drinking water. Speaking about the project, Ahmad Malik, the founder of Charity Does Foundation, expressed his commitment to eradicating

water scarcity in Pakistan's most underserved regions.

"We are dedicated to setting up water pumps across Pakistan's impoverished communities to put an end to the water shortage crisis and foster a sustainable future for Pakistani families," stated Ahmad Malik. He emphasized that the hand pumps are strategically installed after rigorous water testing to ensure their quality and safety.

The initiative has seen the installation of numerous water holes and hand pumps, strategically placed at the heart of villages to maximize accessibility and impact. By providing access to clean water, the foundation aims not only to address immediate health concerns but also to lay the foundation for long-term sustainable development. Ahmad Malik highlighted

the urgent need for clean and safe drinking water in communities across Pakistan, emphasizing that lack of access often leads to waterborne diseases and adverse health outcomes. The installation of hand pumps in isolated areas is expected to contribute significantly to reducing child mortality rates from diseases such as diarrhea and malnutrition.

The efforts of the Charity Does Foundation and Community Outreach-UK underscore a commitment to humanitarianism and community welfare, striving to uplift marginalized communities and empower them with the basic necessity of clean water. Through such initiatives, these organizations are paving the way for a healthier, happier, and more prosperous future for the people of Pakistan.

## Jhol Police recover a stolen buffalo

By Mehtab Shar

JHOL: In a swift and decisive operation, Jhol Police, under the leadership of SHO Nabi Bux Lashari, successfully recovered a stolen buffalo in a targeted raid near Jhol. The buffalo, which had been reported stolen one month ago from Darya Khan Marri, was found in the possession of unidentified individuals.

Acting on actionable intelligence, the police team swiftly mobilized

and conducted a raid in the vicinity of Jhol, where the stolen buffalo was believed to be concealed. Despite the perpetrators managing to evade arrest by fleeing the scene upon the arrival of the police, the stolen buffalo was recovered intact.

SHO Nabi Bux Lashari commended the proactive efforts of his team in swiftly responding to the report of the stolen buffalo and executing a successful raid to recover the stolen animal. He reiterated the

commitment of Jhol Police to combat crime and ensure the safety and security of the community.

The recovery of the stolen buffalo marks a significant achievement for law enforcement in the region, reaffirming their dedication to upholding justice and holding perpetrators of crime accountable. The investigation into the theft continues, with efforts underway to identify and apprehend those responsible for the crime.

# METRO KARACHI

## Deputy Mayor Warns K-Electric Over Its Conduct

KARACHI: Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad issued a stern warning to K-Electric, highlighting public distress caused by the company's conduct.

Speaking at a press conference held at the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation's headquarters, Murad, accompanied by PPP's Dil Muhammad and Jumman Darwan, condemned K-Electric's unannounced load shedding and outstanding dues to the water board. He criticized the privatization of K-Electric, supported by previous administrations, and emphasized public dissatisfaction with the utility's actions.

Murad cautioned that if K-Electric's behavior persists, citizens may resort to street



protests, invoking the popular slogan "Damadam Mast Qalandar." He reaffirmed PPP's commitment to city development under Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's leadership, stressing the need for service

over politics. Murad pledged cooperation across party lines for Karachi's betterment, citing PPP's legacy of non-discriminatory public service and its contributions to national democracy.—RT/Agency

# METRO KARACHI



## Benazir Hari Card To Enable Banking Transactions And Subsidy Access Via ATMs: Murad

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah announced the launch of the Benazir Hari Card, aimed at benefiting farmers through various government programs and ensuring transparent implementation of interventions.

Presiding over a meeting with the agriculture department, Shah emphasized the card's role in supporting agricultural development, a key component of the national economy. The meeting included Agriculture Minister Muhammad Bux Mahar, Secretary Agriculture Rafiq Burro, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoti, and other officials.

The Benazir Hari Card will enable farmers to access banking services such as deposits, withdrawals, balance checks, and transfers, as well as government subsidies via ATMs. All agricultural landholders, regardless of landholding size, are eligible. Initially, cards will be issued to over 150,000 verified farmers under the Wheat Seed Cash Reimbursement Program, with eligibility verified by the revenue department.



Farmers owning land jointly must provide a No Objection Affidavit from other owners to register. Those with multiple landholdings will receive one card reflecting their total landholding. The Agriculture Department will collaborate with top technology firms to develop the necessary software and digital infrastructure, supported by the Sindh Water and Agriculture Transformation Project (SWAT) and the World Bank. A robust IT-based system will manage the Benazir Hari Card registration, involving the Revenue and Agriculture departments, banks, and beneficiaries. The Revenue Department will upload required documents to the Agriculture Department's web/app, while joint teams will geo-tag farms and verify data. The Agriculture Department will collect information from landholders, and a system will authenticate and randomly check entries. Verified data will be sent to a partner bank for NADRA verification, and the bank will issue the cards, which will be distributed to farmers at the taluka level. Shah directed the Agriculture Department to expedite this process to ensure timely support for farmers, enhancing the overall efficiency and transparency of agricultural interventions in Sindh.—RT

## BSEK: Matric And Ninth Grade Exams Postponed On May 28 Rescheduled For First Week Of June



KARACHI: The Board of Secondary Education Karachi (BSEK) has announced that the May 28 postponed exams will now take place on Sunday (June 2).

The federal government declared May 28 a national holiday on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbeer, the day when Pakistan conducted successful nuclear tests in the hills of Chagai in 1998. In a statement issued on Wednesday, a spokesperson for the education board said that since the intermediate's annual examinations would also be taking place simultaneously, the delayed papers would be taken at the same examination centres.

The communique stated that in the morning shift, the ninth class (Science Group) will give their Urdu Normal Course, Sindh Normal Course (Compulsory), Geography of Pakistan Paper-I, and English Literature in lieu of Urdu. It added that matric class (General Group) students, in the evening shift, will give their Arabic, Persian, and Household Accounts papers.—RT/Agency

## K-Electric Has Overbilled 20 Billion Rupees In 10 Years: Nasir Shah

KARACHI: Provincial Minister of Energy and Planning, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, revealed significant overbilling by K-Electric amounting to 20 billion rupees over the past ten years in government institutions. He noted that despite receiving billions of rupees for the installation of smart meters to prevent overbilling, K-Electric has not yet installed these meters in government institutions.



Speaking to members of the Council of Economic and Energy Journalists (CEEJ) in his office on Wednesday evening, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah highlighted the transparency achieved through the installation of smart meters by SEPCO and HESCO, which provide real-time data to the government. The meeting was attended by Provincial Minister Saeed Ghani, the Energy Secretary, and other officials.

Syed Nasir Hussain Shah expressed concerns over K-Electric's failure to submit Metering Units (MUs) to the Sindh government but indicated that progress is expected soon. He emphasized the dire situation of overbilling in government institutions and questioned the implications for citizens, announcing that the government will form a joint committee to protect Karachi's residents from K-Electric's overbilling practices. This initiative aligns with the directives of Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto.

Addressing a query, he mentioned the disparity in coal power tariffs, with Tharcoal at 5.50 rupees compared to other coal power plants at 15 rupees. He also discussed the province's 5736 ongoing schemes, stating that efforts are underway to allocate more funds in the new budget to ensure the completion of 4800 schemes.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed K-Electric, SEPCO, and HESCO to develop mechanisms to reduce bills and load shedding. Additionally, the government plans to provide 200,000 solar panels to the province's residents, with an 80% subsidy from the Sindh government and a 20% contribution from the public.—RT

## KATI Raises Alarm Over IMF's Trade Deficit Forecast

KARACHI: The Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) President Johar Qandhari has expressed deep concern over the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) forecast that the trade deficit will exceed \$27 billion in the coming financial year. Qandhari attributes the widening trade deficit to increased production costs, the highest interest rates in the region, and stagnant export growth.



Qandhari emphasized the difficult conditions faced by industrialists, noting that the high cost of doing business is hampering industrial growth. He called for the government to swiftly implement an economic policy that includes reducing the interest rate to single digits. "The sky-high

prices of electricity and gas need to be brought down to promote industrialization, set up new industries, eliminate unemployment, and accelerate economic activities," he said. The KATI President also urged the government to develop a long-term economic policy in consultation with industrialists. He stressed that reducing energy and production costs is crucial to boosting exports immediately. Additionally, Qandhari advocated for measures to control imports and reduce dependence on foreign goods by increasing duties on unnecessary and luxury items.

Qandhari remains optimistic that, with the right policies developed in collaboration with the industrial sector, the government can achieve results that contradict the IMF's grim projections. "If the government formulates a policy in consultation with industrialists, we can see outcomes that defy the IMF's estimates," he concluded.—RT

## Sharjeel Criticizes Imran Khan's Objectives



KARACHI: Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon expressed concerns about Imran Khan's objectives, alleging that the PTI founding chairman's actions were not in the country's best interests. Memon accused Imran Khan of conspiring against Pakistan, claiming that his recent social media activity, allegedly operated from Adiala jail, posed a threat to national unity. Referring to a controversial post

equating Imran Khan with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Memon questioned the PTI's response and accused them of confusion. He further criticized Imran Khan's policies, alleging favoritism and financial mismanagement during his tenure. Memon underscored the need for accountability and urged against compromising national interests for political gain.—RT

## FPCCI's Standing Committee On PR & Communications Convenes At Federation House

KARACHI: The FPCCI Standing Committee for Public Relations and Communications (2024-25) held its inaugural meeting at Federation House, Karachi. Key attendees included Convener Shujaat Ali Baig, Deputy Convener and Head of Marketing Ausaf Group, Turab Shah, Committee Secretary and Senior Director of Communications, Insights & Innovations at K-Electric, Imran Rana, along with representatives from JS Bank, SSGC, PIA, Profit & Pakistan Today, Union Microfinance Bank, Star Marketing, and senior representatives of the FPCCI President.



Convener Shujaat Ali Baig emphasized the importance of public relations in connecting FPCCI with its stakeholders. The committee committed to serving as a bridge between the media, stakeholders, and FPCCI to address issues and maintain a positive public image. Key discussions included planning for national holidays and events, forming sub-committees, engagement strategies, invitation protocols, committee roles, regional expansion, future plans, events calendar, activities, and a membership drive. The committee resolved to celebrate significant events, plan engaging activities, and strengthen stakeholder relationships. Imran Rana was confirmed as a committee secretary, and a

sub-committee led by Hasan Saeed was established to finalize plans for 2024 and 2025 activities. The meeting concluded with a strategic plan to extend FPCCI activities beyond Karachi, highlighting regional business potential, particularly under the CPEC initiative. The committee also plans to invite key figures to discuss economic opportunities and business challenges.—RT

## BISP Sindh Disburses Rs 633.979 Million To 60,379 Deserving Women

KARACHI: The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Sindh has disbursed Rs 633.979 million to 60,379 deserving women in eight districts of the Sindh province under the Benazir Kafalat program. The first phase of the program covers seven districts of Karachi Division and Hyderabad.



The BISP administration ensured transparent and efficient disbursements without any deductions through camp sites set up in the respective districts. "The Benazir Kafalat program empowers women and supports low-income families," said Director General BISP Sindh, Zulfiqar Ali Sheikh. "We ensure fair and transparent disbursements, and deserving women receive their due stipend without any hassle." A total of 228,755 deserving families in Karachi and Hyderabad received their quarterly financial assistance of Rs 10,500 each, along with their educational stipends, under the fourth quarter of the fiscal year 2023-24. The BISP administration established 34 camp sites in eight districts of Sindh, providing transparent and convenient disbursements. Basic facilities, including clean drinking water, seating arrangements, and shade, were available at all camp sites. To address grievances or complaints, the BISP administration constituted a task force and established a complaint cell at the Central Zone office in Karachi. Beneficiaries can also contact the BISP official free helpline number at 0800-26477 for assistance.

## Governing Body Members MPA Sadia Javed And MPA Rukhsana Parveen Praise NICVD's Free Services During Visit



KARACHI: The National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) was honored to welcome esteemed members of its Governing Body, Ms. Sadia Javed (MPA) and Ms. Rukhsana Parveen (MPA), for a comprehensive visit today. Professor Tahir Saghir, Executive Director of NICVD, provided a detailed briefing on the hospital's operations, emphasizing the institute's commitment to providing free cardiovascular healthcare to all segments of society. During the briefing, Professor Saghir highlighted NICVD's pioneering initiatives and the state-of-the-art treatments available to patients.

Following the briefing, Ms. Sadia Javed and Ms. Rukhsana Parveen toured various departments of the hospital. They were particularly impressed by the advanced technology and the efficiency of the medical staff. The visit included ongoing projects aimed at further enhancing the quality and reach of NICVD's services. Both Ms. Javed and Ms. Parveen expressed their admiration for the exemplary services provided by NICVD. They commended the institution's unwavering dedication to patient care, particularly noting the significance of offering free medical services in improving public health outcomes.

"NICVD's commitment to providing high-quality, free cardiovascular care is commendable. The impact on the community is profound, and we are proud to be associated with such a remarkable institution," stated Ms. Sadia Javed. Ms. Rukhsana Parveen added, "The ongoing projects and the dedication of the staff are truly inspiring. NICVD sets a benchmark in healthcare services, ensuring that everyone has access to the best possible treatments regardless of their financial status." The visit concluded with a renewed commitment from the governing body members to support NICVD's mission and vision, ensuring that it continues to lead in cardiovascular care and innovation.—RT

## Murad Urges Swift Issuance Of Benazir Mazdoor Cards For Workers

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed the Sindh Employees' Social Security Institution (SESSI) to expedite issuing Benazir Mazdoor Cards to provide additional support and incentives to workers. During a meeting attended by Labour Minister Shahid Tahim, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoti, Secretary Labour Hafze Abbasi, Commissioner SSSI Saleem Khuhro, and other officials, Shah emphasized the need to enhance workers' welfare as per PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's vision. This includes health benefits, educational grants, marriage assistance, and small business loans.



The CM highlighted the importance of quick card issuance, noting that delays deprive workers of their entitled benefits. With approximately 800,000 workers in the province, SESSI has partnered with NADRA to issue 625,000 cards in the first phase. So far, 150,000 cards have been issued, with an additional 250,000 expected by the end of June. Shah instructed the Labour Department to collaborate with NADRA to ensure timely card distribution. He also directed the SESSI Commissioner to accelerate worker registration and card development, utilizing 54

fully functional registration sites. Biometric verification of dependents is being conducted at SESSI healthcare facilities, and NADRA is supporting capacity-building workshops and providing hardware for new registration sites. The CM stressed that worker data should be based on CNIC numbers to streamline and integrate all related information for the Benazir Mazdoor Card program.—RT

## Two Senior Karachi Police Officials Acquitted In Robbery Case

KARACHI: An additional district and sessions judge acquitted SSP Imran Qureshi, DSP Tariq Bajari and other accused on Wednesday in a case pertaining to an alleged robbery in Karachi's Orangi Town.



The court acquitted SSP Imran Qureshi, DSP Tariq Bajari and other accused while accepting their acquittal plea. During the hearing, the prosecution did not identify the accused as responsible and stated that they were not involved in the incident. The prosecution also failed to provide any evidence to prove otherwise. The plaintiff filed a no-objection on the acquittal plea. Lawyer Amir Qureshi stated that the plaintiff had asked in writing not to prosecute the case and others involved. According to the police, a case was registered against the accused in Pirabad police station. They were accused of robbing around Rs15 million from the house of a citizen named Shakirullah. Earlier in December 2023, the two officers were declared innocent in the interim challan of the case involving alleged robbery by police personnel in the house of a businessman in Orangi Town. According to the interim challan, no evidence could be found against SSP Imran Qureshi and other accused in the case.—RT/Agency



KARACHI: Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) Senior Leader, Pir Sadruddin Shah Rashidi along with other Opposition leaders is addressing a press conference after meeting held at Kingri House.—Photo by Saeed Lashari

"Accept responsibility for your life. Know that it is you who will get you where you want to go, no one else."

—Les Brown

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THURSDAY MAY 30 2024

## Finance Ministry Claims Economy Poised For Moderate Recovery

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Finance has painted a positive picture of the economy, highlighting that key indicators demonstrating stability in the real, fiscal, and external sectors.

In its Monthly Economic Update and Outlook report for May 2024, the finance ministry's Economic Adviser's Wing noted that signs of economic stability were becoming more evident as the country approached the end of the outgoing fiscal year.

As the fiscal year is about to end, the economic indicators demonstrate the strengthening of stability in the real, fiscal and external sectors," according to the report released on Wednesday. According to the report, GDP growth is elevating while inflation rates are on a decline with a positive primary balance, reflecting the effectiveness of recent fiscal consolidation efforts.

The economic performance also indicates that agriculture has been a major contributor to this fiscal year's economic upswing, registering a growth of 6.25% in the agriculture sector's recovery



is mainly attributed to government initiatives through improved input supply and increased credit disbursement to farmers.

Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) growth in 2024 Quarter 3, became positive and is expected to remain moderately positive on average throughout the second half of the current fiscal year. It witnessed a minor decline of 0.1% during July-March FY 2024 against the contraction of 7.0% same period last year. During this period, 11 to 22 sectors witnessed positive growth.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation stood at 17.3% on a year-on-year basis in April 2024 as compared to 36.4% in April 2023. The major drivers in-

clude housing, water, electricity, gas & fuel, perishable food items, furnishing & household equipment maintenance, clothing, footwear and transport.

On the fiscal front, during July to March FY24, the revenue growth outpaced the growth in expenditures. Within revenues, both tax and non-tax collection grew significantly by 29.3% and 90.7%, respectively.

Moreover, measures to control non-mark-up spending helped in improving the primary surplus to Rs1615.4 billion (1.5% of GDP) from Rs503.8 billion (0.6% of GDP) last year. While, the overall fiscal deficit remained at 3.7% of GDP, the same as recorded last year.

On the external front, the current account for FY2024 (July-April) narrowed down significantly, recording a deficit of \$0.2 billion compared to last year's \$3.9 billion, primarily due to an improved trade balance.

In April 2024, the current account surplus was recorded at \$491 million, an increase from \$434 million in March 2024. Year-on-year, exports in April 2024 increased by 23.4% to \$2.6 billion, fueled by eased import restrictions that enhanced the supply chain for export industries.

In the same period, imports also rose by 22.8% to \$4.4 billion. The trade deficit for April 2024 was recorded at \$1.8 billion.

Furthermore, the FDI witnessed an increase of 39.1% and reached \$358.8 million in April 2024, as against an inflow of \$258.0 million last month. The remittances in April 2024 were encouraging, as they increased on a year-on-year basis by 27.9% to \$2.8 billion.

On the back of a persistent policy rate at 22%, during 1st July - 03rd May, FY2024 money supply (M2)

shows a growth of 7.1% (Rs 2,229.8 billion) as compared to 7.0% growth (Rs1,943.4 billion) in last year.

Although the signs of a moderate economic recovery are evident. But to sustain this positive momentum, the policy efforts and reforms to raise productivity, and competitiveness are imperative.

In Jul-Apr FY2024, workers' remittances recorded at \$23.8 billion (\$23.0 billion last year), increased by 3.5%.

YoY remittances increased by 27.9% in April 2024 (\$2.8 billion) as compared to April 2023 (\$2.2 billion). However, MoM remittances declined by 4.8% as compared to March 2024 (\$3.0 billion) mainly owing to post Eid factors.

Pakistan's total liquid foreign exchange reserves increased to \$14.3 billion on May 24, 2024, with SBP's reserves stood at \$9.1 billion and commercial banks' reserves remained at \$5.2 billion.

"Going forward, the economy will gain momentum in the coming months of this fiscal year," the report added.—RT/Agency

## PTI Urges CJP Isa And CEC To Investigate Nawaz's Election As PML-N President

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has called on Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja to look into Nawaz Sharif's election as Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president, media reported on Wednesday.

"The election commission and the supreme court should take notice of the unopposed election of the fugitive and analyse it on the same criteria on which the fair elections of the PTI were tested," the PTI spokesperson said.

"The nation is watching every raton sitting on the state thrones very carefully and will deal with those who deviate from the Constitution and the law," he added.

The former ruling party's remarks come as Nawaz, a three-time former prime minister, was elected as the PML-N President "unopposed" — six years after a court ruling had removed him from office.

Nawaz had lost the prime minister's office in 2017 and the presidency of his party in 2018, as a result of the Panama Papers ruling.

However, he was elected as the party president today once again as no other party leader submitted their nomi-



nation papers against the party supremo for the top "guardians of national interests and would fight against the corrupt and oppressive regime until the end".

The spokesperson further rejected the PML-N President's May 28 "Youm-e-Takbeer" celebration as "absurd" stressing that the government was attempting to use the national atomic program for their political gains and using public funds to that effect. Underlining that Pakistan's nuclear program was a great national asset which was acquired by the nation by "cutting its belly," he lauded the scientists for making the country a nuclear power and stressed that the program was materialised owing to the competent, hardworking and intelligent patriotic scientists under the unwavering leadership of Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan.—RT/Agency

The party then held its intra-party elections on March 3 which too have been challenged with the ECP raising questions over the current "status" of the former ruling party after losing "its organisational structure on lapsing of 5 years".

Termining the PML-N as "nothing more than the personal estate of the Sharifs and the inheritance for their young children," the PTI spokesperson rebuked the "venomous propaganda" against its incarcerated founder Imran Khan stressing that the former premier

## Verdict Delayed In Iddat Case As Judge Requests Transfer Of Appeals To Another Court

ISLAMABAD: In a dramatic turn of events, the sessions judge hearing the Iddat case sought its transfer to another court on Monday when announcing the reserved judgment many thought would overturn the incarcerated premier Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi's conviction.

Judge Shahrukh Arjumand left the courtroom after complainant Khawar Maneka expressed no confidence in him. The complainant made emotional arguments after asking the court to grant him 10 minutes to speak.

Shortly after, the judge wrote to the Islamabad High Court (IHC) requesting it to fix the case for hearing in some other court.

Judge Arjumand wrote in the letter "Though earlier application of complainants has already been dismissed in this regard on April 30, 2024, but I think it will not be appropriate to object the IHC in this specific decision has been raised on the Presiding Officer".

It added "As arguments at length were heard in the matter, therefore, it is humbly submitted to transfer the appeals to any other court of competent jurisdiction".

"It is further submitted that complainant and his counsel always tried to frustrate and delay the proceedings on one pretext or other, therefore, time frame may be fixed for disposal of appeals," the judge wrote.

As the hearing commenced, an hour later than scheduled, Maneka appeared before the court along with his counsel Rizwan Abbasi.

The judge observed that prosecutor Abbasi was yet to present arguments on two points, following which he stepped onto the dais. However, Maneka requested the court for some time to present his arguments. At this, the judge asked him to let his counsel speak first. "My lawyer will not be able to explain my suffering. I will speak myself," replied Maneka.

At this point, Bushra Bibi's counsel Usman Gill urged the court to issue contempt notices to Maneka for interrupting court proceedings.



Maneka asked for 10 minutes of speaking time, saying he belonged to a village and that rumors were being spread about him and his daughter's divorce every day. "Fake divorce letters are being made and spread on social media," the complainant maintained.

Maneka's interruption irked the PTI counsels who got into a heated argument with the former. Judge Arjumand then intervened asking the lawyers if they wanted to create scene.

"Today, respect is being demanded for a person who has served as the former premier. Why not grant a poor man the same respect too?" asked Maneka as he compared himself to Imran.

"I am being threatened. Listen to this poor man. I don't believe in this court. I only believe in the Almighty. Think of me as a poor person, and realize what my family has suffered. My house has been destroyed," he lamented.

He then asked the judge to not make a decision, alleging that he appeared to have been "influenced".

Judge Arjumand remarked that it was not possible for him to transfer the case at this stage. However, he observed that any decision he now makes would be controversial. The judge then left the courtroom.—RT/Agency

## Court Halts Fake Bank Accounts Case Against President Zardari



KARACHI: A banking court on Wednesday put the fake bank accounts case against President Asif Ali Zardari on backburner after an immunity plea from his counsel, media reported.

The banking court judge said that the case could not be heard against President Zardari owing to the presidential immunity.

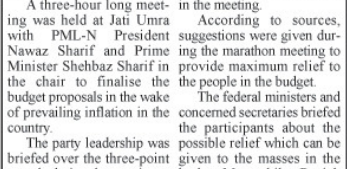
The court also granted a plea of Faryal Talpur for exemption from appearing in the court.

The banking court adjourned further hearing of the case until June 09.

Advocate Muhammad Waqas, an associate of senior lawyer Farooq H. Naik, filed two applications before the court on behalf of their clients in a previous hearing, pleading that Asif Ali Zardari has been elected president.

He submitted that Article 248 (2) of the Constitution safeguarded the president from legal proceedings in court during his term of office and claimed the presidential immunity and asked the banking court to halt the criminal proceeding against him in fake bank accounts case. While in another application, his sister Faryal Talpur sought exemption from the court appearance for one day.—RT/Agency

## PML-N Decides To Provide Relief To Masses In Upcoming Budget



LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) led government has decided to give maximum relief to the masses in the upcoming budget.

A three-hour long meeting was held at Jati Umra with PML-N President Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the chair to finalise the budget proposals in the wake of prevailing inflation in the country.

## Poet Ahmed Farhad In AJK Police's Custody: AGP Informs IHC

ISLAMABAD: The Attorney General for Pakistan, Mansoor Usman Awan, Wednesday informed the Islamabad High Court regarding the whereabouts of missing Kashmiri poet Ahmed Farhad.

According to the AGP, the poet has been "arrested and currently in police custody" in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The AGP revealed the information during the hearing of a petition seeking the recovery of the poet.

Urooj Zainab, Farhad's wife who moved IHC on May 15, sought her husband's recovery and requested the court to identify, investigate, and prosecute those responsible for his disappearance.

The plea is being heard by Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, while human rights lawyer Iman Mazari is representing Zainab in the case.

A report by the DhirKot Kashmir police station was also presented before the court.

In conversation with journalists outside the IHC, Federal Law Minister Azam



Nazeer Tarar said the police is investigating the Kashmiri poet's case.

"Ahmad Farhad is in Azad Kashmir, I assisted on constitutional matters as a judicial assistant," he said, explaining his presence at the court today.

Farhad, known for his defiant prose, was allegedly abducted from his house on May 14.

During the hearing of the case on May 21, AGP Awan assured the court about rescuing and recovering the poet following the IHC orders.

"[We] will do whatever it takes [We] will rescue and recover [Farhad]," the AGP said while addressing the

IHC judge and taking the responsibility to look into the matter.

During the hearing, Justice Kayani ordered the AGP to ensure that "no one gets picked up from Islamabad".

"If a person does not get recovered, it will be a failure of the state," the judge said. Responding to the remark, AGP Awan asked for time to ensure the poet's recovery.

Meanwhile, the petitioner's lawyer asked the AGP to share the progress on recovery made in the last six days.

## Shehbaz Commends Buddhist Scholars For Promoting Interfaith Harmony

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said Pakistan is proud of its ancient Buddhist heritage, which flourished in the northwest Pakistan in the shape of Gandhara art and culture, over two thousand years ago.

He was talking to a delegation of Buddhist leaders, who called on him in Islamabad on Wednesday.

Welcoming the delegation, he expressed his gratitude for their participation in the Symposium, being held in Pakistan in connection with the "Vesak Day" that commemorates the birth, enlightenment and passing away of Lord Buddha.

The prime minister underscored the importance that his government attached to interfaith harmony. He also acknowledged the valuable contributions of the Buddhist scholars and monks to the promotion of interfaith harmony and understanding.

The Buddhist leaders appreciated the prime minister's commitment to fostering a culture of inclusivity



and respect for all religions. They also commended Pakistan's efforts to preserve and promote its Buddhist heritage sites and cultural artifacts.

The delegation members showed their keen desire to collaborate with Pakistan in preserving and promoting Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. During the meeting, the prime minister and the delegation discussed ways to strengthen interfaith dialogue and cooperation, as well as opportunities for cultural and academic exchanges between Pakistan and Buddhist majority countries.

The meeting concluded with a resolve to continue exploring avenues for mutual understanding from Nepal.—RT/Agency

## IHC Restricts Telcos From Recording Calls And Data For Surveillance

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) in an order on the audio leaks case restrained on Wednesday telecom companies from recording phone calls and data for surveillance purposes.

Justice Babar Sattar heard the petitions of former first lady Bushra Bibi and former chief justice Saqib Nisar's son against their respective audio leaks.

The court demanded clarity regarding the law authorizing the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to carry out surveillance activities.

Additional Attorney General Munnawar Iqbal replied, "It is being done under a legal framework".

Justice Babar Sattar remarked "under which law are you recording peoples' calls", asking the AAG to inform the court officially. "Who has given the permission; who has given the authority to record calls?" the judge said.



one has been permitted to carry out legal interception. "If the authority to conduct surveillance has been granted, tell us where and how," the judge remarked.

At this, the AAG stated that rules should be made in this matter if none exist.

The judge questioned who would make the rules, and also asked who would notify the institutions about the rules. He further asked if any secret recording has been made till now after seeking permission from the courts.

"Under the law, every six months one's permit for such secret recording will be reviewed, has any such review committee been formed to date?"