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# REGIONAL TIMES

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## Heartland

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## NATIONAL

PML-N Government Never Abused Power Against Opposition, Claims CM Maryam



## SPORTS

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## Dar And US Ambassador Review Developments In Bilateral Ties

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Friday met United States Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome and reviewed the latest developments in Pak-US bilateral relations, media reported.



During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the latest developments in Pak-US bilateral relations and discussed ways to move the relationship forward.

The meeting came two days after the United States (US) House of Representatives passed a resolution urging the government of Pakistan to uphold democratic institutions, human rights, and the rule of law.

A total of 368 members voted in favour of the House Resolution HR 901, titled 'Expressing support for democracy and human rights in Pakistan'. Seven members voted against it.

The resolution — passed with 85 per cent of House

members participating and 98pc voting in its favour — urged Islamabad to uphold democratic institutions, human rights, and the rule of law, and respect the fundamental guarantees of due process, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech of the people of Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the resolution also condemned attempts to suppress the people of Pakistan's participation in their democracy, including through harassment, intimidation, arbitrary detention, or any violation of their human, civil, or political rights. It also condemned any effort to subvert the political, electoral, or judicial processes of Pakistan. Pakistan held general elections on February 8 with independent candidates backed by former PTI winning most of the seats. However, PML-N and PPP formed an alliance to keep Imran Khan's party out of power. The opposition parties have alleged rigging in the elections — a claim which was rejected by the caretaker administration, which conducted the polls. —RT/Agency

## National Assembly Passes Amendment To Elections Bill 2024

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Friday passed an amendment to the Elections Act, 2017 [The Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2024] media reported.



The bill was moved by Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Azam Nazeer Tarar.

Briefing the lawmakers, he said the amendment was aimed at expediting the settlement of petitions pertaining to elections of the National Assembly, the Senate, provincial assemblies, and local governments.

He explained that due to the workload on serving judges, the proposed amendment seeks to restore the

original provision of Section 140, making retired high court judges eligible for appointment as members of election tribunals.

In a heated session at the National Assembly, the Election Act Amendment Bill

The bill, introduced by the Law Minister, allowed for the appointment of retired judges to election tribunals, a move contested by legal experts citing constitutional conflicts with the Election Commission's prerogatives.

Barrister Gohar raised concerns, asserting the bill's contradiction with a recent Supreme Court order, questioning its legality under current judicial precedents.

Prime Minister Nazir Tarar defended the legislative authority of Parliament, asserting its right to enact laws independently of judicial oversight, a sentiment echoed by Azam Law Minister Nazir Tarar. However, opposition

figures, including Alia Kamran, expressed apprehension over the potential misuse of judicial appointments and its impact on electoral transparency.

Meanwhile, Umar Ayub highlighted unrelated grievances, condemning human rights violations against incarcerated women and mistreatment of workers, including Sanam Javed. Amidst parliamentary debates, the National Assembly also approved significant financial demands for the upcoming fiscal year, totaling over Rs 1.358 trillion, underscoring ongoing legislative priorities amidst political turbulence. —RT/Agency

## "Elite Class Will Be Brought Into Tax Net," Vows PM After Budget 2024-25 Approval

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Friday hailed the approval of the budget 2024-25 in the National Assembly (NA), vowing to bring elite class and tax defaulters to tax net, media reported.



The remarks came during the prime minister's meeting with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb as he lauded the latter and his team preparing a "pro-people budget" that prioritises welfare of common man and promises to steer the country towards economic prosperity.

Talking to the finance minister, PM Shehbaz expressed his satisfaction over the active participation of all the treasury and opposition members in the budget session.

He also appreciated the efforts of the officers from ministries of finance, planning, other relevant ministries and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in preparation of the budget.

The government, he said tried its best to utilize all possible resources to provide maximum relief to the common man. He said the government provided relief to the salaried class, pensioners and workers.

The prime minister high-

lighted that a special attention was given in the budget to various important sectors such as health, education, agriculture and information technology.

He said the elite class and the tax defaulters would be brought to the tax net. It is not possible for the poor pay the taxes and the elites enjoy tax exemptions, he added.

Expressing satisfaction over the economic situation, the prime minister said the country's economy had now been put on the right path and that Pakistan's journey of prosperity had begun.

PM Shehbaz Sharif further said due to the business friendly policies of the government, the trust of the investors had been restored on the government.

He said the government was taking steps to bring reforms in the government de-

partments and privatize the loss making State Owned Entities on priority.

Earlier in the day, the National Assembly (NA) approved the Federal Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 with a total outlay of Rs18,870 billion.

Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aunur Raheem moved the motion for consideration of the Finance Bill, 2024 to give effect to the financial proposals of the federal government for the year, commencing on July 1, 2024.

The motion was passed with majority vote which led to the passage of Finance Bill-2024 after clause-by-clause reading and adopting amendments after due process of voting. All the amendments, presented by the opposition members, were rejected. —RT/Agency

representative, which is currently held by Munir Akram. Akram assumed this position on November 1, 2019.

The spokesperson said the appointments were being cogitated for several weeks and the announcement regarding the appointments was a normal procedure.

Zahra Baloch, while commenting on the US House of Representative's resolution, regretted the development, saying Pakistan had resolved to relations based on mutual respect and non-interference with the US. The US Congress should stop strengthening Pakistan-US relationships, she said adding that Pakistan had apprised America about its serious reservations over the resolution. "The resolution by the US House of Representatives is an unwarranted interference in Pakistan's internal affairs," she said. —RT/Agency

## Rizwan Saeed To Replace Masood Khan As Pakistan's Ambassador To The US



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has decided to replace Masood Khan and appoint Additional Foreign Secretary (Middle East and SIFC) Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh as envoy to the United States, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said on Friday.

Masood Khan has been serving as ambassador to Washington since February 2022. He was nominated for the post by the then prime minister Imran Khan in November 2021.

In another major diplomatic appointment, the government has decided to appoint senior diplomat Asim Iftikhar, who's serving as Pakistan's ambassador in France, as its additional permanent representative to the UN, the spokesperson said.

She said Iftikhar will, at a suitable time, assume the office of the permanent repre-

## Pakistan Responds To US Congress Resolution Regarding February 8 Elections

ISLAMABAD: In a tit-for-tat move, the National Assembly (NA) on Friday passed a resolution condemning the United States (US) House of Representatives' recent resolution on Pakistan's February 8 general elections and termed it "interference" in its internal affairs, media reported.



PML-N lawmaker Shaista Pervaiz Malik tabled the resolution in the National Assembly, which was passed by majority amid protest from opposition benches. Lawmakers from PTI-SIC alliance chanted slogans against the government, creating a tense atmosphere in the assembly.

The move came in response to the US Congress's House Resolution — HR 901, which was seen as "interference" in Pakistan's internal affairs.

The resolution regretted that the subject Resolution clearly reflects an "incomplete and wrong understanding" of the political and electoral processes of Pakistan.

It further stated that the US Congress resolution does not acknowledge the free and enthusiastic exercise of the right to vote by millions of Pakistanis in the General Elections held on 8 February 2024.

"An independent and sovereign country like Pakistan will not accept any Interference in its internal affairs and the subject resolution is an

attempt to undermine the state," it stated.

The resolution, tabled in the NA, draws US Congress attention to more important issues such as the ongoing acts of genocide in Gaza, gross human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and state-sanctioned atrocities against minorities, especially the Muslims, in India.

It concluded by expressing the hope that in future the US Congress will play a more constructive role in strengthening Pakistan-US bilateral relations by focusing on avenues of collaboration for mutual benefit of both our people and countries.

US Congress resolution Earlier on Wednesday, the United States (US) House of Representatives passed a resolution urging the government of Pakistan to uphold democratic institutions, human rights, and the rule of law.

Meanwhile, the resolution also condemned attempts to suppress the people of Pakistan's participation in their democracy, including through harassment, intimidation, arbitrary detention, or any violation of their human, civil, or political rights. It also condemned any effort to subvert the political, electoral, or judicial processes of Pakistan. —RT/Agency

A total of 368 members voted in favour of the House Resolution HR 901, titled 'Expressing support for democracy and human rights in Pakistan'. Seven members voted against it.

The resolution — passed with 85 per cent of House members participating and 98pc voting in its favour — urged Islamabad to uphold democratic institutions, human rights, and the rule of law, and respect the fundamental guarantees of due process, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech of the people of Pakistan.

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## PTI Conflicts Deepen As Sher Afzal Marwat Demands Shibli's Scalp



ISLAMABAD: Strife within the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) continues to escalate as Sher Afzal Marwat demanded resignation from Shibli Faraz, saying that the party will only then be freed from the "qabza mafia".

His demand came after Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Omar Ayub stepped down as the PTI Secretary General on Thursday, saying there would be more changes in the party's organisational structure.

"I demand resignation of Shibli Faraz from party positions and as leader of the Opposition in Senate," said

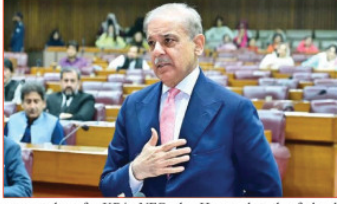
Marwat, who has been at loggerheads with Faraz and other party leaders.

In May, outspoken Marwat also refused to work with Senator Faraz and Omar, saying they didn't allow him to meet incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan.

Marwat's remarks came after the party revoked his nomination for the post of National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman and named Sheikh Wags Akram for the said office. Following his remarks, Marwat was expelled from the party's core and political committees on the directives of PTI founder. —RT/Agency

## Shehbaz Questions KP's Failure To Establish CTD Despite Receiving Rs590 Billion

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Friday questioned the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government for its failure to establish the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) despite receiving funds worth Rs590 billion during the last 14 years.



Responding to a point of order raised by Sunni Itehad Council (SIC) lawmaker Asad Qaiser, the prime minister highlighted that under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, an additional one percent share was allocated for the KP province just to augment its efforts against terrorism.

He said the last NFC Award was agreed upon in 2010 by the government of Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani when terrorism was at its peak and the KP province suffered the most, followed by Balochistan and other provinces.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said that KP people had been the frontline soldiers against terrorism which would always be remembered. He said the additional one

percent share for KP in NFC was still intact and no other province including Balochistan got such funds nor objected to it despite immense sacrifices by their law enforcement agencies and people against terrorism.

He told the House that from 2010 till now, the KP province had received Rs590 billion but could not yet establish the CTD for which the funds were mainly allocated.

This also needs to be looked into as why the CTD is still incomplete there despite getting such huge funds, he remarked. Coming to another objection by the opposition member, the prime minister told

the House that the federal government had forwarded a panel of three persons, as per tradition, asking the KP government to choose one officer for appointment as Chief Secretary which they have not decided so far.

He also offered to revise the panel if the provincial government desired so but rubbished the allegation of any discrimination against the province.

Pakistan has witnessed a surge in terrorist activities, especially in KP and Balochistan, since the outlawed militant group Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022. —RT/Agency

## -Can you believe how out of touch they are? National Assembly Approves Increase In Salaries And Travel Allowances For Lawmakers

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly (NA) has passed an amendment in the Budget 2024-25 to increase the salaries and travel allowances of Pakistan lawmakers despite protest from the opposition.



The amendment, presented by Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Abdul Qadir Patel, was approved with a majority vote. The amendment to the Salary and Allowances Act is being implemented through the Finance Bill 2024-25.

According to the documents, travel allowance for lawmakers have been increased from Rs10 to Rs25 per kilometre. Additionally, unused annual airline tickets will now carry over to the following year instead of being canceled.

The number of annual travel vouchers has also been increased from 25 to

30. Meanwhile, the finance committee of the National Assembly has been entrusted with the authority to determine the salaries and allowances of lawmakers.

Earlier in the day, the National Assembly (NA) approved the Federal Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 with a total outlay of Rs18,870 billion.

Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb moved the motion

for consideration of the Finance Bill, 2024 to give effect to the financial proposals of the federal government for the year, commencing on July 1, 2024. The motion was passed with majority vote which led to the passage of Finance Bill-2024 after clause-by-clause reading and adopting amendments after due process of voting. All the amendments, presented by the opposition members, were rejected. —RT/Agency



# THE HEARTLAND



HYDERABAD: Activists and leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami are holding a protest demonstration against prolonged electricity load shedding and over billing outside HESCO's head office.-RT

## DC Matiari orders foolproof security arrangements for Muharramul-Haram



**By Sajjad Ali Abbasi**  
MATIARI: Deputy Commissioner Matiari, Muhammad Yousif Shaikh, has ordered comprehensive security measures to ensure a peaceful Muharram-ul-Haram. A high-level meeting was held at DC Complex Matiari, attended by SSP Matiari Syed Asghar Shah, Additional Deputy Commissioner-I Noor Ahmad Khahro, DHO Dr. Pir Ghulam Husain, Additional Deputy Commissioner-II Moonis Ahmad, Assistant Commissioners, Town Officers, and religious scholars representing different schools of thought. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Yousif Shaikh directed all law enforcement agencies to intensify surveillance in Bhitshah, particularly in hotels, where a large number of outsiders are expected to arrive. He emphasized the need for stringent snap checking on NHA & hotels and instructed that only permitted religious scholars, cleared by the Sindh Home Department, be allowed to deliver speeches. He further warned that no banned scholars would be allowed to enter the district, ensuring a secure and peaceful environment for the Ashura observances. DC Shaikh urged Ulemas to promote love, peace and brotherhood in their sermons and discourage fire brand hate speeches. SSP Matiari Syed Asghar Shah announced contingency plans for security, requiring prior written permission for Majalis and processions. Local bodies, Municipal and Town administration, and public health engineering departments were tasked with ensuring cleanliness in their respective jurisdictions. DC Muhammad Yousif Shaikh said that this time, the monsoon season and Ashura are occurring simultaneously, so concerned departments must work together to accomplish all tasks. He directed the establishment of a Central Control Room at the DC Office and instructed all Assistant Commissioners to convene meetings with religious scholars at the Taluka level for Ashura arrangements and to ensure peace and tranquility.

## MDF, Oxfam hold community session to address social issues

**By Ayaz Burio**  
KN SHAH: MDF and Oxfam organized a community event in UC Burria with the aim of promoting behavioral change and addressing social issues. During the keynote address, Shaista Mughal highlighted the pivotal role of women in national development, emphasizing that women constitute 60% of the population. She underscored the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in driving progress, fostering growth, and building a more equitable society. Project Tahir, Sario shared that marginalized communities face social issues that undermine the confidence of girls and women, hindering their advancement in society. The event focused on raising awareness about these challenges and advocating for gender equality, challenging harmful societal norms and behaviors that perpetuate discrimination and violence against women.



Himmat Shaikh hosted the event, using poetry by Ustad Bukhari to underscore issues related to women's protection. Through poetry and other expressions, the event aimed to inspire men to reflect on their attitudes and behaviors towards women, encouraging them to support gender equality and social justice. Tahir Sario played a warm and welcoming role at the event, extending greetings to the guests. His efforts helped bring together a diverse group of community members, including women and children, fostering a sense of inclusivity and respect. His hospitality contributed to creating an atmosphere where everyone felt valued and appreciated, particularly acknowledging the presence of women and children.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Hala Naka Chang Goth are holding a protest demonstration at the Hyderabad press club against their area's influential persons.-RT

## Mosque's caretaker starts cleaning sewerage lines in TMK



**By Abdul Sattar**

TANDO MUHAMMAD KHAN: During the monsoon rains, a severe situation has arisen in Tando Muhammad Khan where there is a significant increase in garbage accumulation throughout the city. Concerning the cleanliness required for offering prayers at the Mir Muhalla mosque, efforts to clean the sewerage line has been started by the caretaker of a mosque. In this regard the people were also urged during the Friday prayers to clean their sewerage lines outside their homes so that city could be cleaned. The sanitary workers which have been posted by the municipal administration are posted to clean the selected areas of the city or homes of the influential men. The local people have demanded of the concerned authorities to take notice of the matter and ensure cleanliness in the city.

## CIA Police Umerkot arrests two criminals



**By Muhammad Bachal**

UMERKOT: SSP Umerkot Asif Raza Baloch's directives were successfully executed by CIA Umerkot Khalil Kambar as four suspects were arrested when they were standing on the Umerkot-Dhoronaro road with intentions of committing robbery. Upon seeing the police, two suspects managed to flee from the scene, while two criminals named Allah Dino Dars and Mevo Meghar were apprehended at the scene. A raid is ongoing to apprehend the fleeing suspects. Upon the arrest of the suspects, a pistol, bullets, and four motorcycles were recovered.

## Journalist Abid Hussain Bhatti and his brother assaulted in Daultpur



**By Aijaz Jokhio**

DAULATPUR: Abid Hussain Bhatti, a journalist from the Daultpur Press Club, and his brother Yasir Ali Bhatti were sitting at their shop when Javed Zardari arrived on a motorcycle to get fuel. Upon being asked for payment, Javed Zardari refused, saying he wouldn't pay and dared them to do whatever they wanted. Javed Zardari then assaulted the journalist and his brother. Abid Hussain Bhatti notified the local police, who arrived and arrested the intoxicated Javed Zardari, locking him up at the police station. In response to this incident, President of the Daultpur Press Club Muhammad Moosa Unar, along with Mehboob Jokhio, Murtaza Jokhio, Paryal Unar, Shabbir Jokhio, Muhammad Aslam Rajput, Zafar Anjum Arain, and others, led a protest. The journalists condemned the attack on Abid Hussain Bhatti and his brother in strong terms, demanding that a case be registered against the assailant and justice be served to the journalist. They called for an end to the harassment of journalists and for their safety to be ensured.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Matiari are holding a protest demonstration at the Hyderabad press club against their area police.-RT

## Nishat Girls Wing holds sixth three day training camp in Badin



**By Jibran Talpur**  
BADIN: In Badin, the Nishat Girls Wing organized a three-day sixth training camp, in which 45 members from various districts of Sindh participated. The camp focused on capacity building, offering training on a range of educational topics such as IT skills, business and administration, mass communication, procedures for obtaining scholarships, letter drafting, organizational rules and principles, methodological elements and PowerPoint presentations. The lectures were delivered by Naheed Talpur, Sadaf Talpur, Sabita Talpur, Shabana Kashif, Naseem Talpur, Sabr Almas Talpur, Qamar-un-Nisa Junejo, Abdul Fatah Langah, and others. The inauguration ceremony of the three-day training camp was attended by the central president of Nishat Girls Wing, Sadaf Talpur, General Secretary Hira Junejo, Finance Secretary Kashaf Junejo, and Press Secretary Amna Memon. Qamar-un-Nisa Junejo was the special guest at the concluding ceremony, with Mark Waqar Talpur also participating as a member of the advisory board. At the end of the camp, all participating students were awarded certificates. On this occasion, Sadaf Talpur, the central president of Nishat Girls Wing, spoke to the media, stating that Nishat Girls Wing Jamaat Luari Sharif is a welfare organization aimed at advancing the education of underprivileged and needy female students. She mentioned that Nishat Girls Wing has organized numerous programs so far, particularly focusing on securing scholarships abroad. The leaders of Nishat Girls Wing stated in a joint statement that the organization is doing excellent work in promoting girls' education. They emphasized their efforts to bring their daughters forward in the field of education, provide them with quality education, and offer them scholarship opportunities abroad so they can build better careers. They also mentioned that the current custodian of the shrine of Luari Sharif, Hazrat Qibla Pir Muhammad Sadiq Qureshi Naqshbandi, has given special instructions for girls' education and provides scholarships at a personal level to ensure they receive higher education.

## AC MPK Akhtar Ali Lashari visits ice factories, LPG shops



**By Narian Das**  
MIRPURKHAS: The Assistant Commissioner Digri, Akhtar Ali Lashari, conducted raids on ice factories, factories and shops selling LPG gas cylinders in Digri. Samples of water used for ice production in factories were also checked and directives were issued to the owners and workers of these factories to adhere to health safety regulations. Subsequently, the Assistant Commissioner also visited shops selling LPG gas cylinders and issued notices, directing them to strictly adhere to the rules and regulations of Sui Gas during cylinder refilling. He warned of strict legal action against owners of LPG gas cylinder shops if found violating the rules. During this operation, Assistant Commissioner's Office Assistant Tasawwar Raza Laghari accompanied him.



HYDERABAD: Sanghar newlyweds are protesting for the provision of protection at the Hyderabad press club.-RT



# NATIONAL

# METRO KARACHI



## PML-N Government Never Abused Power Against Opposition, Claims CM Maryam

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said on Friday that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government never abused its authority against the opposition nor did it ever try to restrict facilities for its [jailed] political rivals.



CM Maryam was addressing the Punjab Assembly's (PA) session discussing Budget FY25 under the chair of Speaker Malik Ahmed Khan. The opposition lawmakers resorted to ruckus during her address and chanted anti PML-N slogans, but she continued to speak amid the noisy protest.

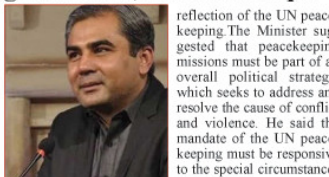
"The authorities that instead of one install two air conditioners in the prison cell of PTI founder Imran Khan—the former premier who is held at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail. She said that PTI's trolls used to ridicule her for her public-friendly actions. "They check the price of roti at a tandoor as an insult and used to mock me."

However, the daughter of PML-N supreme blasted the former provincial government of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying: "They were busy setting new records of incompetence and removing air conditioners from other people [when they were in prison cells]."

"Punjab is the only province that has reduced the price of roti. Instead of shouting slogans here, they [PTI lawmakers] should reduce prices [of roti] in Khayber Pakhtunkhwa," she said. The CM mentioned that a tax-free budget was presented in Punjab for the first time, which should have pleased the opposition as well. The citizens of Punjab have sighed in relief after years, she added. The chief minister detailed that her government restored basic facilities to the masses, which were halted by the previous administration, especially the provision of free medicines at government hospitals. Moreover, inflation was brought down to its lowest level in years, she added. Due to the noisy protests by the opposition, the provincial assembly failed to approve the supplementary budget and Saturday's session till Saturday, 2pm.—RT/Agency

## Pakistan Fully Committed to Strong Peacekeeping Alliances, Affirms Naqvi

ISLAMABAD Pakistan will work with the United Nations and all interested states to further develop the concept of peace enforcement. This was stated by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, while addressing the UN-COPS Summit 2024 at the United Nations General Assembly in New York today.

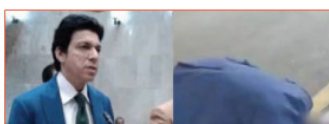


The Interior Minister said Pakistan is proud of long-standing contributions to the UN peacekeeping. He said Pakistan is committed to peacekeeping partnership especially with the African Union and the OIC. He said in today's dangerous time, the world faced threats of forced foreign interventions, suppression of freedom struggles, poverty, inequality, global tensions,

reflection of the UN peacekeeping. The Minister suggested that peacekeeping missions must be part of an overall political strategy, which seeks to address and resolve the cause of conflict and violence. He said the mandate of the UN peacekeeping must be responsive to the special circumstances or situations. He added that each mission should be provided with adequate human and material resources and advanced capabilities like radars and early warning intelligence. Mohsin Naqvi said improvements can be made in command and control structure especially to ensure timely response to attacks against civilians and peacekeepers.—RT/Agency

## Faisal Vawda Prostrates in 'Gratitude' as SC Dramatically Accepts Apology

ISLAMABAD Senator Faisal Vawda was seen performing a sajda (prostration) to express gratitude after the Supreme Court on Friday accepted his apology in a contempt of court case.



The apex court pardoned Vawda and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) lawyer Mustafa Kamal and withdrew the contempt of court notice issued to them.

According to the court's order, read by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, both the parliamentarians — Senator Vawda and MNA Kamal — have realised that the words they used were inappropriate. "They have now withdrawn their statement and tendered an unconditional apology to the court," read the order.

Vawda, on Wednesday, tendered an unconditional apology to the apex court in the contempt case, saying that he has left himself at the mercy of the apex court. Kamal had, earlier this month, also sought an unconditional apology for his remarks against the judiciary. The court further wrote about withdrawing the show-cause notice issued to both politicians in view of their reflection on the matter and tendering of apology. The top court's decision comes more than a month after it had issued contempt of court notices to both politicians after they had done hard-hitting press conferences against the judiciary

in May, with Vawda saying that no allegations could be levelled without evidence and Kamal sought to establish ethical standards for the judges as justice could "only be bought". Their statements had come after six Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges wrote a letter to Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) members, pointing out the intelligence agency's meddling in judicial affairs. The politicians also pointed out the dual citizenship of an IHC judge.—RT/Agency

## SOUTHERN PUNJAB

### DC Zaheer Anwar Jappa Visits THQ Hospital Ahmedpur Sharqia



By M Siddique  
BAHAWALPUR: Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa visited the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Ahmedpur Sharqia, where he checked on the patients under treatment. He also inaugurated a modern operation theater at the hospital. Present at the occasion were Assistant Commissioner Ahmedpur Sharqia, Muhammad Faisal, Chief Executive Officer Health, Dr. Syed Tanveer Shah and Medical Superintendent of THQ, Dr. Arif

Ghouri, Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur, Zaheer Anwar Jappa, inspected various departments of the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Ahmedpur Sharqia to review the available medical facilities. He also examined the cleanliness and tree plantation efforts at the hospital. After the hospital visit, the Deputy Commissioner inaugurated the upgraded water filtration plant at Qainchi Mor Ahmedpur Sharqia. Local residents thanked the Deputy Commissioner for providing clean drinking water. During his visit to Ahmedpur Sharqia, the Deputy Commissioner also inaugurated the upgradation works at Mehmoold Ladies Park, Chowk Muneer Shaheed. He planted a tree in the park as part of the plantation campaign. Finally, Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur held an Open Katchery at the Assistant Commissioner's Office in Ahmedpur Sharqia to address public grievances. He listened to the issues raised by the people and issued orders for their resolution.

## Sindh Madressatul Islam University Hosts Workshop on Brand Ambassadors Program

By Rahib Gaho

KARACHI: A workshop was conducted on Friday at Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU), chaired by Provincial Ombudsman Sindh Muhammad Sohail Rajput, aimed at selecting students as Brand Ambassadors of the Provincial Ombudsman Sindh. These students will be tasked with disseminating information about the role and functions of the Ombudsman among their peers and the general public. The workshop, held at Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto Auditorium, saw the Ombudsman Sindh addressing a large gathering of students from Sindh Madressatul Islam University. He emphasized the Ombudsman Office's role in delivering administrative justice and outlined the objectives of the Brand Ambassadors Program initiated with the support of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI). The program aims to promote civic responsibility, community outreach, and transparency in government departments through student engagement.

Highlighting the significance of the historic institution, the Ombudsman expressed pride in being at Sindh Madressatul Islam University, the Alma Mater of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He stressed the importance of bridging academia with the Ombudsman Office to foster a culture of accountability and governance in the country. Dr. Mujeebuddin Sahrai Memon, Vice Chancellor of SMIU, welcomed the Ombudsman Sindh and his team, underscoring the university's commitment to nurturing future leaders and promoting social justice. He noted the collaboration between SMIU and the Ombudsman Office in spreading awareness about social work and justice. Rehana G Ali Memon, Advisor, and Masood Ishrat, Registrar from the Secretariat of Provincial Ombudsman Sindh, provided insights into the Brand Ambassador Program and the workings of the Ombudsman Office through a detailed presentation. Selected student ambassadors will be recognized for their service with certificates.

The session also included a question-answer segment where the Ombudsman addressed queries from SMIU students and faculty. Vice Chancellor Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai presented souvenirs to the guests in conclusion of the event. Muhammad Naeem Ahmed, Director of Students Affairs and Counseling at SMIU, extended gratitude to the Ombudsman Sindh for selecting SMIU for the Brands Ambassadors Program. The workshop was attended by deans, chairpersons of academic departments, faculty members, and a large number of students.

## Ghee And Oil Factories Threaten Closure Over FATA, PATA Tax Exemption



Karachi: All ghee mills operating in Pakistan have issued a stern warning to the government, declaring an imminent standoff. The Chairman of the Ghee Mill Association stated that if the Fata Pata scheme remains intact in the federal budget 2024-25, ghee and oil factories nationwide will cease operations starting July 1. Chairman PVMA, Abdul Razak, alongside former Chairman PVMA, Sheikh Umar Rehman, addressed a press conference on Friday. They expressed grave concerns over the impact of the Fata Pata tax exemption on the ghee and oil industry. Currently, these factories are taxed at 85 rupees per kg but are only receiving 15 rupees per kg. PVMA members have announced their intent to challenge the government's decision in the Supreme Court, preparing for a legal battle and potential strike. Sheikh Umar Rehman highlighted that the price of ghee per kg is expected to rise by 10 to 12 rupees following the passage of the budget. With 156 ghee mills operational nationwide, approximately fifty percent have already closed due to the Fata Pata scheme. He criticized the current helplessness in addressing these economic pressures. Noting significant imports of edible oil across the country, Sheikh Umar Rehman emphasized that Fata Pata imports account for 353,000 tons of tax-free oil and ghee annually, impacting local industry competitiveness. Sheikh Umar Rehman further emphasized that over the past six years, the government has incurred losses amounting to approximately 180 billion to 200 billion rupees due to tax exemptions granted to Fata Pata. He urged the immediate removal of these exemptions to safeguard government revenue and support the sustainability of Pakistan's ghee industry.—RT

## IFC approves \$400m loan for PTCL

KARACHI: The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has approved a loan of \$400 million to Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) to fund its acquisition of a major telecom firm, media reported. As per details, the loan is part of a seven-year financial agreement with a one-year grace period. The IFC-led consortium includes the Silk Road Fund and British investors. The agreement was signed on June 27, 2024, in Karachi, and the loan will be repaid in installments over three years.

Last year, PTCL signed a Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) with the shareholders of Telenor Pakistan to buy 100% of TPL's shares, based on an enterprise value of Rs108 billion. The deal will be done on a cash-free, debt-free basis and PTCL will fund the acquisition through external debt that it will raise. Telenor Pakistan is a leading mobile operator serving 45 million subscribers with reported revenue of Rs112 billion and EBITDA margin of 43% based on the last twelve months (LTM) September 2023 financial reporting. PTCL's major assets include Ufone, a mobile operator in Pakistan with over 20 million customers. Telenor Group said in a press release that the sale is part of its strategy to build scale and market-leading players in Asia, as presented at the 2022 Capital Markets Day. It concludes the strategic review of the telco operations in Pakistan, which was announced in July 2022.—RT/Agency

## No load shedding from 10 pm to 6 am: Sindh minister Nasir Shah warns power

KARACHI: Sindh Energy Minister Nasir Hussain Shah has issued a stern warning to K-Electric, Hyderabad Electric, and Sukkur Electric, mandating that load shedding must not occur between 10 pm and 6 am. This directive aims to alleviate the burden on citizens during critical hours.



Minister Shah emphasized that all three power companies are required to implement measures to reduce load shedding both during the day and at night. He stressed that if load shedding is unavoidable, the public must be informed in advance to minimize inconvenience. Highlighting the hardships faced during the hot summer months, especially in the afternoons, Shah insisted that efforts be made to prevent load shedding during these peak hours.

Additionally, a committee has been established to address electricity theft, with various institutions providing necessary support to curb this issue.—RT

## K-Electric seeks Rs 10 increase in Karachi's electricity tariff

KARACHI: In a multi-year tariff petition, K-Electric has requested National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) to raise the base electricity tariff in Karachi by Rs 10 from Rs 33 to Rs 44.



This request is part of K-Electric's comprehensive investment plan, which includes establishing fourteen new grid stations and laying 550 kilometers of transmission lines in Karachi over the next seven years. An online public hearing on K-Electric's application was conducted by Nepra on Thursday. K-Electric has outlined a \$2 billion investment strategy for improving the city's electricity transmission, distribution, and supply system. The company aims to enhance the infrastructure to meet the growing electricity demands. During the hearing, K-

Electric's Director of Communication, Imran Rana, assured that the increase in the base tariff would not impact Karachi's electricity consumers due to the uniform electricity rate policy implemented across the country. Stakeholders voiced their opposition to the multi-year tariff during the Nepra hearing. A flexible emphasis has been adopted for the multi-year tariff, which, if reviewed annually, would enhance its effectiveness. The approval of this tariff is crucial for maintaining a stable electricity supply and demand balance in the city. According to a spokesperson for K-Electric, the seven-year investment plan involves the installation of 14 new grids, 550 km of transmission lines, and aerial bundle cables on 1700 PMTs. These upgrades are aimed at meeting the future electricity demands of Karachi and ensuring a reliable supply for its residents.—RT/Agency

## Air travel gets more expensive after tax hike

KARACHI: In the latest budget for 2024-25, air travel costs are set to rise massively, particularly for those flying in business and club class. Starting from July 1, the government has introduced new excise duties on air tickets to various international destinations. These changes take effect on July 1st and will be felt most by travelers heading to destinations like the United States, Canada, North and Latin America. The excise duty for these routes has jumped significantly, from Rs 250,000 to Rs 350,000.

That's a cool Rs 100,000 extra you'll need to shell out for that premium flying experience. Europe isn't spared either. Business class flights to European countries will now come with a Rs 210,000 duty, up from the previous Rs 150,000. This represents a Rs 60,000 increase for those looking to explore European destinations in style. Travelers to New Zealand and Australia will also face a similar Rs 60,000 duty hike, bringing the total to Rs 210,000. And it's not just long-haul trips that are affected. The duty on business class tickets to popular Asian destinations like China, Malaysia, and Indonesia has also been raised to Rs 210,000. Meanwhile, travelers to Saudi Arabia, UAE, the Middle East, and African countries will now pay an additional Rs 30,000, with the new excise duty totaling Rs 105,000. These changes reflect the government's strategy to increase revenue through higher taxes on luxury travel options.—RT/Agency

## Soyem of Information Department's DGPR's Father to be held on Sunday

Karachi: Muhammad Saleem Khan, Director General of Public Relations (DGPR), has recently lost his father, Muhammad Ferooz Khan. The Namaz-e-Janaza was conducted at Jamia Masjid Gulzar-e-Madina in Bufferzone, attended by former Health Minister Dr. Sagheer Ahmed, officers, employees of the Information Department.



Khan's residence to offer condolences and Fataha for the deceased. Muhammad Ferooz Khan was later laid to rest at Dakhli Hassan graveyard. The Soyem and Quran Khawani for his departed soul will be held on Sunday, June 30th, between Zuhr and Asr prayers at Jamia Masjid Gulzar-e-Madina in Bufferzone.—RT



## Welcome to Hell!

The recent passage of the federal budget for 2024-25 by Pakistan's National Assembly is nothing short of a catastrophic blow to the ordinary citizen. This budget, heavily criticized by the opposition as being driven by IMF dictates, promises to make daily life a living hell for the average Pakistani. By pushing through a budget that seems tailored to benefit the ruling elite while ignoring the plights of the masses, the government has widened the already vast chasm between itself and the people it is supposed to serve.

The finance minister's lofty claims of economic stability and plans to boost the tax-to-GDP ratio ring hollow in the face of harsh realities on the ground. The rejection of all opposition amendments, including those aimed at reducing the pe-

troleum development levy, underscores the government's disregard for the hardships faced by the common people. The increase in taxes and the em-

powerment of FBR officers to conduct sales tax audits without stringent checks will likely lead to rampant abuse of power and further financial strain on small businesses and individuals alike.

Moreover, the proposed establishment of a Tax Fraud Investigation Wing is another layer of bureaucracy that will serve as an instrument of harassment rather than a tool for genuine economic reform. The supposed tax exemptions on essential

items like cardiology stents and surgical materials are mere crumbs tossed to the public, failing to mitigate the overall punitive nature of this budget.

The stark division between the ruling elite, represented by figures like Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, and the struggling populace is now more pronounced than ever. This budget has ignited a fire of discontent that is likely to fuel widespread unrest and could very well signal the beginning of the end for this government. How long the current administration can maintain its hold amidst growing public outrage is uncertain, but one thing is clear: the passage of this budget has set Pakistan on a perilous path of increased discord and instability.

## THE HEARTLAND



LARKANA: Deputy Inspector General of Police Larkana Range, Nasir Aftab is presiding over a meeting for security arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram-RT

### Villagers protest against Thardeep Rural Support Program for non-issuance of withheld wages

By Muhammad Bachal

UMERKOT: In Umerkot District, residents of village Bahadur Thaeem protested in front of the Press Club in Pithoro, led by Moulana Bux, Allah Bachayo, Shahnawaz and others, against the Thardeep Rural Support Program. This NGO, funded by the Sindh Government and the World Bank, is responsible for the DFERP project to construct dirt roads in the villages. Despite four months passing since the villagers completed their work, they have not received their prom-

ised wages. The protestors stated that they were employed by the Thardeep Rural Support Program for the government-funded project to build roads in the villages. They were promised a payment of 17,500 rupees per person within ten days of completing the roads. However, it has been four months since the work was finished, and over 80 villagers, including men and women, have not received their due payments. The villagers shared that they worked in the scorching heat, with their children by their side, to build these roads but have not been paid for their labor. They mentioned that they have been visiting the NGO's office in Umerkot daily, spending money on travel, only to be told that their payment will be deposited today or tomorrow. Despite these assurances, their issue remains unresolved. The protestors have appealed to the Deputy Commissioner of Umerkot and other authorities to ensure they receive their rightful wages and justice. They warned that if their demands are not met, they will escalate their protest.

### IBA test passed candidates protest for their offer orders in Shikarpur

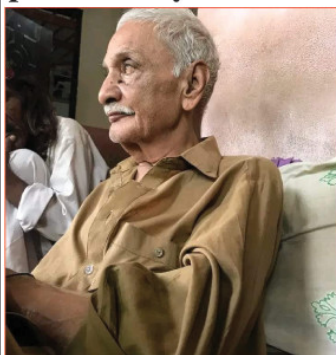


By Adeel Alvi

SHIKARPUR: The IBA test passed candidates staged a protest demonstration under the leadership of Salik Soomro, Sheeraz Siddiqui, Attaullah Channa, Sumair Soomro, Umar Mirani, Haleem Soomro, Maqsood Ahmed and others for the issuance of offer orders to them. The protest leaders said

that despite the removal ban on posting the government has delayed the process of posting teachers, who had qualified the test conducted by the IBA. They expressed concern over the performance of the Education Department officials and demanded of the higher authorities to take notice of the matter, otherwise they will be compelled to widen their protest.

### Educationist Sarwar Ali Shah Rashdi passes away in Talhar



TALHAR: Famous social leader and senior teacher Sarwar Ali Shah Rashdi passed away at the age of 65. He belonged to the Rashdi family. The deceased was the younger brother of the renowned political figure and philanthropist Asghar Ali Shah. Late Sarwar Ali Shah served for a considerable time as a teacher in the education department. He was laid to rest in the famous graveyard of the city, Lutf Ali.—RT

### Three traders go missing while going to Kandhkot

By Aftab Bhatti

KANDHKOT: Three Hindu traders of Ghauspur have mysteriously disappeared while going to Kandhkot. The missing traders include Sunjay Kumar, Nitesh Kumar and another trader. The mysterious disappearance of traders has left their

families deeply concerned, as their cell phone have also been switched off. Meanwhile, speculation has arisen that the traders may have been kidnapped, leading to disruptions in future business transactions. Police have not yet confirmed the kidnapping of the traders.

### SAU conducts successful experiment in palm oil production

By Mumtaz Ali

TANDO JAM: In a significant development, Sindh Agriculture University (SAU), Tando Jam, has successfully conducted an experiment in palm oil production. Experts highlighted the importance of establishing a marketing mechanism to encourage farmers to cultivate palm oil, which could notably reduce the country's dependence on imported edible oils and help alleviate the economic crisis. Urban investors were urged to consider investing in agriculture, underscoring its potential benefits. The seminar titled "Oil Palm Production Technology and Advanced Nursery Management," organized by SAU Tando Jam in collaboration with the Agricultural Linkages Program (ALP) of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council in Islamabad, took place at SAU Senate Hall on Friday. During the seminar Vice Chancellor Dr. Fateh Marri emphasized that Pakistan currently imports edible oils worth \$6 billion annually, making it the second-largest import after fur-nace oil. Given the economic challenges, the country aims to reduce reliance on imports, securing only \$1.5 billion from the IMF. Increasing domestic production of edible oils, particularly through palm oil cultivation in coastal, saline, and humid areas, could significantly contribute to achieving this



goal. Dr. Marri called for urban investors to invest in agriculture and encouraged collaboration among government entities, research institutions, and the Coastal Development Authority to promote palm oil cultivation among farmers. Dr. Inayatullah Rajpar, Dean of the Crop Production Faculty, stressed the importance of integrating coastal, Kirihar, Kohistan, and Thar regions into the agricultural value chain to enhance productivity. Dr. Allah Wadhayo Gandhi, Principal Investigator of the Palm Oil Project, presented findings that supported the feasibility of palm oil cultivation in suitable areas. He highlighted successful experiments conducted in Tando Jam and other regions, suggesting that palm oil could significantly benefit farmers and reduce edible oil imports. Dr. Muhammad Aslam Memon, PARC Director of Social Sciences, emphasized the need for industrial participation in the project and proposed agreements between industries, research institutions, and farmers to address various concerns. Progressive farmer Allah Warayo Bozdar emphasized the necessity of establishing a robust marketing mechanism for palm oil to ensure farmers' benefits and maintain crop diversity. The seminar also featured insights from Executive Director of Agricultural Research Sindh Dr. Wali Muhammad Baloch, Director of University Advancement and Financial Assistance Dr. Muhammad Ismail Kumbhar, Director of ORIC Dr. Tanveer Fatima Miano, Dr. Ghulam Murtaza Jamro, Juma Khan Bajkani, and other experts. The event saw active participation from agricultural experts, faculty, scholars, farmers, and students, underscoring the importance and potential impact of palm oil cultivation in Pakistan.

### DC Jacobabad Zahoor Ali Marri orders action against transporters overcharging people

By Muhammad Ali Surhio

JACOBABAD: On the orders of the Deputy Commissioner Jacobabad, Zahoor Ali Marri, RTA Muhammad Waseem and Assistant Commissioner Jacobabad, Thul, Gulam Abbas, halted several vehicles of transporters and even sealed the shops of some transporters. In this regard, Deputy Commissioner Jacobabad, Zahoor Ali Marri, stated in his statement that no leniency

will be shown to transporters who overcharge in Jacobabad district. Deputy Commissioner Jacobabad, Zahoor Ali Marri, further stated that all transporters in Jacobabad district are directed not to charge extra from passengers, otherwise legal action will be taken against them on a daily basis.

### Wedding ceremony of journalist Zulfiqar Ali Khaskheli's son held in Gharo

By Syed Daim Shah

GHARO: The wedding ceremony of the President of the Gharo Press Club, Zulfiqar Ali Khaskheli's son, was held at a marriage hall in Gharo. The leaders of different organizations, area notables, journalists and civil society leaders attended the wedding cere-

mony in a large number and felicitated the groom. Those who attended the ceremony include Dr. Imtiaz Sheerazi, Sanam Khan Qureshi, Dr. Niaz Kalah, Sarwar Shah, Mehtab Shah, Sheerazi, Ahmed Shah Bukhari, Usman Kunhar, Abdul Aziz Kalmati, Sarwar Khushk, Syed Jalal Shah, Haji Rajib Khaskheli, Niaz Sirai, Abdul Hameed Panhwar, former MPA Ghulam Qadir Paliyo, Jam Ihsan Ali Jokhio, Mir Babu Panhwar, Syed Daim Shah, Hanif Soomro, Mumtaz Brohi, Molvi Qasim Chandio, Saleh Muhammad Chandio, Iqbal Jakhro, Mehbob Brohi, Akbar Dilwani and others.

### British national appeals govt to help her return home

By Samad Ayaz

NAWABSHAH: Anita Douglas, a British resident associated with the Sikh religion, held a press conference at the Nawabshah Press Club. She converted to Islam in 2005 in Britain and was named Ayesha. She married Pakistani citizen Haroon Saleem Khan, resulting in the birth of a son. Subsequently, Haroon Saleem Khan brought her to Karachi where their marriage faced challenges. Allegedly, Haroon Saleem Khan sub-

jected Anita to daily violence, prompting her to attempt suicide in the Karachi sea. She was rescued by local fishermen and placed in the care of Sarim Burney Trust, where she found refuge for orphaned children and women. After spending some time at the Darul Aman on the directions of Sarim Burney she appeared in the interviews on various private TV channels seeking financial assistance to return to Britain. She received funds ranging from 50 to 60 lac on her appeal. Later, Sarim Burney, the owner of the trust, was accused of mishandling funds. She also accused Sarim Burney of forcing her to marry him due to which escaped with a watchman of the Darul Aman named Ghulam Rasool Arain. She has contracted marriage with Ghulam Rasool Arain and now she has gotten her passport. She requested the federal government and the philanthropists to help her to return to her homeland.

### Tando Adam factory owners refuse to purchase cotton

By Mumtaz Ali

TANDO ADAM: In Tando Adam town, factory owners have shut down factories and refused to purchase cotton in Tando Adam. The protest leaders, who in-

cluded Mehbob Marri, Ehsan Sival, Mukhtiar Marri, Rafique Marri, Ali Nawaz Marri, and others, protested after factories were closed abnd the purchase of cotton was also halted. They stated that not only has this caused financial losses to them when crops are ready, but also the federal government has imposed taxes on the cotton spinning industry, which factory owners refuse to accept.



# SPORTS



## Ricky Ponting has an advice for chokers South Africa ahead of T20 World Cup final



Australia's two-time World Cup-winning captain Ricky Ponting offered a piece of advice for South Africa ahead of their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 final against India. South Africa and India will lock horns in the final of the ongoing mega event at Kensington Oval, Barbados on June 29.

This is the first time the Proteas Men are competing in a World Cup final, having lost seven semi-finals, including a gut-wrenching defeat against Australia in the 1999 World Cup.

Meanwhile, former Australia captain Ponting wants South Africa to embrace the importance of the big match and advised the team to enjoy it as they have not been there before.

"A lot of teams say 'It's just another game' and they try and hide away from how big the occasion is and it is no good doing that. It is all about embracing it for what it is," Ponting stated.

"These players haven't been there before, so enjoy tonight, enjoy tomorrow. But make sure everything you do leading in is the same and your preparation is the same," he added.

Ricky Ponting also lauded South Africa for maintaining a perfect record in the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024 as the side is the only team to have won all of their matches and urged them to be themselves in the final.

"They are undefeated up to here, so they don't need to change anything and they don't need to try any harder."

"They just need to turn up and be the best version of themselves and the best version of themselves as a team on the day and give themselves the best chance."

"If they do that, they will be hard to beat."—Agency

## Form 47 captain Babar Azam kicks off training after T20 World Cup debacle

LAHORE: Pakistan's white-ball captain Babar Azam has commenced training briefly after his return from the United States of America (USA) where he led the national team in the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

According to the details, Babar started physical training at National Cricket Academy (NCA). The right-handed batter trained for two hours in the scorching heat in a bid to focus on his fitness.

Details further suggest that Babar Azam will start batting in the nets from Monday and is available for the upcoming home Test series against Bangladesh.

The star batter, however, will partake in Global T20



Canada 2024 where he will represent Vancouver Knights, prior to the Bangladesh Tests.

The fourth season of the GT20 will run from July 25 until August 11. The six-team tournament will be played at TD Cricket Arena in Brampton.

For the unversed, Babar Azam and the team have been under severe criticism following the team's dismal campaign in the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024.

Pakistan had a disastrous start to their campaign as they endured a shock loss against the USA in the Super Over as they failed to chase

down the 19-run target.

Following the defeat against the USA, Pakistan succumbed to a frustrating six-run defeat against arch-rivals India.

The back-to-back defeats put Pakistan on the verge of an early exit from the tournament. The former champions got on the winning track when they registered a hard-fought seven-wicket victory over Canada to keep Super Eights hopes alive.

However, the USA's match against Ireland was abandoned without a ball bowled due to persistent rain in Florida, resulting in Pakistan getting knocked out of the tournament as the USA progressed from Group A along with India.—Agency

## Cristiano Ronaldo shares adorable moment with kids after defeat to Georgia



Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo shared another adorable moment with his kids on his social media on Friday after spending quality time with his family in Portugal a day earlier following a 2-0 defeat to Georgia in Euro 2024.

Ronaldo took to Instagram and posted a heart-warming picture in which he was seen holding his son as he sat on his lap while his daughters stood alongside him. All three of the kids were found wearing the jerseys of the Portugal team. He captioned the post with six red heart emojis.

Prior to this, his partner, Georgina Rodriguez, shared cute pictures on her Instagram story of the Portuguese player enjoying tea with their daughter Bella, who was seen sitting on his lap sipping juice. She captioned the story "twins" with a heart emoji.

The five times Ballon d'Or winner is one of the most admired and followed football players across the globe. He has gained many accolades as well as won many awards.

Moreover, in tough competition with his rival Lionel Messi, he also topped the list of Forbes' highest-paid athletes.

After gaining popularity in Saudi Arabia for playing for Al Nassr, he is currently representing Portugal in Euro 2024.—Agency

## Pakistan's first Olympic markswoman guns for historic medal

JHELUM: Slowing her breath and focusing on a bulls-eye in her pistol's sights, Kishmala Talat is aiming to become the first woman from Pakistan to win an Olympic medal.

At the Paris Games starting on July 26, Talat will compete in the 10m air pistol and 25m pistol events, going for glory abroad and defying stereotypes back home.



Pakistan's medal prospects are undercut by modesty codes which dissuade women from participating in sport.

The 21-year-old Talat, who comes from a military family, is the first Pakistani woman to qualify for Olympic shooting.

"In Pakistan there's a prevalent taboo that dictates girls should stay at home, do girly things, and play with dolls, while boys are to play with guns," she said.

"I see no one as competition. I compete with myself," she told AFP at a target range in the eastern city of Jhelum.

"Wanted to do more"

Talat has won dozens of medals at national level and four internationally, including Pakistan's first shooting medal ever, a bronze, at the Asian Games last year.

Pakistan has only ever won 10 Olympic medals — all by men — and none since the 1992 Games.

Talat, who has just completed her university degree in communications, realistically faces an uphill task to get on the podium in Paris.

She has a global ranking of 37th in the 10m event and 41st in the 25m, according to the International Shooting Sport Federation.

"I longed for recognition. I wanted to do more," she said.

"I wanted that whenever

shooting is discussed, or 'Kishmala' is mentioned, it would be associated with someone who did something great for Pakistan."

Hoping to defy the odds, she spends 10 hours a day training — one hour of physical exercise and then four hours each on the 10m and 25m ranges.

The last hour in the evening is spent meditating, concentrating on the flickering flame of a candle in an attempt to hone the zen needed to find her target.

"I am dedicated to giving my best performance to let Pakistan's name shine," said Talat.

She takes her shots with her spare hand stuffed in her pocket and one eye covered by custom-fit glasses, her face frozen in expressionless concentration.—Agency

## Match officials for T20 World Cup 2024 final confirmed



DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday, confirmed the match officials for the highly-anticipated final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 final between India and South Africa.

According to the apex cricketing body, Richard Illingworth and Chris Gaffaney will serve as the on-field umpires while Richard Kettleborough will take up the role of the TV umpire.

Furthermore, Rodney Tucker will be the fourth-umpire of the high-stakes match.

India and South Africa will lock horns in the high-voltage T20 World Cup 2024 final at Kensington Oval, Barbados on June 29. The final of the 20-team tournament will start at 7:30 PM, Pakistan Standard Time (PST).

South Africa won all eight matches they have played so far while India won seven out of eight as their group-stage fixture against Canada was abandoned without a ball bowled.—Agency

around 10:30 AM local time (7:30 PM PST), the scheduled start time of the game.

Moreover, the forecast remains grim late in the evening with a 50% chance of precipitation at 4:00 pm local time (1:00 AM PST), posing a threat to the possibility of a full-fledged match.

As a result, the ICC has allocated a reserve day for the final on June 30 in a bid to ensure the completion of the high-stakes match but rigorous efforts will be made to complete the game as per the original schedule.

Remember, both teams will need to bat a minimum of ten overs to determine the result through the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method, unlike the group-stage matches where five overs per side are enough to produce the result.

However, bad weather will likely affect the final as heavy rainfall is expected throughout the day.

According to weather.com, there are 66 per cent chances of rain at

## Inzamam hits back at Rohit Sharma amid reverse-swing debate



Former Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq gave India skipper Rohit Sharma a befitting response in the wake of an ongoing reverse-swing debate.

Pakistan's batting great earlier questioned Indian pacers' ability to reverse the ball early, citing the example of Arshdeep Singh bowling the 15th over against Australia in the Super Eights of the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

In response, the Indian captain indirectly told the Pakistan great to use his brain before going on to explain the factors causing the ball to reverse.

"What answer will I give? If you are playing under the sun and the wickets are this dry, the ball will reverse on its own. The ball is reversing for all teams. Not just for us," stated Rohit.

"Sometimes, it's important to open your mind (use your brain). You have to understand where we are playing. We are not playing in England or Australia," he added.

But the debate continued as Inzamam-ul-Haq responded to Rohit Sharma's "use your brain" remarks, stating "don't teach something to someone who actually taught it to the world."

"We shall definitely use our brains but the first thing is that he (Rohit) admitted that it's happening. So it means what we observed is correct."

"Secondly, Rohit does not need to tell us how reverse swing works, under how much sun, on what pitch; you don't teach something to someone who actually taught it to the world. Tell him it's not right to say these things."—Agency

## Rain threat looms large over T20 World Cup 2024 final

BARBADOS: The highly-anticipated ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 final between India and South Africa, scheduled here at Kensington Oval on June 29, is likely to be affected by rain.

The bad weather may play spoilsport in the final as rain is expected throughout the day.

According to weather.com, there are 66 per cent chances of rain at around 10:30 AM local time (7:30 PM PST), the scheduled start time of the game.

Moreover, the forecast remains grim late in the evening with a 50% chance of precipitation at 4:00 pm local time (1:00 AM PST),



posing a threat to the possibility of a full-fledged match.

As a result, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has allocated a reserve day for the final on June 30 in a bid to ensure the completion of the high-stakes match but rigorous efforts will be made to complete the game as per the original schedule.

Remember, both teams will need to bat a minimum of ten overs to determine the result through the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method, unlike the group-stage matches where five overs per side are enough to produce the result.

Despite all the efforts, if both teams did not manage to bat ten overs each across the two-day period then the trophy will be shared.

India and South Africa are unstoppable in the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024 as both the finalists are thus far unbeaten.

South Africa won all eight matches they have played so far while India won seven out of eight as their group-stage fixture against Canada was abandoned without a ball bowled.—Agency

## Face of the Day



Name: Sherry Butt  
Location: Lahore  
About me: I hate the Pakistan Cricket Team

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

## ENTERTAINMENT

### Dua Lipa reunites with THIS guest after six years at Glastonbury Festival



Dua Lipa is reported to reunite with a special guest for unforgettable performance at Glastonbury's Pyramid Stage tonight.

As reported by The Sun, insiders revealed that Lipa will reunite Calvin Harris after six years after their chart-topping hit One Kiss.

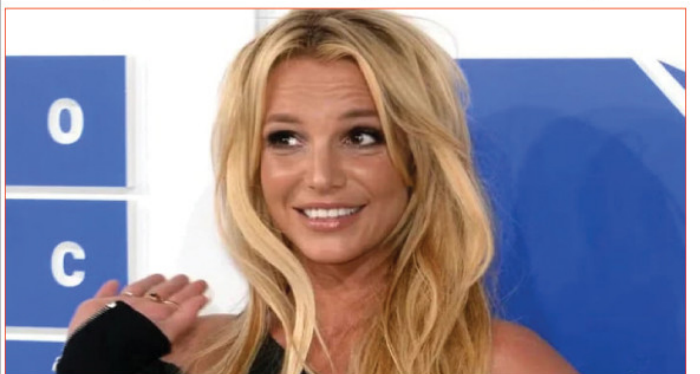
Calvin Harris, who is currently staying at Babington House just 20 miles from the festival site, will join Dua Lipa on stage according to sources.

They said, "It seems Calvin is going to be coming out with Dua as one of her surprise guests tonight."

"He is staying at Babington House, a really lovely hotel where loads of celebrities stay before they come to Glastonbury," they added.

Insider also shared that "he will be flying in later on a helicopter before coming out to join her on stage for One Kiss," adding, "Dua has a huge amount of respect for Calvin and that track is one of her best hits." This highly anticipated performance marks the first of the big headline acts at Glastonbury, with Coldplay set to take the stage on Saturday and SZA on Sunday.

### Crazy but sexy Britney Spears 'incredibly happy' after finding beacon of hope



Britney Spears is seemingly feeling great since the return of her brother Bryan Spears in her life.

As per the new findings of Life & Style, Britney Spears is coming back to her normal life because of her brother's love and care.

Speaking of Britney's brother, the insider shared, "He's already had such a positive influence on her, even if it is one day at a time as far as her recovery and stability goes."

They also added, "Just the fact that they're now talking to her again shows the progress she's made and is a huge step."

"Her boys are very happy that Bryan is back on the scene," the source also claimed about her kids, Sean and Jayden.

It is pertinent to mention here that Britney Spears tied the knot with Kevin Federline on September 18, 2004.

The couple welcomed two sons Sean, and Jayden in their marriage. However, after the duo's divorce her ex-husband was given full custody of the boys in 2008 because of Britney's mental condition.

However, the source claimed about the Toxic crooner's social media posts, "They won't like that she's gone and she blabbed about it on Instagram, but she just couldn't help it. She's so incredibly happy."

Conclusively, they declared, "Everyone is trying to get her to manage her expectations a little bit because in true Britney fashion she's going from zero to a hundred and talking about all the things she wants to do with them, the trips she wants to take with them, the gifts she wants to send."



# THE HEARTLAND



## Thardeep Rural Development holds an awareness seminar in Tando Allahyar

**By Afaq Khanzada**

TANDO ALLAHYAR: In Tando Allahyar, under the auspices of the social organization Thardeep Rural Development Groups Program, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) conducted a seminar in a local hall focusing on various sectors including social welfare, livelihood improvement, livestock and women's empowerment. Many businessmen and women participated actively in the seminar, where journalists also covered the event. The purpose of the seminar was to inform entrepreneurs about grants available to them for enhancing their businesses, thereby contributing to the country's development and prosperity. Thardeep has allocated grants totaling 25 lac to 3 crore rupees for various businesses. The seminar aimed to raise awareness among entrepreneurs so they can benefit fully from these opportunities.

## Cotton factories stop purchase of cotton in protest against new taxes

**By M Ismail Khilji**

PITHORO: The federal government's recent budget imposition of additional taxes on cotton factories has sparked protests from the Sindh Cotton Ginners Association, leading to a strike. The announcement of not buying raw cotton in 350 ginning factories across Sindh, including other districts, has been made, and the purchase of cotton has been halted, causing its price to drop by Rs 3,000 per maund. In various areas including Umerkot, Samaro, Kunri, and others, the buying of cotton at Rs 9,200 per maund has been stopped, causing distress among farmers and cotton growers. Farmers such as Ameer Hassan Arisar, Amanullah Sand, Manzoor Arisar, Iqbal Nohro, and others are deeply concerned, stating that Pakistan ranks among the world's top five cotton producing countries, yet they regret the government's flawed policies causing severe damage to the country's agriculture. Various taxes have been imposed on cotton factories, as well as on edible oil, leading to a significant increase in costs and beginning of the season with a crisis of cotton.

## Met Dept issues forecast about above average monsoon rains in Sindh

**By Raja Zafar Iqbal**

BADIN: The Pakistan Meteorological Department and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Government of Sindh, have issued a weather forecast/advisory stating that the monsoon rain system entered Sindh on June 26, bringing with it the likelihood of heavy rain accompanied by dust storms. In response to this situation, Deputy Commissioner Yasir Bhatti of Badin has issued a circular to all relevant departments, including Local Government, Public Health Engineering, Irrigation Department, Drainage, Health, Livestock, Fisheries, Social Welfare, and others, canceling holidays and instructing them to remain on high alert. Officers of these departments have been directed to stay at their headquarters, keep their phones operational at all times, and not leave without informing higher authorities. Immediate preventive measures must be implemented to prevent loss of life and damage to property, including ensuring cleanliness and clearing drainage systems. Any negligence or carelessness will be treated as a serious offense, and legal action will be promptly taken as per the applicable laws.

## Population Welfare Dept holds Family Health Mela in Larkana

**By Saleem Soomro**

LARKANA: In a significant initiative, the Population Welfare Department holds a Family Health Mela near Dhamrah in Larkana. The event was inaugurated by Assistant Commissioner Larkana Raja Khan Qureshi, Assistant Commissioner Dokri Farzana Mirani, Assistant Commissioner Ratodero Kainat Tufail Shaikh, Divisional Coordination Task Force Shahzad Ali, District Officer Population Welfare Karim Bux Bhutto and others. The Family Health Mela aimed to provide health facilities through collaboration with various institutions including Family Planning Larkana, PPHI Larkana, IRC, Marie Stopes Society and DHO Office Larkana. The event facilitated free medical check-ups for 1280 attendees, with 138 cases addressed in family planning services. Free medicines, contraceptives, and other essentials were distributed to needy women. Guests participating in the event included Focal Person Abdul Waheed Chandio, Program in-charge Dr. Shah Baig, Dr. Kulsoom, Dr. Afroz, Dr. Rashida, Dr. Najam, Dr. Hira Kambhoj, Dr. Taranum, Dr. Yasmin, Dr. Haleema, and others. The collaborative effort in the Family Health Mela is seen as a promising step towards improving outcomes in Population Welfare activities in Larkana.

## Badin widow demands justice in property dispute

**By Raja Zafar Iqbal**

BADIN: In Badin, a widow is protesting against the occupation of her plot, demanding justice. Ayesha, the wife of Amon Raj, resident of Ahmed Raji village along with her daughter Fehmida Raji addressed a press conference after protesting in front of the press club. She stated that her opponents have occupied her personal plot and evicted her from her house. Despite seeking help from influential people, justice has not been served. Ayesha alleged that Nazir Raju and others not only occupied her plot but also took over the houses and evicted her family. Her husband, Nawaz Raju, was thrown out of the house when he asked them to vacate the property. They are calling on the Sessions Judge Badin, SSP Badin, and other higher authorities to take strict action against the accused and provide justice to them.

## AC Ghulam Abbas Sadhayo ensures refund of excessive fares collected by transporters

**By Khair Muhammad Golo**

THUL: In Thul, the Assistant Commissioner took action against those charging excessive fares based on public complaints. The office of a coach service traveling from Thul to Karachi was sealed, and it was reopened two hours later. Additionally, raids were conducted on registered LPG shops, resulting in the sealing of three shops. According to the report, yesterday, Assistant Commissioner Ghulam Abbas Sadhayo, acting on public complaints, conducted a raid along with the Transport Inspector on the office of a coach service operating from Thul to Karachi. They inquired about the fares from passengers, who reported being charged 2500 rupees.

## NWM notable dies of heatstroke amidst prolonged power outages

**By Yousif Rind**

NAWAB WALI MUHAMMAD: A political and social figure of the city and a notable leader of the Rind community, Haji Muhammad Urs Rind's elder brother, Haji Muhammad Musa Rind, fell ill due to the intense heat and the malfunctioning of the city's main burned transformer. He was taken to Hyderabad Hospital, where he passed away. His funeral prayers were offered at the city's Jamia Mosque. It is noteworthy that the city's main transformer in Nawab Wali Muhammad has been malfunctioning for three days. The citizens have demanded the HESCO Chief to repair the transformer and restore the electricity as soon as possible.

**By Hanif Panwar**

MEHAR: The flood affected people, who have been issued financial assistance through the Bank Islami are facing many hardships due to failure of the bank's system. In this regard it was learnt that a large number of people gather outside the Bank Islami Mehar on a daily basis but they get only reply that the system is not working. The people are even not able to know about the available balance in their accounts. In this regard the affected people said that they have to face many hardships in getting the financial assistance from the bank due to its faulty system. They demanded of the DC Dadu and other higher authorities to take notice of the matter and provide relief to them.

## Flood affectees protest against inept performance of Bank Islami

**By Muhammad Bachal**

UMERKOT: The Assistant Commissioner Pithoro, Sanjay Kumar, on the request of journalist Muhammad Bachal Shar paid a visit to Shadi Palli city on Friday. During his visit, the AC

## Police constable martyred, 1 injured and 1 abducted by Kandhkot dacoits

**By Aftab Bhatti**

KANDHKOT: In the attack on the police check post in the jurisdiction of the Andar Sundrani Police Station, a tragic firing incident resulted in the martyrdom of Police Constable Saheb Dino Abbasi. Another constable, Ismail Shah, was injured during the attack. Constable Fattah Sangi was abducted by the assailants following the attack on the police check post. The attackers also took away government-issued weapons. The injured constable was rushed to a nearby hospital for urgent medical treatment. The martyr's funeral prayers were held with great reverence at the SSP office in Mirpur Mathelo.

## Moro Hotel owner booked in power theft case

**By Akhtar Laghari**

MORO: A case of electricity theft has been registered in Moro, and a task force led by SSP Sheeraz Ahmed Memon is overseeing the investigation. It is alleged that illegal electricity usage was detected at the hotel owned by Rana Abdul Sattar. The case of electricity theft has been filed against Rana Abdul Sattar. Sheeraz Ahmed Memon has mentioned that electricity theft was confirmed at the hotel where this illegal activity has been ongoing for a considerable period. He announced to take stern action against the employees also if they are found involved in any illegal practice.

## Project of RSPN, NRSP for youth empowerment reviewed in Matiari

**By Sajjad Ali Abbasi**

MATIARI: In Matiari, under the leadership of RSPN and NRSP and with the support of UNFPA Pakistan, various departments of the Sindh Government, including the Sindh Secretariat, Sports and Youth Affairs, Social Welfare Department and Population Welfare Department, goal is to empower the youth by collaborating with the Sindh Government on various issues and projects, ensuring that more young people health. The visit included a tour of the AKU health facility established at Matiari Hospital and the Adolescent and Youth-Friendly Space (AYFS) set up by NRSP in the village of Pinyu Khatri. The purpose of this visit was to explore how the ongoing projects by NRSP and RSPN, funded by UNFPA, can be effectively run with the assistance of government institutions. The goal is to empower the youth by collaborating with the Sindh Government on various issues and projects, ensuring that more young people health. The visit included a tour of the AKU health facility established at

## Man killed, 4 injured in fatal Bakhshapur road accident

**By Khair Muhammad Golo**

THUL: A high-speed car overturned in the limits of the A-Section police station near Bachro in Thul, resulting in the immediate death of Chairman Domki, a resident of Bakhshapur. Additionally, three women and a child were injured and admitted to the taluka hospital and then handed over to the relatives. The high-speed car overturned leading to the death of the Bakhshapur resident. The body has been handed over to the relatives.

## Sindh Public Service Commission accused of rampant corruption, nepotism

**By MM Faisal**

KUNRI: The Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC) Hyderabad has again been embroiled in controversy over alleged corruption and nepotism in the recent agriculture officer results. Candidates have raised concerns about the commission's lack of transparency, citing instances where those with lower written marks (40) secured high viva marks (80), while those with average marks (55-70) were ignored in the interview results. The SPSC's history of corruption and nepotism has eroded trust in the commission, with every recruitment process marred by allegations of corruption. It appears that the commission prioritizes personal gain over selecting the most qualified candidates. The people of Sindh demand justice and transparency from the SPSC, urging the Chief Minister and Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party to take immediate action to address these allegations.

## DC Zahid Hussain Rind visits Sujawal after heavy rains

**By Kamran Hidayat**

SUJAWAL: During heavy rainfall in Sujawal, Deputy Commissioner Zahid Hussain Rind, along with Town Chairman Syed Aftab Hussain Shah Sheerazi, visited various areas of Sujawal city late last night. They inspected the drainage of rainwater, cleanliness operations, and disposal arrangements in different parts of the city. On the occasion, they instructed the local officials to ensure complete drainage of rainwater and activate disposal operations promptly. It was emphasized that their presence in the field during rainfall ensures effective use of machinery to alleviate concerns among the residents.

## Shadi Palli's mafia defies AC Sanjay Kumar's orders

**By Muhammad Bachal**

UMERKOT: The Assistant Commissioner Pithoro, Sanjay Kumar, on the request of journalist Muhammad Bachal Shar paid a visit to Shadi Palli city on Friday. During his visit, the AC Pithoro ordered the closure of an illegally set up taxi stand near the railway station. The AC sealed a petrol pump for not presenting the NOC. It is worth mentioning that after the departure of the Assistant Commissioner the taxi stand was continued its operations and the petrol pump also started sale of petrol. The people have expressed concern over the authority of the Assistant Commissioner because the people involved in illegal practices have shown dare to break the seals.

## ASI killed, 15 injured in Nawabshah road mishap

**By Samad Ayaz**

NAWABSHAH: A passenger van overturned after tyre burst near Qazi Ahmed Mor on Friday. The incident resulted in the death of a man and injuries to 12 others. Injured victims include Rabia Dahri, Khan Muhammad Dahri, Abdul Rashid Siyal, Ali Gohar Rajpar, Ata-ur-Rehman Siyal, Muhammad Rahim Kunbhar, Muhammad Urs Kunbhar, Sanas Bagri, van driver Gulbhar Dahri, Koral, Rafia Dahri, Balu Ram Bagri, Kasir Das. The deceased Police ASI was identified as Mir Muhammad Zardari.

## Tando Allahyar Police arrest a notorious criminal

**By Afaq Khanzada**

TANDO ALLAHYAR: Tando Allahyar Police after meeting with an encounter managed to arrest a notorious criminal named Sikandar alias Salamon Mangrio in injured condition near Tando Allahyar on Friday. One accomplice of the arrested criminal managed to flee from the scene. The arrested man was wanted by the police in several cases.

## Larkana Police arrest three notorious criminals

**By Saleem Soomro**

LARKANA: Larkana Police continued operations against the criminals on orders of the SSP Larkana. In this regard it was learnt that the Larkana Police conducted raids in the jurisdiction of the Arja Police Station and Allahabad Police Station. The police after meeting with encounters managed to arrest two notorious criminals named Hubdar Gadahi and Shamhor Marfani Abro in injured conditions. According to the police both the arrested criminals were wanted by the police in several cases. It is worth mentioning that the police conducted a raid in the jurisdiction of the Hassan Wahan Police Station and managed to arrest a criminal named Jaffar S/o Luqman Machhi, who was wanted by the police in a murder case of Sikanar Sahro.

## Sindh Police issue list of most wanted robbers

**By Khair Muhammad Golo**

HYDERABAD: Sindh Police, in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs, has released a list of 42 extremely dangerous robbers operating in the Hyderabad range. ARY News reported on Friday. This move comes as part of an intensified crackdown on criminal activities following a similar operation in the Sukkur range. A substantial bounty, amounting to billions, has been announced for the capture of these criminals, either alive or dead. The list details the distribution of these robbers across various districts: 12 in Jamshoro, 18 in Matiari, 11 in Dadu, and one in Tando Allahyar. The police have stated that this action is a precursor to a rigorous operation aimed at eradicating crime in the Hyderabad range.—RT

## Justice Mohammad Faisal Kamal Alam Encourages Young Lawyers At High Court Bar Hyderabad

**By Abdul Wahab Munshi**

Hyderabad: Justice Mohammad Faisal Kamal Alam delivered a noteworthy address at the High Court Bar Hyderabad, emphasizing the importance of keeping the legal profession independent of political influences. He urged senior and junior lawyers to synergize their efforts for the Bar's strength, emphasizing the role of senior advocates advised young lawyers to focus on legal research using resources like the Sindh High Court website. He encouraged embracing international standards in dispute resolution, such as mediation and arbitration, to enhance legal practice globally. Justice Kamal urged lawyers to expand their horizons beyond local boundaries and aim for international recognition in their careers.



# METRO KARACHI



## PTI Karachi Protests Against Excessive Load Shedding and High Electricity Bills



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah is presiding over a meeting of the Energy Department, at the CM House.—RT

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Karachi Division organized a protest outside the K-Electric head office at Gizri Karachi against unannounced load shedding and high electricity bills. A large number of PTI leaders, workers, and citizens participated in the protest.

Prominent participants, including PTI Sindh President Hafeem Adil Sheikh, Karachi Division President Raja Azhar and others, participated in the protest. The protesters chanted slogans against K-Electric's excesses and demanded that Karachi be declared a load-shedding-free zone. PTI leaders submitted a charter of demands at the K-Electric head office.



power outages had made the life unbearable for citizens, with over 800 deaths reported in the past week. Sheikh pointed out that electricity tariffs had been raised three times in one month, making it impossible for people to pay. He criticized the Sindh government for sending police to stop the protest, and accused the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of siding with K-Electric instead of the people.

Sheikh demanded accountability for the 800 deaths reported in the last eight days, asking Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon to explain where those bodies came from. He stated that social leader Faisal Edhi, who reported the deaths, had no political agenda. Sheikh also criticized the Sindh government for neglecting Karachi over the past 16 years, turning it into a concrete jungle without

planting trees or improving water supply, leading to increased heat. Sheikh further stated that while Karachi supported the entire country financially, the city's residents receive nothing but corpses in return. He labeled K-Electric as "killer electric" and vowed to challenge their excesses in court and investigate the 800 deaths. He also called on Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to clarify his promise of providing 300 free electricity units, questioning who actually receives them.

PTI Karachi Division President Raja Azhar also addressed the protest, challenging K-Electric CEO Moonis Alvi to disclose his electricity bill. Azhar highlighted the discrepancy in electricity bills between Sindh and other provinces, with Karachi facing exorbitant

rates despite generating power for the entire country. He demanded an end to load shedding and warned of intensified protests if K-Electric fails to comply. PTI Sindh's Additional Secretary, Rizwan Nazir, said that 2,500 to 3,000 megawatts of electricity were needed in Karachi, which could be generated from waste. He stated that the cost of producing electricity from waste could be as low as Rs 3 per unit.

The protest concluded with a march from Gizri to Korangi led by Hafeem Adil Sheikh, demanding the immediate release of the PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi, and the dismissal of false cases against them.—RT/Agency

## Murad Orders Acceleration Of Solarization Of Government Offices

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday directed the authorities concerned to expedite the solarisation of government offices across the province.

The chief minister made these remarks while chairing a meeting in Karachi today.

During the meeting, Murad Ali Shah emphasized that converting government buildings to solar power will lead to substantial reductions in electricity expenses.

He directed Energy Minister Nasir Shah to accelerate the solarization efforts starting from the financial year.

Earlier, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab announced to solarise three major roads of Karachi including Shahrah-e-Faisal in collaboration with the World Bank.



In a statement issued here, the mayor of Karachi said that the project, worth Rs1 billion would be completed with the assistance of the World Bank. Besides Shahrah-e-Faisal, Shahrah-e-Iran and Marine Drive in Clifton area would also be solarised.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that after the pilot project, 103 additional

## Sindh Assembly Passes Budget for FY 2024-25



KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly on Friday has officially approved the budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, totaling an amount of Rs3 056 trillion, media reported.

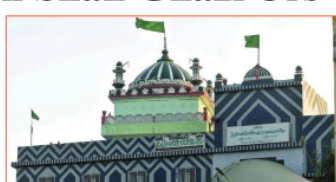
The finance bill, crucial for outlining the financial framework for the upcoming year, was presented and passed with a majority vote despite the opposition members expressing disapproval in the assembly.

During the session, opposition lawmakers staged protests and chanting slogans against the passage of the finance bill for FY 2024-25, demanding the bill should be approved in a phased manner.—RT

## Karachi to Observe Public Holiday on June 29 for Abdullah Shah Ghazi Urs

KARACHI: Karachi administration on Friday announced a public holiday tomorrow (June 29) in the metropolis on account of Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi's Urs (death anniversary).

Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab made the official announcement for the holiday.



Wahab said that all the offices present under the jurisdiction of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) will remain closed on Saturday. However, the offices responsible for performing essential services will stay functional during the public holiday, he added.

The mayor said that the public holiday was declared in accordance with the city council's resolution.

The Urs, of the highly beloved saint is observed every year between Zilhaj 20 and 22 at his shrine located at

Clifton, Karachi.

Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori inaugurated the 1294th annual urs celebrations of Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi at his shrine on Thursday.

The governor laid a wreath on the saint's grave and offered prayers for the development of the country. Later, the governor distributed clothes, water, juices and meals among pilgrims.

The Urs of the revered saint is celebrated traditional fervour every year, with festivities such as qawwali and milad. People from different areas of the port city, interior Sindh as well as other regions of the country travel long distances to take part in the Urs processions out of immense affection and respect for the saint.

Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi was a Sufi saint, who was born in 109 Hijri. He came to Karachi during the Umayyad Dynasty's rule in 1938 Hijri. Since then, he has been recognised by his devotees.—RT/Agency

## Mayor Inaugurates Recreational Facilities and Visits Abdullah Shah Ghazi's Shrine

KARACHI: Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Friday inaugurated the special recreational facilities, Amusement Multi-Adventure and Junior Multi-Adventure Challenge Course, at Safari Park.

Speaking to media on this occasion, Mr Wahab, "We have plan to restore other neglected parks and regard the city's resources as a public trust. This is the Safari Park we dreamed of. The Jumbo Jump will be opened in a few days, and we also have a plan to include jungle trails and tracks in the park."

He said that the promises made to the people of Karachi were being fulfilled. He emphasized the proper utilization of KMC's assets, ending the negative perception about Karachi, and proving the opponents' narratives false.

Wahab reiterated their promise to restore Karachi's vibrancy and eliminate negative elements from the city. He highlighted the improvements seen in the park and the revival of previously closed spaces.

He mentioned that



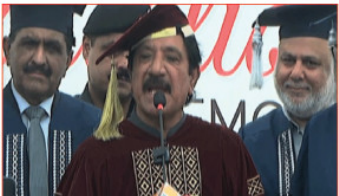
those projects would provide modern recreational facilities for both children and adults, operated under public-private partnership. "Children aged 8 to 15 will have access to multi-adventure amusement facilities at the Safari Park. "We have introduced a zip line in Safari Park and aim to provide more affordable and quality recreational facilities to Karachi's citizens."

Visit to Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi

Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab Mayor on Friday visited the shrine of Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi (RA) and, on behalf of the citizens of Karachi, laid a chadar on the shrine and offered fatha on the occasion of the saint's annual Urs.

He remarked that Karachi was honored to have the blessed shrine of such a great saint, Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi (RA). A large number of devotees from Karachi and other cities came to the shrine during the Urs. During the three-day Urs, excellent arrangements had been made at the shrine by the Karachi administration. In connection with the annual Urs of Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi (RA), KMC has announced a local holiday in Karachi on Saturday, June 29th. All offices within the jurisdiction of KMC, except for essential services, will remain closed on this occasion.—RT

## Provincial Minister Ali Hassan Zardari Vows To Crack Down On Use Of Drugs And Mobile Phones In Sindh's Jails



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Jail, Ali Hassan Zardari, on Friday responded to questions regarding "usage of drugs and mobile phones" in jails of the province.

During ceremony, media asked the minister: "Is drugs and mobile phone usage prevalent in Sindh's jails? Are fees being charged from visitors?"

Sindh Minister for Jail, acknowledging some improvements in the department deferred the complete resolution of the issues to divine intervention. "Many things have improved since assuming charge of office," he claimed, adding, "Only God can make things completely right."

The minister emphasized his commitment to transparency, stating, "I believe in speaking the truth."

Ali Hassan Zardari said he pays sudden visit to the jails of the province to analyze the situation. "When I suddenly visit the jails, a whistle is blown, and everyone finds out that the minister is here," he explained.

The minister sought assistance from the media for betterment of the department.

"Help me, support me," he appealed, underscoring the need for collective efforts to improve the prison system.

Earlier in 2021, Karachi police arrested two alleged members of a drug-smuggling gang besides recovering heroin capsules. Two alleged members of a drug-smuggling gang were arrested by the officials of Ajmer Nagri police station during a raid in Karachi.—RT/Agency

## Pakistani-American Businessman Ali Sheikhan Expresses Interest In Buying Public Enemy Number One K-Electric

KARACHI: Pakistani-American businessman Ali Sheikhan taking to his short-video streaming platform Instagram claimed he wanted to 'buy' K-Electric Supply Company so people of Karachi to get rid of hours-long load shedding.

He said people of Karachi have been suffering from dacoity and robbery incidents and so many of them lost their lives while resisting mobile snatching incidents.

Ali Sheikhan said he wanted to buy K-electric not to make money out of Karachi but to serve the middle-class people of 'his city'—Karachi.

Who is Ali Sheikhan? Ali Sheikhan is an "entrepreneur" of Pakistani descent residing in Houston, Texas, and chairman of the Sheikhan Group of companies.



What is Sheikhan Group? The Sheikhan Group was founded in 2012 with the goal of rapid growth through a diverse portfolio of retail chains, gas stations, shopping plazas, construction companies, and restaurants. With a focus on property acquisition, development, and management, the Sheikhan Group prioritizes quality experiences in retail, energy, and dining.

Earlier, K-Electric had requested the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) to increase the base electricity tariff in Karachi by Rs10 from Rs33 to Rs44, as part of K-Electric's comprehensive investment plan including establishing 14 new grid stations and laying 550 kilometers of transmission lines in Karachi over the next 7 years.—RT/Agency

## Fake Doctor Arrested at Karachi Civil Hospital

KARACHI: A fake doctor has been apprehended from Karachi Civil Hospital, media reported on Friday.

According to details, a man named Abdullah, who is said to be a bakery worker, was doing round in the Civil Hospital's Trauma Centre by wearing doctor's gown.

The security guard got suspicious of his get-up and upon verification he was found fake and handed over to the police.

The fake doctor told the police that he had been dreaming of becoming a medical practitioner since childhood but could not make it through as far as his educational qualifications were concerned.

So, he put on the doctor's gown and reached the hospital to treat patients. But, his college boy looks and fancy hairstyle exposed him to the guards who handed him over to the cops present at the picket set up at the Civil Hospital.

The police said, the same guy was also apprehended by the hospital administration, three months earlier and later was released on a warning. In 2018, police arrested a fake lady doctor from Karachi's Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) Karachi Women's Police SHO Syeda Ghazala said the suspect had been working at JPMC's gynaecology ward for the past one year.—RT/Agency



## KCCI to Organize Free Medical Camp on June 29

KARACHI: The Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) in collaboration with Dr. Essa's Laboratory & Diagnostic Center, Al-Mustafa Welfare Trust and Pakistan Eye Bank Society will be organizing a "Free Medical Camp" at KCCI Auditorium on Saturday, June 29, 2024 from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

According to a KCCI statement on Friday, Free tests for cholesterol, fasting/random sugar and Bone Mineral Density Tests etc. will be offered to visitors along with valuable insight on health and free consultation by dentist, eye specialist, general physician and physiotherapist.

President KCCI Ifthikhar Ahmed Sheikh has requested people from all walks to life, particularly KCCI Members to take advantage of the free of cost healthcare facilities being provided at KCCI's Medical Camp under KCCI Chamber's Corporate Social Responsibility program.—RT

## 3% Sales Tax Imposed on Sindh Schools Charging Rs42,000 Monthly Fees

KARACHI: The Sindh government is going to charge a three per cent sales tax on educational institutions whose annual fee is more than Rs500,000, it has emerged.

Likewise, private hospitals that charge Rs25,000 per day for a private room or bed and consultant doctors who charge over Rs3,000 as their fees would be taxed at the rate of 3pc.

This was announced by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah while speaking on the floor of the house on Thursday.

The proposal to bring education institutions, private hospitals and doctors under the sales tax net was part of the Sindh budget for the financial year 2024-25. The



He said that the tax received from private educational institutions would be given to the education department.

CM Shah, who also holds the portfolio of finance, told lawmakers that every school with a monthly fee of Rs42,000 per month would be taxed.

He added that the Sindh government would pay Rs1 million as compensation to the heirs of those people killed in street crime in Karachi.—RT/Agency



"Welcome every morning with a smile. Look on the new day as another special gift from your Creator, another golden opportunity."

-Og Mandino

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SATURDAY JUNE 29 2024

## In Tit-for-Tat Move, Pakistan Passes Resolution Against US Call For Election Probe

ISLAMABAD: In response to the United States House of Representatives vote to demand a probe into alleged irregularities in Pakistan's general elections, the National Assembly on Friday passed a resolution to condemn the US Congress resolution and termed it "contrary to facts" and "interference" in its internal affairs.

The resolution was tabled by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmaker Shaista Pervaiz Malik, and passed by a majority in the National Assembly amid a noisy protest of the opposition benches.

Through the resolution, the NA expressed sorrow over the US House Resolution 901 which demanded a "full and independent investigation of claims of interference or irregularities of the February 8 polls."

The US resolution was completely against fact, it stated, adding that Pakistan would not tolerate any kind of interference in its internal affairs as an independent and sovereign state.

The lower house of parliament also demanded the US to maintain bilateral ties with Pakistan on mutual respect.

MNA Shaista further said that the resolution passed by the US House of Representa-



tives was a clear "interference in internal affairs" despite being non-binding.

She also slammed the opposition lawmakers for "encouraging an attack on Pakistan's sovereignty" after a country dared to "intervene in our internal matters".

The US House was apparently taking notice of the "expression of supporting democracy in Pakistan", she read, adding that the US resolution was the result of "incomplete information and misunderstanding" regarding Pakistan's political and electoral process.

It was a sorrowful development that the US resolution rejected the independent exercise of voting rights of millions of Pakistanis in the February 8 nationwide polls, the resolution read.

MNA Shaista, via her resolution, urged the US Congress to play a constructive

role in cementing Pakistan-US bilateral ties and focusing on the two-sided interests of both countries.

She further urged the US Congress to pay attention to serious human rights violations in Gaza and Kashmir.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) lawmakers opposed the resolution, chanting slogans of "Cipher-Cipher" and "Shame-Shame" in the House, as well as tore the resolution copies.

The PML-N lawmaker also slammed the opposition lawmakers for "encouraging an attack on Pakistan's sovereignty" after a country dared to "intervene in our internal matters".

Commenting on the treasury's resolution, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan told journalists outside the Parliament House today

that the government did not read the US Congress' resolution properly which demanded to ensure the provision of human rights and transparent polls.

He was of the view that the resolution passed by the US House of Representatives could not be termed as "foreign intervention". However, it exposed the incumbent government's intent for not holding an investigation into the 2024 nationwide elections.

The US House of Representatives, earlier this week, in an overwhelming majority, voted to demand a "full and independent investigation of claims of interference or irregularities" in the polls.

The resolution HR 901 was passed by a massive 368 against seven votes on Tuesday, which makes 85% of the total American lawmakers in the legislature.

Through the resolution, the US lawmakers had emphasized the need for the Pakistani public's participation in the country's democratic process months after its general polls were contested as "rigged" and its outcome termed "delayed" by political parties now seated on the opposition benches in the legislature.

The PTI is among those opposing the results of the polls after its candidates

faced immense hurdles in their run-up to their participation in the vote, leading them to participate as independent candidates and being deprived of their iconic bat symbol following a legal battle with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The country's two major parties, PML-N and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), along with other political parties, formed a coalition government in the Centre following the polls, leaving the candidates of PTI and other political parties with the opposition seats.

The US move triggered a strong response from Islamabad, with the Foreign Office saying it "stems from an incomplete understanding of the political situation and electoral process in Pakistan".

Yesterday, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, while speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, announced the government's plan to "bring a resolution to show sovereignty and unity" as a sation.

Meanwhile, the PTI, whose members won a majority number of seats in the National Assembly, welcomed the US resolution, terming it a move in the right direction.—RT/Agency

## PTI Criticizes Khawaja Asif For Suggesting Anti-Terror Attacks In Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) fired a fresh salvo at the government on Friday, criticizing Defence Minister Khawaja Asif after reports suggested he hinted at launching anti-terror cross-border attacks inside Afghanistan, the war-torn country that shares a 2,640km border with Pakistan.

"We don't allow any interference in our country, so we shouldn't interfere in any other country," members of the united opposition in the National Assembly stated in an emergency meeting on Friday. The meeting of senior opposition leaders took place in the Opposition Lobby in the National Assembly, with former NA Speaker Asad Qaiser and others in attendance.

In a recent interview with a US media outlet, the defence minister ruled out negotiations with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

The government aims not only to curb economic losses caused by the smuggling of oil, fertilizers, and other goods from Afghanistan to Pakistan but also to thwart terrorist infiltration, prevent potential breaches, and implement security checks at the borders.

While condemning Asif's rhetoric, opposition leaders stated that such statements



endanger not only the "brotherly" relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan but also regional peace. "Our ties with India are based on rivalry and now we are adopting the same behavior with Afghanistan. We cannot afford further escalation of conflict and disorder," Qaiser remarked. He emphasized that launching attacks inside a neighbouring country would risk pushing the entire region into war.

Omar Ayub, Leader of the Opposition in the NA, highlighted that "even major world powers have faced challenges in Afghanistan, which has always been considered a geostrategic focal point in the region."

"India is leading many terrorist attacks inside Pakistan. Why didn't the defence minister remark about launching attacks inside India?" he questioned during a media talk outside parliament. The PTI leader reiterated that his party did not

want to drag the country into "someone else's war". Referring to the federal minister's comment about eliminating militancy to attract foreign investment, Ayub asserted that in fact, adherence to the Constitution was necessary for investment. Meanwhile, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar stated that Asif's statement had "harmed" the country. "Khawaja Asif made these remarks without taking the assembly into confidence," he added, highlighting the opposition's crucial role in democracy. Gohar deplored the defence minister's remarks, suggesting they presented a "negative" image of Pakistan to the world.

In addition, PTI leader Zartaj Gul questioned, "Has the government declared India its friend and Afghanistan its rival?" She picked the defence minister apart even more for what she described as an "extremely irresponsible conversation".—RT/Agency

## Pakistan's Foreign Office Denies Exchange Of Letters With India

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch categorically denied reports of an exchange of letters between Pakistan and India, stating that such claims are purely speculative and often propagated by Indian media without basis.

She said Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar has expressed grave concerns over the ongoing conflicts in Palestine and Kashmir, emphasizing the urgent need for international intervention and resolution. These conflicts continue to draw significant attention from Pakistan's leadership.

Baloch stressed the importance of mutual trust and non-interference in each other's internal affairs as the foundation for stronger Pakistan-US relations. She urged the US Congress to focus on strengthening bilateral ties rather than interfering in Pakistan's domestic matters.

Baloch highlighted the successful 18th strategic dialogue between Pakistan and Sweden, held on June 26 marking a significant step in enhancing bilateral relations and cooperation between the



two countries.

The spokesperson criticized the recent resolution by the US House of Representatives as an unnecessary interference in Pakistan's internal affairs.

She noted, "Unfortunately, the US Congress passed the resolution without knowing the facts on the ground." Despite this, she reaffirmed that Pakistan maintains excellent bilateral relations with the United States, advocating for a policy of non-interference to sustain these relations.

Baloch reiterated Pakistan's concerns about the denial of democratic rights to people in Indian Occupied Kashmir, highlighting the

continued human rights violations in the region.

She reported that the Foreign Minister participated in the D8 conference this week, where foreign ministers agreed on the necessity of an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The Deputy Prime Minister called for an unconditional ceasefire and the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces, underscoring Pakistan's commitment to advocating for human rights on the international stage.

FO spokeswoman reminded the international community of the massacre of 32 Kashmiris by Indian forces on June 11, 1991, noting that their families still await justice.—RT/Agency

## Pakistan Will Respond To Terrorism Exported From Afghanistan: Khawaja Asif



ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Friday asserted that terrorism is being exported from Afghanistan into Pakistan. Speaking in the National Assembly, he emphasized Pakistan's right to defend its citizens and territory, stating, "If terrorism continues to emanate from Afghanistan, we will respond accordingly." He emphasized that while efforts for good relations with Afghanistan were desirable, Pakistan would not tolerate terrorism being exported onto its soil. The minister highlighted the importance of good relations with Afghanistan, mentioning his visit to Kabul where he expressed a desire for positive bilateral ties. He

stressed that the issue of Afghanistan should not be politicized and should be handled with a focus on security and stability. Addressing the opposition, he accused them of having links with the Taliban and offering positions to its members. He underscored that these actions undermine Pakistan's efforts to combat terrorism and maintain national security. Khawaja Asif reiterated Pakistan's commitment to protecting its people and ensuring the country's safety against any external threats. He called for a united stance against terrorism and urged all political factions to support the government's efforts in this regard.—RT/Agency

## PM Emphasizes Need For Collective Efforts To Foster National Development

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif presided over an important meeting regarding the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) at the Prime Minister House in Islamabad.

During the meeting, the prime minister emphasized the crucial role of the FBR in the country's economy and underscored the need for collective efforts to foster national development. "We have to work together for the development of the country," he stressed.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif instructed the FBR to secure the services of top lawyers for pending cases in various courts and tribunals. He announced that he would personally chair weekly review meetings to monitor ongoing reforms and revenue collection efforts within the FBR.

The PM also directed the establishment of Customs Appellate Tribunals along-



side the Inland Revenue Appellate Tribunals to expedite the resolution of tax-related cases. Additionally, he emphasized the formulation of a strategy to reward meritorious officers within the FBR.

In the briefing presented to the meeting, it was highlighted that work on the establishment of Appellate Tribunals for Inland Revenue has already commenced. A transparent review examination will be conducted for the appointment of judges in these tribunals to ensure fairness and integrity.

The meeting was attended by prominent figures, including Minister of Law and Justice Asad Nazher Farar, Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan, MNAs Bilal Azhar Kalvi, Barrister Aqeel Kayani, Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal, the FBR chairman and other senior government officials.—RT/Agency

## PTI Parliamentarians Approve Resolution Rejecting Omar Ayub's Resignation

Members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) parliamentary party on Friday unanimously approved a resolution accepting the party's Secretary General Omar Ayub's resignation.

In a surprising development, top PTI leader Omar on Thursday stepped down as the secretary-general of the Imran Khan-founded party "to focus" on his role as the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly of Pakistan.

The politician said that the PTI founder had accepted his resignation that he had tendered on June 22, 2024, via a letter addressed to jailed former prime minister and party Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan.

However, a meeting of the PTI lawmakers earlier today okayed a resolution calling for not accepting the opposition leader's resignation and expressing complete trust in his leadership as the secretary general of the party.

The resolution proposed Omar's continuation of serv-



ices as the PTI secretary general.

As the rifts in the former ruling party widened, the resolution also condemned the reports of the potential formation of a forward bloc by some disgruntled PTI leaders.

"There is no truth in the reports regarding any forward bloc in PTI. All members are united under the leadership of the party founder and lifetime chairman," it stated.

Earlier today, senior leader Sher Afzal Marwat demanded resignation from PTI stalwart Shibli Faraz, saying that the party will only then be freed from the "qabza mafia".

"I demand the resignation of Shibli Faraz from party positions and as leader of the Opposition in Senate," said Marwat, who has been at loggerheads with Faraz and other party leaders.

In May, the outspoken jurist-turned-politician also refused to work with Senator Faraz and Omar, saying they didn't allow him to meet incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan. While announcing his resignation, Omar on Wednesday revealed that more changes would be made in the organizational structure of the PTI in the coming days on the directions of the party founder.—RT/Agency

## Operation Azm-e-Istehkam: Pakistan Envoy To US Stresses Need For Sophisticated Small Arms

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan said that the South Asian country needs small arms and modern equipment to ensure that Operation Azm-e-Istehkam is a success. The federal government this week approved the fresh operation, a reinvigorated and re-emergent national counter-terrorism drive, to eliminate terrorism from the country. While there were concerns about the move affecting the local population in the areas which will be focused on in the drive, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has clarified that it was not a large-scale military operation and that there would be no population displacement. "Pakistan has launched Azm-e-Istehkam [...] to oppose and dismantle terrorist networks. For that, we need sophisticated small arms and communication equipment," Khan told an event organised by Wilson Center's South Asia Institute in partnership with the International Academy of Letters USA in Washington, DC. Addressing the conference titled "Looking Back, Looking Forward: Assessing the US-Pakistan Relationship", the ambassador stressed that Pakistan and the United States should continue to invest in the "reset" of their re-



lationship, maintain strong security links, enhance intelligence cooperation, resume sales of advanced military platforms and sustainment of Pakistan's US-origin defence equipment. "This is crucial for regional security and opposing the rising tide of terrorism that also threatens the interests of the US and its allies," he said. Khan said the bilateral ties should be anchored in ground realities, even as they aim for stronger security and economic partnerships. "Secondly, one or two issues should not hold the entire relationship hostage," said the ambassador. Highlighting Pakistan's demographic dividend, technological advancements and huge market opportunities, he invited US investors and businesses to tap the country's potential. Projecting security, economic and strategic component as the new domains of cooperation between the two countries, the ambassador observed that security cooperation had its importance. "It equals trust building," he observed.—RT/Agency

## SC Accepts Apologies From Vawda And Mustafa Kamal

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Friday accepted the apology tendered by Senator Faisal Vawda and Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) lawmaker Mustafa Kamal and withdrew the contempt of court notice issued to them.

According to the court's order, read by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, both the parliamentarians — Senator Faisal Vawda and Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Mustafa Kamal — have realised that the words they used were inappropriate. "They have now withdrawn their statement and tendered an unconditional apology to the court," read the order.

Vawda, on Wednesday, tendered an unconditional apology to the apex court in the contempt case, saying that he has left himself on the mercy of the apex court. Kamal had, earlier this month, also sought an unconditional apology for his remarks against the judiciary.

The court further wrote about withdrawing the show-cause notice issued to both politicians in view of their reflection on the matter and tendering of apology.

During the hearing, the chief justice remarked: "In Article 66 — freedom of



speech to speak in the parliament — of the Constitution, you can stand up and speak in the parliament."

CJP Isa instructed both politicians to "be careful in the future" when mentioning the judiciary. "We respect you and hope you respect us. Demeaning each other will harm the public," said the chief justice.

CJP told Vawda and Kamal that Article 66 protects lawmakers from speaking in the Parliament and not outside it.

The court's decision comes more than a month after it had issued contempt of court notices to both politicians after they had done hard-hitting press conferences against the judiciary in May, with Vawda saying that no allegations could be levelled without evidence and Kamal sought to establish ethical standards for judges as justice could "only

be bought". Their statements had come after six Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges wrote a letter to Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) members, pointing out the intelligence agency's meddling in judicial affairs. The politics also pointed out the dual citizenship of an IHC judge.

Shortly after their tirade, the SC sprung into action against the leaders and took suo motu notice.

"We, however, expect that they stand by their statements submitted in courts because if there is further transgression, a simple apology may then not be acceptable to this court," stated the order.

The court, in its order, mentioned issuing notices to 24 channels which had broadcast the press conference of Vawda and 28 channels which had live broadcast Kamal's press conference.—RT/Agency