

# REGIONAL TIMES

Uniting People Every Day



Kim Kardashian's therapist gives shocking therapy advice to her family

### Heartland

Minor Boy Drowns in Pond Near Shikarpur

### Money

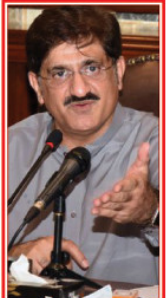
Zafar Moti is Happy! PSE 100-index up by 684.26 points to close at 81,839.86

### NATIONAL

Gandapur Praises Peaceful Muharram Processions

### SPORTS

Babar Azam retains third spot in ICC Test batting ranking



CM Murad Sets Deadlines for Removing Encroachments

## Oman Mosque Attackers Influenced By Misguided Ideas

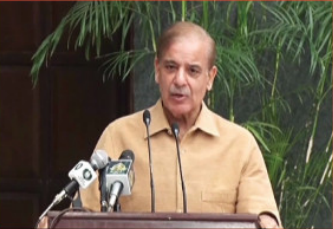
MUSCAT: The three gunmen who shot and killed six people at a mosque in Oman's Muscat city in an attack claimed by Islamic State this week were all Omani nationals, police said on Thursday. The assault began on Monday evening at the Ali bin Abi Talib mosque in the Wadi al-Kabir neighbourhood of Oman's capital Muscat as Shi'ite Muslims gathered. The Royal Oman Police said the three gunmen were brothers and "were killed due to their insistence on resisting security personnel". It said that police investigations had indicated the three gunmen were "influenced by misguided ideas". The six people killed by the gunmen were four Pakistani nationals, an Indian, and a police officer responding to the attack, which Islamic State later claimed re-



sponsibility for. Pakistan has labelled the assault a terror attack. Islamic State on Tuesday said that three of its "suicide attackers" fired on worshippers at the Muscat mosque on Monday evening and exchanged gunfire with Omani security forces until morning. The militant group also published what it said was a video of the attack on its Telegram site. It has claimed responsibility this year for high-profile attacks in Russia and Iran which inflicted mass casualties and is active in Afghanistan. It had not claimed an assault on the Arabian Peninsula for several years until the attack in Oman. Its operations have indicated the group is attempting a comeback after it was crushed by a U.S.-led coalition following its occupation of large swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria and declared a caliphate.—RT/Agency

## FBR's Digitization Efforts Have Unearthed Rs 800bn In Scams So Far: Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif said that the scams of Rs 800 billion in tax refunds were unearthed during the last four months, expressing confidence in the results of the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) digitisation, media reported. Presiding over a meeting regarding FBR's reforms and digitization, PM Shehbaz said that the country's revenue could be increased considerably through further reforms in the FBR. He said the tax refund system of the FBR will be further improved. The prime minister termed the 'unnecessary' Rs 3.2 trillion are pending in



various courts and tribunals regarding taxes. It was said that the sitting government has taken various steps to resolve the pending tax cases. It was informed that dur-

ing the last four months, 63 cases worth Rs 44 billion were disposed of by various courts. The meeting participants were told that 4.9 million people, who can afford to pay taxes, have been identified through use of advanced technology. PM Shehbaz instructed to bring these 4.9 million deserving people to the tax net on a preferential basis and no additional burden should be put on the poor. The meeting was further informed that 150,000 retailers have so far been registered with the Tahir Dost app since April 2024. The prime minister directed the concerned officials to keep the retailers in the loop to make this system more efficient. He instructed to increase the number of appellate tribunals to 100 for speedy decisions of the cases and disposal of the cases related to customs. Besides, the instructions were given to prepare a dashboard to assess the performance of appellate tribunals. PM Shehbaz advised to fully digitise the Fraud Detection and Investigation Department of the FBR. He stressed the need to formulate a strategy for bringing all ongoing reform projects in FBR under a central system.—RT/Agency

## Shehbaz, President Zardari Wish Joe Biden A Speedy Recovery After Covid Diagnosis

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Asif Ali Zardari have sent good wishes to United States President Joe Biden after it was announced that he had tested positive for COVID-19. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre announced the positive test for the 81-year-old Democrat after the president of Unidos-US, a Latino civil rights organisation, said Biden would not be able to speak at a scheduled event due to the diagnosis. "He is vaccinated and boosted and experiencing mild symptoms," Jean-Pierre added. As he boarded Air Force One to depart Las Vegas to recuperate in Delaware, Biden told reporters: "Good, I feel good." But he climbed the stairs slowly, holding the railing tightly and pausing a few steps in and again to-



wards the top. Following the announcement by the White House, the 72-year-old prime minister took to his social media to wish Biden a quick recovery from the illness. In a post on X, Shehbaz wrote: "Wishing President Biden @POTUS swift and complete recovery from Covid. Good wishes." Moreover, President Zardari conveyed his sincere hopes for President Biden's good health and well being, according to a President House statement. Biden's illness comes at a crucial time for him as he has been losing ground in battleground states against Trump, who is headlining a triumphant convention this week. The White House said Biden planned to spend a long weekend at his Delaware beach house. It was unclear how long the sickness would keep him for the campaign trail.—RT/Agency

## Security Forces Thwart Terrorist Attack In Gwadar



GWADAR: Security forces thwarted a terrorist attack in Balochistan's port city Gwadar with timely action, media reported on Thursday. According to the reports, the terrorists had planted an improvised explosive device (IED) in the Mandi area during the night. The security forces, along with the bomb disposal squad, conducted a swift and efficient operation to neutralise the threat and foil the terrorist plans. Meanwhile, the security forces have completed clearance operation in the area. Earlier this week, eight Pakistan Army soldiers were martyred as security forces thwarted an attack on Bannu Cantonment on July 15. The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a statement said a group of ten terrorists attacked Bannu Cantonment on Monday. "The attempt to enter the cantonment was effectively thwarted by the security forces personnel, which forced the terrorists to ram an explosive laden vehicle into perimeter wall of the cantonment," read the official statement. It said suicide blast led to collapse of portion of the wall and damaged the adjoining infrastructure.—RT/Agency

## COAS General Munir Lauds Strong China-Pakistan Military Ties

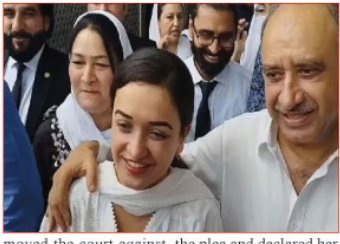
ISLAMABAD: The 97th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China was celebrated at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Pakistan on Thursday. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the event was graced by His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zaidong, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Pakistan, as the Chief Guest.



Attendees included Major General Wang Zhong, Defence Attaché, officials from the Chinese Embassy, and officers from Pakistan's military services. Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir extended a warm welcome to the Chinese delegation. In his speech, he congratulated the PLA on its anniversary and lauded its significant contributions to China's defense, security, and national development. He emphasized the exceptional nature of Pakistan-China relations, highlighting their resilience and mutual trust through changing strategic environments. "The bond between the Pakistan Army and the People's Liberation Army is strong, with continuous bilateral military cooperation demonstrating our ironclad brotherhood," General Munir stated. The Chinese Ambassador expressed gratitude to the COAS for hosting the event, recognizing the sacrifices of the Pakistani military in combating terrorism and promoting regional peace and stability. "We are committed to working alongside our Pakistani brethren to fight terrorism, and we firmly believe that no force can undermine the ironclad friendship between China and Pakistan, and the brotherhood between our militaries," he declared.—RT/Agency

## IHC Judge Criticizes Sanam Javid's Inappropriate Language

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court's (IHC) Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb on Thursday underscored the inappropriate language used by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) firebrand activist Sanam Javid and sought her lawyer's assurance that such conduct won't be repeated. "[I] saw [Sanam] Javid using inappropriate language on the internet," Justice Aurangzeb remarked while hearing the PTI leader's plea seeking her release. For months, Javid has been embroiled in legal battles and has faced arrests and rearrest in multiple cases related to the May 9 riots, triggered after former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan's arrest in a graft case, which saw several military installations being vandalised. She has been acquitted in a total of four cases including the one filed by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) recently, and has acquired bail in the remaining eight cases. On Monday, the PTI activist secured a major relief after the high court ordered her release and prevented the police and other law enforcement agencies from arresting her till Thursday (today). The court's orders came after her father had



moved the court against her daughter's arrest and the plea declared her arrest "illegal". Speaking to the media at the IHC, Javid's lawyer Advocate Mian Ali Ashfaq Ali said that the attorney general, during their meeting, has assured that the PTI activist would not be arrested in any case in the country. "The attorney general has also said in the IHC that Javid won't be arrested," he said. The counsel further revealed that the AGP has said that cases registered against his client in Balochistan and Islamabad would be withdrawn within two days. On the issue of the language used by the PTI activist, Advocate Ali said that he apologised to the court on behalf of his client and reassured that of due caution in future in response to Justice Aurangzeb's remarks back to her province," highlighting her use of harsh and improper words.—RT/Agency

## No One Can Ban PTI: Omar Ayub



ISLAMABAD: Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan has stated that no one could ban Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), reaffirming the Supreme Court's stance that PTI is a political party and will remain so. Speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail on Thursday, Ayub and other PTI leaders shared insights from their recent meeting with the incarcerated PTI founder, Imran Khan. "The fight for true freedom will continue," Ayub quoted the founder. He criticised the government, calling its members "naive". "You imprisoned our leader, but our party remains unbroken," he asserted. Ayub highlighted the Supreme Court's declaration that PTI's political status is unchangeable. He also addressed the nation's economic challenges, noting the rising prices of gas, petrol, flour, lentils, and sugar. He accused the current administration of profiting from wheat imports during Mohsin Naqvi's tenure and hinted at upcoming privatisation deals aimed at generating substantial revenue. "SIFC plans to earn only Rs30 billion through privatisation, while the actual value exceeds Rs1,000 billion," he said. He also mentioned that the PTI founder had ordered organisational restructuring. Ayub expressed concerns about jail conditions, alleging interference from intelligence officials during their meeting. "We will summon Islamabad's in-charge, Punjab's IG the interior secretary, and Adiala Jail's superintendent," Ayub declared. He condemned the involvement of secret agencies in political affairs, urging them to focus on counter-terrorism instead. Ayub insisted, "This government is out of control; we will get our seats back. The Chief Election Commis-

## Imran, Bushra Bibi Appeal Arrest In New Toshakhana Case

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi on Thursday challenged their arrest in a new Toshakhana reference filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The legal moves of the deposed prime minister and his spouse refused to die down following the couple's arrest in the fresh NAB reference related to state gifts, which came just hours after their acquittal in the iddat case last week — also known as the un-Islamic nikah case — which was the last hurdle in their release from jail. In the petition filed in the IHC against the arrests, Khan has nominated the chairman, director general and other officers of the anti-graft watchdog as respondents. "The petitioners have been arrested in violation of law, Constitution and fundamental rights," the petition stated. It maintained that Khan and Bushra had been "illegally" remanded into NAB's custody while their arrest had affected the fundamental rights of "liberty and pre-arrest". On July 13, a team of the anti-corruption watchdog headed by Deputy Director Mohsin Haroon had



arrested Khan and Bushra from the Adiala Jail in the new reference related to alleged "misuse of power for acquiring Toshakhana gifts". The NAB team rearrested Bushra Bibi after she was released from Adiala Jail's Gate No 3, following her exoneration in the iddat case. Subsequently, an accountability court on Sunday approved eight-day physical remand each of the PTI founder and his wife in the fresh graft reference. Khan has been behind bars since August last year after he was sentenced in the Toshakhana criminal case and subsequently sentenced in other cases ahead of the February 8 elections. Although the former PM has been granted bail in several May 9 cases registered in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Faisal-

# THE HEARTLAND



# NATIONAL

## Mobile Phone Makers Appeal to FM Aurangzeb



ISLAMABAD: The representatives of Pakistan Mobile Phone Manufacturers Association (PMPMA) called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at the Finance Division today. Senior officials from the relevant ministries attended the meeting. The PMPMA delegation thanked the Finance Minister and highlighted the necessity for a stable and supportive policy environment that encourages local manufacturers. They advocated for measures to ensure that international brands support the domestic industry and consequently, the national economy. The delegation also presented proposals aimed at promoting the growth of the local industry and increasing the exports of the mobile phone manufacturing industry. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb acknowledged the valuable feedback and underscored the government's commitment for expanding the entire digital ecosystem in the country. He emphasized the importance of maintaining policy continuity and increasing the focus on the broader goals of national economic growth and digital transformation. —RT/Agency



**GARHI KHUDA BUX:** Leaders and activists of the PPP are offering Dua at the grave of Martyred Mir Shah Nawaz Bhutto on his 39th death anniversary at the Mausoleum of Bhutto Family martyrs.—RT



**LARKANA:** Mourners of Imam Hussain (A.S) are taking part in a religious procession to show their devotion and respect for the martyrs of Karbala.—Agency



**HYDERABAD:** Security officials are seen on high alert for a Markazi Ashura mourning procession in honor of the martyrs of Karbala.—RT



**SUKKUR:** Mourners of Imam Hussain (A.S) are showing their devotion and respect for the martyrs of Karbala, during an Ashura mourning procession in connection with 10th Muharram-ul-Haram.—Agency

## Landlord Kills Donkey Brutally in Punjab



CHINIOT: In a shocking incident, a landlord has brutally killed a female donkey by ripping open its stomach with a sickle as punishment for scavenging in his field, media reported on Thursday. According to the details, a cruel landlord named Saqib brutally tortured the female donkey before killing it by ripping open its stomach with a sickle. The incident occurred in the 210 Jb Tarrar, located in the Chiniot district of Punjab province within the jurisdiction of Langrana police station. The police officials stated that a case had been registered against the landlord, named Owais Gujjar, for breaking the spine of the donkey after brutally torturing him. The local police took action after the video of the injured donkey went viral. In the video shared on social media, the landlord can be seen torturing a donkey. —RT/Agency



**HYDERABAD:** Residents of Tando Allahyar are holding a protest demonstration at the Hyderabad press club against their area police.—RT

## Cattle Grazer Killed, 20 Buffaloes Taken Away in Shikarpur

SHIKARPUR: A horrifying incident unfolded in Shikarpur district where a cattle grazer was brutally shot dead and his livestock stolen by armed assailants, police reported on Thursday. The tragic event took place in the village of Ghulam Sarwar Jatoti near Rustam, shaking the local community and raising concerns about security and law enforcement in the area. The victim, Assadullah Rajani Jatoti, was performing his daily routine of grazing his cattle when the attack occurred. According to the police, a group of armed men confronted Jatoti and attempted to seize his livestock at gunpoint. Witnesses reported that Jatoti bravely resisted the assailants' efforts to take his buffaloes. However, this act of defiance led to the attackers opening fire, killing him instantly. The armed men then swiftly made off with approximately 20 buffaloes, leaving behind a scene of chaos and tragedy.



**HYDERABAD:** Residents of Qasimabad are holding a protest demonstration against the killing of Jamal Uddin Malik and demanding justice for him, at the Hyderabad press club.—RT

## PTI to Challenge SC Retired Judges' Appointments in SJC



ISLAMABAD: Terming the retired judges appointment in the Supreme Court adverse for the independence of judiciary, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has announced moving the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) to share its reservations on ad hoc judges. Earlier this week, Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) Chairman and Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa reportedly proposed appointing retired judges in the Supreme Court to reduce the pendency of cases in the top court. "Ad hoc judges are hazardous for independent judiciary," PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan told the journalists in Islamabad on Thursday, dubbing the move as malafide. The lawyer-cum-politician said that the judges should not make the matter controversial. PTI Secretary-General Omar Ayub Khan said that the 56,000 cases would not be wrapped up by appointing three to four ad hoc judges. He alleged that it was an attempt to create a lobby of like-minded judges. Ayub said that legal fraternity and political workers rejected the decision. He also appealed to CJP Isa that their cases should not be referred to ad hoc judges. The PTI's reaction came as the JCP headed by CJP Isa is scheduled to meet on Friday (tomorrow) to consider the appointment of four retired judges in the court. "In view of the huge number of pending cases and the ever-increasing trend of institution of cases in the SC, an effective way to ensure that more cases are decided than instituted and to reduce, and hopefully eliminate the cases which are pending adjudication for several years, it would be appropriate to appoint experienced Judges as ad hoc Judges of the SC," read a notification on the JCP huddle. Four judges had been nominated by CJP Isa, including Justice (ret'd) Mushir Alam and Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqir. Justice (ret'd) Mazhar Alam Miankhal and Justice (ret'd) Sardar Tariq Masood. However, Justice (ret'd) Baqar declined an offer to serve as an ad hoc judge of the Supreme Court followed by Justice (ret'd) Alam's refusal to work as an ad hoc judge for a three-year term. Pendency of cases surges by 3.9% to 2.6m. The Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), in its bi-annual report of judicial statistics, said the number of pending cases in the courts surged to 2.26 million during the second half of the year 2023, increasing the overall pendency by 3.9%. The report revealed that 82% of the pending cases (1.86 million) were at the district judiciary level and the remaining 18% (0.39 million cases) were at the upper tier, including the SC, Federal Shariat Court, and high courts. As per the report, 2.38 million new cases were filed during the period, while the courts managed to decide 2.30 million cases. Despite a significant settlement of cases, the pending cases increased due to the continual filing of new ones, the statement said. "Civil cases constitute 81% of the cases pending in the high courts, while criminal cases account for 19%," the report added.—RT/Agency

## Minor Boy Drowns in Pond Near Shikarpur

SHIKARPUR: An eight-year-old boy tragically drowned in a pond on Thursday in the village of Jindodero near Shikarpur, police reported. The young boy, Mussab, son of Khadim Punjabi, met with the accident while playing near his home, slipping into the pond, as per the police report. This unfortunate incident has not only shaken the local community but also brought to light serious concerns about emergency response and healthcare services in the region. The accident occurred in the early afternoon when Mussab was playing with his friends near the pond. According to eyewitnesses, the boy was running along the edge of the water when he lost his footing and fell in. Despite his friends' immediate cries for help, the pond's depth and slippery edges made it difficult for anyone to reach him in time. The boy's relatives and other villagers, alerted by the sound of his screams, rushed to the scene. They managed to pull Mussab out of the water and, in a frantic effort to save him, transported him to the nearby Hospital Madaji. The journey to the hospital was filled with desperation as Mussab's family and friends clung to the hope that he could still be saved. However, upon arrival, doctors pronounced him dead on arrival. The devastating news sent waves of grief through the small village, where Mussab was well-known and loved. In the midst of their mourning, Mussab's parents made a request to the hospital staff for an ambulance to transport their son's body back home. Shockingly, this request was denied, leaving the grieving family with no option but to carry their child's body on a motorcycle. This heart-wrenching scene was captured on video and quickly spread across social media platforms, igniting widespread outrage and condemnation of the hospital's management. The video showed the boy's father, with visible anguish on his face, holding his lifeless son as they navigated the journey home on a motorcycle. The distressing imagery struck a chord with many, leading to a flood of comments and reactions online. Social media users were quick to criticize the hospital's failure to provide an ambulance, labeling the incident as a severe lapse in humanity and professionalism. The hashtag #JusticeForMussab began trending, with calls for accountability and improved emergency services in rural areas. Local residents joined the chorus of condemnation, expressing their frustration and anger towards the hospital authorities. Many highlighted the chronic neglect and inadequate healthcare facilities that plague rural communities. "It's a disgrace that a grieving family was forced to carry their child's body in such a manner. This should never happen to anyone," said a local community leader. Another resident pointed out that the hospital's refusal to provide an ambulance is indicative of deeper systemic issues that need urgent attention. In response to the public outcry, some local officials promised to investigate the matter and take necessary actions. However, skepticism remains high among the villagers, who have seen similar promises go unfulfilled in the past. The incident has sparked a broader debate about the state of rural healthcare in Pakistan, with many calling for substantial reforms to ensure that such tragedies are not repeated. The tragic death of young Mussab has cast a spotlight on the urgent need for better emergency response systems and healthcare facilities in rural areas. As the village of Jindodero mourns the loss of an innocent life, the hope is that this incident will serve as a wake-up call for authorities to address the glaring deficiencies in the system. For now, the community rallies around Mussab's family, offering support and seeking justice for the little boy whose life was cut tragically short.—RT

## NDMA Warns of Urban Flooding in Punjab and KP Due to Monsoon

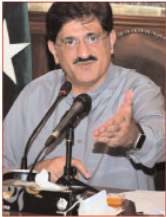
ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in an alert issued on Wednesday warned of flash floods and urban flooding in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other parts of the country due to monsoon rains. The warning comes against the backdrop of the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) which on Monday said that all four provinces including the AJK and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) regions will experience new spells of rain-wind and thundershowers from under the influence of the weather system. Furthermore, the NDMA in its statement has said that Swat, Mingora, Battagram, Mardan, Swabi, Haripur, Abbottabad, Kashmir, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Jhelum, Gujranwala and Sialkot are likely to receive rain accumulation exceeding 50 millimetres under the monsoon spell. Stressing the chances of strong winds and lightning strikes, the body has issued instructions to all relevant departments to take necessary precautions to mitigate the possible effects of flooding and extreme weather. Meanwhile, the masses have been advised to take precautions to prevent flooding and to ensure their safety from lightning strikes, avoid going outside during bad weather and keep a safe distance from electrical poles and wires. A day earlier, the NDMA had also issued an alert regarding possible glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF) in the mountainous regions of KP and GB due to an increase in temperatures coupled with expected heavy rains.—RT/Agency

# METRO KARACHI



## CM Murad Sets Deadlines for Removing Encroachments

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presided over a meeting to follow up on the progress of removal of encroachments from the city, Malir Expressway, TP-4, Hub Canal and the removal of encroachments from the footpaths, green belts and roads from the city.



Those who attended the meeting include provincial ministers, Saeed Ghani, Zial Lanjar, Mayor Karachi Murataz Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, SMBR Baqaullah Unar, MD SSWMB Intiaz Shah, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi, Secretary Transport Asad Zamin, Secretary Planning Khair Mohammad Kalwar, DG SBCA Rasheed Solangi, Special Secretary Local Govt Aisha Hameed, MC A Zaidi, Karachi CEO Water Board Salahuddin, Zubair Channa and PD Malir Expressway Niaz Soomro.

Removal of encroachment: at the outset of the meeting, the CM said that the footpaths are meant for the people to move hassle-free on the city roads, but they have been encroached upon under the nose of the administration. "Now, the green belts of the roads have also been encroached upon by the Dhabas and other such makeshift type of settlements."

Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi said that the assistant commissioners have

started documenting encroachments on the footpaths, roads green belts and even debris put on the roads for under-construction buildings. He added that the administration would submit a detailed plan to the government for removal of the encroachments. At this, the CM said that it was the job of local bodies, local administration and the police not to allow encroachment on the public spaces but "sorry to say I compelled to take up such issues," he said.

Mayor Murataz Wahab told the CM that he was working on the plan for the removal of encroachment from the KMC roads in a planned manner. "Due to Muharram activities, the tasks could not be taken up," he said and added now it would be completed by removing all kinds of encroachments.

This is the city where parking areas of shopping/commercial plazas have been turned into godowns to mint money

and the vehicles and bikes were being parked on the roads. "Why the SBCA is silent," he questioned.

DG of the SBCA Rasheed Solangi told the CM that the officers of his authority have started the survey of the commercial plaza where approved parking areas have been converted into godowns. Just after the survey, the plazas would be given notice to restore their parking areas, in case of failure the buildings would be sealed.

The CM said that he had given two weeks to the administration and local bodies to work out a plan for the removal of encroachment and now one week has passed away and the administration has one week left to submit their plan.

Malir Expressway: The Chief Minister said that the first segment of the 15-km Malir Expressway from Jam Sadiq Bridge to Shah Faisal would prove to be an alternate road to the airport which was most important for the people of the city.

The PD Malir expressway told the CM that due to some litigation issues the work has been delayed. He requested the CM to give him a month so that he could complete the remaining work of the first segment.—RT

## Wahab Orders Upgrades for KMC Hospitals' Emergency Services

KARACHI: Karachi Mayor Barrister Murataz Wahab on Thursday strictly directed the officials to improve the functionality of emergency wards, OPDs, and laboratories of KMC hospitals through technical and professional skills of doctors and paramedical staff.

"Medical Superintendents of Karachi hospitals should submit their proposals to improve the functioning their respective hospitals," he said while presiding over a meeting with officials of the Medical and Health Services Department at his office.

Wahab emphasized enhancing medical facilities at the Abbas Shaheed Hospital and activating all of its departments. Attendance of employees must be ensured and a biometric system should be installed in all hospitals. Employees persistently absent should be dismissed according to the law, he directed.

Wahab said that Karachi Metropolitan Corporation spends a substantial amount of its budget on providing medical services to citizens; therefore, these hospitals should play an effective role in providing standard health-care facilities to the poor and middle-class citizens.

The services of the absent Senior Director Admin and Accounts of Medical Department, Rashid Sabzwari, has been suspended. Doctors and paramedical staff appointed in KMC hospitals should understand that they need to ensure their presence according to the prescribed procedures of government employment. Continuous duty schedules for officials and other subordinate employees should be strictly followed to ensure round-the-clock medical treatment for patients.

He also directed that the mortality of the KMC in Landhi should be made functional to provide nearby facilities for keeping bodies in Landhi, Korangi, Shah Faisal Colony, and other adjoining areas. Furthermore, an immediate report should be submitted regarding the establishment of modern morgues in various areas of Karachi, he added.

During the meeting Wahab was briefed that 89 patients are permanently residing at the Leprosy Hospital of Karachi Metropolitan Corporation in Manghroli where their care and food provisions are managed with the cooperation of welfare institutions.—RT

# REGIONAL TIMES NATIONAL

## Anti-Corruption Hands Over 'Missing' PTI MNA to Police



MUZAFFARGARH: The anti-corruption department of police on Thursday handed over Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MNA Moazzam Khan Jatoi, who had reportedly gone missing a day ago, to the Muzaffargarh police.

Police said the anti-corruption police handed over Jatoi to Saddar police station after lodging a case against him in the anti-corruption department.

The PTI had claimed that the lawmaker was abducted by unknown people.

PTI Muzaffargarh Secretary General Mahar Javot Hasan had said MNA Jatoi had gone missing since he was abducted by unidentified persons from his residence in Multan on Wednesday.

Since the Supreme Court verdict pertaining to the reserved seats came in PTI's favour, the former ruling party has blamed the government for a number of suppressive and repressive measures to pressurise its members to change their allegiance.

Seeking the top court's intervention to resolve the matter, PTI Chairman Gohar Ali Khan claimed last week that lawmakers of his party were being forced to switch their loyalties.

He condemned the "abduction" of PTI leaders and their family members — including MNA Sahibzada Ameer Sultan, PTI media wing member Rizwan Malik, Mian Fayyaz Ahmad Chajra's son Mian Tajamal Hussain and brother Mian Intiaz Hussain and other social media activists.

In a major legal victory for the PTI, the SC on Friday ruled that the party was eligible for the allocation of reserved seats.

The decision has not only paved the way for the PTI's return to the parliament, which was kicked out of the February 8 polls owing to the ECP's December 2023 ruling, but has also increased the pressure on the coalition alliance as the judgement will change the composition of the National Assembly.

On the other hand, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on July 15 announced that the government had decided to ban the PTI and file treason references against the party founder Inran Khan and former president Arif Alvi. The move has been termed by the opposition benches a desperate attempt by the government.

"The PTI and Pakistan cannot co-exist," Tarar had told a press conference in Islamabad, saying that the matter would go to the federal cabinet and the Supreme Court.

Contrary to Tarar's claim, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar Tuesday said that the decision to impose a ban on the PTI had not been taken yet by the federal government.—RT/Agency

## Karachi Endures Heatwave and Severe Power Outages

Karachi: As a scorching heatwave envelops Karachi, residents grapple with prolonged power outages exacerbating their discomfort. The city, experiencing temperatures soaring above 40 degrees Celsius, faces extensive load-shedding schedules enforced by the Karachi Electric (KE). Numerous neighborhoods have reported power interruptions lasting several hours, severely impacting daily life and essential services. Hospitals, educational institutions, and businesses are struggling to operate effectively amidst the persistent energy shortages. Residents have expressed frustration over the lack of respite from the relentless heat, compounded by unreliable electricity supply.



The Karachi Electric has attributed the outages to technical faults and increased demand due to the soaring temperatures. However, citizens remain skeptical, citing frequent disruptions despite assurances of improvement in infrastructure. Local authorities have urged residents to conserve electricity during peak hours to alleviate the strain on the grid. Meanwhile, community organizations are distributing relief items such as water and fans to mitigate the adverse effects of the heatwave.

In response to mounting public outcry, the Sindh government has vowed to investigate the causes behind the prolonged power cuts and collaborate with KE to expedite resolution measures. Efforts are underway to restore normalcy and ensure uninterrupted power supply, particularly during this critical period of extreme weather conditions.

For further updates on the situation in Karachi, please follow local news channels and municipal advisories.—RT/Agency

## Sindh Home Minister Lauds Police for Muharram Security

KARACHI: Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar on Thursday commended the Sindh Police for their exceptional security measures from the 1st of Muharram to Ashura Day across the province.

Minister Lanjar expressed his gratitude, stating, "Your tireless work, dedication, and sense of duty are worthy of praise and appreciation." He emphasized that achieving success in challenging tasks and events requires the cooperation of the entire team.

The minister highlighted that the police's individual and collective efforts at all levels ensured that Muharram Majlis, processions, and other gatherings remained peaceful and safe.



"We strongly hope that Sindh Police's performance will continue to excel, ensuring the safety and peace of all future events. The contributions of other law enforcement agencies and the Sindh Rangers during Muharram are also commendable," he added.—RT/Agency

## IPI Condemns Murder of Journalist Malik Hassan Zeb

The International Press Institute (IPI) global network has said that it remains deeply alarmed by the escalating violence against journalists in Pakistan, following the killing of reporter Malik Hassan Zeb on July 14—the 8th journalist to be killed in the country since the start of 2024.

Zeb was shot dead in the Newsheera district on Sunday, with the IPI saying that he was going to the store along with his brother when two unknown assailants on motorcycles opened fire on Zeb. His brother survived the attack and filed a first information report (FIR) of the incident. The motive behind the 40-year-old journalist's killing is unclear.

"We urge authorities to conduct a swift and thorough investigation into the motive for this killing and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice. We renew our call on authorities to take concrete action to ensure the safety of journalists in Pakistan," IPI said in a statement. At a daily publication, Zeb covered health and city beats. He was also a member of the Khyber Union of Journalists and the Peshawar Press Club (PPC).

IPI in June issued a statement expressing our concern over the deterioration of



press freedom and journalists' safety in Pakistan, marked by a recent wave of violence against the press along with the introduction of legislative and other measures that impose harsh restrictions on press freedom and online expression.

Zeb is the eighth journalist to be killed in Pakistan in 2024, which is a record number. At least five other journalists have been killed since May. On May 3, Muhammad Siddique Mengal was killed in a bomb attack, on May 15, Ashfaq Ahmed Sial was shot by two motorcycles and on May 21, Kamran Dawar was shot dead. Also on the same day, journalist Nasrullah Gadani was shot by assailants on motorcycles and died three days later.

On June 18, journalist Khalil Jibrani was also shot dead by unidentified assailants on a motorcycle. It is uncertain, the IPI said, how many of these incidents were connected to these journalists' work. "IPI extends its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Malik Hassan Zeb," IPI Director of Advocacy Amy Brouillette said.

"Authorities must investigate the motive for Zeb's killing to determine if it was connected to his work as a journalist. They must also send a strong message that all attacks on the press will be swiftly and thoroughly investigated and perpetrators will be brought to justice."

"We renew our call on authorities to ensure the safety and protection of the media in Pakistan," she added. "The violence and attacks against journalists in Pakistan must end."—RT/Agency

## Inflation Surge Affects Prices Of Essential Goods Nationwide

KARACHI: Amidst a storm of inflation in the country, the prices of essential goods, including ghee, cooking oil, pulses, flour, sugar, and milk, have skyrocketed, media reported on Thursday.



Despite government claims of relief to the citizens, the inflation rates continue to climb, affecting daily necessities the most with electricity, banaspati ghee, cooking oil, pulses, flour, sugar, milk, and chicken meat are among the most affected items.

Overall, the prices of twenty-five essential items have increased, with the inflation rate recorded at over 23 percent.

According to details of the items, cooking oil prices have surged by Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 per liter, while black chickpeas, moong dal, dal

mash, and dal chana have risen by Rs. 65, Rs. 60, Rs. 50, and Rs. 45 per kg respectively.

Sugar prices have also increased by Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 per kg, and chicken meat has become more expensive by Rs. 80 to Rs. 100 per kg, now selling at Rs. 600 to Rs. 650 per kg.

The wholesale inflation rate in June reached a 16-month high of 3.36 percent, a significant rise from below zero in June last year.

Chicken, following tin and beef, has become increasingly unaffordable for the common man, with prices reaching Rs. 650 per kg after consecutive monthly increases.—RT/Agency

## MQM Leaders Meet Sindh Governor



KARACHI, July 18 (PPI) Senior leaders of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) Central Committee, including Dr. Farooq Sattar, Syed Mustafa Kamal, and Anees Qaimkhani, called on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor House.

According to a statement issued by the Governor House on Thursday, the meeting covered several key issues, including federal cooperation in ongoing development projects in Karachi, challenges faced by traders, unscheduled load shedding, and complaints of over-billing. Mr Tessori emphasized the federal government's full support for the development of Karachi. He highlighted the urgent need for prioritizing infrastructure restoration and development. Additionally, he assured the MQM leaders that he would address the issues of unscheduled load shedding and over-billing with the K-Electric authorities. Dr Farooq Sattar pointed out that the lack of basic facilities in Karachi is causing significant hardship to the public. Syed Mustafa Kamal echoed concerns about the increasing complaints of unscheduled load shedding and over-billing.—RT/Agency



KARACHI: Shia Muslims are offering Zohra'in prayer during a Markazi Ashura mourning procession to show their devotion and respect for the martyrs of Karbala, in connection with 10th Muharram-ul-Haram.—Agency

## Man in Rangers Uniform Robs Citizen in Karachi

KARACHI: An alarming incident was reported, where a man in Rangers uniform robbed a shopkeeper on gunpoint in Karachi's Gulshan-e-Iqbal 13-D area, media reported on Thursday.

The footage of the robbery incident went viral on social media in which the suspect wearing the law enforcement uniform can be seen arrived in a pakwan center waving pistol in his hand, took the shopkeeping outside with him.

According to the statement of police spokesperson, the suspects, disguised in uniforms of a law enforcement agency, robbed a citizen at gunpoint, stealing a mobile phone and cash.

The police have initiated action by contacting the victim to gather more details. The Spokesman for East Police stated that the SP Gulshan is personally overseeing the case, ensuring that the culprits are brought to justice.—RT/Agency

## Major Raid at Islamabad Airport

ISLAMABAD: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) conducted operations against drug trafficking and seized more than eight and a half kilos of drugs in four operations.



The ANF teams arrested four accused during raids. As per the ANF spokesperson, 55 capsules filled with ice were recovered from a passenger from Islamabad to Qatar.

While narcotics were also recovered from a passenger going to Saudi Arabia from Lahore as 2.6 kg of ice and 235 grams of heroin

were recovered from the said while two kg of heroin and one kg of ice were recovered from the parcel sent from Lahore to Peshawar.—RT/Agency

## Govt to Conduct First National Drug Survey in 13 Years

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday accorded approval in principle for the conduct of National Drug Survey.

Under this exercise, data of persons using drugs will be collected. Mohsin Naqvi said the drug survey should be authentic and comprehensive, emphasizing it will ensure effective decision making against narcotics. He directed that apart from homes, data should also be collected from educational institutions, slums.—RT/Agency

# EDITORIAL

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

Friday, July 19, 2024



## Pakistan's Escalating Animal Cruelty Crisis Demands Immediate Action

The latest incident of animal cruelty that has surfaced on social media is a harrowing reminder of a growing and disturbing trend in Pakistan. The brutal killing of a female donkey by a landlord in Chiniot, Punjab, is a despicable act that underscores a perverse culture of violence against animals. Saqib, the perpetrator, used a sickle to rip open the donkey's stomach as punishment for scavenging in his field. This barbaric act, following similar incidents in Wazirabad where another donkey was tortured and mutilated, reflects a deeply troubling societal issue.

from the dire state of our country and its struggling economy are increasingly being misdirected towards helpless animals. This



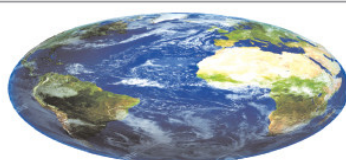
channeling of personal grievances into acts of cruelty reveals a lack of empathy and a dangerous disregard for life. The horrifying acts of violence against these defenseless creatures not only reflect poorly on our society but also highlight a critical failure in our legal and moral frameworks.

It is high time that the courts and the gov-

ernment take stringent action against such heinous crimes. The laws governing animal welfare in Pakistan need urgent amendments to ensure that the punishment for such acts fits their severity. Stronger legal repercussions will serve as a deterrent and signal that our society does not condone such barbarity.

Animal cruelty is a crime that must be addressed with the utmost seriousness. The government, law enforcement, and civil society must collaborate to create a culture of compassion and respect for all living beings. It is through such collective effort that we can hope to eradicate this perverse culture and build a more humane society.

# GLOBAL WATCH



## 32 Dead in Bangladesh Riots Over Job Quota

DHAKA: Bangladeshi students set fire to the country's state broadcaster on Thursday, a day after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina appeared on the network seeking to calm escalating clashes that have killed at least 32 people.

Hundreds of protesters demanding reform of civil service hiring rules fought back and overwhelmed riot police who had fired at them with rubber bullets, chasing the retreating officers to BTV's headquarters in the capital Dhaka.

The incensed crowd then set ablaze the network's reception building and dozens of vehicles parked outside, a BTV official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The broadcaster said "many people" were trapped inside as the fire spread but another official from the station later told AFP that they had safely evacuated the building.

Hasina's government has ordered schools and universities to close indefinitely as police step up efforts to bring the country's deteriorating law and order situation under control.

The premier appeared on the broadcaster on Wednesday night to condemn the "murder" of protesters and vow that those responsible will be punished regardless of their political affiliation.

But violence worsened on the streets despite her appeal for calm as police again attempted to break up demonstrations with rubber bullets and tear gas volleys.

At least 25 people were killed on Thursday in addition to seven killed earlier in the week, according to a tally of casualty figures from hospitals compiled by AFP, with hundreds more wounded.



Police weaponry was the cause of at least two-thirds of those deaths, based on descriptions given to AFP by hospital figures.

"We've got seven dead here," an official at Uttara Crescent Hospital in the capital Dhaka, who asked not to be named for fear of reprisal, told AFP.

"The first two were students with rubber bullet injuries. The other five had gunshot injuries."

Nearly 1,000 others had been treated at the hospital for injuries sustained during clashes with police, the official said, adding many had rubber bullet wounds.

Didar Malekin of the online news outlet Dhaka Times told AFP that Mehedi Hasan, one of his reporters, had been killed while covering clashes in Dhaka.

Several cities across Bangladesh saw violence throughout the day as riot police marched on protesters who had begun another round of human blockades on roads and highways.

Helicopters rescued 60 police officers who were trapped on the roof of a campus building at Canadian University, the scene of some of Dhaka's fiercest clashes on Thursday, the elite Rapid Action Battalion police force said in a statement.

## Musk: Biden Using COVID-19 Diagnosis to Criticize Trump



President Joe Biden used his positive COVID-19 test in a political statement by posting "I'm sick" on X (formerly known as Twitter). This move was aimed at former president Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk.

The 81-year-old president's post was accompanied by a link to a donation page for Biden's 2024 campaign. This message targeted Musk and his wealthy buddies who are willing to "buy" the elections.

Earlier, the owner of the electric car maker Tesla had been supporting the Republican candidate in the forthcoming elections in November.

Following the attack on the former president, Musk endorsed Trump on X and had hoped for his rapid recovery.

On the contrary, the billionaire has also been dissatisfied with Biden's immigra-

tion policies and has favoured Trump's re-election bid by donating to a political group responsible for electing the Republican Representative, as reported by Bloomberg.

The president posted this statement right after being tested positive on Wednesday, a day after he attended the NAACP National Convention in Las Vegas, where he criticized Trump's policies.

"He (Biden) will be returning to Delaware, where he will self-isolate and will continue to carry out all of his duties fully during that time," the White House said in its official release on Wednesday (local time).

However, Biden is vaccinated and has also had COVID-19 vaccine booster shots, the most recent being in September 2023, the WH said.—Agency

## Watchdog: US Aid Failures May Have Helped Afghan Militants

WASHINGTON: Amid already existing concerns of arms and ammunition left behind in the United States' hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan being used by militants, a US watchdog has warned that Washington's aid might be benefiting terrorists in the war-torn country.

A report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) said that two US State Department bureaus could not prove compliance with internal policies for vetting aid groups in Afghanistan that received \$293 million in funds.

The revelation comes as the US remains the largest aid donor to impoverished Afghanistan nearly three years after the Taliban seized Kabul as the last US troops completed a chaotic pullout following 20 years of war.

Ever since the its withdrawal back in August 2021, the country has provided more than \$17.9 billion in assistance to Afghanistan.

"It is critical that the State knows who is actually benefiting from this assistance in order to prevent the aid from being diverted to the Taliban or other sanctioned parties," said the SIGAR report.

The report falls in line with the concerns raised by Pakistan which has time again complained of US weapons being used by banned outfits, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan



not immediately respond to a request for comment.

SIGAR said three of five State Department bureaus were found in compliance with department regulations requiring vetting of aid fund recipients.

But the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs could not provide enough documentation to prove their adherence.

"State could not demonstrate compliance with its partner vetting requirements on awards that disbursed at least \$293 million in Afghanistan," it continued.

For that reason, "there is an increased risk that terrorists and terrorist-affiliated individuals and entities may have illegally benefited," it said.

The department agreed with the report's conclusions and would "work to ensure compliance" with vetting requirements, it said.—Agency

It is to be noted that the Pentagon itself has confirmed that out of the 427,300 weapons that Washington had provided to the Afghan forces, around 300,000 weapons were "left behind" when its forces withdrew from the war-torn country in August 2021.

The SIGAR report said that the Afghan Taliban have tried to obtain US aid funds "through several means, including the establishment of humanitarian organizations," underscoring the need for the department to "fully and consistently assess the risks posed by its implementing partners."

The State Department did

## American Tycoon J. Michael Cline Dies After Falling from Hotel



James Michael Cline, the finance executive who launched the Fandango movie ticketing business in 2000, died by suicide at the age of 64 in Manhattan on Tuesday morning after jumping from the Kimberly Hotel's 20th floor, as per a report in Variety. According to a statement by the New York Police Department, the officials reached the hotel at 10:19 am and found "an unconscious and unresponsive male with injuries indicative of a fall from an elevated position. The investigation remains ongoing." According to TMZ, he left a suicide note in his room. After leaving Fandango, which is now owned

by NBC Universal and Warner Bros, in 2011, Mr Cline founded Accumen, Insureon, and Accolade through his Accretive company, which had also made an investment in Fandango. He also ran a number of tech companies and venture capital businesses, including the hedge fund Bridgewater Associates. He was the executive chairman of Juxtapose, a company incubator that has helped establish firms such as Orchard, Tend, Earned, Great Jones, and Nectar. He was also an advocate of animal protection and served as the chairman of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.—Agency

## Biden Hints at 2024 Withdrawal Amid Democratic Pressure

Following pressure from a top Democrat on Wednesday, President Joe Biden is all set to withdraw from his re-election bid in the forthcoming elections only if doctors prescribe him to rest.

This statement came for the first time from Biden over quitting the White House race, shortly after Representative Adam Schiff, a key ally from California, urged Biden to "pass the torch."

"If I had some medical condition that emerged, if somebody, if the doctors came and said, 'you've got this problem, that problem,'" Biden told the Black Media outlet BET in an interview taped Tuesday, when asked what could make him rethink.

The 81-year-old has been fighting for political survival since his disastrous performance in the presidential debate, in which his confused responses sparked concerns about his age.

Moreover, Schiff, who is expected to win a Senate seat this year, was the first Democrat to step forward and ask



Biden to withdraw from the presidential election race.

"A second Trump presidency will undermine the very foundation of our democracy, and I have serious concerns about whether the president can defeat Donald Trump in November," Schiff said in a statement to the Los Angeles Times.

Meanwhile, around 20 House Democrats and one senator have urged the president to withdraw from the presidential election race.

Biden insists that Democratic voters support him, but a poll by the Associated Press and the NORC Centre for Public Affairs Research said Wednesday that nearly two-thirds want him to step aside.—Agency

is 'pretty good' and he is all set to win the forthcoming elections.

With pressure on Biden mounting, Democrats said on Wednesday they plan a virtual nomination for the president in the first week of August, ahead of the Democratic National Convention (DNC) on August 19.

Nevertheless, several lawmakers are against the virtual nomination and have criticised this decision.

Biden insists that Democratic voters support him, but a poll by the Associated Press and the NORC Centre for Public Affairs Research said Wednesday that nearly two-thirds want him to step aside.—Agency

## Trump Running Mate JD Vance to GOP: 'We Are United to Win'

Republican vice-presidential nominee and former US president Donald Trump's running mate Senator James David Vance has said that the party is united to win the upcoming presidential elections in November this year.

"My message to you, my fellow Republicans, is that we love this country and we are united to win," Senator Vance said while addressing the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on the event's third day. Introducing himself as the vice-presidential candidate on Wednesday, the 39-year-old senator spoke on Trump's assassination bid and called for a celebration for Trump's surviving an attempt on his life. "Instead of a day of celebration, this could have been a day of heartache



and mourning. For the last eight years, President Trump has given everything he has to fight for the people of our country," Vance told crowds.

"I want all Americans to go and watch the video of a would-be assassin coming a quarter of an inch from taking his life. Consider the lies they told you about Trump, and then look at that photo of him defiant, fist in the air.

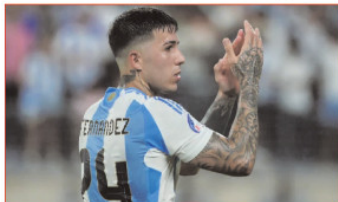
"When Trump rose to his feet in that Pennsylvania field, all of America stood with him," Vance said.

It is to be noted that the Republican senator won a commanding victory in the 2022 Ohio Republican Senate primary and later triumphed over his Democratic opponent, Tim Ryan, in the November election in the same year.—Agency

# SPORTS



## FIFA investigates racist chants by Argentina players after Copa America victory



The football governing body FIFA revealed on Wednesday that it is launching an inquiry into racist songs sung by Argentine players after claiming the Copa America crown.

The global football body said: "FIFA has seen a video that has circulated on social media and the matter is under investigation."

Further, FIFA reiterated, "Football, FIFA included, is an open space that has no room for racism and discrimination by anyone including the players, fans and officials."

The chants arose from an offstage live video posted by Enzo Fernandez, a Chelsea and Argentina midfielder on the team bus after their win against Colombia in Miami on Sunday.

Fernandez remarked that some of the players sing a '23' chant popularised by the 2022 World Cup final against France. The song even targets France's star striker Kylian Mbappe among others and uses racist and homophobic slurs. Chelsea was quick to launch an internal disciplinary process to reprimand Fernandez for the event.

Since then, Fernandez

has come out to apologise, the club disclosed that it had launched an "internal disciplinary process."

Chelsea Football Club affirmed that it condemns all types of discrimination and would make use of Fernandez's public apology statement.

Fernandez, who joined Chelsea from Benfica for a Premier League record fee of £105 million (\$136.8 million) in 2023, expressed in his apology: "This contains highly objectionable language and there is no reason for these words. They include discrimination in any form and I want to apologise for this incident I was swept up in the spirit of Copa America."

The French Football Federation (FFF) lodged a formal protest to FIFA about the chants on Monday. FFF president Philippe Diallo said he "utterly denounced in the strongest of terms, racism and discrimination comments targeting players in the France team."

France won in the last 16 of the 2018 FIFA World Cup against Argentina.—Agency

## Babar Azam retains third spot in ICC Test batting ranking

Pakistan's star batter Babar Azam has retained third position in the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Test batter rankings.

According to the latest ranking issued by the ICC, New Zealand's Kane Williamson remains number one in the rankings, while England's Joe Root is in the second position.



Brooke moved up three places to 7th, and England's Harry

to 13th. India's Ravichandran Ashwin remains number one among Test bowlers.

England's James Anderson ended his Test career at number 8 while Shaheen Afridi is at number 9 in the Test bowling rankings.

India's Ravindra Jadeja remains number one in Test all-rounders.—Agency

## Pakistan strikes twin gold against India in lifting, table tennis



Muhammad Usman of Pakistan won the gold medal in 85 kg by defeating his Indian opponent in the World Strength Lifting Championships played in Kazakhstan.

Muhammad Usman also won a silver medal in the incline bench press category.

??Pakistan's Table Tennis star Arham Bin Farrukh won the gold medal in Under-21 by defeating Indian player Akshak in the final played in Sharjah.

??Pakistan's Table Tennis star Arham Bin Farrukh won Gold and Bronze in Sharjah!

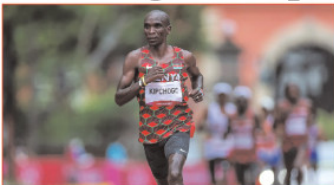
Pakistan's Arham Bin Farrukh clinched the #gold medal in the Under-21 category at the #TTC Open International #TableTennis in #Sharjah, defeating #Indian player Akshak in the #final.

Arham also... pic.twitter.com/KS0uQ5QO

Arham Bin Farrukh won the open category. "I won the bronze medal," she expressed her joy after winning the final game against her Indian opponent.—Agency

## Paris: The ultimate challenge for marathon legend Kipchoge

KENYA: When he started out running in the early 2000s, a young Eliud Kipchoge simply wanted to get on a plane and go to Europe.



major prize ended up being his only one on the track.

Two decades later, the Kenyan marathon legend is heading to Paris for what could be his final challenge at the 2024 Olympics.

At 39, he says he is hoping to make history on August 11 by becoming the "first human being" to win the Olympic marathon three times in succession, overtaking Ethiopia's Abebe Bikila (1960, 1964) and Waldemar Cierpinski of Germany (1976, 1980).

It was in Paris in 2003 that the then 18-year-old made a thunderous international debut, snatching the 5,000 metres world championship gold ahead of favourites Hicham El Geroj and Kenenisa Bekele.

But Kipchoge's first

was a baby. Young Eliud loved running but didn't dream of glory.

"Running is normal in our village, in our community, you run up and down to school, to the shopping centre," he told AFP in an interview.

He decided to take a chance in athletics, "but it was not about aiming to become a big runner... I just wanted to get into a plane and fly to Europe," he said.

"I didn't know that being an athlete can put more food on my table for my family and my siblings."

As a teenager, he often spotted a neighbour during his training sessions, someone he had watched on television winning silver at the 1992 Olympics: 3,000 metre steeplechaser Patrick Sang.—Agency

He has won 16 of the 20 official marathons he has run since 2013, including 11 victories in the majors (five in Berlin, four in London, one each in Tokyo and Chicago), alongside Olympic golds in 2016 and 2021.

The youngest of four children, Kipchoge was raised by his mother, a kindergarten teacher, in the village of Kapisiywa in the foothills of Kenya's Rift Valley.

His father died when he

## Olympic swim star Titmus warns she is better now than Tokyo

SYDNEY: Swim star Ariane Titmus says she has never prepared as well for a major event and is in better shape now than when she won Olympic 200m and 400m freestyle gold in Tokyo.



from the Australian swim team's training camp outside Paris.

The Australian heads to Paris on the back of shattering the 200m world record last month and clocking the second quickest 400m of all time, behind only her own world best.

It makes her red-hot favourite in both disciplines, with her task in the 200 made easier by key rivals, American great Katie Ledecky and Canadian teenager Summer McIntosh, opting to focus on other races.

Titmus will also swim the 800m after winning silver at the Covid-delayed Japan Games behind Ledecky.

"I definitely think as an athlete I have grown a lot in three years and as a person I've grown more," the 23-year-old said late Wednesday.

"I think, mentally, I've got so many learnings from the last Olympic Games."

"I know this is going to be different with big crowds, which I'm very excited for. But I think as an athlete—all together as a whole—I'm in a better position than three years ago."

"I think I've prepared the best I ever have for a swim meet," she added.

Ledecky, who was stunned by Titmus in the 200m and 400m at Tokyo,

has entered the 400m, 800m and 1500m in Paris, but is set to skip the shorter distance.

McIntosh has also pared down her freestyle schedule to enable her focus on other events.

Titmus said she wasn't disappointed not to be facing them.

"No, not really. I mean, my toughest competitor I train with every day and that's a massive task in itself," she said, referring to teammate and former 200m world record holder Mollie O'Callaghan.

"The fact that those two

have pulled out doesn't change anything for me. It doesn't change the way I want to swim the race."

Titmus's form will be tested right out of the gate in Paris, with her 400m title on the line on day one at La Defense Arena.

She beat Ledecky in a thrilling final in Tokyo then broke the American's long-standing world record in 2022, only for McIntosh to better the mark last year.

The Australian hit back to reclaim the world record months later with the clash between the three shaping as a blockbuster.

"Out of all of my races I know how to race it the best. I'm excited to see what I can put together on the world stage," Titmus said of the 400m.

I don't think about the result or the magnitude of the Olympic Games, I just think about putting together eight great laps.—Agency

## Spain climb to third in FIFA rankings, Argentina stay top



Newly crowned European champions Spain rose to third in the latest FIFA rankings published on Thursday, while World Cup winners Argentina held on to the top spot following their Copa America triumph.

The rankings come after a busy month for football, with Argentina beating Colombia to win the Copa America and Spain defeating England to win the European Championship.

England moved up to fourth, leapfrogging Brazil after their underwhelming Copa America campaign.

Venezuela, who reached the Copa America quarter-finals, were the most improved side in the rankings, rising 17 places to 37th, with Euro quarter-finalists Turkey jumping 16 places to 26th.

The top 10-ranked nations:

- 1 - Argentina
- 2 - France
- 3 - Spain
- 4 - England
- 5 - Brazil
- 6 - Belgium
- 7 - Netherlands
- 8 - Portugal
- 9 - Colombia
- 10 - Italy—Agency

## This upcoming fast bowler made Babar, Fakhar struggle in nets



In the wake of a calamitous T20 World Cup campaign, Pakistan's cricket scene could be on the cusp of significant changes.

Babar Azam, the national team's white-ball captain, along with batsman Fakhar Zaman, recently faced a tough test in the nets against Ubaid Shah, a young and emerging talent and brother to famed bowler Naseem Shah.

During the net session, both Azam and Zaman struggled, visibly discomfited by Ubaid's deliveries.

A particular moment that caught wide attention—a viral video clip—shows the duo unsuccessfully handling a challenging pull shot, resulting in both batsmen being struck. This incident has intensified the ongoing scrutiny of Babar's leadership and form.

Amid growing debates about his fitness and performance, the pressure on Babar Azam is mounting.

Pakistan cricket, still reeling from their early exit at the World Cup marked by unexpected defeats to the United States and traditional rivals India, is reportedly considering a review of player contracts.

Influential figures like Mohammad Rizwan and Shaheen Afridi, alongside Babar, might face demotions in their central contracts for the upcoming season as part of a broader restructuring effort aimed at revitalizing the team's fortunes.—Agency

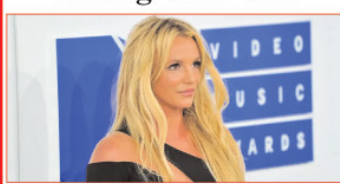


Name: Hader Iqbal  
Location: Karachi  
About me: I love taking selfies!

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

# REGIONAL TIMES ENTERTAINMENT

## Britney Spears' storms as her dance videos get labeled as 'boring' and 'sad'



Britney Spears labeled the Osbourne's "boring" as while she responded to Ozzy Osbourne's comments about being "fed up" with her Instagram dancing videos.

The Baby One More Time singer responded in full by penning a lengthy post on her main Instagram page on Wednesday and offered her own feelings towards their comments.

As per Daily Mail, it is pertinent to mention that on Tuesday's episode of The Osbournes podcast, the family also stated that her dancing clips were heartbreaking and sad.

On Tuesday's episode of The Osbournes podcast, the family also said her dancing clips were both "heartbreaking" and "sad," according to the earlier publication.

## Kim Kardashian's therapist gives shocking therapy advice to her family



Kim Kardashian revealed some interesting advice given by her therapist to her ultra famous family.

The reality TV megastar discussed the therapist's shocking advice to her family while dishing on her own mental health during the new episode of The Kardashians.

During the latest episode of the show, the 43-year-old Kim opened up to her sister Khloe Kardashian, saying that her therapist started to watch their show to do a little bit of homework on her.

"She said we all need therapy — especially you (Khloe)," said Kim.

After questioning whether it was a 'good idea' for Kim's therapist to watch their reality show, Khloe agreed with the personal assessment.

Kim tried to use it as an opportunity to try to convince Khloe to seek help, and said, "I really think you need to be on this journey with me."

She further said, pointing at camera, "Khloe might enjoy having someone help her navigate through certain situations in life."

Moreover, talking about her own mental health, Kim said that her therapist pointed out that she thinks "calm is her superpower."

Kim continued to tell Khloe what her therapist said, "She thinks I am so desensitized from trauma that I am literally frozen in fight or flight."

"She believes one time in life something happened and I remained calm and that worked for me. So I will always choose calm."

Kim said while quoting her therapist's words.

Moreover, talking further on this topic, Khloe suggested that maybe Kim being robbed at gunpoint in 2016 had something to do with the change of her attitude.

The Kardashians streams on Hulu every Thursday.

# NATIONAL

## Pakistan Railways Increases Train Fares

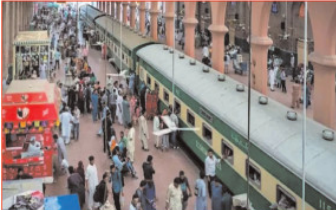
LAHORE: Pakistan Railways has announced a fare hike for all trains, with effect from Friday, July 19, media reported.

PR notification issued here on Thursday stated that fares would be increased by one percent for all mail, express, intercity, and passenger trains, including outsourced services.

This adjustment was being implemented under the rationale of fare rationalization. The fare for all freight and goods trains would see a two percent increase. All stations, booking offices, reservation offices, and relevant staff had been informed in this regard.

On June 11, Pakistan Railways slashed train fares by 25 percent to facilitate passengers during Eidul Adha 2024 festivities.

Pakistan Railways announced a reduction in fares for three days of Eidul Adha 2024, which was applicable on all passenger trains except for Eid special trains.



Back in May 2024, Pakistan Railways announced reduction in train fares across various classes.

The economy class fares of some trains had been reduced up to 54% while the air-conditioned class fares were reduced by 40%.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Railways collected an amount of over Rs 76 million from ticketless passengers in a crackdown during the last six months with the help of railway police and train staff.

"Around 59,143 passengers had travelling without tickets in different trains and collected the said amount from them, which is deposited in the official bank account of the department," sources in the Ministry told APP. They said that it was not the first time that action was taken on a large scale against ticketless passengers, adding that these types of crackdowns had taken place daily.

The sources said that ticketless travelling was illegal, and those who were caught without a ticket were charged a journey price for the whole ticket plus the penalty. Those who do not pay are handed over to the railway police.—RT/Agency

## Gandapur Praises Peaceful Muharram Processions

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur announced that all processions and Majalis in the province have concluded peacefully, and he paid tribute to all relevant institutions for ensuring the smooth and secure culmination of Muharram processions.

During Muharram, 846 processions and 8,857 Majalis were held across 14 districts of the province. The chief minister commended the efforts of the civil administration, police, security forces, Rescue 1122, PESCO, and municipal administration for their hard work in providing foolproof security and other necessary arrangements.

He expressed special gratitude to the people of the province for their cooperation during Muharram. He also appreciated the role of peace committees in maintaining sectarian harmony and thanked scholars



and leaders of various schools of thought for their contributions.

The chief minister highlighted the excellent arrangements made by the relevant institutions for uninterrupted power supply, cleanliness, traffic management, and provision of water and food during the Majalis.

He directed police and district administration officials to remain on duty until all Majalis are completed and participants have safely returned home.—RT/Agency

## FIA Interpol Arrests Nine Criminals from UAE

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) National Central Bureau (NCB) Interpol has arrested nine wanted criminals from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), media reported.

According to the FIA spokesperson, the arrested individuals were wanted by the Punjab Police in various cases.

The arrested accused include Irfan Asghar, Farhan Nazakat, Samar Abbas, Najibullah, Saddam Hussain, Muhammad Rafeeq, Muhammad Saqib, Muhammad Usman, and Tariq Mehmood.

The FIA spokesperson revealed that the accused were involved in murder and attempted murder cases, with some of them evading arrest for up to 14 years.

The arrested individuals will be brought back to Pakistan, with a team already dispatched to UAE for their



extradition. Earlier, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) National Central Bureau (NCB) Interpol of Pakistan successfully apprehended 66 accused individuals wanted for serious crimes across various countries.

These arrested individuals were wanted in cases involving murder, attempted murder, robbery, kidnapping, and corruption, while Red notices were issued by FIA-NCB Interpol Pakistan to facilitate their apprehension.—RT/Agency

that over the last six months, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) National Central Bureau (NCB) Interpol of Pakistan successfully apprehended 66 accused individuals wanted for serious crimes across various countries.

These arrested individuals were wanted in cases involving murder, attempted murder, robbery, kidnapping, and corruption, while Red notices were issued by FIA-NCB Interpol Pakistan to facilitate their apprehension.—RT/Agency

## Ahsan Iqbal Urges Quick Implementation of CPEC 2.0

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, chaired a meeting on Thursday to assess the implementation of decisions regarding China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects.

These decisions were particularly those made during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China.

"There is complete agreement between the leaderships of China and Pakistan on the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, also known as CPEC 2.0," said Iqbal.

The minister said his visit to China last week was a continuation of the PM's discussions with the Chinese president and prime minister, which focused on the strategic implementation of these decisions to ensure the success of CPEC 2.0.

Mentioning the global interest in China's economic development model, he said world leaders were keen to benefit from China's innovative approach. "As of 2018, Pakistan was the biggest beneficiary of China's economic model and open market due to CPEC," he remarked.

However, he said, progress slowed down after



2018, leaving Pakistan behind while other regional corridors completed their projects.

Despite these setbacks, Ahsan Iqbal stressed the continued importance of CPEC due to Pakistan's strategic geographical position. He urged the Ministry of Railways to expedite the documentation and preparatory steps for the MLI project.

"During my recent visit to China, we agreed to convene an early meeting of the Joint Financing Committee for the MLI project, which will take place within a month," he announced.

He stressed the need for full preparation by the Ministry of Railways and other concerned departments for this critical meeting. "Given CPEC's unique status, there are ample growth opportunities. To capitalise on these opportunities, we must be se-

rious about completing the projects included in Phase 2.0," he added.

The minister also called for a collaborative effort from all relevant ministries and institutions to ensure the timely completion of CPEC projects. "The governments of China and Pakistan have agreed to start work on the MLI project soon. The duration and stages of completion will be determined in the upcoming meeting of the Joint Financing Committee."

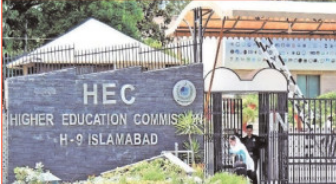
Additionally, he urged the Railway and National Highway Authority (NHA) to prepare a comprehensive master plan for road construction across the region. "The master plan should outline how CPEC and Pakistan can play a pivotal role in connecting the entire region and serve as an engine of global economic growth," he stressed.—RT/Agency

## HEC Degree Verification System Down for 10 Days

ISLAMABAD: Students seeking verification of their degrees are facing a rather precarious situation as the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) degree verification system is non-operational for as many as 10 days, sources told Geo News on Thursday.

The sources say that the degree verification of hundreds of students faces uncertainty and has also left those worried who intend to travel abroad for higher studies. The government body, each year, verifies degrees and provides education credentials-related services to hundreds if not thousands of students.

HEC's degree attestation or verification service is often utilised by students wishing to secure admissions into for-



foreign educational institutions which often require HEC-attested, verified documents to tackle the issue of forged documents etc.

Furthermore, the service is also used by those people intending to apply for jobs as well as those applying for immigration to other countries.

Lamenting the HEC's attitude towards the said issue, students have said that their concerns have not been addressed de-

-Can you believe this?

## Abbottabad Mother Kills Her Three Children

ABBOTTABAD: A horrific incident occurred in the Noori Shah area of Abbottabad where a mother allegedly slit the throats of her three children. According to initial reports, an eight-month-old infant succumbed to their injuries, while two other children remain hospitalized.

Police confirmed that the suspect, believed to be suffering from mental health is-



uses, used a sharp object to attack her children. The eight-month-old infant died at the scene, while the two

other children are currently receiving medical treatment. Police have launched an investigation into the crime.—RT/Agency

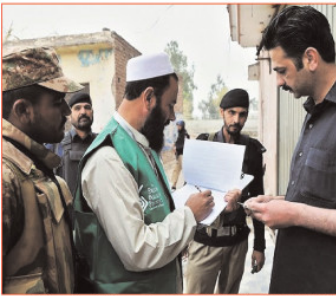
## Pakistan Records World's Highest Population Growth Rate

ISLAMABAD: According to the latest digital population census report released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, as of 2023, the total number of Afghans residing in Pakistan is 1,233,453.

Out of these, 939,878 are living in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, 310,832 in Punjab, and 145,875 in Sindh. Additionally, Balochistan hosts 474,812 Afghan residents, while Islamabad, the federal capital, accommodates 52,056 Afghan nationals.

The number of Chinese nationals stands at 356,800 and 26,900 Bengali residents, along with 172,158 foreigners from other nationalities.

The bureau noted that Pakistan has recorded the highest population growth rate in the region and globally, raising concerns about the population po-



tentally doubling by 2050. The country is home to 21,260,079 Afghans, Bengalis, Chinese, and other foreign nationals, while approximately 8,700,000 Hindus, Christians, Ahmadis, and other religious minorities reside in the country. The report also highlights that 25,370,700 children aged 5 to 16 years are currently out of school. The Bureau of Statistics emphasized that the literacy rate in Pakistan has reached a record high since 2017, with 61% of males, and 53% among females.—RT/Agency

## Azam Khan Testifies in £190m Case



ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Imran Khan's principal secretary Azam Khan has submitted his statement to the court in the 190 million pound reference.

According to the statement, he served as principal secretary to the prime minister from August 2018 to April 2022. He said that the PM's advisor Shahzad Akbar brought a signed note for the cabinet's approval.

According to the statement, Shahzad Akbar said that the then

PM had instructed to present this secret deed to the cabinet for approval.

The file was sent to the cabinet secretary so that the matter could be presented to the cabinet for approval. He said that he did not participate in the cabinet meeting because it was an "in-camera session".

The NAB also presented the statement in the court and Azam Khan confirmed he signed it.—RT/Agency

## PIA Reduces Fares for Umrah Pilgrims

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has announced a reduction in airfares for travel to Saudi Arabia for Umrah pilgrims.

According to a PIA spokesperson, pilgrims traveling from Toronto to Madina via Lahore will benefit from 15pc discounted fares.

The PIA spokesperson stated that this discount is effective immediately and will remain in effect until November 15.

Last time, Umrah fares were reduced by 30 percent on April 7 and remained effective till April 11 for pilgrims traveling to Jeddah, Madinah, Riyadh, and Dammam.

The Umrah pilgrimage is undertaken year-round in the Grand Mosque of



Makkah. The new Umrah season started earlier this month, right after 1.8 million Muslims from all over the world undertook the annual Hajj pilgrimage.

It may be noted that Saudi Arabia is reportedly seeking to increase the number of Muslims performing Umrah to reach 30 million a year.—RT/Agency

## 'WhatsApp Learning Program' to Launch in Lahore Schools

LAHORE: The School Education Department in Lahore has decided to launch WhatsApp learning program for teachers and parents in government schools, media reported.

As per the details, the program, which is being implemented in collaboration with UNICEF, will initially be launched in 10 schools in Lahore.

Under the program, 10 parents and 5 teachers from each school will be selected to participate in a 4-week training session. The training aims to improve the educational standards in public schools. The Education Authority has also requested schools to submit a list of interested teachers and parents. The development came after Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz approved public schools' reorganization pro-

gramme focusing on rehabilitation of government schools across the province.

The Punjab chief minister said that a target has been set to construct and rehabilitate 1,000 grounds of government schools in a period of six months. She directed to start weekly and monthly competitions in government schools. She directed a comprehensive mapping of schools to determine facilities and needs across Punjab. She also called for a plan to regularize 14,000 AEOs (Assistant Education Officers) and SSEs (Secondary School Educators) in Punjab.

The chief minister also approved the launch of the Green School Programme, under which each student will plant at least one sapling, and digital mapping of the plants will be completed.—RT/Agency

## CM to Present Balochistan's Case to Council of Common Interest

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Thursday said that interest of the province would be prioritised at any cost in the forthcoming meeting of the Council of Common Interest. CCI and all the decisions would be taken in the best interest of the people of the province.

These views were expressed by him while chairing a meeting held at Chief Minister's Secretariat to review agenda items to be discussed in the forthcoming

meeting of the Council of Common Interest. Bugti said that provincial government intended to present the case of the province before the Council of Common Interest in a befitting manner. He said that steps would be taken for the overall progress, development and prosperity of the people of Balochistan after addressing issues with the federal government amicably. The meeting was attended by Minister's Secretariat to Provincial Secretary for Inter Provincial Coordination, Balochistan, Meena Majeed,

Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shaheel Qadir Khan, Secretary Inter Provincial Coordination Department, Balochistan, Syed Sikandar Shah, Secretary, Irrigation Department, Balochistan, Hafiz Abdul Majid, Secretary, Energy Department, Bashir Khan Bazi and others. Separately, Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Thursday said that development work of public interest would be expanded across the province to facilitate people.—RT/Agency

## Kashmiris to Celebrate Accession to Pakistan Day

SRINAGAR: Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control and the world over will observe the Accession to Pakistan Day, tomorrow (Friday) the 19th July, with a renewed pledge to continue the plebiscite struggle for Jammu and Kashmir and its complete merger with Pakistan.

According to a Kashmir Media Service report on Thursday, July 19 as an im-

portant day of the Kashmir history, said that in 1947 the people of Kashmir had decided their accession to Pakistan even before the partition of Indian sub-continent.

It was on 19th July 1947, genuine representatives of the Kashmiris unanimously passed the resolution of Kashmir's Accession to Pakistan during a meeting of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference at the

residence of Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan in Abi Guzar area of Srinagar.

The historic resolution called for the accession of the Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan in view of its existing sentiments, religious, geographical, cultural and economic proximity to Pakistan and aspirations of millions of the Jammu and Kashmir people.—RT/Agency

## CM Bugti Says, PPP Committed To Public Service

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Thursday said that development work of public interest would be expanded across the province to facilitate people.

These views were expressed by him while talking to a delegation of divisional presidents and general secretaries of PPP Balochistan who called on him under the leadership of Senator Sardar Umer Gorgate at Chief Min-

ister's Secretariat. He said that problems of the workers and office bearers of PPP Balochistan, who were assets of the party, would be addressed at district level in compliance with the instructions of Chairman PPP Balawal Bhattu Zardari.

The CM said that PPP believed in providing services to the people, adding that party would further be organised at district and divisional levels of the province. He

said that all issues of the party would be addressed through mutual understanding.

"Another session with all the office bearers of the party will be arranged to deliberate upon the issues relating to the affairs of the party," Bugti said.

On the occasion, Secretary Information, PPP Balochistan, Sardar Sirbuland Jogezi and others were also present.—RT/Agency

# METRO KARACHI



## Mustafa Kamal tells Government to scrap agreements with IPPs

KARACHI: Power sector crisis has been the biggest problem than terrorism, MQM leader Mustafa Kamal said in a press conference on Thursday.

MQM leader asked incumbent government to declare emergency to tackle this problem.

He asked the government to summon 40 independent power producers (IPPs) and inform them, "We could not implement these agreements".

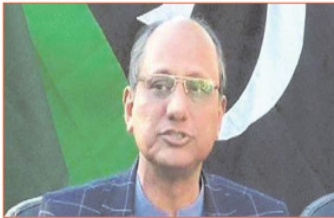
"The NEPRA cost has been 8.50 rupees per unit of electricity, while the bills issued on 34 rupees per unit," he said.



"Tell the government of China and their companies to have pity on us, we are unable to implement the agreement," Mustafa Kamal said.

He asked the government to discuss the matters with companies, "tell them, we want to revisit the entire agreement," he added.—RT/Agency

## PTI Fails to Meet Political Party Standards: Saeed Ghani



KARACHI: PPP leader and Sindh Local Bodies Minister Saeed Ghani has said the PTI does not fall within the parameters of a political party, adding the PPP does not want any political party should be banned.

Talking to journalists after a reception, Saeed Ghani said economic development hinged on political stability, adding his party accepted the Supreme Court's verdict on reserved seats despite the fact it had ambiguity.

"The PTI founder was removed as a result of a no-confidence move against him. But he is happy with the current situation."

He does not want his personality should be damaged. Such kind of behaviour does not suit a politician. The PTI founder does not think beyond his personality," the PPP leader said.

The PTI will have to prove that it is a political party. It will have to act as a political party, Saeed Ghani said.—RT

## FPCCI: Government Should Renegotiate IPP Agreements to Save Economy



Karachi: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has called upon the government to renegotiate Independent Power Producer (IPP) agreements urgently. Malik Khuda Bakhsh, Convenor of FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Energy, emphasized the critical need to revise current agreements to alleviate the burden of exorbitant electricity tariffs on industries.

In a joint appeal with industry leaders including S.M. Tanveer of the United Business Group, Bakhsh highlighted that existing IPP contracts have led to unsustainable electricity costs, hindering industrial growth and posing a grave threat to the national economy. The FPCCI asserts that immediate action is imperative to mitigate these adverse effects and foster a conducive environment for economic recovery.

Bakhsh further underscored the widespread impact of high energy prices

across all sectors, stressing the urgent requirement for a comprehensive review and audit of IPP operations. The current tariff structure, exacerbated by substantial capacity charges, has rendered electricity prices in Pakistan among the highest in the region, thereby discouraging new investments and impeding industrial expansion.

The FPCCI's stance reflects the escalating concern among industrialists nationwide, who contend that unless addressed promptly, the energy crisis could precipitate further closures of manufacturing facilities and exacerbate economic challenges.—RT

## Turkiye Remembers July 15th Coup Attempt While Reflecting On Democracy's Resilience

Karachi: Acting Consul General of the Republic of Turkey, Ali Fuat Erkurt, led a solemn gathering at the Türkiye Consulate in Karachi to commemorate the dark chapter of the nation's history: the July 15th coup attempt in 2016. Attended by Turkish nationals, intellectuals, educators, and prominent figures from the city, the event was a poignant reminder of the resilience of Turkey's democracy in the face of adversity.



Erkurt emphasized that the coup attempt orchestrated by the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (FETO) was not just an attack on the government but a direct assault on democratic principles, freedoms, and the Turkish way of life. He recounted the harrowing events of that night when rogue military factions attempted to overthrow the democratically elected government, leading to chaos and tragic loss of lives.

"Under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, ordinary civilians displayed extraordinary bravery in standing up against the coup plotters," Erkurt stated, highlighting the courage shown by Turkish citizens who defended democracy despite the peril they faced.

The aftermath saw swift action by the Turkish government to dismantle FETO's network, with thousands arrested and extensive investigations launched to ensure justice for the victims. Erkurt stressed the ongoing importance of defending democracy, upholding the rule of law, and safeguarding freedoms from threats both domestic and abroad.

"In remembering our fallen heroes and the re-

## Mayor Commends Security Efforts in Karachi



KARACHI: Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab has appreciated the police, security forces, law enforcement agencies, administration and other institutions for ensuring peaceful Youm-e-Ashur in the City.

Talking to the media, Mayor Murtaza Wahab said Muharram security arrangements were made excellent and all the institutions in Karachi did a good job.

"We stand with state. If a decision is in favour of you, you say it is good. There is water problem in Karachi, which will be solved soon. We are Pakistanis; every institution is respectable for us. The first phase of Safe City will be completed in 12 months. A licence must be obtained for commercial sale and purchase of water," the mayor said.

Additional IG Karachi praised the police for the excellent security arrangements during Muharram.

He thanked the organizers of the procession and other organisations for their cooperation and said law and order and protection of lives and property of the citizens are the first priority for the police.—RT

## Karachi Officials Blame Private Builder for Malir Children's Deaths



KARACHI: The Karachi city government on Thursday shifted blame onto the private housing society's builder for deaths of children who fell into a manhole in Malir's Memon Goth area.

At least two children had died in the tragic incident, while three others were rescued alive on Wednesday. Those rescued alive were shifted to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre in critical condition.

Police said several children were standing on the manhole lid, which collapsed under their weight. The incident took place when children had gathered at a Muharram saheb in Ghafoor colony.

People of the private society have dug deep wells for sewerage as the colony does not have proper sewage system.

This is not a one-off event as at least 17 people have died after falling into sewer nullahs or gutters in Karachi this year.

Residents of the area rescued the children on their own as rescue organisations could not be reached because cellular services were suspended by the provincial government, in a bid to enhance security for mourning processions on 10th of

Muharram.

The deceased have been identified as 10-year-old Taha Lashari and 4-year-old Hasnain. The other three are 7-year-old Saqib, 11-year-old Parvez and a 10-year-old unidentified kid.

Memon Goth is considered a stronghold of the ruling Sindh government's party, the Pakistan Peoples Party. The residents of the backward area appraised Geo News that it was third such incident within one and a half years wherein children fell into a manhole.

Talking on Geo News' programme "Geo Pakistan", Karachi Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad said it was a private society, therefore, its builder was responsible to provide all the facilities and infrastructure to its residents.

"Responsibility of the incident lies on shoulders of the private society's builder," he said.

He said it was a big tragedy and he personally went to the deceased's house to condole the family.

The deputy mayor said after one such incident had some time ago taken place in Memon Goth, police had caught a couple of people stealing cover of a manhole. He said citizens were also responsible to some extent for such unfortunate incidents as they should immediately inform police watching a culprit damaging or stealing public property.—RT/Agency

## Karachi Heatwave: Lawyers Request Exemption From Wearing Black Coats

KARACHI: The Karachi Bar Association (KBA) has sought an "exemption from wearing black coats" in the courts amid extremely hot and humid weather.

The bar association wrote a letter to the sessions judges, seeking an exemption for lawyers from wearing black coats for 10 days due to the ongoing heat wave in the port city.



The KBA general secretary said that lawyers were facing difficulties in performing tasks while wearing black coats and also bearing health issues.

Therefore, the sessions' judges have been requested to allow lawyers to perform court-related tasks without sporting black coats.

The temperature in the city has reached alarmingly high levels for the last few days making life miserable for the masses after mercury soared to 37°C today which felt like 54°C.

A day earlier, the mercury in the metropolis reached a sweltering 40.5°C which in reality felt like scorching 56°C as sea breezes came to a halt while humidity level was 66% at 5pm.

The feels-like temperature is based on the experience of the actual sensation of heat or cold outdoors and is based on various environmental factors comprising humidity levels, air temperature and wind speed—all of which together influence the perception of weather among individuals according to their exposure.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) had predicted that sea breezes would be started in Karachi from Thursday evening which would slightly bring down the mercury to 36°C to 38°C.

Moreover, it also forecast chances of isolated thunderstorms and rain from Thursday to Friday in the provincial capital.—RT/Agency

## Transport Canada Approves Pakistan's Aviation Security



KARACHI: In a major development, the security delegation from Transport Canada on Wednesday completed the security audit of Jinnah International Airport, media reported.

According to Airports Security Force (ASF), the team conducted thorough inspection of the security arrangements in place at the airport and found them satisfactory.

During the audit, the ASF team comprising National Inspectors gave a briefing to the Transport Canada team.

The assessment team was given briefing on security deployment, entry control, screening, issuance of passes and addressing emergency situations.

The Transport Canada team commended the efforts of the ASF for taking additional measures to ensure the safety of the Pakistan International Airlines' (PIA) direct flights to Canada.

The team also termed the overall aviation security measures satisfactory at the international airports of Pakistan.

It is pertinent to mention that the two-member delegation from Transport Canada arrived in Pakistan on July 15 for the security audit of the Jinnah International Airport. The delegation, composed of Transportation Security Inspectors Barbara Durdut and Abdul Tahir was warmly welcomed by Director PCA Shahid Qadir at the Civil Aviation headquarters.

The delegation's aim was to assess the implementation of various security protocols at the airport.

This assessment included reviewing the procedures and special security measures in place for direct flights from Pakistan to Canada, specifically focusing on PIA flights.—RT/Agency

## Karachi Heatwave: 2 More Deaths Reported as 'Feels Like' Temperature Hits 54°C

KARACHI: Two more deaths were reported in Karachi due to a heatwave during the past couple of days as the temperature in the city reaches alarmingly high levels, the Sindh Health Department said Thursday.

With the two fatalities reported at Civil Hospital, the number of casualties that occurred due to heat stroke from June till now has reached 51, the health authorities added.

The port city has been in the grip of a heatwave for the last few days making life miserable for the masses as they face hours-long unannounced load-shedding despite the power utility's assurances.

A day earlier, the mercury in the metropolis reached a sweltering 40.5°C which in reality felt like scorching 56°C.

The feels like temperature is based on the experience of the actual sensation of heat or cold outdoors and is based on various environmental factors comprising humidity levels, air temperature and wind speed—all of which together influence the perception of weather among individuals according to their exposure.

Meteorologists say that the "feels like" temperature is the perceived temperature in a certain area and can be higher owing to environmental factors, despite the actual temperature.

It is the temperature which is sensed by the human body after its interaction with the temperature reflected from Earth's surface.

Furthermore, the health department revealed that nearly 50 heatstroke cases were reported in the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said that the current temperature in the country's financial hub stands at 37°C which feels like 54°C.

With humidity levels standing at 64%, the metropolis is experiencing a 24-kilometre-per-hour sea breeze, the Met Office said.—RT/Agency



## Chinese Bus Maker to Set Up Plant in Karachi

KARACHI: A major Chinese bus maker has decided to install a manufacturing plant of intra city, EV buses in Karachi, media reported on Thursday.

The CEO of Yutong Middle East and other officials called on Sindh's transport minister Sharjeel Memon today.

"The work for the Yutong bus-making plant's installation will start within three months," talking to media provincial minister said.

"The installation of buses manufacturing plant will be completed by the next year," Sharjeel Memon told media.

He said the installation of bus plant will boost industry and create new opportunities of jobs.

"The preparation of buses in Karachi will help in saving foreign exchange, while the buses' export will also benefit Pakistan," he added.—RT/Agency



"Now Yutong's intra-city and electric buses will be manufactured in Karachi," he said. "The plant will assemble the electric and hybrid diesel buses," Sindh's minister said.

## Javed Odho takes over as Karachi's top cop again

KARACHI: Javed Alam Odho has been appointed as Additional Inspector General (AIG) Karachi police on Thursday, media reported.

Javed Alam Odho previously served in the position and was replaced by Khadim Hussain Rind in September 2023.

Javed Alam Odho's reappointment comes after a surge in street crimes in Karachi, which led to the removal of the previous police chief, Khadim Hussain Rind on March 30.



Imran Yaqoob Minhas is currently serving as Additional IG Counter Terrorism Department (CTD).

Earlier in April, it was reported that the Sindh government decided to remove the then Karachi police chief Imran Yaqoob due to a surge in street crimes in the metropolis. The PPP government had decided to replace Additional IG Karachi Imran Yaqoob Minhas only 15 days after his appointment to the top post.—RT/Agency

Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative.

—Oscar Wilde

# The REGIONAL TIMES

Uniting People Every Day

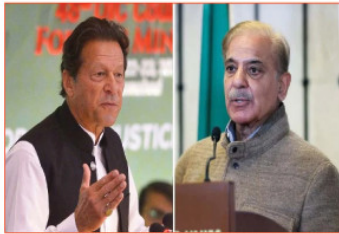
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FRIDAY JULY 19 2024

## Fitch Says, Imran's Release Unlikely; Government May Last 18 Months

ISLAMABAD: BMI, a Fitch Solutions company, has forecast that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan is unlikely to walk free anytime soon, while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led coalition government may prove a house of cards in the next one-and-a-half years amid economic uncertainties.



Despite several successful legal appeals, opposition leader Imran Khan will remain imprisoned for the foreseeable future, predicted BMI, in its Pakistan Country Risk Report for the fourth quarter of the calendar year 2024.

The risk evaluation company also painted a dire scenario for the ruling alliance, which is considering banning PTI as a political party over its alleged anti-state activities following a favourable verdict by the country's top court in its reserved seats case.

"We expect that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government

istans work in agriculture, another flood or drought would pose a significant risk to the economy. The country's fragile political situation could also derail the recovery," the risk evaluator said.

It said while parties were successful in creating a new coalition government following the February election, the strong electoral performance of independent candidates was backed by jailed PTI leader Imran Khan.

"Another round of protests in urban areas could disrupt economic activity," the Fitch wing warned.

On the economic side, the BMI doesn't see an imminent crisis haunting Pakistan but warns that a lot depends on the political stability and climatic conditions conducive to agriculture.

"As we had predicted, economic activity in Pakistan was stronger than most analysts had expected in the fiscal year 2023-24 (July 2023-June 2024).

"Economic growth in

Pakistan will accelerate from 2.4% in the fiscal year 2023-24 to 3.2% in the fiscal year 2024-25, driven by monetary easing, improved agricultural output and slowing inflation," the Fitch firm said.

In its forecast regarding one of the most important economic indicators, it said, "We think that Pakistan's current account deficit will remain small but will widen from 0.8% of GDP in fiscal year 2023-24 to 1.0% of GDP in 2024-25."

It said easing inflation would provide the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) with the space to cut its key policy rate from 22% to 16% in 2024.

"We expect that policymakers at the SBP will continue to loosen policy over the longer term, to 14% by the end of 2025." The key risk to this forecast is towards faster-than-expected inflation, which would cause policymakers to slow their easing cycle," the Fitch firm added.—RT/Agency

## Retired Judge Maqbool Baqar Declines Supreme Court Appointment

ISLAMABAD: Justice (retired) Maqbool Baqar on Thursday declined an offer to serve as an ad hoc judge of the Supreme Court, becoming the second judge to refuse the appointment following criticism.

Days before his announcement, retired Supreme Court judge Mushir Alam had turned down the offer to work as an ad hoc judge for a three-year term.

The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP), headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, is scheduled to meet on Friday to consider the appointment of four retired apex court judges.

While the government strongly believes the need exists for additional judges to clear pending cases, the main opposition party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has termed the move as "dishonesty".

Talking to Geo News, Justice (retired) Baqar said that he was deciding against becoming an ad hoc judge due to "personal reasons".

However, he mentioned that the appointment of ad hoc judges to the apex court is in line with the law and that criticism is "baseless".

Backing CJP Isa's decision, Baqar, who also served as the caretaker chief minister of Sindh, said that it was "crucial" to appoint ad hoc judges in light of the backlog



of cases. The development comes after PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub, in conversation with journalists in Islamabad, said hiring three or four judges won't address the issue of thousands of pending cases.

"The motive behind the move is to appoint 'like-minded' judges to the Supreme Court. Political workers and the lawyers' fraternity reject the move," Ayub, the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, said.

Ayub also requested that the ad hoc judges, when appointed, should not be allowed to hear the cases relating to PTI.

For his part, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar termed the move "dishonesty" and said that all of a sudden, the JCP plans to appoint four ad hoc judges during vacations.

"Appointing these judges

for three years is malicious. Ad hoc judges will be harmful to an independent judiciary, we are taking this matter up in the Supreme Judicial Council. Judges should not make this issue controversial."

Meanwhile, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar has said that ad hoc judges should be appointed to the Supreme Court.

"Ad-hoc judges should be appointed. The constitution allows it. Moreover, the Judicial Commission appoints them, not the chief justice," he explained, as the PTI keeps raising concerns about CJP Isa.

It is pertinent to mention here that Baqar and Alam were among four judges, including Mazhar Alam Miankhal and Sardar Tariq Masood, whose names were to be considered in the JCP's Friday meeting.—RT/Agency

## Pakistan Bar Council Calls For Constitutional Court Formation

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Bar Council has called for the formation of Constitutional Court in the country through a constitutional amendment, ARY News reported.

As per details, the bar council said that the proposed court would exclusively hear political and constitutional cases, providing timely justice to the people.

The Pakistan Bar Council believes that the establishment of a constitutional court would save valuable time and provide swift justice to the common man.

The council has also expressed support for the appointment of ad hoc judges to help expedite the decision-making process in cases.

Currently, a significant amount of the Supreme Court's time is spent hearing political cases, and the estab-



lishment of a constitutional court would help alleviate this burden.

Earlier today, another retired judge Justice Maqbool Baqar declined an offer to serve as an ad hoc judge of the Supreme Court.

Bakar has become the second judge to refuse the appointment as Justice (r) Mushir Alam had turned down the offer to work as an ad hoc judge for a three-year term.

Justice Bakar, and Alam were nominated for the ad hoc position in the upcoming Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) meeting scheduled for Friday, July 19.

The JCP, chaired by Chief Justice Isa, will consider appointing four retired judges — Mushir Alam, Maqbool Baqar, Mazhar Alam Miankhal and Sardar Tariq Masood — as ad hoc members of the Supreme Court.—RT/Agency

## Rana Sanaullah: Government Can Ban A Political Party Under Article 17



LAHORE: PML-N senior leader Rana Sanaullah Khan says Article 17 of the Constitution allows the government to give declaration to ban a political party.

Speaking at a TV talk show, Sanaullah said that after approval by the cabinet the declaration to ban a political party is referred to the Supreme Court within 15 days.

"If the apex court agrees to the declaration, a ban is imposed on that party," Sanaullah said, adding the government had only ex-

pressed its intentions (with regard to banning the PTI) so far.

He said once the government takes a decision, the constitutional procedure will be followed.

The former minister said like the PTI, the government also has the right to present its point of view and strive for its success.

"There is no harm in making efforts if the government has an option to get the reserved seats through constitutional means," he added.—RT/Agency

## Imran Challenges Physical Remand In LHC

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has challenged the physical remand granted by an anti-terrorism court in 12 cases, media reported.

As per details, the petition filed in Lahore High Court argued that the lower court did not thoroughly review the record while granting physical remand, and that the police have already conducted their investigation while the petitioner was in jail.

The petition further argued that the law was not followed during the granting of physical remand, and requested the court that the physical remand be declared null and void in all 12 cases.

Earlier, an Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) sent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on a 10-day physical remand in 12 cases pertaining to riots on May 9.

Imran Khan was pro-



duced through a video link as the prosecutor cited "security concerns" for not producing him in person.

"Why can't you produce the accused in person before the court?" the judge, Khalid Arshad asked. The prosecutor replied that the PTI founder cannot be presented in court for security reasons.

The prosecutor said they wanted to investigate the PTI founder regarding the footage they found of the May 9 incidents.

The prosecutor said that the PTI founder would not

be taken away from the Adiala Jail and be investigated there. On the other hand, the defence counsel opposed the physical remand plea, maintaining that the physical remand cannot be granted if an accused is presented via video link.

Usman Gul, the PTI founder's lawyer, said that the physical remand cannot be given without the appearance of the accused. It is pertinent to mention here that Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi are already on six-day physical remand in a new Toshakhana case till July 19.—RT/Agency

## Islamabad Urges Kabul To Act Against Bannu Attackers

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday summoned the Deputy Head of Mission of the Afghan Embassy in Islamabad and demanded decisive action against terrorists involved in the attack on Bannu Cantonment, media reported.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Pakistan issued a strong demarche to Afghanistan over the attack which claimed the lives of eight security personnel.

While expressing concerns over the use of Afghan soil for carrying out terror attacks, Pakistan demanded a swift action against the outlawed Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group based in Afghanistan.

The group, along with outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), has been responsible for several deadly attacks within Pakistan.

Pakistan urged the interim Afghan government to



fully investigate and take immediate, robust and effective action against the perpetrators of the Bannu attack and to prevent such attacks against Pakistan using the territory of Afghanistan.

"The Bannu Cantonment attack is yet another reminder of the serious threat posed by terrorism to regional peace and security. Pakistan reiterates the call for decisive action against terrorism and remains steadfast in its commitment to combat this menace and to uphold its security against

all threats," the MoFA statement said.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan security forces killed 10 terrorists who attacked Bannu Cantonment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the early hours of Monday. The attackers attempted to infiltrate the Bannu cantt but were repelled, leading them to detonate an explosive-laden vehicle against the perimeter wall. The security forces retaliated strongly and killed all the attackers, while eight personnel were also martyred.—RT/Agency

## Ex-Minister Ejaz Demands Record Of IPP Payments



ISLAMABAD: Former caretaker federal minister Gohar Ejaz has demanded record of the payments made to the independent power producers, media reported on Thursday.

Former commerce minister has demanded of Federal Minister of Energy Awais Leghari to make the data of all 106 IPPs public.

"The nation should be informed about these power plants and how much electricity generated by each of them according to their capacity, former minister demanded.

Gohar Ejaz also demanded that the record of capacity payments made to the IPPs should also be made public and the data of their generation costs

should also be unveiled before the public.

Former minister demanded that the payments made to the IPPs for fuel costs should be declared in public and the data of recoveries made by the independent power producers should also be disclosed.

"People want to know on which rate the electricity being supplied to them," he said.

He said the electricity price should be below 30 rupees per unit. He also demanded that the agreements with the IPPs should be changed into "take and pay" mode.

"The government should buy cheaper electricity where it is available," he said.—RT/Agency

## Law Minister Claims CJP Isa Not Interested In Tenure Extension

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday said that in late April or early May, there was a meeting with the Chief Justice (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa regarding the Judicial Commission, in which he stated that he was not interested in extending the tenure.

In a statement, the minister denied the news about the extension of the tenure of Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and said that because of the high pension bill, the debate about the extension of the tenure of government employees arose.

The federal law minister stated that ad hoc judges should be appointed as the



constitution permits for this. He said that the matter of imposing Article 6 on PTI leaders could be brought to the Parliament for debate.

The law minister said that there is a genuine case of Article 6 against leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as the constitution was violated by dissolving the as-

semblies in the presence of a no-confidence motion.

Azam Nazeer said that the issue of the application of Article 6 on PTI leaders could be brought to the Parliament for debate. Last year decision was not taken to ban the PTI to maintain the political environment, he said.—RT/Agency

## LHC Sets Hearing For Imran's Bail in May 9 Cases

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday adjourned hearing on the pleas of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan against disposal of interim bails in three May 9 cases till July 22.

Two-member bench com-

prising Justice Amjad Rafique and Justice Shehram Sarwar conducted hearing on Imran Khan's pleas, dismissed in three cases related to May 9 riots which include cases of attacking Askari Tower and Jinnah House and arson in Shadman Police Station.—RT/Agency

be accepted by the LHC.

It must be remembered that the PTI founder's bail pleas were dismissed in three cases related to May 9 riots which include cases of attacking Askari Tower and Jinnah House and arson in Shadman Police Station.—RT/Agency

## PPP Backs Government Amid PTI Ban Controversy

ISLAMABAD: The PPP secretary general on Thursday said that the party has decided to "stand with the federal cabinet's decisions". Days after a few senior party members decried the government's announcement to ban the PTI. Earlier this week, the federal government announced that it had decided

to ban the party and seek Article 6 proceedings against its founder Imran Khan, ex-president Dr Arif Alvi, and former National Assembly (NA) deputy speaker Qasim Suri. The move appeared to be an attempt to prevent the PTI from becoming the single largest party in the NA as the announcement was made

on the heels of relief given to the party by the top court in the case of the reserved seats as well as to the party chief in the Iddat case. The announcement attracted flak from across the political spectrum, with stakeholders from different parties terming the move "undemocratic."—RT/Agency