

India 'main sponsor of terror'

India's 'fictitious narrative' can't hide truth: FO

Peace and stability in South Asia remained hostage to India's rigid approach and hegemonic ambitions, says FO

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Monday rubished "misleading and one-sided" remarks made by Indian Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi during a podcast with US computer scientist and podcaster Lex Fridman. During the podcast, PM Modi alleged: "Every attempt to foster peace with Pakistan was met with hostility and betrayal." The Indian premier hoped that "wisdom would prevail on the leadership in Islamabad to improve bilateral ties". Denouncing Modi's false propaganda, FO spokesperson Shaifqat Ali Khan said: "The remarks are misleading and one-sided. They conveniently omit the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, which remains unresolved for the last seven decades despite India's solemn assurances to the United Nations, Pakistan and the Kashmiri people." He said that India's fictitious narrative of victimhood could not hide its involvement in fomenting terrorism on Pakistan's soil and the state-sanctioned oppression in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJK). "Instead of blaming others, India should reflect on its own record of orchestrating targeted assassinations, subversion and terrorism in foreign territories," the spokesperson added. He asserted that Pakistan has always advocated constructive engagement and result-oriented dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues, including the core dispute of IOJK. However, peace and stability in South Asia have remained hostage to India's rigid approach and hegemonic ambitions, said the spokesperson. "The anti-Pakistan narrative, emanating from India, vitiates the bilateral environment and impedes the prospects for peace and cooperation. It must stop."

Continued on Page 03

Ready to resign over Jaffar Express incident: Asif

Asif was reacting to the opposition's demand for his resignation "for a security lapse"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Defense Minister Khawaja Asif on Monday said he is ready to step down as defense minister if it resolves the issue [of Jaffar Express attack]. Talking to journalists at the parliament house here he said "I am being held responsible [for the attack]. If my resignation resolves the issue, then I am ready, I have no objection to it." Asif was reacting to the opposition's demand for his resignation "after a security lapse" resulted in the attack on the Jaffar Express. The opposition alliance held a joint press conference a few days ago and called the attack on the train "a terrorist" incident due to a major security lapse and demanded the resignation of the Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

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ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Afiniti Information System led by CEO Jerome Kapelus called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. — DNA

Zakir Naik meets Nawaz, CM Maryam

During the meeting at the Sharif family's estate, the scholar and PML-N leaders reportedly discussed various issues

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Renowned Islamic scholar Dr Zakir Naik visited former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz at their residence in Raiwind. During the meeting at the Sharif family's estate, the scholar and PML-N leaders reportedly discussed various issues. However, no official statement has been released regarding the specifics of the conversation. Last week, former Pakistan cricketer Mohammad Hafeez has sparked controversy after meeting Dr. Zakir Naik.

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PIA set to roar for UK after Eid

It comes three months after PIA resumed its Europe operations after four-year hiatus

BUREAU REPORT

LONDON: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) continues to salvage its pride as it is expected to resume direct flights to the United Kingdom after Eidal Fitr. The announcement was made by Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK Dr Muhammad Faisal during an Iftar dinner in London. The dinner was attended by journalists as well as social media influencers. PIA's direct flights to the UK destinations will swim

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Afiniti delegation meets PM PM Shehbaz pledges full support for agri development and growth

PM Shehbaz welcomed Afiniti's interest in further investment in Pakistan's IT sector. He suggested that Afiniti Pakistan establish a world-class call centre in the country for national and international clients

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed the commitment to provide all necessary facilities to develop the agricultural sector and enhance agricultural production. Chairing a review meeting on the matters related to the Ministry of National Food Security and Research in Islamabad today, he termed agriculture as the backbone of the national economy. The Prime Minister said young agricultur 1 researchers from across the country should be engaged for the advancement of the agricultural sector. He also directed to take strict and swift action against companies involved in the business of substandard agricultural seeds. Shehbaz Sharif further instructed the acceleration of measures to boost the production of edible oil in

Continued on Page 03

Govt employees unlikely to get pay, pension raise

There is also no plan to revise employees' allowances or pay scales, says minister

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In an unexpected move, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday confirmed that there was no proposal under consideration to increase the salaries and pensions of federal government employees in the upcoming fiscal year.

Continued on Page 03

Briefs

Oil, gas reserves discovered in Waziristan

MPLC informed PSX that new hydrocarbon reserves have been found in the Spin Wan-1 well, located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Pakistan has made a significant breakthrough in its energy sector with the discovery of a second major oil and gas reserve in the Waziristan Block, according to an official statement. Mari Petroleum Company Limited (MPLC) informed PSX in a letter that new hydrocarbon reserves have been found in the Spin Wan-1 well, located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The letter stated that the well is producing light crude oil and natural gas with a flow pressure of 3,431 pounds per square inch (psi). The daily output from the well is estimated at 20,485 million standard cubic feet of gas per day (MMSCFD) and 117 barrels of light crude oil.

Man arrested for online hate campaign

FIA seizes digital evidence in arrest of man accused of promoting hate and terrorism

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The FIA Cyber Crime Circle has arrested a suspect accused of running a hate campaign against state institutions following the Jaffar Express attack. The suspect, identified as Haider Saeed, was apprehended in a raid conducted in the capital city's Bani Gala area, Express News reported. According to the FIA spokesperson, Saeed was found sharing derogatory material targeting state institutions during the Jaffar Express attack.

Torkham border

Pak-Afghan jirga agrees to halt disputed construction

Afghan authorities to suspend disputed construction, trade route reopening expected soon

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Pakistan and Afghanistan reached an agreement on Monday for a ceasefire and the reopening of the Torkham trade route for all types of movement. The breakthrough came during a Pak-Afghan jirga held to address border tensions at the Khyber-Torkham crossing. Pakistani joint member Jawad Hussain told media that both sides agreed to halt hostilities and restore trade and travel at the crucial border crossing. As part of the agreement, the joint jirga decided to temporarily suspend disputed construction by Afghan forces. The Afghan delegation has requested time until this evening to consult their authorities on the matter. Hussain said that the Afghan jirga would brief their officials on halting the construction and that the issue would be deferred until the next meeting of the Joint Chamber of Commerce. The final decision on the disputed construction will be taken during that session, while trade activities at the crossing will resume in the meantime. The date for the next meeting will be decided through mutual consultation. Additionally, officials from

Continued on Page 03

Waqas blames SM activists

Whoever doesn't follow your agenda is picked up and associated with India," Akram

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Theeek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson Sheikh Waqas Akram on Monday blamed the government for linking fake accounts involved in spreading hate against state institutions with the PTI. In a statement, Akram said that the government had made a mockery of the constitution by picking up the young people belonging to the PTI, claiming those who were picked were mess spreading message of incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan.

Continued on Page 03

PTI confirms participation in NSC in-camera session

PTI confirms participation in National Security Committee, provides 14 names to NA speaker

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The PTI on Monday decided to take part in today's (Tuesday) in-camera meeting of a parliamentary panel on national security to discuss the issue of terror attacks in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa amid tight security arrangements. Over the last few months, both KP and Balochistan have witnessed a surge in terrorist attacks, mainly targeting the security forces, the police, and other law enforcement agencies. In the last two days, several police stations in KP have come under attack, which were successfully thwarted. Meanwhile, last week, a dramatic showdown unfolded in Balochistan with terrorists who hijacked the Jaffar Express train and took hundreds of passengers hostage. An operation to rescue the passengers lasted two days. National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq convened the meeting for 11am at Parliament House on Tuesday in the National Assembly Hall, to be attended by parliamentary leaders from all political parties represented in parliament, along with their representatives.

Continued on Page 03

Govt should refrain from rhetoric in war against terrorism

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Adviser Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif stated on Monday that the federal government should refrain from political rhetoric and instead cooperate in the war against terrorism. In a statement, Saif said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police was bravely confronting terrorists, and in the last three days, the police had thwarted multiple terrorist attacks, adding that in Bannu and Lakki Marwat, the public stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the police to repel terrorist assaults. "The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government pays tribute to the brave police and the proud public.

Continued on Page 03

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Pak, Bangladesh vow to strengthen bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain and Advisor to the Ministry of Labour and Employee Organization (ILO), a meeting was held between Chaudhry Salik Hussain, and Brigadier General (Retd.) Dr M Sakawat Hussain, said a press release issued here on Monday. The meeting was attended by Secretary Workers Welfare Fund Zulfiqar Ahmed and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN in Geneva Bilal Khan and senior officials from both sides. Chaudhry Salik Hussain emphasized the deep historical, cultural, and faith-based connections between Pakistan and Bangladesh, highlighting the importance of building on this foundation to foster closer relations. Both sides reiterated the need for enhanced high-level engagements and institutional cooperation to establish mutual trust and collaboration. Key areas of discussion included expanding economic, trade, and investment linkages, fostering people-to-people ties through cultural and academic exchanges, and promoting parliamentary and institutional interactions. Both delegations recognized the potential for collaboration in labor rights, skills development, and workforce mobility as a means of driving economic growth. The meeting also underscored the importance of coordination on key regional and global issues at multilateral forums. Both parties agreed that renewed efforts to strengthen this partnership would contribute to regional stability and prosperity.—APP

Gemology, lapidary courses, funded by NEVT-TC kicks off

PESHAWAR: The six-month 'Gemstone Identification (Gemology)' and three-month 'Gemstone Cutting & Polishing (Lapidary)' certification courses have commenced on Monday at the Gems and Jewelry Center of Excellence (GJCE) UET Peshawar. The course is fully funded by the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTC) under the Prime Minister Youth Skill Development Programme. A total of 106 young individuals from different walks of life have enrolled in the programme, which aims to provide a combination of practical knowledge and theoretical expertise, preparing them for careers in gemstone and jewelry sectors. The orientation ceremony, held here Monday was attended by the students and faculty members. Prof Dr Khizar Azam, Registrar UET Peshawar was the chief guest at the orientation ceremony. Addressing the students he said, the Prime Minister Youth Skill Development Programme, under the umbrella of NAVTC is an excellent opportunity for the youth to gain specialized skills that will help them succeed in the gemstone industry. He urged the students to benefit from this opportunity and contribute significantly in Pakistan through growing gemstone sector.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister and Minister-in-Charge for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar addressing during his visit to Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). President Atif Ikram Sheikh is also present on the occasion.

Sindh CM approves to abolish many TO, DEO, director posts

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah while presiding over a review meeting of school education emphasised the importance of foundational learning and early childhood care & education (ECCE) and approved the decentralisation of financial and administrative powers to the school level for headmasters as well supported the dissolution of additional or duplicate posts for town officers, District Education Officers (DEOs), and directors stressed the importance of digitizing the education department. This digitisation will involve monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes, such as tracking attendance for teachers and students using facial recognition technology.

Moreover, there will be an effort to eliminate unnecessary administrative layers from the taluka to the divisional level. A significant emphasis will be placed on technical education and skill development through initiatives like Middle Tech and Matric Tech, which will also incorporate STREAM Labs in both formal and non-formal sectors. The Chief Minister also highlighted the importance of public-private partnerships through the Sindh Education Fund (SEF) model and Education Management Organizations (EMOs), aiming to bridge the gap between primary and post-primary schools by enhancing existing schools and adding classrooms with essential facilities. The meeting was attended by Education Minister Syed Sardar Shah, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Om-

budsman Sindh Sohail Rajput, PSCM Agha Wasif, Chairman of the Planning and Development (P&D) Najam Shah, Secretary of School Education Zahid Abbasi, Secretary of Finance Fayaz Jatoi, and others. The Chief Minister was informed that there are 40,990 schools in the province, which include 36,300 primary schools, 2,600 elementary schools, 1,600 secondary schools, and 490 higher secondary schools. Current enrolment across all schools stands at 5.2 million, comprising approximately 3.09 million boys (59pc) and 2.12 million girls (41pc). The education minister reported that the number of out-of-school children is 7.8 million. The CM set a target of bringing one million children to school during the next financial year. He expressed his satisfaction that

the girls enrolment ratio in the schools was encouraging. To a question, the CM learnt that the net enrolment rate for primary education is 67 per cent, and for secondary education, it is 22 per cent. He emphasised the need to address the challenges in transitioning from primary to post-primary education by upgrading primary schools. To facilitate this transition, Murad Ali Shah approved initiating secondary shifts of elementary schools within existing primary schools to help close the gap between primary and post-primary education. In consultation with the education department, the Chief Minister decided to abolish several positions of District Education Officers (DEOs) at the district level, including DEO SEMIS, DEO Academics, DEO Sports, and DEO Quality

Assurance. The number of Taluka Education Officers (TEOs) will also be reduced; instead of four, there will be one TEO per taluka. Moreover, instead of having two DEOs (one for secondary and one for primary), there will be one DEO per district for better unity of command and efficient administration. Similarly, at the divisional level, there will be one Director of School Education instead of two. The CM has decided to transform existing high schools into model schools, establishing four model schools in each taluka to enhance the quality of education. By the 2025-26 academic year, approximately 150 schools will be developed as model institutions, with a total of 600 schools expected to be transformed by the end of the 2028-29 academic year.

CDA chief emphasizes aesthetic landscaping for Interchanges

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Monday outlined ambitious plans for the landscaping of the Jinnah Square and Taysip Erdogan Interchange projects. The meeting, attended by Member Environment, Member Engineering, Member Administration, architects, experts, and senior CDA officers, focused on transforming these key infrastructure projects into visually stunning landmarks. Chairman Randhawa, acting on the directives of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, stressed the importance of creating aesthetically pleasing and sustainable designs for both interchanges. He instructed the team to develop unique and attractive landscaping plans, including 3D designs, to enhance the visual appeal of the projects. Highlighting the need for modernization, Randhawa directed the use of elegant LED lighting to ensure proper illumination and beauty. He emphasized that effective landscaping, combined with land scaling, would not only enhance the projects' beauty but also attract tourists, showcasing Islamabad's excellent infrastructure and landscapes. The Chairman also called for the landscaping of the Jinnah Square Interchange to reflect Pakistan's struggle for independence and its historical landmarks, adding a cultural and patriotic dimension to the project. He further instructed that the designs for both interchanges be comprehensive, sustainable, and feasible, with a focus on long-term modernization of the underpasses. Randhawa made it clear that there would be no compromise on the quality, standards, or sustainability of the work. He emphasized that the landscaping should be built on modern and sustainable foundations, contributing significantly to enhancing the beauty of Islamabad, which is already renowned as one of the world's most beautiful capitals. The Chairman directed that landscaping work begin only after the approval of suitable designs, which will be finalized after thorough due diligence within the stipulated timelines.—DNA

Commissioner orders closure of non-compliant housing societies

They also discussed the digitalization of land records, the Plus Project, pending transfers, Khayat issues, the performance of e-registration centers, and ongoing cases in revenue courts

SARGODHA: Commissioner Jahanzeb Awan has issued a directive to seal housing societies that fail to submit the required fees. He issued these orders during a performance review meeting with revenue officers from all four districts of the division on Monday. During the meeting, Jahanzeb Awan emphasized the necessity for revenue officers to focus not only on administrative tasks but also on ensuring the full collection of revenue dues. "As the fiscal year approaches its end, it is crucial for the revenue field staff to work diligently to meet targets," he stated. He further directed revenue officers to resolve pending court cases within three months, asserting that no revenue case should remain unresolved for over a year in any revenue court. Such cases, Awan indicated, should be prioritized for resolution. The meeting included detailed briefings from deputy commissioners on several agenda items, including stamp duties, transfer fees, agricultural income taxes, water rates, and the auctioning of government agricultural land and commercial plazas. They also discussed the digitalization of land records, the Plus Project, pending transfers, Khayat issues, the performance of e-registration centers, and ongoing cases in revenue courts. Additionally, the Commissioner Jahanzeb Awan was briefed on the revenue rankings and parcel-based systems across the four districts. Deputy Commissioner Sarogdha Capt (Retd) Muhammad Waseem, Additional Commissioner Raye Muhammad Yasir Bhatti, ADC (Revenue) Fahad Mahmood, ACP Khan Muhammad participated in the meeting, and other deputy commissioners and assistants from Khushab, Mianwali, and Bhakkar, who joined via video link.—APP

Qureshi calls enhanced trade cooperation between ICCI, Uzbekistan

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) hosted a prominent business delegation from Uzbekistan here on Monday, led by Bakrom Yusupov, Trade and Economic Counsellor at the Embassy of Uzbekistan. The delegation, comprising representatives from Uzbekistan's fruit, vegetables, beverages, and confectionery sectors, engaged in productive B2B meetings with Islamabad's business leaders to explore new trade and investment opportunities.



In his welcome address, Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of ICCI, highlighted the chamber's commitment to promoting trade, investment, and industrial growth. He encouraged Uzbek business leaders to explore partnerships in

Pakistan's industrial zones, invest in joint ventures, and participate in the chamber's business-friendly environment that supports both local and foreign investors.

In his concluding remarks, Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Senior Vice President of ICCI, expressed confidence that the discussions would open new avenues for economic cooperation, business ventures, and the auctioning of government agricultural land.

Prominent ICCI leaders present at the event included Chairman Founder Group ICCI Tariq Sadiq, Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, former President Mian Shaukat Masood, Executive Members Imran Minhas, Najeeb Ellahi Malik, Tahir Ayub, Malik Aqeel Ahmed, former SVP Khalid Chaudhry, and Senior Advisor to ICCI President Naeem Siddiqui.

KP CM hosts Iftar dinner for orphans

PESHAWAR: In observance of World Orphans Day, a special ceremony was held at the Chief Minister's House in Peshawar where-in Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur welcomed over a thousand orphaned children from various orphanages across the region as special guests. The CM arranged an Iftar dinner for the children, personally joining them for the meal. In a heartwarming gesture, he also distributed Eid clothes and cash gifts (Eidi) among the children, individually meeting and interacting with them. The children expressed joy and appreciation for being warmly received by the Chief Minister. The event was attended by members of the provincial cabinet, officials from the Social Welfare Department, and representatives of welfare organizations. Speaking at the occasion, Gandapur emphasized the state's responsibility towards orphaned children, stating, "Orphaned children are the children of the government and the state. It is our duty to care for them. Supporting the underprivileged is one of the hallmarks of a welfare state." He further affirmed the provincial government's commitment to continue supporting vulnerable segments of society. A collective prayer was also offered for the country's progress, prosperity, peace, and for the elevation of martyrs' ranks.—APP

Tax incentives for green construction must for sustainability: Sherry

ISLAMABAD: Senator Sherry Rehman, the Chairperson of Senate's Standing Committee on Climate Change, stressed the need for integrating construction industry concerns into national climate policies and proposed tax incentives for green construction projects and higher taxes on non-compliant sectors. She was speaking at a high-level consultative webinar, organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here on Monday, said a press release. In her keynote address, Senator Sherry Rehman highlighted the solid waste crisis in major metropolitan areas and its severe impact on the Indus river, the second most polluted river globally. "The informal sector is already practicing circularity by recycling and reusing materials, but we need formal sector integration into national policies," she stated.—APP

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India's 'fictitious narrative' can't hide...

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PTI confirms participation in NSC...

FROM PAGE 01 "The session will meet under his chairmanship and entail a comprehensive briefing on the country's security situation to the cabinet members...

PM Shehbaz pledges full support...

FROM PAGE 01 Pakistan is sure to receive valuable foreign exchange spent on its imports. He directed the activation of research work in the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council at the earliest...

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PJA set to roar for...

FROM PAGE 01 The skies three months after the national flag carrier resumed its Europe operation after four-year hiatus...

Torres double helps Barca claim late 4-2 comeback win

Barca have 60 points and a game in hand after last week's postponement of their home game

SPORTS DESK

MADRID: Barcelona's Ferran Torres scored twice to help secure a late 4-2 comeback win at Atletico Madrid in a pulsating LaLiga clash on Sunday that took the Catalans back to the top of the table...



able, we showed our best side, we gave the best we had. "It was clear to me that if I scored it would be an important game. Since the ball was on the other side of the pitch I could see Gallagher was moving away from me and as soon

Karachi Whites, Lahore Blues maintain winning momentum

Karachi Whites, Lahore Blues maintain winning momentum in National T20 Cup

FAISALABAD: Karachi Whites and Lahore Blues continued their winning momentum in the ongoing National T20 Cup 2024-25 by defeating their respective opponents on Sunday night...

registered their second win of the tournament, defeating Dera Murad Jamali by six wickets. Player of the Match Saqib Khan led Karachi's bowling attack with impressive figures of 3/23 in four overs...

DNA FAISALABAD: Karachi Whites and Lahore Blues continued their winning momentum in the ongoing National T20 Cup 2024-25 by defeating their respective opponents on Sunday night...

put up a fiery 72-run stand. Earlier, Player of the Match QasimAkram and Mohammad Salman Mirza were chasing a modest 98-run target in just 24 runs...

Former Australian cricketer mocks Muhammad Rizwan

Hogg conducted a mock interview with a content creator impersonating Rizwan

SYDNEY: Former Australian cricketer Brad Hogg has sparked debate among cricket fans after mimicking Pakistan's wicket-keeper-batsman Muhammad Rizwan's English in a viral video...

Broad warns ECB against appointing Stokes as captain

ECB Director Rob Key hinted that Stokes was among the leading candidates for the captaincy

LONDON: Former England pacer Stuart Broad has cautioned the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) against considering all-rounders Ben Stokes for the role of ODI captain...

Ready to resign over Jaffer Express incident: Asif

Defense Minister Khawaja Asif and Information Minister Attaulah Tarar...

FROM PAGE 01 Defense Minister Khawaja Asif and Information Minister Attaulah Tarar said they are not resigning from their posts...

Mitchell Owen picked by Peshawar Zalmi for PSL 10

Owen scored a 39-ball century to lead Hurricanes to their maiden BBL title earlier this year

KARACHI: Australia's emerging middle-order batter Mitchell Owen has been roped in by former champions Peshawar Zalmi for the upcoming Pakistan Super League (PSL) 10...

lians in the former champion's squad for the upcoming edition of the IPL, slated to run from March 22 to May 25. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), as a result...

FROM PAGE 01 Defense Minister Khawaja Asif and Information Minister Attaulah Tarar said they are not resigning from their posts...

Briefs

US raids won't break nation's resolve

SANAA: Yemen's Ansarullah popular resistance movement has reassessed the country's undecided determination to resist and confront foreign aggression aimed at forcing the Arab country to stop its pro-Palestinian operations. "Sana'a was not broken by 200,000 raids, and its steadfastness will not be broken by a million raids," Abdulrahman al-Anhouthi, director of the Yemeni General Corporation for Radio and Television said.

The official was referring to the Arab Peninsula nation's coming under numerous incessant aerial assaults by a Saudi Arabia-led military coalition, which invaded the country in 2015, as well as ongoing American, British, and Israeli attacks against the Yemeni people.

He made the remarks as the United States claimed to carry out major airstrikes against Yemen on Sunday night, hours after the Ansarullah resistance movement warned that the Yemeni Armed Forces will target the American aircraft carrier, and warships in the region.

"The Yemeni people will not abandon Gaza, even if we are all martyred," he told Palestine's Saba news agency, pointing to the Palestinian territory that has endured more than 15 months of a heavily US-backed Israeli war of genocide. — Agencies

KBA moves SC against judge transfers

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Karachi Bar Association has petitioned the Supreme Court against the transfer of judges in the Islamabad High Court (IHC). Filed by advocate Faisal Siddiqui, the petition names the President, the federal government, and the Supreme Court Registrar as respondents, along with registrars of the Lahore, Islamabad, Sindh, and Balochistan high courts, as well as both transferred and affected judges.

Invoking Article 184(3) of the Constitution, the petition calls for the annulment of the new seniority list and the appointment of the outgoing IHC chief justice. It argues that the President lacks unchecked authority to transfer judges, a move that threatens judicial independence. Furthermore, the petition deems the transfer notification unconstitutional and demands that the affected judges retake their oath.

Murad, Hammad declared absconders

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court on Monday declared three PTI leaders absconders in case related to attack on judicial complex. ATC Judge Tahira Abbas Saira has declared Murad Saeed, Hammad Azhar and Farrukh Habib absconders for skipping hearings continuously.

He has also issued arrest warrants for Raja Basharat and others who were absent during today's hearing.

The anti-terrorism court later adjourned the hearing till April 7 after marking the attendance of the suspects who attended the hearing.

Air Chief vows to cement military coop with South Africa

Dr Thobekile Gamede commended the professionalism and accomplishments of Pakistan Air Force, highlighting its success in the domains of indigenization and cutting-edge technological advancements



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A high-level defence delegation from the Republic of South Africa, led by Dr Thobekile Gamede, Acting Secretary of Defence, called on Air Chief Marshal Zahoor Ahmed Habber Siddiqi, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. The visit marked a significant step

towards strengthening the enduring military ties between the two countries, focusing on areas of mutual interest and exploring new avenues of cooperation in the aviation industry. During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff shared insight into various ongoing modernization projects of Pakistan Air Force's operational construct, force goals and plans for the force structure with a keen focus on future warfare. He emphasized the crucial

role of the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park in bolstering self-reliance and driving regional defence innovations. The Air Chief also reiterated PAF's commitment to collaborating with the South African Air Force in military to military co-operation and the training domain.

Dr Thobekile Gamede commended the professionalism and accomplishments of Pakistan Air Force, highlighting its success

in the domains of indigenization and cutting-edge technological advancements. She expressed a strong desire to rebuild South African Air Force, seeking assistance from PAF for its modernization and servicing of critical equipment. The dignitary also conveyed an earnest interest in bolstering the existing cooperation between the Air Forces of both countries. This includes a specific request for increased collaborative efforts to revamp training setups, ranging from basic to tactical levels, across multiple warfare domains. The South African Acting Secretary of Defence was notably impressed by the PAF's Multi-Domain capabilities showcased during Exercise Indus Shield, which was attended by a South African Air Force delegation as observers. She highlighted that the successful execution of this exercise underscored the professional process and versatility of Pakistan Air Force in diverse operational environments. The South African delegation also articulated intentions to re-equip their Air Force and establish an industrial setup aligned with the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park being spearheaded by PAF. The delegation also visited National ISR & Integrated Air Operations Centre and PAF Cyber Command, where they were given a detailed briefing on PAF's operational capabilities. This visit of Acting Secretary of Defence South Africa to Air Headquarters, Islamabad is a testament to the strong commitment of both nations to further enhance their military partnership through continued dialogue and collaboration.

Israeli airstrike kills three in Gaza

CAIRO: An Israeli airstrike killed three Palestinian men in the Gaza Strip, medics said on Monday, and there was no sign of progress at renewed ceasefire talks. Medics said the three men were killed near Bureij camp in the center of the devastated Palestinian enclave by a missile fired from a drone. Israel's military said one strike hit three militants in central Gaza as they were planting explosives, while another targeted several militants in Rafah. In Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, medics said three people were wounded in another airstrike. Rafah residents have reported frequent fire by Israeli forces deployed in areas adjacent to the border inside the city boundaries. The persistent bloodshed underscores the fragility of a three-stage ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas. The Palestinian militant group Hamas mediated by Qatar, Egypt, and the United States. Israel wants to extend the ceasefire to the next phase, a proposal backed by US envoy Steve Witkoff. Hamas says it will resume freeing hostages only under the second phase that was due to begin on March 2. — Agencies

Public haills Palestinian draft budget

RAMALLAH: As part of ongoing efforts to advance its reform agenda, and in a significant step towards promoting transparency and public participation, the Palestinian Government continues to welcome feedback from citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) on the draft Public Budget Law for 2025 before its final approval. The draft budget for 2025 has been made publicly available on the Ministry of Justice's digital legislation platform, providing an accessible platform for all concerned parties, including citizens, CSOs, and private sector institutions, to review the proposed law and submit their invaluable input, comments, and feedback, ensuring broad accessibility and public participation. This landmark initiative follows an intensive consultative workshop organized by the Ministry of Finance, which brought together key CSOs to review budget priorities and align them with national priorities and reform efforts. — Agencies

NHPP to address population growth, health infrastructure

Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb briefed on development of National Health and Population Policy (NHPP) 2025-34

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, today attended a meeting to review the ongoing development of the National Health and Population Policy (NHPP) for the period 2025-34. The meeting by senior officers from the Ministry of Finance as well as a three-member NHPP team, led by Dr. Sameen Siddiqi, Professor at Aga Khan University and NHPP Team Lead, along with Health Systems Specialist Dr. Tayyeb-Masad and Public Health Expert and Coordinator NHPP Dr. Noor ul Huda Shah. During the meeting, the NHPP team provided an update on the formulation of the policy, which is set to guide the country's health and population strategies for the next decade. The team emphasized that the policy is being developed with a focus on evidence-based decision-making and prioritizing critical health issues, all within the context of the fiscal constraints result-

ing from Pakistan's current macroeconomic situation. The NHPP team outlined the broader goals of the policy, which include reorganizing and restructuring the existing health infrastructure, addressing the challenges posed by high population growth, integrating health and population strategies, and leveraging political capital to increase public sector financing for the health sector. These efforts are aimed at creating a health system that works efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of a growing population, particularly the most vulnerable sectors of society. In addition, the team presented a series of proposals and recommendations designed to help achieve the goals of the NHPP. These proposals focused on strengthening health systems, improving resource allocation, and ensuring that critical health services reach all segments of the population, particularly those most in need. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb commended the team for their hard work and the progress made thus far on the NHPP.

Fighting erupts along Lebanon-Syria border

The Lebanese and Syrian armies said they are communicating with each other to ease tensions

WEB DESK

BEIRUT: Fighting erupted along the border between Lebanon and Syria overnight on Monday, Syrian state media reported, after three Syrian soldiers were killed in earlier clashes. The violence came a month after daylong fighting between the Syrian military and armed Lebanese Shia groups closely allied with the ousted Bashar Assad government in the north-east of Iraq. Lebanon has been seeking international support to boost funding for its military as it gradually deploys troops along its porous northern and eastern borders with Syria and along its southern border with Israel. The Lebanese and Syrian armies said they are communicating with each other to ease tensions. Lebanese troops have been deployed in

large numbers in the area. Families in the border area fled toward Hermel in Syria amid the overnight clashes and shelling. Syria's interim government accused Hezbollah from the Lebanese Hezbollah group of crossing northeastern Lebanon into Syria on Saturday, kidnapping three soldiers and killing them on Lebanese soil. Hezbollah in a statement denied any involvement. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, said the Shia groups were involved. The circumstances of the incident remain unclear. Syrian state media, citing an unnamed Defense Ministry official, said the Syrian army shelled "Hezbollah gatherings that killed the Syrian soldiers" along the border. Though the clashes largely calmed before sunrise, Lebanese media reported low-level fighting at dawn after an attack on a Syrian military vehicle.

IHC merges petitions, forms larger bench on Imran's meeting

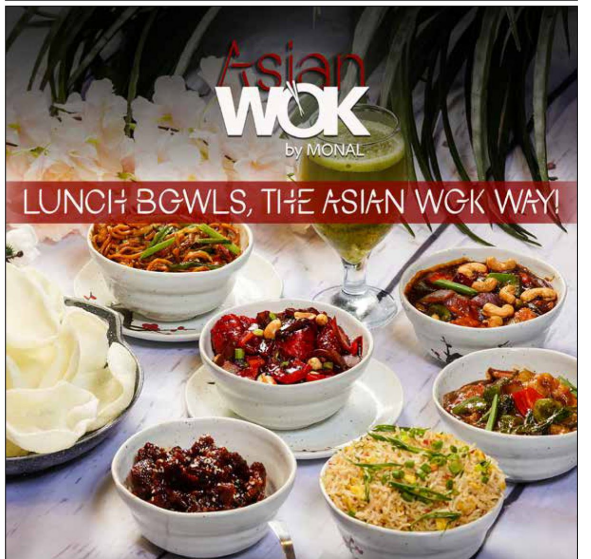
Plea laments operational difficulties, uncertainty faced by prison administration due to multiple cases

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday issued directives for the constitution of a larger bench and merging various pleas pertaining to meeting rights of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan who is incarcerated in Adiala jail. The development came as IHC's Acting Chief Justice Sarfraz Dogar heard a petition filed by Adiala jail Superintendent Abdul Ghafoor Anjum who complained of multiple pending pleas concerning Khan's visitation rights and conflicting judgements by the courts on the said issue.

However, his incarceration has not been without controversy as the former ruling party has time again complained of mistreatment by the authorities as well as alleged hindrances in arranging meetings between Khan, his lawyers and others. Last week, the IHC had ordered Adiala officials to produce the ex-PM before the court in a personal capacity in relation to a plea filed by Mashal Yousafzi against alleged denial of permission to meet the PTI founder. The court, initially, had sought Khan's virtual appearance via video link by 2pm. However, upon expiry of the deadline, the politician was due to be presented in court in person as per the court orders. However, the Islamabad advocate general (AG) informed the court that bringing the PTI founder from jail was not possible due to security concerns and that presenting him via video link was also not feasible. The court directed the Adiala jail superintendent and Islamabad AG to submit their affidavits in this regard. Meanwhile, in his plea filed in the IHC, Adiala jail Superintendent Anjum highlighted that Khan was being accommodated as per the relevant SOPs agreed in March 2024.

"In the interest of judicial consistency, it is imperative that all related cases listed [...] be consolidated before a single or larger bench to ensure uniform adjudication and effective enforcement of judicial directives," read the jail official's petition while citing operational difficulties and uncertainty faced by the prison administration. The former prime minister, facing a plethora of legal cases, has been behind bars in Adiala jail since September 2023.



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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Sweden Alexandra Cannell Berg Von Linde called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters. — DNA