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## Sahibzada Hamid named chairman of Public Accounts



**Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD**  
The PTI founder on Wednesday appointed Sahibzada Hamid Raza of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) as chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). According to sources, earlier the PTI founder had nominated Sher Afzal Marwat as the chairman. However, the PTI founder consulted the party leadership and nominated the Sahibzada for the office of chairman. He has issued instructions to Omar Ayub in this regard. It may be noted that the PAC plays a crucial role in upholding transparency and accountability within ministries, divisions, and public sector organisations.

## Pakistan, Iran for energy cooperation including IP Gas Pipeline

**A Joint statement after President Raisi's visit mentions; terrorism as common threat**



**Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD**  
Pakistan and Iran "reiterated the importance of cooperation in the energy domain, including trade in electricity, power transmission lines and IP Gas Pipeline Project", says a joint statement issued by the Foreign Office after Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi culminated the three-day official visit on Wednesday. "The two sides agreed to further expand trade and economic cooperation and affirmed their commitment to transform their common border from 'border of peace' to a 'border of prosperity' through joint development-oriented economic projects, including setting up of joint border markets, economic free zones, and new border openings," the statement read. As Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Raisi held talks on a wide range of issues, they agreed to boost their bilateral trade to \$10 billion over the next five years. They also underscored the imperative of a long-term durable economic partnership and collaborative regional economic and connectivity model, particularly for socioeconomic development in Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan and Pakistan's Balochistan provinces. **TERRORISM IS A COMMON THREAT**  
Pakistan and Iran condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, which, they said, posed a common threat to regional peace and stability and presented a major impediment to the development of the region. They agreed to adopt a collaborative approach to confront this menace and to leverage the existing bilateral institutional mechanisms to effectively combat and counter this threat, while fully upholding the principles of the UN Charter, particularly the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states. Both sides also acknowledged the key role of enhanced economic and commercial opportunities in improving the security environment in the border areas. At the same time, they also reiterated the importance of forging regular cooperation and exchange of views between political, military and security officials of the two countries to combat threats such as terrorism, narcotics smuggling.

## PTI seeks Ejaz Chaudhary's production orders for Senate session



**Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD**  
An application has been filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) opposition leader Shibli Faraz for the production orders of PTI incarcerated leader Ejaz Chaudhary for the Senate session. The application has been submitted to the Senate Secretariat. Shibli Faraz wrote a letter to Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani that Ejaz Chaudhary was confined to Kot Lakhpat Jail. He said the senator had a constitutional right to participate in the session. The opposition leader has sought production orders of Senator Ejaz Chaudhary in the letter to the Senate chairman.

## Punjab CM gives in principle approval to housing project



**Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE**  
Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has given in principle approval to 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' housing project. A special meeting regarding the housing project was held with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in chair. Senior Provincial Minister Murrtyun Aurangzeb, Senator Pervez Reshded, Information Minister Azma Zahid Bokhari, MPA Samia Ashiq, chief secretary, Lahore commissioner and other relevant officials were in attendance. In the meeting, the Punjab CM was briefed on the construction of model houses and their monthly installments. The participants of the meeting were told that state land had been identified in five cities for the housing scheme for low-income homeless people. During the meeting, the chief minister gave in-principle approval to the 'Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar' project on 519 kanals of state land in five major cities including Lahore.

## DGPR Will Have To Play Vibrant And Effective Role To Counter Fake News: Ahmad Aziz Tarar



**Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE**  
Secretary Information & Culture / Director General Public Relations Punjab Ahmad Aziz Tarar has said that the present government holds in high esteem responsible journalism. Timely provision of factual information to the people will be ensured under any circumstances that he added. He said that the DGPR department will deliver factual information to the people through relevant platforms so as to counter fake and baseless news, publication trend. Ahmad Aziz Tarar expressed these views while presiding over a briefing session at the DGPR office today. Additional Director General Public Relations Rubina Aziz, all sections Directors, Deputy Directors and other relevant officers were also present on the occasion. **Secretary Information & Culture** underscored that proactive measures would be undertaken in order to equip the department on modern lines so as to ensure dissemination of accurate and timely information to the general public. It would enable the general public to receive timely information about people-friendly policies and development projects of the Punjab government. He underlined that effective use of artificial intelligence and digital media has become indispensable in order to fulfil diverse communication needs of the present era. The DGPR department is adhering to its policy of playing a vibrant role by equipping itself with modern communication tools so as to disseminate effective and authentic information.

# PM Shehbaz urged to extend olive branch to jailed Imran Khan, mend ties with India



**Soon Times Correspondent KARACHI**  
A top business leader of the country has urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to extend an olive branch to his political rival incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan. The PTI founder remains behind bars after he was booked in range of cases containing criminal charges including Official Secrets Act, terrorism, corruption and others.

Khan, the deposed prime minister, was ousted from power via opposition's no-confidence motion in April 2022. However, the PTI alleged that Khan removal was orchestrated by the United States by supporting the opposition's no-trust motion. The PTI founder was arrested in August last year after he was sentenced in Toshakhana case. Later, he was convicted in cipher and un-Islamic marriage cases as well wherein his appeals are currently pending before the

respective courts. The development came during the PM's day-long visit to Karachi where he addressed the business community and listened to their suggestions and queries related to trade and economy. During a Q&A session, business tycoon Arif Habib appreciated PM Shehbaz's efforts during his previous stint in securing the bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Referring to his meeting with IMF

Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva in June last year, the owner of top brokerage firm suggested the prime minister to "shake two more hands" — one with the neighbouring country including India and another with the PTI founder in a bid to ensure stability in the country. "[...] secondly, you should also shake hand with an inmate of Adiala jail. I think these two steps will yield positive results," he remarked.

## Pakistan, Portugal eye closer ties across multiple fronts

**Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD**  
National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq stated on Wednesday that Pakistan and Portugal enjoyed a multifaceted and friendly relationship marked by shared interests and a common stance on various regional and international matters. "It is high time to enhance political, cultural, economic and people-to-people connections between the two countries," the speaker said during a meeting with Portuguese Envoy to Pakistan Manuel Frederico Pinheiro Da Silva, who called on him. According to a news release, the two sides during the meeting discussed various bilateral, regional and global issues. They expressed contentment with the current state of bilateral relations and reaffirmed their joint resolve to further expand and diversify mutually beneficial cooperation. While discussing parliamentary relations, the speaker underscored the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in strengthening bilateral ties, particularly through expanding cooperation between parliamentary friendship groups and the exchange of parliamentary delegations. He also mentioned extending the invitation to his Portuguese counterpart to visit Pakistan along with a parliamentary delegation. Discussing trade and economic cooperation, the speaker said that Pakistan's proactive efforts in creating a conducive environment for economic and



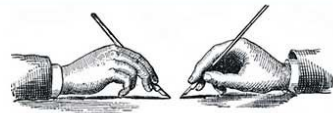
trade activities, providing significant investment opportunities and benefits. The speaker also highlighted that Pakistan had ample tourism opportunities, especially ancient Buddhist heritage, could be a potential driver for closer ties between the two nations. The ambassador expressed gratitude for the speaker's kind remarks and reiterated that Portugal viewed Pakistan as an important regional stakeholder. He expressed a desire to further strengthen linkages in areas of mutual interest, in addition to fostering parliamentary and cultural exchanges.



As a **CORRESPONDENT**

CONTACT US 

0321- 888-1135  
www.SoonTimes.pk



## IT Capacity for Trade Monitoring

Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Wednesday chaired a meeting to assess the effectiveness and sufficiency of the Information Technology (IT) infrastructure of the Ministry of Commerce (MOC). The meeting was deliberated the current IT capabilities of the ministry, particularly in monitoring trade activities, international imports and exports, remittances, and other key performance indicators (KPIs). Minister underscored the indispensable role of digital solutions in facilitating the

acquisition of accurate and comprehensive information and data essential for informed decision-making. It was enacted, but its further utilization and enhancement need deliberation. Recognizing the transformative potential of technological advancements, he emphasized the imperative for leveraging digital tools to enhance the efficiency and precision of trade-related data monitoring and analysis. Furthermore, the Minister Kamal stressed the importance of fostering collaboration for exchange of information and data dealing

with trade and economic development among diverse stakeholders, including federal and provincial organizations. The meeting concluded with a consensus on the necessity for proactive measures to augment the IT capacity of the Ministry of Commerce, aligning with the broad vision of harnessing technology to propel economic growth and prosperity. The Minister directed to further work on developing the dashboard to a much-updated level for better analysis and review. Minister Kamal reiterated the commitment of the ministry to embrace

innovation and digital solutions as integral components of its operational framework. He highlighted the significance of developing synergy among these entities to leverage the digital infrastructure for the attainment of trade and economic development. The initiative led by Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal Khan signifies a concerted effort towards modernizing trade monitoring mechanisms, poised to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the realm of commerce and international trade.

### What Challenges Female Veterinarians Face in Pakistan?



Dr. Saba Anver

In the male-dominated field of veterinary medicine in Pakistan, female veterinarians navigate a landscape fraught with challenges and obstacles, both in securing employment opportunities and thriving in their careers. Despite their expertise and qualifications, gender bias, societal expectations, and institutional barriers often hinder their professional advancement, perpetuating inequality and limiting their contribution to the field. One of the most significant challenges faced by female veterinary graduates in Pakistan is gender bias in the hiring process. Many veterinary clinics and organizations prefer to hire male veterinarians, perpetuating the notion that men are more capable in this field. Despite possessing the same level of education and training as their male counterparts, female vets are frequently overlooked for promotions and leadership positions. Dr. Ayesha Khan, a seasoned veterinarian graduate from the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Lahore with over a decade of experience, recounts her struggle to be taken seriously in a male-dominated field shares her experience. "I have applied to numerous veterinary clinics, but I often receive rejection letters or no response at all. I can't help but wonder if my gender has played a role in their decision not to hire me. I have often been sidelined during important decision-making

processes simply because of my gender." Younger and fresher veterinary graduates also face challenges related to their lack of experience. Many employers prefer to hire candidates with several years of experience, leaving recent graduates struggling to find entry-level positions. Dr. Ali Hassan, a recent graduate from the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, highlights the Catch-22 situation facing many young vets. "Employers often require experience for entry-level positions, but how can we gain experience if no one is willing to hire us?" he questions. Poultry farming is a crucial sector of Pakistan's agriculture industry, but female veterinarians working in this field face unique challenges. Dr. Saima Ahmed, a poultry veterinarian, highlights the difficulties she faces on a daily basis. "Despite having extensive knowledge of poultry health and management, I often find it challenging to gain the trust of male farmers who prefer to consult male veterinarians," she explains. Additionally, long hours and physically demanding work make it difficult for female vets to balance their professional and personal lives in the competitive world of veterinary medicine, marketing plays a vital role in attracting clients and expanding one's practice. However, female veterinarians often struggle to establish themselves as credible professionals in the eyes of potential clients. Dr. Hina Malik, a marketing consultant for veterinary clinics, emphasizes the importance of building a strong personal brand. "Female veterinarians need to overcome societal stereotypes and establish themselves as knowledgeable and competent professionals," she advises. Dr. Fatima Ali, a recent

graduate from the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Rawalpindi, believes that perseverance is key. "I know that finding a job in this field will be challenging, but I am determined to succeed. I am exploring alternative career paths such as freelance consulting and telemedicine to gain experience and establish myself as a competent veterinarian," she says. Despite the numerous challenges they face, female veterinarians in Pakistan are resilient and determined to succeed in their chosen field. Organizations such as the Pakistan Veterinary Medical Council (PVMC) are taking steps to promote gender equality in the veterinary profession. Dr. Sarah Khan, president of the PVMC, acknowledges the need for systemic change. "We are working to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for female veterinarians through mentorship programs and advocacy initiatives," she states. Additionally, the scarcity of female role models and mentors within the veterinary community further compounds the challenges faced by aspiring female veterinarians in Pakistan. Without guidance and support from experienced practitioners who have navigated similar obstacles, young women entering the field may feel discouraged or isolated, lacking the necessary mentorship and networks to thrive in their careers. The challenges faced by female veterinarians in Pakistan underscore the need for systemic change and proactive measures to dismantle gender barriers within the profession. By fostering a culture of inclusivity, respect, and support, Pakistan can harness the full potential of its female veterinary workforce and pave the way for a more equitable and vibrant veterinary community.

### Iran's Pragmatic Approach toward Afghan Taliban



Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer

Iran's relationship with the Afghan Taliban is characterized by complexity and caution, as the two are not traditional allies. Tehran's approach to the Taliban is influenced by numerous bilateral and regional factors, including historical animosities and disputes. One significant source of tension is the sectarian divide, as Iran, a predominantly Shia Muslim country, has a longstanding ideological rift with the Sunni Taliban. Additionally, a longstanding dispute over water resources adds to the contentious relationship. Despite these challenges, Iran has not adopted the hostile stance it took towards the Taliban in the 1990s; instead, it has sought to establish a more pragmatic and normalized relationship with the group since the latter's takeover of Kabul in August 2021. Iran's cautious approach to the Taliban's ascent to power was rooted in its desire to see the withdrawal of US and Western forces from Afghanistan, which Tehran viewed as a potential source of regional stability. This shift in Iran's stance toward the Taliban marks a significant departure from its previous confrontational interactions with the group. Overall, Iran's engagement with the Taliban regime is a balancing act aimed at securing its own interests while navigating the complex geopolitical landscape of the region.

Iran's current overtures toward the Taliban reflect its strategy of seeking alternatives to the US-dominated global order and its pragmatic approach towards achieving specific objectives in Afghanistan. While anti-American sentiment is not the primary driver of Tehran's cautious engagement with the new Afghan government, Iran hopes to address its own security and political concerns through this relationship. These include the growing terror threat from the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP), the critical issue of water supply to eastern Iran, and the migration of Afghan refugees. Iran's approach has been pragmatic and aims to deepen trust with Kabul, even though it has not officially recognized the Taliban regime. Despite allowing visits from prominent Afghan opposition leaders such as Ahmed Massoud and Ismail Khan, Iran understands

that no domestic Afghan group currently poses a credible threat to the Taliban's consolidated control. The major challenge to the Taliban, and by extension Iran, comes from ISKP, whose extremist agenda and violent attacks pose a significant threat to regional stability and security. ISKP's strict interpretation of sharia law and anti-Shia stance makes it an inveterate enemy of Tehran. The mutual threat posed by ISKP has encouraged Iran and the Taliban to set aside their differences and collaborate on counter-terrorism efforts. Iran's intelligence minister has publicly acknowledged cooperation with the Taliban against ISKP fighters, while Iranian parliamentarians have praised collaborative efforts that have prevented terrorist attacks. This counter-terrorism partnership offers Iran benefits, including greater border security and opportunities for joint intelligence operations with the Taliban. Such cooperation helps Iran address internal critics of its relationship with the fundamentalist Sunni Taliban by emphasizing the importance of these efforts for national and regional security. Terrorist attacks, such as those in Kerman, have prompted calls in Iran to increase security along the Afghan border. At a recent UN Security Council meeting, Iran highlighted the regional security risks posed by terrorism, drug trafficking, and border control deficiencies in Afghanistan. Through its pragmatic engagement with the Taliban, Iran seeks to safeguard its interests while contributing to regional stability.

Iran's policy toward the Afghan Taliban is heavily influenced by geopolitical considerations, much like the approaches of China and Russia. Iran is cautious about the potential influence of other regional powers in Afghanistan and seeks to maintain a delicate balance with the Taliban regime to preserve its own interests. By refraining from actions that could provoke the Taliban, Iran aims to consolidate its position with the new leadership in Kabul, thereby limiting the impact of its rivals, particularly Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Pakistan. Tehran's primary concern is to prevent Pakistan from dominating the power dynamics in a Taliban-led Afghanistan, making the containment of Islamabad's influence a central focus of its strategy. Moreover, Iran is wary of any aggressive moves by the Taliban along the Iran-Afghanistan border that could embolden Sunni extremist groups within Iran, posing a threat to the country's security and stability.

Tehran's engagement

with the Taliban in Afghanistan is significantly influenced by economic considerations. With Afghanistan's foreign aid still suspended, the Taliban is keen to develop economic ties with Iran to sustain its economy. Currently, about one-third of Afghanistan's total imports are sourced from Iran, making the economic relationship between the two neighbors crucial. Tehran has taken proactive measures to bolster bilateral trade and commerce, such as hosting the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Economic Committee meeting in November 2023. This meeting was notable as it was the first since the Taliban regained power, and it was attended by the Taliban's Deputy Prime Minister, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. The meeting resulted in the decision to create working groups to identify obstacles hindering economic cooperation between the two countries. On February 24, 2024, a technical delegation from Afghanistan visited Iran to evaluate the facilities of the Chabahar Free Trade Zone, a key area that could accommodate Afghan exports. Such visits not only foster economic ties but also help in improving political relations between the two nations. Tehran's interest in using Afghanistan as a transit route for Iranian energy and other exports aligns with India's vision of Afghanistan as a gateway to Central Asia. In a recent meeting in Kabul, Indian diplomat J.P. Singh discussed with the Taliban's foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi the potential for enhancing economic cooperation and initiating bilateral transit using Iran's Chabahar Port, commonly known as the "Golden Gate" to landlocked Afghanistan. These developments indicate a growing interdependence among Iran, Afghanistan, and India, driven by economic and strategic interests.

The Helmand River dispute between Iran and Afghanistan is a complex and potentially volatile issue rooted in the shared dependence on the river for water, agriculture, and livelihood amidst increasing scarcity. The Helmand River's origin in Afghanistan's Hindu Kush Mountains and its flow into Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province creates a vital connection for both nations. Afghanistan's construction of a dam on the river for irrigation and power generation has heightened tensions, prompting violent clashes between the two sides.

### LHC CJ refers Fawad's plea for extension in protective bail to division bench



LAHORE The Chief Justice of Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday referred the application for extension of protective bail of former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry to a division bench. Fawad appeared before Chief Justice Malik Shaltzad

Ahmad Khan along with his wife Hiba Fawad. He submitted that the LHC had granted him protective bail in 36 cases and requested the court to order extension in bail. The chief justice referred his plea to the division bench headed by Justice Alia Neelum.

Believe me or not it will happen soon  
Believe me or not it will appear soon  
The sky will shine and bright will be the moon  
Believe me it will appear very soon  
You will have soon for whom you dream  
Just look forward for hard work because it will happen soon  
The success is around the corner and you will surely reach soon  
Be patient and do your self groom  
One day will come when you will bloom  
Hold on! Your sky will appear very soon  
Humility will be served with whatever they deserve.  
Aet kindly you will rewarded soon.  
Share with other which you want for you  
Because you will be blessed in the result very soon.  
This world is precious  
Make it for you, work on it in the morning, evening and in the noon.  
Bet me! In the result you will get your brighter moon.  
Spread the positivity you will appear on the sky very soon.  
Bitness and hurdles are everywhere you please just change your tone  
You can do it you will knew it very soon.  
Believe me it will happen very soon  
Raffa Amjad



## The signing of the MoU between Tareen Education Foundation and District Administration Khanewal



**Soon Times Correspondent**  
Khanewal: Today, Tareen Education Foundation (TEF) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the District Administration for the upgradation of an IT laboratory and the construction of two new classrooms at the Khanewal Public School and University College (KPSUC). The MoU was signed by the Deputy Commissioner, Mr Waseem Hamid Sindhu and the CEO of TEF, Mr Akbar Khan. The Additional Deputy Commissioner of Revenue (Khanewal), Ms Azubah Azim and the Principal of KPSUC, Professor Hafiz Rashid Saeed Rana

were also present on this occasion. The Deputy Commissioner expressed gratitude to Mr Jahangir Khan Tareen for his generous support and conveyed appreciation for TEF's contribution to promoting quality education in public schools. He hoped that the collaboration between TEF and the District Administration Khanewal would go a long way in demonstrating a new paradigm in IT education in Khanewal. Mr Akbar Khan said that as part of Mr Jahangir Khan Tareen's vision, TEF is committed to empowering the youth, especially students from the underprivileged and marginalized segments of our society.



## Afforestation is important for elimination of environmental pollution: AC Hakim Khan

**Soon Times Correspondent**  
Bhera: Assistant Commissioner Hakim Khan has said that afforestation is very important for the elimination of environmental pollution to protect human life from the effects of changing seasons. He was talking to the members of the club after planting a sapling in the lawn of Bhera Press Club Registered. Former Deputy District Education Officer Chaudhry Ikrumulhik Salimi, Building Inspector Tanveer Hitar, Sanitary Supervisor Syed Zahid Hussain Shah and

others were also present on this occasion. On his arrival at the club, President Shaheen Farooqi welcomed him along with the members. Assistant Commissioner Hakim Khan said, it is the duty of every citizen to participate in the plantation campaign. Every person should plant and protect a tree. Assistant Commissioner Hakim Khan said that more and more saplings are being planted in this plantation campaign to make the area greener so that the environment can be kept clean in the future.

## Civilians' trials: SC refers matter to committee for formation of larger bench

**A six-member bench headed by Justice Aminuddin heard the appeals regarding civilians' trials**

**Soon Times Correspondent**  
ISLAMABAD  
The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday referred civilians trial case to the Practice and Procedures Committee for formation of a larger bench. A six-member bench headed by Justice Aminuddin heard the appeals regarding trial of civilians in military courts.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Musarrat Hali and Justice Inam Saadat Khan are also part of the bench.

**COMMENCEMENT OF HEARING**  
As the hearing started, Attorney General Mansoor Awan said 20 accused had been released and sent back to their homes on Eid.

Justice Mian Muhammad Ali Mazhar inquired was there no case against the



petitioner Justice Javvad S Khawaja, raised objection on the bench and said the matter should be sent again to the judges committee for formation of a nine-member bench.

On this occasion, Aitzaz and other lawyers requested the court to bring judgments on record. The lawyers took the stance that verdicts passed for 20 accused should be brought on record.

The court remarked that it would ask them to provide copies of the rulings. Justice Shahid Waheed said the court wanted to know what procedure was followed for the trial.

Later, the Supreme Court sought copies of the judgments of military courts while hearing appeals regarding trials of civilians in military courts.

After the arguments of the counsels, the six-member larger bench of the Supreme Court referred the matter to the Practice and Procedures Committee after the objection of the main petitioners.

released accused now?  
Aitzaz Ahsan stood on his seat and replied that these accused had been convicted and sent home. Unfortunately, the attorney general was not seen perfect in this case, he said.

Justice Aminuddin inquired what Aitzaz was talking about in the submission list of the attorney general? Aitzaz said yes it was part of the list. Later, the court made the attorney general's statement part of the record.

**OBJECTION BY BENCH**  
Khawaja Ahmad Hussain, the counsel for

## Police arrest 7 persons during patrol & recover arms

**Soon Times Correspondent**  
Nowshera Soon Sakasar: According to the instructions of DPO Khushab Touqeer Muhammad Naqem, police arrested 7 persons during the patrol along with SI Muhammad Zohaib under the supervision of SHO Inspector Malik Muhammad Jaz Ahmed of Nowshera police station. Meanwhile, 41 bore bore containing 12 rounds of bullets were recovered from the possession of Rafiqat Habib, 12 bore rifle containing 4 rounds of cartridges from the possession of Jahanzeb resident of Kufri, 30 bore rifle-pistol containing 4 rounds of bullets from the possession of

Muhammad Melhooob caste Bharti resident of Sarki, a 30-bore pistol was recovered from the possession of Imran Aslam resident of Kufri, a 30-bore pistol from the possession of Muhammad Mumtaz, a resident of Kofri, 10 rounds of rifle 8mm from the possession of Muhammad Shaukat, a resident of Kufri, and 840 grams of hashish from the possession of Shah Jehan alias DC son of Mansab Khan, resident of Uchhal were recovered. Separate cases have been registered under the provisions of illegal display of weapons, aerial firing and drugs.

## Missing Baloch students: IHC raises question over accountability in intelligence agencies

**Soon Times Correspondent**  
ISLAMABAD  
The Islamabad High Court (IHC) conducted the hearing of a petition filed for the recovery of missing Baloch students on Wednesday.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani presided over the proceedings.

During Wednesday's hearing, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan presented a report on the recovered missing Balochs.

The judge inquired about the allegations of human rights violations detailed in the petition.

The petitioner's lawyer, Imran Mazari, informed the court that on the same day, the caretaker prime minister [Anwarul Haq Kakar] appeared before this court, a Baloch student was abducted, and the following day he was released in Rawalpindi.

Upon this, the court questioned if there was anyone accountable in intelligence agencies and if there were any intelligence agencies where there was self-

accountability, noting that police officials often faced suspension for instances where they went beyond the law since they did not act clandestinely.

"My reservation against the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances is because they work with those [agencies] who are accused," the judge stated, observing that those departments that operated under the law got regulated, but what about those which acted beyond the law.

The judge remarked that when someone's loved one went missing, this method or way of their disappearance instilled hatred within them. "If someone's brother is missing, imagine what his mother, sister, and daughter go through."

He further stated that the police were better than all institutions because they carried out actions in front of everyone, whether right or wrong.

The court asked the AGP to inquire from the Ministry of Defence about the process of self-accountability within intelligence agencies. "There can be mistakes in the working, but that doesn't mean they are not accountable," he added.

Justice Kayani said if someone was accused of terrorism, file a case and take action, but do not take extrajudicial action. "The role of intelligence agencies will be

under the law, just like the FBI and other agencies, every institution has to work within their defined parameters. The court also has to work within its ambit."

Remarking that there were a thousand ways to resolve any matter according to the law, the judge asked the AGP to tell him about the committee which was to be formed comprising representatives of the ISI, IB, and MI.

The AGP responded that they had contacted the Supreme Court regarding this matter.

The judge remarked that if you want to amend the order, file miscellaneous petitions and satisfy the court. He said if there were any objections to forming a committee, explain the reasons and satisfy the court.

Addressing the AGP, the judge stated that the petitioner's lawyer was informing that on the same day the caretaker prime minister made a statement in the court, a person was abducted; this shows that the prime minister's statements hold no significance.

Later, the court adjourned the hearing on the petition until May 21.

Back on Feb 28, caretaker prime minister Anwarul Haq Kakar had appeared the court. He had told the court no one could favour enforced disappearances.

"I am here on the orders of court. I myself hail from Balochistan and we are facing armed insurgency there," Kakar had said.

He had added that allegations were levelled against the paramilitary forces and the institutions of counter-terrorism. "It is not good to accuse the entire state in this case," the caretaker prime minister had said.

## Roy Akbar Director Directorate of Workers Education Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development



express solidarity with sanitation workers. Together with the Directorate of Workers' Education and a Japanese local enterprise, KPS, collected garbage with sanitation workers at a playground in Islamabad. He said that cleaners are the most important people of our society, thanks to whom we get a clean environment. He said that it is the responsibility of everyone to take care of cleanliness. It should be noted that Workers Education is a subsidiary of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development whose main objective is to provide training to workers. Deputy Director of CDA also spoke on this occasion and thanked the officers and employees of Workers Education Manager of KPS and his employees also participated in the cleaning work.

**Soon Times Correspondent**  
Islamabad  
Healthy Environment Healthy People This

was said by Rai Muhammad Akbar, Director of Directorate of Workers Education during the sanitation effort to

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER BHALWAL CANAL DIVISION BHALWAL AT SARGODHA

#### NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

- Bids are invited under PPIRA Rules 2014 (amended to-date) based on Market Rates System 1<sup>st</sup> Bi-Annual period (1st January 2024 to 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2024) District Sargodha of Rates approved by the competent authority from the approved contractors of the Irrigation Department who have got their names enlisted / renewed in appropriate category for the current financial year 2023-24.
- In accordance with Administrative Department Notification No. SO (EV/L) Irri-1/2010 dated 20.04.2024 complete set of Tender Documents can be purchased from the office of the Executive Engineer, Bhalwal Canal Division Bhalwal at Sargodha (Secretary Tender Opening Committee Zonal Level) on or before 09.05.2024 (Thursday) by interested bidders on submission of a written application to the above office upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Rs.10000/- (Rupees: Ten Thousand Only) upto 3.00 PM. No tender documents shall be sold on the date of receipt of tenders. The tender from IB-3566 of the tender will be received by the contractor firm. The Executive Engineer, Bhalwal Canal Division Bhalwal at Sargodha (Secretary Tender Opening Committee Zonal Level) will issue the tender form / tender documents after his entire satisfaction and verification of all documents.
- Only Contractors / authorized persons having power of attorney can purchase / attend bid opening meetings/sign the financial bids as required under Clauses 16 of "General Directions for Guidance of the Tender".
- The tender must be delivered by the intending bidders in person or through their authorized representative to the Tender Opening Committee in sealed envelope. Tenders received by post or through any other means shall not be entertained / accepted.
- The conditional, incomplete & overwritten tender submitted by the bidders will be considered as rejected.
- All the bidders must sign each page of bidding documents.
- All the bidders must fill and sign the Tender Form Application Form.
- The Procuring Agency / Tender Opening Committee may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal, the grounds for its rejection shall be communicated upon request to any contractor who submitted a bid or proposal, but it is not required to justify those grounds.
- Earliest money @ 2% of the estimated cost of work preferably bank guarantee / in the shape of Deposited Call, drawn in favor of the Executive Engineer, Bhalwal Canal Division Bhalwal at Sargodha from any scheduled bank must accompany the tender, failing which tender will not be entertained / accepted.
- All the bidders should satisfy themselves about site, location, conditions prevalent at site and its accessibility because immediately after issuance of letter of acceptance from the Executive Engineer, Bhalwal Canal Division Bhalwal at Sargodha, the contractor will have to mobilize to the site of work within seven days and to start the work at site.
- In case of tender rate less than 5% of the Technical Sanctioned amount, the lowest bidder will have to deposit additional performance security / quality assurance security as per Finance Department, Government of Punjab, Lahore Notification No.RO(Tech/FI)D1-2/83(VI/11/1) dated 06.04.2005, No.RO (Tech) FDI-2/83(VI/11) dated 24.01.2006 and No.RO(Tech/FI)D1-2/2010 dated 04.09.2012 prescribed therein.
- In accordance with Government of Punjab Finance Department Notification No. RO(Tech/FI)D1-2/2017 dated 16.11.2022. General direction (DNIT) amount, the lowest bidder will have to deposit quality assurance security from the schedule bank equal to the amount of difference between approved DNIT amount and the quoted bid amount, within 15 days of issuance of notice or within expiry period of bid, whichever is earlier.
- The work will be executed according to specifications approved design / drawings approved by competent authority and P.W.D specifications.
- The Contractor will have to submit the Construction Schedule for completion of work within stipulated period. In case of failure, the contractor will have to pay compensation as per relevant Clauses of Contract Agreement.
- The payment will be made as per actual work done after deduction as per departmental rules, subject to the clearance of works by the ADP Consultants, departmental committee or any other agency and subject to availability of funds.
- No interest shall be paid to the contractor on account to any delay in making payment by the department for the work done by him.
- The contractor have no right to claim any interest on account of delay in making the payment of the work done, due to non-receipt of funds in time.
- The Deposited at Calls of 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest bidders will be released after approval of tenders by competent authority.
- If two or more contractors / firms become the lowest by quoting the same rates for this work, the decision of competent authority to accept the tenders for award of contract will be final.
- In case of any dispute, the matter shall be referred to the H'able Secretary, Irrigation Punjab whose decision will be final and binding for both parties.
- The successful bidder will have to execute an agreement with the Executive Engineer, Bhalwal Canal Division Bhalwal at Sargodha (Secretary Tender Opening Committee Zonal Level) within 07 days of issuance of acceptance letter.
- The potential bidders can lodge their complaint regarding transparency and fairness of all bidding processes on toll free helpline: 0800-1133; by Email: pmipi@pwbho.com or by direct application: PMUI irrigation Secretariat, Old Anarkali, Lahore.

The detail of work is as under-

S#	Name of work	Estimated cost (Rs in Million) (Civil Work)	Earliest money 2% on T.S Estimate (Rs in Million)	Tender Fee (Rupees)	Time Limit	Sanction No. & Date
1	Concrete Lining of Dowal Dsly from RD 62 to 462 (ADP)	130.940	2.620	10000/-	18 Months	CE (I) Spd. No. 4452W/A/9-2001 dated 16.04.2024

**Executive Engineer**  
Bhalwal Canal Division  
Bhalwal at Sargodha



## UCP wins Judo Championship 2024



**BAHAWALPUR**  
 Intersports Judo Championship 2024 held at the Islamia University Bahawalpur was won by the University of Central Punjab.

Seven universities from across the country participated in the championship, including the University of Central Punjab, Punjab University Lahore, Sindh Agriculture University Tando Jam, the University of Gujarat, Superior University Lahore, the University of Veterinary and Animal Science Lahore, and the Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

During the competition, the young players performed brilliantly. Dean Faculty of Management Sciences and Commerce UBS Prof. Dr. Jawad Iqbal along with Director of Sports Aamjad Farooq Waraich gave the trophy to the winning team Superior University Lahore got the second position and the University of Punjab got the third position.



## Myanmar rebel group withdraws troops from key town on Thai border

**Web Desk**  
 An armed ethnic group in Myanmar has withdrawn its troops from a town along the Thai border following a counteroffensive by the ruling junta from whom rebel fighters wrested the key trading post this month, a spokesperson for the group said on Wednesday.

Myanmar is locked in a civil war between the military on one side and, on the other, a loose alliance of established ethnic minority armies and a resistance movement born out of the ruling junta's bloody crackdown on dissent after its 2021 coup.

The Karen National Union (KNU) made a "temporary retreat" from Myawaddy, its spokesperson, Saw Tav Nee, said after the return of junta soldiers to the vital strategic area that is a conduit for annual foreign trade of more than \$1 billion.

Armed soldiers from a militia with a history of shifting allegiances, the Karen National Army (KNA), were clearing barricades and patrolling the town of 200,000 people, two residents said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Photographs posted on some pro-junta social media groups showed a handful of its soldiers raising the Myanmar national flag at a military base the KNU had controlled just days before, and where the rebel group had raised its own banner.



## Uncapped all-rounder in Zimbabwe's squad for Bangladesh tour

**(Web Desk)**  
 Sikandar Raza will captain a 15-member group for the T20I series against Bangladesh. All-rounder Jonathan Campbell is the uncapped player in the unit, while Tadiwanashe Marumani and Faraz Akram have earned recalls. Campbell is an adept left-hand batter who bowls leg-spin.

The remaining players are the same as that featured in Zimbabwe's last T20I series away in Sri Lanka in January 2024.

The side includes veterans such as Sikandar Raza, Sean Williams, and Craig Ervine. The pace attack will be led by Blessing Muzarabani and Richard Ngarava, with support from Clive Madande and Brian Bennett—the impressive young guns in the side. Madande, Bennett and Campbell featured in Zimbabwe's emerging men's team that won the gold medal at the 15th African Games in Ghana in March.

**Squad:** Sikandar Raza (c), Faraz Akram, Brian Bennett, Ryan Burl, Jonathan Campbell, Craig Ervine, Joylord Gumbe, Luke Jongwe, Clive Madande, Tadiwanashe Marumani, Wellington Masakadza, Blessing Muzarabani, Ainsley Nellovu, Richard Ngarava, Sean Williams



## UN rights chief 'horrified' by mass grave reports at Gaza

**GENEVA**  
**Web Desk**  
 UN rights chief Volker Turk said on Tuesday he was "horrified" by the destruction of the Nasser and Al Shifa medical facilities in Gaza and reports of mass graves containing hundreds of bodies there, according to a spokesperson.

Palestinian authorities reported finding hundreds of bodies in mass graves at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis this week after it was abandoned by Israeli troops. Bodies were also reported at the Al Shifa site following an Israeli special forces operation.

The Israeli military said claims by Palestinian authorities that the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) had buried bodies were "baseless and unfounded". It said forces searching for Israeli hostages had examined bodies previously buried by Palestinians near Nasser hospital and had returned the bodies to where they were buried after they were examined.

"The examination was conducted in a careful manner and exclusively in places where intelligence indicated the possible presence of hostages. The examination was carried out respectfully while maintaining the dignity of the deceased," it said in a statement.

Ravina Shamdasani, the spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said the rights organisation was raising the alarm because multiple bodies had been discovered.

Turk said he had been horrified by the reported mass grave discoveries and the hospitals' destruction, she said.

"Some of them had their hands tied, which of course indicates serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and these need to be subjected to further investigations," Shamdasani said.

## Iran's Raisi arrives in Sri Lanka to foster ties, open hydropower

**COLOMBO**  
 Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi arrived in Sri Lanka on Wednesday for a brief state visit aimed at strengthening ties, during which he will also open a \$514-million hydropower project.

The first visit by an Iranian president to Sri Lanka since an April 2008 trip by its then president, Mahmmud Ahmadinejad will see the two countries sign five pacts, or Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs).

Iran agreed to build the hydro power project in 2010 but funds dried up after the release of \$50 million, as US sanctions imposed later that year on the Middle East nation made it hard to transfer money, forcing Sri Lanka to fund the rest.

It was also hit by delays because of the COVID-19 pandemic, environmental concerns and protests from villagers.

The project will add 290 GWh to the national grid, while supplying water to 6,000 hectares (15,000 acres) of farmland and drinking water to thousands of families in three districts, the office of Sri Lanka's president said in a statement.



## Ukrainian officials thank the US for its latest military aid to help stop Russia's onslaught



**KYIV, Ukraine**  
 Ukrainian officials on Wednesday expressed thanks for a fresh batch of U.S. military aid that threw Kyiv's armed forces a lifeline in their more than two-year war with Russia, even though the new supplies aren't expected to have an immediate impact on the battlefield.

Ukrainian troops have faced acute shortages of shells and air defense systems as political quarrels in Washington held up the aid for

months, allowing the Kremlin's forces to edge forward in some parts of eastern Ukraine by sheer weight of troop numbers and firepower in what has largely become a war of attrition.

The U.S. decision came as the Kremlin's army extended its bombardment of the northeastern Kharkiv region and Ukrainian long-range drones struck more fuel and energy facilities inside Russia.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked the U.S. Senate for approving the \$61 billion aid package late Tuesday.

"Ukraine's long-range capabilities, artillery and air defense are extremely important tools for the quick restoration of a just peace," Zelenskyy said on the social platform X. He urged quick deployment of the hardware that Kyiv expects to receive in the coming weeks and months.

"The key now is speed," he said in a later post.

Two Russian S-300 missiles struck Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city near the border with Russia, during the night, injuring six people, and another two hit the Kharkiv region town of Zolochiv where no casualties were reported, local officials said.

Another missile hit the southern city of Odesa, injuring one woman, Mayor Hennadii Trukhnov said.

Ukrainian drones, meanwhile, targeted Russian infrastructure, setting ablaze two energy facilities in the western Smolensk region.

## Germany will resume working with UN relief agency for Palestinians after a review



**NEW YORK**  
 Germany said Wednesday that it plans to follow several other countries in resuming cooperation with the U.N. relief agency for Palestinians in Gaza after the publication of an independent review of its neutrality.

The head of the Arab League hailed the report, saying it showed that Israel's allegations were baseless and part of a "systematic campaign" meant to end the mandate of the agency.

Israel says that hundreds of UNRWA workers are members of Palestinian militant groups, and claims the report understated the problem. Its allegations led to the suspension of contributions to UNRWA by the United States and more than a dozen other countries.

Also Wednesday, the Israeli military said it is redeploying two reserve brigades from Israel's northern border to Gaza for "defensive and tactical missions," as it prepares for an offensive in Rafah, which Israel



describes as Hamas' last stronghold in the territory.

The U.S. Senate passed a \$26 billion aid package late Tuesday that includes around \$9 billion in humanitarian assistance for Gaza, which experts say is on the brink of famine, as well as billions for Israel. President Joe Biden has promised to sign it immediately.

The Israel-Hamas war was sparked by the unprecedented Oct. 7 raid into southern Israel in which the militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250 hostages. Israel says the militants are still holding around 100 hostages and the remains of more than 30 others.

## Australian police arrest 7 alleged teen extremists linked to stabbing of a bishop in a Sydney church

**SYDNEY**  
**Web Desk**  
 Australian police arrested seven teenagers accused of following a violent extremist ideology in raids across Sydney on Wednesday, as a judge extended a ban on social media platform X sharing video of a knife attack on a bishop that started the criminal investigation.

The seven, aged 15 to 17, were part of a network that included a 16-year-old boy accused of stabbing a bishop in a Sydney church on April 15, police said.

Clips of the stabbing were taken from the church server's livestream and subsequently made the rounds on X. An Australian regulator on Monday ordered the platform to take down the videos, an action the platform is fighting.

Other social media companies including Google,

Microsoft, Snapchat and TikTok have complied with similar orders.

Five other teenagers were still being questioned late Wednesday by the Joint Counter-Terrorism Team, which includes federal and state police as well as the Australian Security Intelligence Organization, the nation's main domestic spy agency, and the New South Wales Crime Commission, which specializes in extremists and organized crime.

More than 400 police officers executed 13 search warrants at properties across southwest Sydney because the suspects were considered an immediate threat. New South Wales Police Deputy Commissioner David Hudson said.

"We will allege that these individuals adhered to a religiously motivated, violent extremism ideology," Hudson told reporters.

"It was considered that the group... posed an unacceptable risk and threat to the people of New South Wales, and our current purely investigative strategies could not adequately ensure public safety," Hudson added.

Australian Federal Police Deputy Commissioner Krissy Barrett said investigators found no evidence of specific targets or timing of an intended "violent act."

She said the police operation was not linked to Anzac Day on Thursday, a public holiday when Australians remember their war dead.

It has been a potential target of extremists in the past.

A 16-year-old was charged on Friday with committing a terrorist act, a crime that carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, following the knife attack in which an Assyrian



Orthodox bishop and priest were injured.

An Australian Federal Court judge on Wednesday extended an order banning X from showing videos of Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel being repeatedly stabbed.

Justice Geoffrey Kennet extended the ban, which the court put in place on Monday, until May 10.

X, formerly called Twitter, announced last week it would fight on court Australian orders to take down posts relating to the attack.

Australia's eSafety Commission, which describes itself as the world's first government agency dedicated to keeping people safe online, applied to the court for the temporary global ban.