

DAILY MIRROR

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Imran Khan's call for Faiz Hameed's open trial interferes with military matters: Tarar

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar criticised the incarcerated PTI founder, Imran Khan's demand for an open trial of former DG ISI Lieutenant General (ret'd) Faiz Hameed, calling it interference in military affairs.

Tarar remarked that the PTI founder's shifting stance on Faiz Hameed, alternately calling him "an asset, a hero, and then a zero", reveals his mental distress.

"The PTI founder is constantly trying to create controversy around this issue with his statements," Tarar said, urging Khan to instead focus on addressing the £190 million case.

Tarar further noted that the incarcerated PTI founder's contradictory statements indicate a state of severe confusion and anxiety. He pointed out that by refusing to consider Faiz Hameed's case as an internal military matter, Khan has inadvertently confirmed that Hameed was indeed his asset.

The information minister added that the

case also highlights the PTI founder's tendency to use people and then discard them, asserting that he is skilled in betraying those who once served him.

Earlier in the day, Khan had called for an open court trial of Faiz Hameed, insisting that the matter is not an internal military issue.

During an informal conversation with journalists, Khan stated that the army chief should facilitate a transparent trial for General (ret'd) Faiz, clarifying that his association with the ex-ISI chief is no longer relevant post-retirement.

"General Faiz became insignificant after retirement. How could he benefit me in any way?" he questioned, dismissing the notion that he maintains contact with the former DG ISI.

The former premier further emphasised that if Gen (ret'd) Faiz is indeed the mastermind behind the May 9 conspiracy, then the trial should be held openly. He added that the incident was a local issue rather than a matter of national security.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir presenting gift to a child during national youth convention at Pak china friendship centre, in the Federal Capital.

Army chief stresses state's duty to shield public from 'social media dangers'

'A strong bond between people, govt, and military is guarantee of Pakistan's security and development: Gen Munir'

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir has underscored the state's responsibility to protect the public from the dangers and chaos caused by social media.

Addressing a National Youth Convention in Islamabad on Wednesday, where Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was also in attendance, the army chief emphasised the importance of safeguarding the nation from the disruptive impact of online platforms. "A strong bond between the people, the government, and the military is the guarantee of Pakistan's security and development," General Munir stated. He expressed confidence in the country's future, pointing out that the "sparkle in the eyes" of the youth is a sign of hope and security for Pakistan.

The army chief highlighted the value of an independent state, urging the audience to consid-

er the struggles of those in regions like Libya, Syria, Kashmir, and Gaza. "To understand freedom's worth, look at their plight," he said.

Addressing the youth directly, he noted, "Knowledge is what sets a person apart." He also reminded them of the importance of resilience, quoting the Quran, "Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: 'We believe,' and will not be tested?"

General Munir dismissed the narrative of Pakistan's impending economic collapse, asking rhetorically, "Where are those who predicted Pakistan's default now?"

He declared Pakistan's youth as the nation's most valuable asset, vowing, "We will not let it go to waste." The army chief concluded his address by reciting a verse from Allama Iqbal: "The fate of nations lies in the hands of individuals; every person is a star in the destiny of the nation."

President Zardari declares youth empowerment key to country's bright future

INP

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday declared the empowerment of youth as key to bright future of Pakistan.

He said, "Pakistani youth had significant potential and could greatly elevate country's reputation if given appropriate opportunities."

During meeting with Asrar Khan Kakar, the newly elected President of the Oxford Union Society, Asif Ali Zardari congratulated him on his election to the coveted position.

President Zardari highlighted that Asrar Kakar, a resident of Balochistan province, had attained a significant honor through his election and that his achievement would inspire other young people.

He expressed the optimism that Israr Khan would continue to bring honor to the country with his future achievements.

Bus crash in Iran kills 35 Pakistani pilgrims, injures 23

The bus, primarily carrying pilgrims from Sindh province, overturned in Yazd while en route to Iraq

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: At least 35 Pakistani pilgrims have been killed and 15 critically injured in a bus accident in Iran's Yazd province, state-run.

The accident, which occurred late on Tuesday, was reportedly caused by a braking system failure.

The injured have been transported to a nearby hospital. Most of the passengers were from Larkana, Ghotki, and other Sindh cities.

Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, Muhammad Mudassar Tipu, in a series of tweets, expressed his grief over the incident and assured that he would do his utmost for the repatriation of those who

passed away while also attending to the injured.

"Embassy officials have already left for Yazd, almost 700 km away from the embassy, this morning. An officer in Zahedan is overseeing emergency arrangements. I'm in touch with the Iranian government and the office of the Mayor of Yazd for crucial arrangements," he added.

"We thank Iran for extending excellent cooperation. We kindly request your support and patience in this hour of grief," he concluded. President Asif Ali Zardari has expressed profound grief over the tragedy, offering condolences to the victims' families and directing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to repatriate the bodies and provide aid to the injured.

Removing backwardness of Balochistan top priorities of Govt: Shoaib

APP

Quetta: Balochistan Minister for Finance Mir Shoaib Noshirwani on Wednesday said that provincial government under leadership of Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz has decided that removing the backwardness of areas and solving public problems was among the top priorities of all of us.

He said that incumbent government was trying to put the province on path of development in every sphere of life like other provinces. He expressed these views while talking to various

delegations called on him in his office.

The delegation informed the Minister about their problems being faced by them in the areas. The Provincial Minister said that he was struggling to address people's problems at their doorsteps. He said that our government would leave no stone unturned to solve public problems saying that he was a representative of the people and he would never disappoint the people.

I believed in providing facilities to the people and I will always be there for public welfare, he said.

Pakistan hoping for \$7bn IMF package approval in September: Finance Minister

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Wednesday the federal government is making good progress with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and hopes to get board approval in September for a new \$7 billion loan programme.

The government and the IMF reached an agreement on the 37-month loan programme in July. The IMF said the programme was subject to approval from its executive board and obtaining "timely confirmation of necessary financing assurances from Pakistan's development and bilateral partners."

"We are making good progress with IMF for Board approval in September," Aurangzeb said in a text message to Reuters.

The government is in talks with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and China to meet gross financing needs under the IMF programme, Aurangzeb had said in July following a trip to China to seek energy sector debt reprofiling. Rollovers or disbursements on loans from Pakistan's long-time allies, in addition to financing from the IMF, have helped the country meet its external financing needs in the past. The IMF did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment on Pakistan's external financing needs and the executive board's meeting on the loan programme. During an analyst briefing following the State Bank's decision in July to cut rates by 100 basis points, the central bank chief said he expected rollovers of \$16.3bn in the fiscal year to June 2025 — more than half of the country's \$26.2bn external financing requirement.

Khawaja Asif hints at Imran Khan's 'open trial' in military court

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Responding to incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder's demand for an "open trial" of ex-spymaster Faiz Hamid, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Wednesday that Imran Khan's trial will be open if it is held in a military court in connection with May 9 riots.

The defence minister's statement came hours after the former premier called for an open trial of former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief Lieutenant General (ret'd) Faiz Hamid who was taken into custody by the military over alleged abuse of power and the Army Act violation earlier this month.

"We don't have any precedent that any

general's military trial held in an open court in the country's history," said Asif while speaking on Geo News programme Aaj Shahzeb Khanzada Kay Saath.

"If the PTI founder faces any trial in a military court, then I can assure you that it would be open to the public and media because he is a civilian."

He further clarified that it is the military's tradition not to conduct open trials of its employees and officers.

Accusing the former ruling party of working in collusion with the detained former spy chief.

Asif said that the last year's May 9 violent protests triggered by Khan's arrest and saw attacks on state properties including military installations were pre-planned.



Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding country wide anti-smuggling drive, in Islamabad.

Terrorism resurges due to past mistakes: PM

'I say without fear that the army chief and I are working as one, with a shared goal of advancing Pakistan'

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stated that terrorism had been eradicated in Pakistan, but due to certain mistakes, it has resurfaced in recent years.

He made these remarks while addressing a National Youth Convention in Islamabad on Wednesday, where Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir was also present.

"Our national hero, Arshad Nadeem, has proven that no matter how challenging the circumstances, if the nation decides to confront its difficulties, success will follow," Sharif said. He emphasised that the key to the country's progress lies in the hands of its youth and that the government is responsible for providing them with modern knowledge to spur development and prosperity.

Reflecting on the country's 77-year journey, Sharif acknowledged both failures and successes. "If Pakistan remains united politically and economically, it is because of

the 1973 Constitution. We became the first Islamic nation to achieve nuclear power status. We sacrificed 70,000 lives in the war on terror to finally eliminate the scourge, but unfortunately, due to some errors in the past few years, terrorism has returned."

He pointed out that while Pakistan suffered a \$150 billion economic loss and made significant sacrifices, the nations that urged Pakistan to fight terrorism provided only \$20 billion in aid. "The world benefited from Pakistan's efforts to end terrorism, and our defence institutions played a crucial role," he added.

Sharif also highlighted the importance of agriculture, warning that failing to fully utilise this sector would be detrimental.

He lamented that Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), once a national asset, now faces privatisation. "South Korea followed Pakistan's five-year development plan and achieved progress," he noted.

He praised the youth as the nation's asset, urging them to

engage in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). "I have requested the governor to provide loans to the youth, with 40% allocated to SMEs, creating job opportunities."

Commenting on the loss of East Pakistan, Sharif remarked that it serves as a lesson.

"The individual who led the movement against Pakistan and declared the two-nation theory dead is now facing the consequences in Bangladesh."

Sharif also addressed the issue of electricity, recognising it as a continuing challenge for the common man. He mentioned that the Punjab government recently provided relief to citizens for two months using its own resources, urging other provinces to contribute similarly. "We need solidarity," he stressed.

He concluded by calling on politicians and constitutional institutions to work together for the nation's service. "If I am serving Pakistan today, then I say without fear that the army chief and I are working as one, with a shared goal of advancing Pakistan."

Balochistan CM expresses sorrow on death of pilgrims in Iran

APP

Quetta: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Wednesday expressed his sorrow and grief over the death of dozen of pilgrims in a traffic accident involving their bus traveling from Larkana to Iran.

The Chief Minister offered condolences and shared his heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved families. He prayed for the early recovery of the injured Zahireen and the patience of the bereaved families. The CM said that provincial government was an equal participant in this hour of grief with the bereaved families.

PTI vows Islamabad rally despite NOC withdrawal, Section 144 in Punjab

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The PTI vowed on Wednesday to go ahead with its August 22 rally in the federal capital despite the withdrawal of its no-objection certificate (NOC) and the imposition of Section 144 in Punjab against all kinds of "political assemblies".

For the past several months, the PTI has been trying to get permission to hold a public meeting in Islamabad, without any success. In March, after receiving no response from the district administration despite multiple attempts, the PTI had approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to seek permission to hold a public meeting in the federal capital.

However, the district administration did not allow the party to hold the meeting. Later, the administration allowed PTI to hold a meeting on 27th Ramadan, a date the party refused to accept claiming that workers would be busy in mosques. The party had subsequently said that its power show would be held in Islamabad's Tarnol on Thursday but also expressed concern that the district administration once again might not allow the party to hold a public meeting in the federal capital.

Today, an order issued by Islamabad Chief Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa said it was immediately suspending the NOC issued on July 31 by the deputy commissioner.

According to a copy of the notification issued today suspending the NOC, the party was disallowed to carry out a rally due to the lack of available resources and the restrictions posed by the current law and order situation in Islamabad, adding that it would be difficult for the police to manage the security needs due to multiple events occurring simultaneously in the capital.

It said it was unsafe to issue a NOC for the PTI rally given the current situation.

"The agencies referred to the past conduct and track record of PTI which indicates a severe law and order situation might arise," the order said.

Separately, the Punjab Home Department imposed Section 144 across the province in light of "the prevailing law and order situation and security threats".

According to a notification, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, there were sufficient grounds to proceed under Section 144 as an "immediate prevention and speedy remedy to prevent disturbance of public peace, safety of lives and property of public".

It prohibited, gatherings, sits-in, rallies, demonstrations, protests and similar activities across Punjab with effect from Thursday to Saturday.

EC denotifies Home minister Balochistan

ONLINE

QUETTA: Election Tribunal has denotified home minister Balochistan Mir Ziaullah Langau besides ordering re-election in 7 disputed polling stations of PP-36 Balochistan Assembly (BA).

The EC has declared portfolio held by home minister Balochistan null and void.

Justice Abdullah Baloch of Election Tribunal Balochistan

High Court during the hearing of the petition nullified the portfolio of home minister held by him.

JUI-F candidate Mir Saeed Langau rival candidate of Mir Zia Ullah Langau in PP-36 Balochistan Assembly had filed election petition in election tribunal.

Akram Shah advocate had persuaded the election petition filed by Mir Saeed Langau while Salim Lashari advocate appeared on behalf of Mir Zia Langau.

Historic Pakistan Day Parade to be held in New York on August 25: Munir



By Khawaja Farooq

New York: "We are one under the shadow of Pakistan flag." We all have recognition, we all have Pakistan, there will be a spring of green crescent flags in America too. The historic Pakistan Day Parade will be held in New York on August 25 in connection with Independence Day.

President Pakistan Day Parade Committee New York Munir Lodhi said public representatives in the program, Diplomats, Mayor of New York Eric

Adams and other important figures will be in special attendance. Shields will be distributed to those who have rendered the best services. The national anthem of Pakistan will also be played in the ceremony. Munir Lodhi said that the songs found in the music show will resonate. Eminent artists including Malko, Saira Altaf will be performed. The green crescent flag will be hoisted. Community people will set up stalls to display cultural costumes and other items. Morning breakfast to be freed, the show will send a clear message across the world. Pakistanis living in America will not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the security of the United States and the country. President Pakistan Day Parade Committee New York added that everyone is invited. The Community Service Commission will be continued. He said that we are using all resources to raise the prestige of Pakistan in America.



Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) Judge, Jamal Khan Mandokhail along with Shaikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Governor Balochistan and others offering Fateha for the departed soul of Yunus Mandokhail, Former Chief Secretary Balochistan, in Quetta

Skill development programme to help improve economy: Rubina

INP

KARACHI: Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Chairperson Rubina Khalid announced on Wednesday the resumption of the skill development program focused on human resource development under BISP. She stated that this initiative would not only help people become financially self-reliant but also contribute to improving the economy.

She made these remarks while speaking to the media after a meeting at the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Provincial headquarters.

Rubina Khalid urged officers to collaborate with renowned institutions providing training in handicraft design to ensure participants receive certifications meeting modern global standards. This, she said, would facilitate employment opportunities abroad and boost foreign exchange earnings. The Chairperson praised the performance of BISP staff, noting their dedication despite limited resources. In response to a question, Khalid criticized the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for neglecting the health sector in the province. She said that government hospitals were ignored while private hospitals benefited from the Sehat Card scheme. She also noted the provincial government's failure to maintain peace in the region.

AIOU Announces Results for Autumn 2023 Semester

PRESS RELEASE

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the results for the Associate Degree Programs (General, Commerce, Education, Mass Communication, Library Science, and Dars-e-Nizami) and the BA (Old) Program offered in the Autumn 2023 semester.

According to the Controller of Examinations, Mian Muhammad Riaz, the results have been uploaded to the students' portals. Students who have completed their programs will soon have their provisional certificates available on their portals, enabling them to enroll in the next academic phase. It is important to note that the second phase of admissions for the Autumn 2024 semester will begin on September 1st. This phase will include BS (ODL) programs, teachers' training programs, postgraduate diploma programs, and certificate courses.



QUETTA: Donkey cart holder on the loaded with iron bars for delivery purpose.

Thar coal producing cheapest power in country: Murad Ali Shah

INP

KARACHI: Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday said that the Sindh government had 10 years ago called for investment in the wind and solar energy, now entire country wants investment in it.

Talking to Lahore's media persons here, Sindh's Chief Minister said that electricity has become a very serious issue. "The cheapest electricity being generated in the country with Thar coal power plants," he said.

He said Thar coal power plants generating over 3,000 megawatts of the electricity. "This electricity supplied to the national grid and later Faisalabad," he pointed out. "Thar's electricity not supplied to Sindh," he said.

"Thar coal could generate cheaper electricity for Pakistan," he said. "We can create jobs and increase exports with industries running on Thar coal," CM Shah suggested.

Senate Body criticizes CDA over lack of action regarding Rawal Dam pollution

By Zahid Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change has criticized the Capital Development Authority (CDA) over lack of action regarding Rawal Dam pollution which is being inundated with 9 million gallons of sewage daily.

Chairing a meeting of Senate Body here on Wednesday, Senator Sherry Rehman along with other Committee members raised serious concerns over the supply of polluted water of Rawal Dam to the residents of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, posing a significant public health risk.

Senator Rehman unpacked the

severe environmental and health hazards associated with Rawal Dam's contamination, which includes sewage, toxic substances, and chemicals. "Will the residents of Islamabad and Rawalpindi continue to receive this contaminated water until sewage treatment plants are installed," Senator Rehman questioned the CDA underlining the urgency of the situation.

The chair criticized the CDA for its failure to make substantial progress on the installation of sewage treatment plants, despite three years of tendering processes. "It's unacceptable that after three years, we are still discussing plans for treatment plants while human lives are at risk," she remarked.

To address these concerns, Senator Rehman has mandated that the water testing report of Rawal Dam be presented at the next committee meeting. Additionally, she has formed a two-member sub-committee, headed by Senator Shahzaib Durrani, to inspect the pollution at Rawal Dam and submit a detailed report. This inspection aims to provide a clear assessment of the pollution levels and recommend immediate actions to mitigate the damage. The Chair Senate Body also stressed the need for the CDA to disclose the cost of de-silting Rawal Dam, which was crucial for maintaining its capacity and ensuring the quality of water supplied to residents.

DC Hub reviews preparations of anti-polio drive to be held on Sept 9

APP

Quetta: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Hub Ruhana Gul Kakar on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review preparations regarding anti-polio campaign to be started on September 9. The meeting was attended by concerned officials. In the meeting, the performance of the polio workers was reviewed and the issues related to the training session of the officers and workers of the line department were also discussed. WHO Surveillance Officer Dr. Dawood, National Staff Officer Polio

District Hub Dr. Nazir Ahmed Ronja gave a briefing to the participants of the meeting about the preparations for the five-day polio campaign starting from September 9. In the briefing, it was told that 90,800 children of 22 union councils of Hub District will be administered the vaccine of anti-polio. The meeting was briefed that the government's commitment was to secure the future of every child by vaccinating them for a polio-free Pakistan, in this regard, the polio campaign would be launched under a comprehensive and integrated strategy.



Resident of Muslim Bagh, Ashraf Khan addressing a press conference regarding his backbone operation, at Quetta press club.



Women's T20 World Cup shifted from Bangladesh to UAE

SPORTS DESK

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council on Tuesday announced that this year's ICC Women's T20 World Cup is being moved out of Bangladesh which has been rocked by political unrest and violence during recent weeks.

According to a statement issued by the ICC, the ninth edition of the tournament will now take place in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in October with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) continuing to host the event.

The 10-nation event will take place across two venues in the UAE — Dubai and Sharjah — from Oct 3 to 20.

Bangladesh's prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country earlier this month amid the protests against Hasina's rule, and an interim government led by Muhammad Yunus has taken charge.

"It is a shame not to be hosting the Women's T20 World Cup in Bangladesh as we know the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) would have staged a memorable event," ICC chief executive Geoff Allardice said in a statement.

"I would like to thank the team at the BCB for exploring all avenues to try and enable the event to be hosted in Bangladesh, but travel advisories from the governments of a number of the participating teams meant that wasn't feasible. "However, they will retain hosting rights. We look forward to taking an ICC global event to Bangladesh in the near future," he added. "I'd also like to thank the Emirates Cricket Board for stepping in to host on behalf of the BCB and Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe for their generous offers of support, and we look forward to seeing ICC global events in both of those countries in 2026."



Spectators holding Pakistan's and Bangladesh's national flags cheer during the first day of the first Test cricket match between Pakistan and Bangladesh at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium

Shoriful double leaves Pakistan 158-4 in rain-hit first Bangladesh Test

SPORTS DESK

Bangladesh left-arm paceman Shoriful Islam took two wickets in four balls to leave Pakistan at 158-4 on a rain-hit opening day of the first Test in Rawalpindi on Wednesday.

The 23-year-old spearhead removed the home team's skipper Shan Masood for six and then star batter Babar Azam for a two-ball duck before Pakistan launched their recovery on a greenish pitch. Saim Ayub was unbeaten on 56 and Saud Shakeel on 57, having added a fighting 113 on the first day, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said on X. Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto took no time in sending Pakistan in to bat after winning the toss and caught Pakistan napping at 16-3. It was Shoriful's new-ball partner Hasan Mahmud who gave the visitors the first breakthrough when Abdullah Shafique was smartly caught at gully by Zakir Hasan for two in the fourth over.

Shoriful then had Shan caught behind off a sharp delivery, with Bangladesh

successfully reviewing a not-out decision by South African umpire Adrian Holdstock. Shan argued the decision by television umpire Martin Gough of England with the on-field officials as Bangladesh fielders celebrated the dismissal, refusing to accept he nicked the ball.

Babar nicked a leg-side delivery in Shoriful's next over and was caught by wicketkeeper Liton Das for his first home-ground duck in 14 Tests. No play was possible before lunch, with 230 minutes of action lost because some wet outfield patches left by overnight rain were deemed dangerous by the two umpires — Richard Kettleborough of England and Adrian Holdstock of South Africa. The weather forecast for all five days is not encouraging with rain and bad light predicted.

Pakistan entered the Test with four fast bowlers in an all-pace attack with no frontline spinner, while Bangladesh included three pacers and two spinners.

All-rounder Aamer Jamal has missed out on a place for the first fixture of the two-match Test series against Bangladesh, which is set to be played from Wednesday. The two-match series is part of the World Test Championship (WTC) third cycle (2023-2025) contested by nine teams. Pakistan is currently sixth and Bangladesh is eighth on the table.

The second Test will also be played in Rawalpindi, from August 30, after being moved from Karachi because of construction work at the stadium.

Pakistan: Shan Masood (captain), Saud Shakeel, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Khuram Shahzad, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Rizwan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Agha Salman, Shaheen Shah Afridi
Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (captain), Zakir Hasan, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Nahid Rana, Shoriful Islam, Hasan Mahmud

Joao Felix returns to Chelsea with permanent move from Atletico Madrid

SPORTS DESK

Chelsea have signed Portugal forward Joao Felix from Atletico Madrid on a seven-year deal, the Premier League club said on Wednesday.

Financial details were not disclosed, but English media reported that Chelsea paid around 46 million pounds (\$59.95 million) to secure the 24-year-old's return to Stamford Bridge.

Felix impressed during his six-month loan spell at Chelsea in the 2022-23 season, scoring four goals in 20 appearances. He spent the last campaign on loan at Barcelona, scoring 10 goals in 44 games.

Atletico signed Felix from Benfica in 2019 for a club-record fee of 126 million euros (\$140 million). He scored 34 goals in 131 matches and helped them win the LaLiga title in 2021.

"It's a chance for me to find a home," Felix told Chelsea's website.

"After two loans, Chelsea and Barca, I needed to stay permanently in one place. There's no better place for me to be than Chelsea. I see a perfect place to shine.

"I felt really good when I was here, despite the results we had. I'm really happy to be back," he added.

Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca said Felix's versatility was important.

"The good thing about Joao is that he can play in different positions. He can play inside, he can play as a (number) nine, he can play outside," Maresca told reporters.

Chelsea play Swiss side Servette in the Europa Conference League playoff stage on Thursday before visiting Wolverhampton Wanderers in the Premier League on Sunday.



Chelsea's Joao Felix at Stamford Bridge, London, Britain,

NOTICE FOR OPEN AUCTION

Open bids/auction for Dismantling of Existing structures coming under the alignment of Flyovers at various locations of Quetta City to mitigate traffic congestion and widening of roads, are hereby invited from interested parties. The open auction will be conducted through Government Auctioneer on 10.09.2024, at 12.00 (Noon) in the presence of the representative of this Department.

S. No.	Description.	Location.	Basic/Starting Bid Price	Place of auction.
1.	Dismantling of existing structure coming under the alignment of flyovers/Trumpet Interchanges at various locations of Quetta City to mitigate Traffic Congestion.	1. Construction of Trumpet Interchange Custom chowk on Saniab Road, Quetta.	1350000/-	Office of the Executive Engineer Project Division-I, Whyte road, Quetta.
		2. Construction of Trumpet Interchange Gahi Khan chowk on Saniab Road, Quetta.	1150000/-	

CONDITIONS. 1. The highest bidder will be bound to deposit (one fourth) of the amount of bid (in cash) soon after declaration of the amount of the bid and the balance (three fourth) amount of the bid will have to be deposited by the highest bidder in this office within One Week failing which amount already deposited will be forfeited in favour of Government of Balochistan and no claim whatsoever will be entertained on this accounts. 2. The intending bidders should have to produce deposit at call amounting to Rs.100000/- (For Each Work) from recognized Bank along with Photocopy of National Identity Card without which they will not be allowed to participate in the bid. 3. Amount of the bid should be inclusive of all charges i.e cost of material dismantling removal of debris and clearance the site etc. 4. The successful bidder be required to take / remove the material and clear the site within 30 days from the date of acceptance of the bid. The site clearance should be done to the entire satisfaction of the Engineer-in-Charge. 5. In case the successful bidder fail to clear the site within stipulated time limit, the Engineer-in-charge will get the site cleared through some other agency at the risk and cost of the bidder and the above amount will be forfeited to the Government of Balochistan and no claim from the bidder will be entertained on this account. 6. The competent authority reserve the right to reject the highest bid without assigning any reasons thereof. 7. The intending bidder may inspect the site to be auctioned before offering their bids.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Project Division-I, Whyte Road Quetta.

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Troubled tribunals

IT is unlikely that the public will get timely closure on the many controversies raging over the Feb 8 general election. The tribunals appointed under the Elections Act of 2017 to settle election-related disputes will not be able to meet their 180-day deadline, it has emerged in a report released by the Free and Fair Election Network.

Fafen has highlighted that, so far, only 7pc of the 377 petitions have been resolved, with Balochistan's tribunals alone in achieving a double-digit disposal rate of 17pc. Sindh, KP and Punjab lag far behind with disposal rates of 7pc, 4pc and 0.5pc, respectively, while the tribunal appointed for Islamabad's seats has yet to dispose of a single case. Punjab, where the most challenges have been filed, still has only two tribunals functioning out of the eight sanctioned, mainly because of the Election Commission of Pakistan's refusal to honour the Lahore High Court's decisions about who should head them.

The nation saw the post-polls fiascos play out on their television screens and has awaited answers about what exactly went wrong. It may be recalled that, in a replay of the ECP's results transmission system's failure in 2018, this time, too, a new and improved results consolidation system had failed to function, and the announcement of the results was put off without any explanation from the Commission.

While these delays were happening, many candidates and their supporters saw their victories magically turn into defeats and vice versa. Complaints flooded in from across the country of results being finalised behind closed doors after kicking out those who had contested the elections. Many new controversies emerged post-Feb 9 that threw both the credibility of these elections and the ECP's impartiality into further doubt.

From supposedly 'final' results being retracted, revised, and then reissued, to recounts being done without candidates being informed, to glaring discrepancies in the results issued to candidates and the results endorsed by the authorities — so much was so obviously wrong that it defied understanding how these gross irregularities would be upheld.

This is where the election tribunals, acting as third-party arbiters between the disputing candidates, were supposed to provide closure. They should have done so within the mandated six-month period, which would have helped the system self-correct as soon as possible. Alas, it seems that these disputes will continue to linger for the foreseeable future, weakening an already struggling democracy. The delay will only mean that the legitimacy of the coalition government will continue to remain in doubt, which will undermine its authority and allow political instability to continue to fester.

Tragically, the systems that were meant to act as a check and balance on our institutions and ensure compliance with the constitutional order keep failing us constantly.

By Mahir Ali

Poking the bear

TWENTY-FOUR years ago, just months into his first term as Russia's second post-Soviet president, Vladimir Putin was pictured partying at a dacha in Sochi while his nation coped with the loss of a nuclear-powered submarine during naval exercises; all of its 118 personnel perished in the disaster. The vessel was called Kursk.

Back in 2000, the Russian media had few qualms about calling out official incompetence and presidential indifference. Fast forward to 2024, and none of the officially tolerated press or TV outlets can be expected to seriously fault the authorities for this month's swift foray into Russian territory by Ukrainian troops. The barely resisted incursion occurred in the Kursk oblast.

The region's name should also resonate with anyone familiar with the key events of World War II. The most formidable clash of tanks in history entailed a monumental loss of life — upwards of a million, by some accounts — but the Battle of Kursk is mainly remembered as a turning point when, following a hard-won triumph in the Battle of Stalingrad, the Soviet Red Army turned the tide against the Nazi invaders. Less than two years later, it was at the gates of Berlin. More than 80 years later, both sides in the unnecessary conflict try to tar each other with the Nazi tag; both rely to some extent on far-right forces within their military structures. But whatever the follies and fallacies of Moscow and Kyiv, this is not World War II, and it's crucial to all humanity that it does not turn into World War III.

The curse of Kursk haunts Putin. That threat still cannot be discounted,

although the flashpoint might be in a different part of the world, but it is not imminent. However, the consequences of the Ukrainian advance into Russian territory remain unclear, and the messaging from Kyiv about its motivation has been somewhat muddled. It serves as a temporary morale booster for Ukrainians, no doubt, as well as a slap in the face for Putin's pretensions as Mr Security — someone who would keep Russians safe from all foes. He has failed several times in that respect over the years, but it is not clear whether the present embarrassment will suffice as a potential tipping point. The Ukrainian president has said that the successful attack on Russian soil was intended as a negotiating tactic — presumably to persuade Putin that the border is vulnerable in both directions, so his insistence on retaining large chunks of Ukraine as part of any peace deal is untenable.

However, Volodymyr Zelensky and his aides have also talked about creating a buffer zone, and expressed the hope that some of the Russian troops on the front line in eastern Ukraine might be withdrawn to Kursk, which was poorly defended by inexperienced young conscripts, hundreds of whom are now in Ukrainian custody, possibly intended to serve as bargaining chips in future PoW exchanges.

Might that work, or will Putin's instinct be to exact revenge, for which Ukrainian civilians may pay the biggest price? Putin's tendency is to prefer revanchism over compromise. Russia's apparent inability thus far to meaningfully resist the Ukrainian military in Kursk — the first time in 80 years that foreign forces have advanced so far into its territory —

should serve as an even bigger reminder than his one-time confidant Yevgeny Prigozhin's revolt last year that Putin's republic does not measure up to its projected illusions. There is good reason, no doubt, to resent the Nato encirclement of Russia, which has been proceeding for decades, but that hardly justifies the decision to invade Ukraine, let alone pretend that the coveted territory ought never to have been separated from the 'motherland'.

Without delving into history, suffice it to say that Putin's ill-considered gambit returned to bite him on the backside, whereas it remains to be seen whether Zelensky's gamble will pay any dividends. The conflict needs to end, but neither Ukraine and its Western allies nor Russia are inclined to contemplate the kind of compromises that would facilitate such an outcome — echoes of Gaza, arguably.

US sources suggest that Kyiv's Kursk initiative derailed talks in Qatar towards an agreement on not targeting energy facilities: chiefly power plants in Ukraine and oil refineries in Russia, but including nuclear facilities. That information adds to the absurdity of Zelensky's apparent assumption that the Kursk advance would sufficiently rattle Putin into making concessions. The Russian president, evidently intending to deny all responsibility (as usual) if what comes next does not fit his narrative, flew off to Azerbaijan on a scheduled visit. Echoes of the submarine incident. What might come next in this sordid conflict remains to be seen. But anyone who expects Putin to come to his senses in the face of territorial blackmail is living in a fool's paradise.

By Arooj Waheed Dar

'Doing okay'

PERSISTENTLY high inflation in Pakistan is eroding the purchasing power of the poorest, limiting access to basic facilities. The World Bank estimates that poverty will remain around 40 per cent, with 10 million people at risk of falling below the poverty line due to potential economic shocks. Despite this, social protection programmes receive minimal attention, with Pakistan allocating less than one per cent of GDP to social assistance, thus offering little relief to the poor.

With the government's limited fiscal space and competing priorities, it is clear that investment in social sectors is likely to remain low. Therefore, the government must focus on creating a conducive environment for social delivery organisations (SDOs) to step in and address these gaps.

The Doing Good Index of the Centre for Asian Philanthropy and Society examines the regulatory and societal environment in which private capital is directed towards philanthropy.

It ranks countries in four categories based on its findings: 'doing well', 'doing better', 'doing okay', and 'not doing enough' (from best to worst). According to the DGI 2024 report, which surveyed 122 SDOs in Pakistan through the SDPI, the country is classified as 'doing okay', indicating an unfavourable regulatory environment.

This classification represents a decline from its 'doing better' status in 2020.

The report highlights a drastic increase in the regulatory burden for SDOs between 2020 and 2024. This period coincides with severe impacts on marginalised communities in Pakistan due to Covid-19, climatic shocks, and the Russia-

Ukraine war. Instead of easing the regulatory burden for SDOs during this critical period, further hurdles were put up with primary focus on heightened scrutiny of political funding and rigorous monitoring of financial flows to NGOs under the pretext of preventing money laundering and terrorism financing.

SDOs are struggling to meet their financial needs.

The report shows that in Pakistan, the process for obtaining clearances and registering an SDO takes an average of 360 days, significantly longer than the Asian average of 123 days. Once registered, additional complex laws hinder the smooth functioning of SDOs, creating disincentives for philanthropic work.

In terms of finances, SDOs are facing growing difficulties in transferring and receiving foreign funds. This issue is compounded by a decline in local funding due to reduced purchasing power, which limits individuals' capacity to donate. Consequently, SDOs are struggling to meet their financial needs and to expand their coverage. The absence of incentives and hurdles in claiming tax incentives for corporate donors exacerbates the situation.

Furthermore, the procedures for accessing government procurements are reported to be highly complex.

Non-transparency remains a significant concern. The proportion of SDOs receiving government contracts has noticeably declined between 2020 and 2024, alongside a sharp decrease in the perceived transparency of the procurement process.

During 2020 to 2024, the percentage of SDOs that viewed the procurement process as transparent dropped from 48pc to 10pc.

Additionally, the percentage of SDOs that found it easy to win government contracts fell from 30pc to 6pc, and those finding it easy to access procurement information decreased from 64pc to 11pc.

Unfortunately, it is not the first time in Pakistan that political agendas have taken precedence over social welfare and public well-being. As with many other decisions, the move to increase regulatory burdens on SDOs appears largely driven by the desire to undermine a particular political party. The PTI foreign funding case, coupled with Pak-istan's efforts to comply with FATF requirements, led to tighter controls on foreign funding, not just for political parties but also for NGOs.

Along with decreased funding for NGOs, this has created rent-seeking opportunities, as most government contracts are awarded to well-connected SDOs.

According to the report, the majority of SDOs believe that the removal of this undue regulatory burden can significantly enhance their performance, allowing them to better cater to the needs of an increasingly deprived population. Moreover, a single oversight department should be established to streamline the process and reduce procedural delays and red tape.

While philanthropy is ubiquitous in Pakistan, much of it is informal and unrecorded. Regulating these activities is crucial to ensure comprehensive coverage and to prevent duplication.

With negligible public spending in social sectors, it is essential for the government to set political agendas aside and create a conducive environment for SDOs to address these deficiencies.

DAILY MIRROR

Ahsan for catching up with pace of digital revolution for national development

APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday stressed the urgent need to keep pace with the global digital revolution to achieve development across all sectors and put the country on a sustainable growth trajectory.

"The world is advancing at the speed of electrons. We cannot afford to lag behind, as in the next 22 years, we will be evaluating our development in the context of our 100 years of independence," he stated while addressing the opening session of the conference titled "Empowering a Digital Pakistan."

Citing historical examples, the minister noted that nations embracing global changes achieved progress and prosperity, while those that ignored these changes faced failure.

He highlighted that the world was now undergoing a digital revolution after the industrial revolution. "In the industrial era, the big used to eat the small; in the digital world, the fast eats the slow, regardless of size," he remarked.

"Today, Pakistan stands at a defining moment. The future of a nation or an individual hinges on the choices made. These choices determine the destiny of that person or nation," he said.

Ahsan Iqbal explained that if the choices were wrong, one could not blame others for their circumstances. Conversely, if the choices are right, the credit for success belongs solely to the individual or nation that made those choices, he added.

He also pointed out that Pakistanis were once known globally for their hard-working and intelligent reputation. However, this image was tarnished by the previous government of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), which labeled its opponents as "thieves and dacoits."

In 2018, he noted, ambassadors from major countries, including the United States, Britain and European states, were actively seeking investment opportunities in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. "For the first time, Pakistan was the darling of international investors, eager to be part of CPEC, but we squandered this opportunity by entrusting power to the PTI," he

said. He recalled that the PML-N government had introduced Vision 2010 in 1998 and Vision 2025 in 2013 but was later disrupted by the so-called change in 2018.

Subsequently, the minister said, the governance was handed over to someone with no experience even at the union council level, severely damaging the national economy. "The negative impact of this decision is still being felt."

Emphasizing the importance of adapting to modern trends and maintaining agility, he reminded that no country has achieved development without consistent policies over at least 10-15 years.

To achieve developmental goals, Ahsan Iqbal reiterated that Pakistan needed peace, stability, consistent policies and continuous reforms.

"The nation now needs a healing touch. We must come together, set aside smaller identities, and embrace a larger identity as Pakistan," he remarked quoting "Coming together is a beginning; staying together is progress and working together is success."



President, Asif Ali Zardari exchanging views with Israr Khan Kakar, President of Oxford Union during meeting held at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad

Governor grieves over death of pilgrims

APP

Quetta: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandukhail expressed his deep grief over the loss of 35 pilgrims and several injured as a result of the fire on the bus of Pakistani pilgrims near Dasheer Taftan check point on Wednesday.

In his condolence statement, Governor Balochistan said that we shared the grief of the families of all the martyred and injured pilgrims.

He also prayed for forgiveness of the martyrs in this tragic accident and the speedy recovery of the injured and patience and courage to the bereaved families.

Karsaz road accident: Driver sent to jail on 14-day judicial remand

INP

KARACHI: A Karachi court on Wednesday sent a driver, involved in a road accident which killed two people, on a 14-day judicial remand.

The incident took place at the city's Karsaz Road on Aug 19

when a Land Cruiser had hit three motorcycles and one car which resulted in the loss of two lives while three seriously injured.

Earlier, police had not produced the accused in court by stating that she was undergoing psychiatric treatment at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre.

She was presented before the court today as she had been discharged from the JPMS's psychiatric ward.

The suspect's lawyer said the charges against her client were bailable. At this, the IO responded that the section 302 had also been added in the case which was non-bailable.

Later, the court inquired whether she had come under any torture from police which she responded to in negative.

Meta's role in advancing child protection, privacy initiatives commendable: Minister

INP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar has commended Meta (Facebook) for its proactive role in ensuring safe digital spaces and effectively utilizing its platform to support the Ministry's initiatives on child protection, privacy and related human rights concerns.

Speaking during meeting with a delegation headed by Vice President Public Policy APAC, Meta, Simon Milner which called on him here on Wednesday, the minister also recognized the Public Service Video (PSM) developed by Meta as a significant contribution to advancing the ministry's mission.

The PSM highlights the collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Human Rights and Meta to promote the right to privacy and child protection in digital spaces. The content is designed to educate the public about their digital rights and responsibilities, reflecting the Ministry's broader human rights agenda.

A central aspect of this initiative is the

promotion of the TakeltDown platform, developed by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC).

The platform allows individuals to anonymously report explicit images or videos of minors shared online. Through this tool, families and young people can take proactive measures to remove harmful content from the internet, addressing online harassment, exploitation, and cyberbullying.

Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar emphasized the importance of sustained collaboration with Meta to tackle pressing issues such as online child protection and the preservation of individual privacy rights. He reiterated the ministry's dedication to partnering with Meta and other key stakeholders to ensure that Pakistan leads in human rights advocacy and protection.

The Ministry of Human Rights remains committed to expanding its partnership with Meta and other collaborators to enhance the awareness, protection and promotion of human rights across the nation.

Comprehensive plan devised for success of Quetta anti-polio campaign

INP

QUETTA: The district administration Quetta has devised a comprehensive plan for success of the anti-polio vaccination campaign.

A meeting of DPEC held here on Wednesday with Deputy Commissioner Quetta Lieutenant (R) Saad bin Asad in chair reviewed the monitoring, training, security and other arrangements of the anti-polio campaign to be start from September 10, 2024.

A comprehensive plan was chalked out during the meeting to make the upcoming anti-polio campaign successful and to administer the polio vaccine drops to all children aged under five year.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioners City, Sariab, Sadar, Kuchlak, DHO, DDHO, District EPI Officer, Divisional EPI Officer and Union Council Coordinators.

A detailed report of the previous campaign was reviewed in the meeting, in which effective measures were taken to

remove the deficiencies.

It was also decided in the meeting that police lady constables will also perform duty along with the teams during the anti-polio campaign starting from September 10 in Quetta.

It was decided that the parent or family who refuses to administer the polio vaccine drops will be arrested.

In the meeting, a report was also presented about the sensitive areas. During the campaign, announcement would be done from all mosques regarding the administration of immunization drops.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Quetta said that no negligence will be tolerated during the anti-polio campaign. He said that parents have a responsibility to cooperate with the administration in vaccinating their children against polio.

DC Saad bin Asad added that teachers and religious scholars should educate people about the harmful effects of the paralytic polio and adopt the preventive measures to become polio-free.

Governor, others offered Fatehkhani for late Younis on 3rd day of him

APP

Quetta: A large number of people including Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandukhail attended the third day of late former Chief Secretary Balochistan Younis Khan Mandukhail and offered Fatehkhani on Wednesday. He was the close relatives of Balochistan Governor, brother of former Senator Sheikh Saeed-Al Hassan Mandukhail and uncle of Provincial of Assembly member (MPA) Zarak Khan Mandukhail prayed for late the Younis during the third time.

Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandukhail was present continuously from morning to afternoon for the Fateh of the third day of the late at Airport Road Askari Housing Scheme Quetta. Meanwhile, Supreme Court of Pakistan Justice Jamal Khan Mandukhail and former Balochistan Governor Jan Muhammad Jamali, provincial ministers, assembly members, senior government officials, political dignitaries, tribal elders, scholars and religious leaders from various walks of life and schools of thought participated in the recitation of Fateh on third day of late.

They made prayers for the late Sheikh Younis Khan Mandukhail's forgiveness and elevation of ranks.

Election Tribunal dismisses Sarfraz Bugti's competence plea

INP

QUETTA: The Election Tribunal of Balochistan on Wednesday dismissed the petition filed against the competence of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

The Election Tribunal consisting of Justice Rozi Khan had reserved the decision on the completion of the hearing last day.

On behalf of the government, Advocate General Balochistan Asif Ali pursued the case in the Election Tribunal.

Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti's eligibility for PB-10 was challenged by Nawabzada Ghoram Bugti.

Pakistan seeks stronger parliamentary ties with Belarus: Ayaz Sadiq

NA speaker reiterates Pakistan's support for Belarus on international platforms, including its bid to join the SCO

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq stated on Wednesday that Pakistan is committed to further strengthening its bilateral ties with Belarus, particularly through enhanced parliamentary engagement.

During a meeting in Minsk with Igor Sergejenko, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus, Sadiq remarked, "This visit marks an important step forward in our bilateral relations. We deeply appreciate your hospitality and are eager to build on the foundations laid over the past 30 years of diplomatic relations."

The speaker emphasised the importance of deepening parliamentary relations between Pakistan and Belarus with a focus on expanding the legal framework for cooperation, according to a news release issued on Wednesday.

"We are committed to revisiting and updating existing agreements to ensure

they are more effective. Our Parliament will actively work on these frameworks to facilitate closer interaction," Sadiq said.

Regarding bilateral cooperation, the speaker reiterated Pakistan's support for Belarus on international platforms, including its bid to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

He also affirmed Pakistan's willingness to support Belarus in joining various organisations in which Pakistan is a member. "We believe that our collaboration can be mutually beneficial, and we are ready to offer our support wherever possible," he emphasised.

Sergejenko expressed his gratitude for Pakistan's consistent support at international forums. He welcomed the visit of the Pakistani parliamentary delegation, comprising members of the National Assembly Aslam Ghumman, Syed Tariq Hussain, and Syed Hafeezuddin, noting it as a significant milestone in strengthening the ties between the two countries.



Chairman Senate, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani talking to media persons during his visit to the grave of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai during 281st Annual Urs of Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai festival held in Bhit Shah

Lawlessness will not be tolerated: Musadik Malik

APP

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik said on Wednesday that while every political party has the right to protest, it must be conducted peacefully and within the bounds of the law.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that no one would be allowed to take the law into their hands under the guise of political demonstrations.

Responding to a question about the denial of permission to PTI for a political rally, Minister said, "How can we permit those who openly talk about coming to Islamabad and seizing control?"

He warned that inciting people and attacking state installations and disre-

specting martyrs cannot be associated with peaceful protests.

The minister made it clear that any attempt to repeat the events of May 9, when violent protests erupted, would be thwarted.

"The state will take action against those who break the law," he added.

Malik also highlighted the ongoing organized campaigns against the heads of state

institutions, stating that the entire nation stands united in strengthening these institutions.

He said that reducing polarization and overcoming despair was needed and strengthening state institutions was crucial for national unity and stability.

Secretary P&SHD reviews NHSP's progress extensively

By Maqsood khalid

LAHORE: The Secretary of the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD), Ms. Nadia Saquib, chaired an extensive review meeting to assess the progress of the National Health Support Program (NHSP) on Tuesday. The meeting, held at the Secretary's Office on Birdwood Road, Lahore, was attended by key officials, including Special Secretary Muhammad Iqbal, Additional Secretary of Development & Finance Rana Adeel, ADS Technical Dr Younas, Director HISDU Ahmar Khan, and the core NHSP team.

On this occasion, the Director General of Health Services and Program Director, Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Gondal, delivered a detailed briefing on various aspects of the program. He provided an in-depth analysis of the integrated referral system management, which has been developed to link Primary Healthcare facilities with higher-level health institutions. He also discussed expanding services at 19 Rural Health Centers (RHCs) through the provision of specialized healthcare and improving TB case notification rates in underperforming districts. Dr Gondal further outlined the annual work plan for the Expanded

Program on Immunization (EPI), which aims to increase immunization coverage by at least one per cent for the Pentavalent-1 vaccine and by five per cent or more for Fully Immunized Children (FIC) in targeted areas. Moreover, he highlighted ongoing efforts to digitize cancer registry records and enhance the capacity building of healthcare managers. The status of quality improvement initiatives in primary care facilities, including the implementation of Minimum Service Delivery Standards (MSDS) and licensing by the Punjab Healthcare Commission, was also discussed.

Secretary P&SHD Nadia Saquib expressed her satisfaction with the progress achieved so far, commending the team for their dedication and commitment. She underscored the importance of sustaining the program's momentum to meet the established targets within the set timelines. However, she directed the Health Information and Service Delivery Unit (HISDU) to develop an integrate the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system and the cancer registry case records.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Saquib reaffirmed her commitment to transparency and accountability in the management of public health services.



Social Activist, Hameeda Noor addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.