

Pakistan, Turkiye pledge to achieve \$5bn bilateral trade target

Islamabad (News Desk) Pakistan and Turkiye have pledged to continue efforts towards achieving a bilateral trade volume of \$5 billion, Radio Pakistan reported on Thursday. The Turkish president arrived in Islamabad shortly after Thursday midnight and was received by the premier and President Asif Ali Zardari in Rawalpindi. Both leaders are set to hold meetings with the visiting guest during his official two-day trip. Today, he was welcomed warmly with a guard of honour upon his arrival at the Prime Minister's House in Islamabad for talks with PM Shehbaz, state-run Radio Pakistan

reported. A contingent of the armed forces presented a guard of honour to the visiting dignitary, with the national anthems of both countries also played. During a high-level meeting, the Turkish President said that both countries considered expanding the scope of their current goods trade agreement in the first stage, according to Radio Pakistan. "Turkish investors will be encouraged to engage more in Pakistan and develop flagship projects," Erdogan told reporters after the meeting. "Our military dialogue and cooperation in the defence industry have grown our trade and investment relations ex-

ponentially." Erdogan said that both sides reaffirmed their determination to advance projects and potential areas of cooperation including procurement, sales and joint manufacturing. The Turkish president expressed confidence that the 24 agreements signed with Pakistan today will "prove beneficial for the two countries and the region". Addressing the Pakistan-Turkiye Business Forum in Islamabad, the PM said that both nations had pledged to ensure bilateral trade worth \$5bn. "We had committed that together, we will achieve a target of \$5bn volume in bilateral trade, but unfortunately it is a long way to

go," he said in his speech. "Today we signed various MoUs and agreements but the more important point is that we need to convert them from paper to action. In that, I am fully committed to supporting all your efforts," PM Shehbaz said, addressing Pakistani and Turkish businesspeople. The prime minister sincerely apologised for any "undue inconvenience" experienced by Turkish investors, refusing to delve into details to avoid "political point scoring". "Some of our Turkish businessmen who came to Pakistan with a great sense of commitment ... did that investment and both sides benefitted.



Turkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is welcomed warmly with a guard of honour on Thursday morning upon his arrival at the Prime Minister House in Islamabad

Minor girl 'tortured to death' by employer in Punjab

SARGODHA: (News Desk) An underage house help was allegedly tortured to death by her employer and his family over allegation of stealing a chocolate. Sanallah, father of the victim, a resident of Chak 43 SB, told journalists here on Wednesday that Abdul Rasheed, a trader of Rawalpindi, employed her daughter Iqra (15) as house help around two years ago.

He said that a few days ago the trader and his family brutally tortured his daughter, accusing her of stealing a chocolate bar.

He said the suspects inflicted injuries to his daughter's head, arms, legs and face with a sharp instrument. They also fractured Iqra's arms and legs, he said, adding that his daughter succumbed to the torture. Sanallah appealed to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to take notice of this brutality, demanding strict legal action against the suspects.

The police have arrested the trader and his wife, who are being interrogated.

PAC meets after a year, finds irregularities in health ministry



ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) In its first meeting since last year's general elections, PTI lawmaker Junaid Akbar Khan-led Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the National Assembly took exception to alleged gross financial mismanagement in the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination. The PTI leader was unanimously elected as the PAC chairman only last month, following a yearlong delay. As it resumes its oversight responsibilities, the committee is expected to play a crucial role in ensuring transparency and accountability in government expenditures.

While reviewing audit objections related to the health ministry and the national heritage and cultural division on Wednesday, PAC members raised concerns over financial irregularities and called for greater accountability in both departments.

The PAC chairman strongly objected to the failure of the relevant ministries to hold meetings of departmental accounts committee (DACs), warning their representatives that the NA panel would not discuss the audit objections that could have been settled at the level of DACs.

Justice Sarfraz Dogar appointed IHC acting chief justice amid reservations over seniority

Islamabad (News Desk) Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar on Thursday was notified as the acting chief justice of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) amid reservations expressed by some judges over his seniority.

Judges recently elevated to the Supreme Court will also be sworn in by the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) today.

Unlike the usual practice, where a senior judge administers the oath to an acting chief justice of a high court, President Asif Ali Zardari will oversee Justice Dogar's oath-taking. This follows specula-

tion that five senior IHC judges, who had openly opposed Justice Dogar's transfer, might refuse to administer the oath.

According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, Dogar was appointed acting chief justice by the president. He will step into the position "with effect from the date he [takes] oath of his office, till appointment of regular chief justice." Dogar was moved to courtroom number one and has begun hearing cases. His appointment as acting chief justice follows the ap-

pointment of Justice Aamer Farooq to the SC earlier this week. Late on Wednesday night, the Ministry of Law and Justice issued a notification formally announcing Justice Dogar's appointment as acting chief justice of the IHC. The appointment, made by the president under Article 196, may diminish the controversy over seniority. The law ministry also notified acting chief justices of the three other high courts: Justice Ejaz Swati has been appointed as acting CJ of Balochistan High Court (BHC), Justice Junaid Ghaffar has been named acting CJ of

Sindh High Court (SHC) and Justice S.M. Attique Shah as acting CJ Peshawar High Court (PHC). In addition, notifications for the appointment of seven judges to the Supreme Court have also been issued. Besides Justice Aamer Farooq, BHC Chief Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar, SHC Chief Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui and his colleague Justice Salahuddin Panhwar, PHC Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and his colleague Justice Shakeel Ahmad, and Justice Mian-gul Hassan Aurangzeb will be sworn in by the chief justice of Pakistan.



ANP leader Ameer Haider Khan Hoti addresses a party gathering in Mohmand on Wednesday

Man shoots himself dead after killing 4 children in Swabi: officials

Swabi (News Desk) A man in Swabi's Yar Hussain district shot himself dead after allegedly killing four of his minor children early on Thursday morning, officials said. Yar Hussain Station House Officer (SHO) Abdul Wali told Dawn.com that police were informed about the bodies by locals. "The father received a bullet wound to the head,

while the Rescue 1122 team found the bodies at the deceased man's house and shifted them to the tehsil headquarters hospital," SHO Wali said. The deceased were identified as Saiful Islam, 42; Ziaul Islam, 12; Abdur Rehman, 10; Sana Umar, 8; and a two-year-old girl whose name could not be ascertained immediately.

SHO Wali said the incident seemed to be a domestic issue since the man's wife had gone to her parent's home. He said police had lodged a first information report (FIR) and begun further interrogation into the case. According to a jirga member Awwal Sher Khan, the man sent his two-year-old daughter to the wife two days earlier

after his efforts to bring back his wife had failed. But the wife returned the child, which culminated in reaching his frustration into the incident, he added. Similar incidents have occurred in the recent past, with a man in Bhawalnagar allegedly killing himself last December after shooting his wife and daughter dead over an issue related to 'honour'.

Ji warns against displacement in KP again

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Jamaat-i-Islami emir Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman has warned against further 'displacement experiments' in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stating that playing with fire in the region is dangerous.

Military operations were not a solution to establishing peace, instead there was the need to address the root causes of terrorism, the Ji emir emphasised while addressing a tribal peace jirga, organised by his party in Islamabad.

"The people of Pakistan demand peace at all costs, if we are not given a peaceful and stable Pakistan, we must at least ensure one for future generations — this country is our home," he said.

Hafiz Naeem strongly criticised what he dubbed as a US agenda of pitting the neighbouring Muslim countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan, against each other.

PTI to continue letter-writing spree

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Former prime minister Imran Khan has decided to send yet another 'open letter' to Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir, his lawyer claimed on Wednesday, saying the jailed PTI founder wished to express his grievances against the system and propose "structural reforms" to resolve crises faced by the country.

Faisal Chaudhry, speaking to mediapersons outside Adiala jail in Rawalpindi after meeting the incarcerated PTI founder on Wednesday, claimed that the letter would be based on six points. He claimed that the contents of the letter were noted by him during his meeting with Mr Khan, adding that it would be dispatched soon. The PTI has previously claimed to have sent the army chief two open letters, which are already mired in controversy. Security sources had denied receipt of the first purported letter to the army chief, whose contents were divulged to the media. Similarly, a second such letter also never saw the light of day; instead, only its salient features were shared on the social media handle of the ex-PM. It is worth noting that the incarcerated former premier does not have access to his X account, and his verified social media accounts are being operated by someone else. Surprisingly, the party has been quite cagey about sharing the letters themselves with mediapersons. In contrast, the complete contents of an open letter to CJP Yahya Afridi — written in the last week of January — were released to the media along with pages and pages of 'evidence' and documents.

Delay in FDE DG's appointment raises questions

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) An inordinate delay of twenty months in the appointment of the director general of the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) — a regulatory body that oversees the affairs of 431 public sector schools and colleges in Islamabad — has raised serious questions.

In the absence of a regular director general, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training is running the affairs of the regulatory body on an ad-hoc basis.

The post fell vacant in July 2023 last year, when the then DG was sidelined in a highly suspicious manner. Since then, the key office has been run through ad-hoc arrangements.

Officials blame court case for persistent delays in appointment

In September last year, the ministry of education completed the interview process for appointment to the key slot and shortlisted a three candidates.

The list was subsequently sent to the Prime Minister's (PM) Office for selection of the best candidate. However, the process could not be completed as sources said that the PM's Office raised questions about the summary. "Yes, the PM Office sent back the summary. But, there was no major objection, rather due to a court case against the appointment of the DG, the PM Office and law wing directed us to get a clearance from the court first," said an official from the education ministry.

Physical fitness certificate mandatory for all heavy vehicles in Sindh: Sharjeel Memon

Karachi (News Desk) The Sindh government on Thursday made it mandatory for all heavy vehicles in Karachi to have a physical fitness certificate amid the rising number of traffic accidents involving dumper trucks.

The decision came following a high-level meeting chaired by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to discuss the alarming number of traffic accidents in the metropolis and the ensuing criticism

against the authorities for negligence. Last week, the provincial government had banned the entry of heavy vehicles into the city during the daytime, only allowing them to operate from 11pm to 6am. Exemptions, however, were granted to trucks carrying water, petroleum products, medicines, meat and other essential goods.

Addressing a press conference following the meeting today, Sindh Infor-

mation Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said, "The provincial government will ensure that all heavy vehicles plying the roads carry a fitness certificate." He added that the transport department will issue the fitness certificate and barcodes will be given to all registered vehicles.

"The Karachi Water & Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) will also provide barcodes to its water tankers and issue fitness certificates," Memon said,

adding that all heavy vehicles will have 30 days to receive the fitness certificate or they will not be allowed on the roads. Memon said that heavy vehicles coming from other provinces should have a fitness certificate issued by the Sindh government, stating that the Punjab government had issued similar rules which will be strictly implemented in the province now. Regarding the complaints that the vehicle number



plates were not issued on time, he said, "The excise department has 80,000 number plates that have not been collected. There

are only two motor vehicle inspectors in the province and the number is being increased minister said that the Sindh Assembly.