

## Armed forces ready to make any sacrifice for country's freedom, President Zardari says on Pakistan Day

Islamabad(News Desk) As Pakistan Day celebrations are underway on Sunday, President Asif Ali Zardari said Pakistan's armed forces were ready to render any kind of sacrifice as he paid tribute to the armed forces and law enforcement agencies for giving unprecedented sacrifices. This day commemorates the Lahore Resolution passed on March 23, 1940, and the adoption of the first Constitution of Pakistan on March 23, 1956. While speaking at a Pakistan Day military parade

at Aiwan-i-Sadr, President Zardari said: "Pakistan is facing geo-political challenges, while their brave armed forces, with the support of the nation, have been giving unprecedented sacrifices." He said that India had always tried to cast an evil eye on Pakistan while Khawarij and other terrorists' outfits wanted to achieve their evil designs, according to the Associated Press of Pakistan. However, the nation and armed forces were standing in unison and would foil their nefarious de-

signs, he added. The president stated that fifth-generation warfare had turned into a challenge, adding that Pakistan had the capacity to overcome difficulties. He stressed the need to strengthen defence and boost economic sectors, including agriculture. He termed the youth an "asset of the nation" and urged the need to equip them with research-based education and the latest technological training. The president said that Pakistan's foreign policy was based upon ensuring

stability and peace, adding that the country wanted strong ties with its neighbours and the international community based upon mutual respect and shared goals of prosperity. He reiterated Pakistan's solidarity with "Kashmiri brethren and sisters who had been bracing Indian atrocities" and reaffirmed that Pakistan would continue raising its voice at all global fora for the Kashmiris' right to self-determination. He also urged all provincial governments to focus on social welfare initiatives.



President Asif Ali Zardari speaks as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif accompanies him at a Pakistan Day ceremony at President House in Islamabad on March 23, 2025.

### Bodies of couple handed over to India by AJK authorities

MUZAFFARABAD: (News Desk) Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) authorities handed over the bodies of a young man and woman to their counterparts from India-held Jammu and Kashmir at Kaman Bridge in the Chakothi-Uri sector on Saturday. The deceased — 23-year-old Yasir Hussain and 20-year-old Asia Bano — had reportedly jumped into the Jhelum River on March 5 in Uri after their families allegedly opposed their plans to marry. Bano's body was later recovered from the river in Lower Chhattar, a neighborhood of Muzaffarabad, while Hussain's body was found along the Jhelum River bank in Chinari, about 12 kilometers from the Chakothi-Uri crossing point. Photographs shared by police showed Hussain's body entangled in ropes. It later emerged that his body had initially been spotted near Kaman Bridge on India held side on Thursday afternoon.

### Armaghan sent to prison after refusing to confess before magistrate



KARACHI: (News Desk) The prime suspect in the Mustafa Amir murder case on Saturday was sent to prison after he refused to record his confessional statement while a magistrate observed that the suspect was not in stable condition to record his confession. The administrative judge of the anti-terrorism courts sent Armaghan to prison on judicial remand since he said that it was mandatory to send a suspect in judicial custody whether he makes or refuses to make a confession before magistrate. Armaghan has been booked for allegedly kidnapping and murdering 23-year-old Mustafa Amir in the Defence Housing Authority and torching his body along with the victim's vehicle in Hub in January. The investigating officer, inspector Mohammad Ali, filed an application before the magistrate concerned to record confessional statement of the suspect under Section 164 of the criminal procedure code and brought him before the court. The judicial magistrate (South), Asim Aslam, in his order noted that the suspect was made to sit in his chamber after removing handcuffs and the police officers were directed to leave the premises and one-hour reflection time was given to him. It also said that the suspect seemed to be tired and lazy and the magistrate informed him that he was not bound to make a confessional statement as the same may be used against him as evidence.

### Peace and progress in Afghanistan necessary for regional stability: envoy

Islamabad(News Desk) Pakistan's special envoy for Afghanistan, Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq Khan on Sunday said that peace and progress in Afghanistan were necessary for regional stability. Speaking as a guest of honour for the flag-hoisting ceremony at the Pakistani embassy in Kabul on Pakistan Day, the envoy emphasised that his country and Afghanistan's economic interests were intrinsically linked with one another. Earlier, the envoy had met Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi in

Kabul, where they vowed to sustain their diplomatic engagement to address ongoing bilateral challenges, including trade, security and the status of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. "Pakistan and Afghanistan must synergise their efforts to foster regional economic development," he said, adding that the neighbouring country remained "one of the most important regional partners of Pakistan". A significant development in trade relations is the reopening of the Torkham border after a 27-day closure. The

crossing was shut on Feb 21 due to a dispute over construction activities and was reopened following negotiations mediated by a jirga. Currently, the border is operating under a temporary arrangement until April 15, with ongoing negotiations for a long-term solution. Islamabad has expressed the hope that a permanent agreement will be reached before the current mechanism expires. "Both countries must work together to enhance bilateral trade and galvanise regional connectivity," Khan high-

lighted. He also said that the country remained committed to developing a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with Afghanistan. Pakistan's Head of Mission Ambassador Ubaidur-Rehman Nizamani, in his remarks on the occasion, called for honouring the sacrifices of armed forces and renewing the pledge to work towards a stronger and prosperous Pakistan. He underscored the need of reinvigorating the country's resilience to overcome all internal and external challenges.



Pakistan's special envoy for Afghanistan, Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq, and Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, in Kabul.

### Federal Water Management Cell to be shut next month

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) The Federal Water Management Cell (FWMC), an entity tasked with managing water resources, will cease to function from April 1 as the government looks to cut the size of the bloated bureaucracy. FWMC, the only federal body addressing water management issues at the national and international

levels, was part of the Ministry of National Food Security & Research (MNFSR). A notification issued by the ministry the other day said that out of FWMC's sanctioned strength of 39, 30 posts were filled. The officials have now been placed in the surplus pool of the establishment division for further postings. The nine vacant posts will

be treated as abolished. Prior to the devolution under the 18th Amendment, a fully functional water management department operated at the federal level. FWMC officials placed in surplus pool of bureaucrats; several depts of food security ministry in line for closure. Following the devolution, the department was reduced to a small cell in the MNFSR.

After the 18th Amendment, food and agriculture were made provincial subjects, leaving the food security ministry with little capacity to intervene on these issues. Last year, the Senate Functional Committee on Devolution recommended the full devolution of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research to provinces.

### Islamabad, Kabul agree to deepen diplomatic ties

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Pakistan and Afghanistan on Saturday vowed to sustain their diplomatic engagement to address ongoing bilateral challenges, including trade, security and the status of Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between Pakistan's special envoy for Afghanistan, Ambassador Muhammad Sadiq, and Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, in Kabul. Mr Sadiq is currently on a three-day visit to the neighbouring country aimed at reviving diplomatic ties following a period of strained relations over security concerns.

According to a statement from the Afghan foreign ministry, both sides emphasised the importance of holding joint meetings and exchanging delegations to resolve outstanding issues.

### Mystery shrouds Mansehra schoolgirl's death on campus

MANSEHRA: (News Desk) As mystery surrounded a schoolgirl's death on campus in the Hilkot area here on Saturday, the police began an investigation. "We're trying to ascertain what exactly happened to the girl," additional SHO of the Battal police station Shujaat Hussain Shah told reporters. He said the body was shifted to a health centre to fulfil medico-legal formalities. Mehrun Nisa Naseem complained to police that her 14-year-old eighth-grade daughter went to the Government Middle School Hilkot in the morning but at around 1230 noon, she was informed about her death. "A teacher informed me over the phone that my daughter's body is lying in the school's backyard, so I rushed therewith my family members and found the body in a pool of blood," she said. Family claims 14-year-old died by suicide; police begin probe. The woman claimed that her daughter died by suicide. The police shifted the body to the Battal rural health centre for postmortem. Additional SHO Shujaat Shah said the police had collected "circumstantial evidence from the crime scene" and initiated investigation to ascertain the exact cause of death.

### KP health dept asks MTIs to appoint focal persons for sharing dengue data

PESHAWAR: (News Desk) With the dengue season fast approaching, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa health department has directed medical teaching institutions to appoint focal persons for sharing data of the people infected with the mosquito-borne disease. In a letter, additional director-general (health services) Dr Shahid Yunis told the MTIs' hospital and medical directors to nominate focal persons for updating the health department about the dengue cases. He emphasised that as the dengue season was just round the corner, it was imperative to accord priority to preventive measures and establish early surveillance systems to minimise transmission risks and identify potential outbreaks on time. Referring to a dengue season advisory issued by the National Institute of Health Islamabad and circulated to authorities coupled with the provincial chief secretary's directives, Dr Yunis said that all relevant departments were required to collaborate effectively for the successful implementation of the Dengue Action Plan, 2025. Orders preventive steps, establishment of early disease surveillance system. Deputy director (public health) Dr Mussawir Manzoor told Dawn that in order to ensure prompt dengue case reporting and real-time data sharing, MTIs had been asked to notify focal persons and task them with sharing the data of dengue cases with the health department.

### Parts of Balochistan shut as police crack down on BYC

QUETTA: (News Desk) As most parts of the province shut down to protest the crackdown by police to disperse the Baloch Yakjehti Committee protesters, over one dozen activists, including BYC chief organiser Dr Mahrang Baloch, were arrested on Saturday from the protest camp set up near the University of Balochistan. Dr Baloch was arrested along with 16 other activists, including seven women, and moved to the Quetta district jail after

their initial detention at the Bijli Road police station. "As many as 17 BYC activists were arrested along with Dr (Mahrang) Baloch," a police official said. A heavy contingent of police encircled the sit-in camp at Munir Mengal Road and arrested Mahrang Baloch, who was leading the protest against the arrest of BYC activist Bebarg Baloch, his brother, Vice Principal of Bolan Medical College Dr Ilyas Baloch, and his family members. The partici-

pants were also protesting against the alleged burial of 13 bodies without identification. After the arrest, the police also uprooted the sit-in camp and dispersed other activists present at the site with the bodies of three protesters who were killed a day before, allegedly during the police crackdown. The police handed over the bodies to the respective families. By late Saturday night, the supporters of BYC were present in the Saroyan area and 'clashes' between

the protesters and the BYC continued. Police were using tear gas to disperse the mob. Reports also suggested that the post office of Balochistan University and many shops on Sariab Road had been torchted while a heavy contingent was present in the area to disperse the protesters. Raid on camp. In its statement, the BYC said the police conducted a raid at the sit-in camp near the University of Balochistan and "brutally behaved with the workers and supporters and arrested



them". The BYC had alleged that three people, who were participating in the sit-in, were killed in police firing and many others sustained injuries. BMC hospital authorities

confirmed two deaths and said two bodies were brought to the hospital which were later taken away by the people who accompanied the bodies.