

# Independent

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Quetta

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## Health Card Programme launched in Balochistan finally; over 2.3 million families to get free medical facilities

Caretaker CM reiterates government's resolve to play wholehearted role and provide resources to make exemplary Health Card Programme

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The much-awaited and ambitious Health Card Programme has been launched by the interim government in Balochistan finally.

The caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki formally inaugurated the programme at the Chief Minister's secretariat here on Friday morning.

Over 2.3 million families having computerized national identity cards (CNICs) with permanent residence of the province would benefit from the programme.

The families would get free treatment for different diseases at over 1200 public and private hospitals all over the province.

The launching ceremony was attended by the

caretaker Minister for Health, Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezi, Minister Information, Jan Achakzai besides other members of the interim provincial cabinet and advisors to the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, administrative secretaries of the provincial government departments

and other concerned high ups and government functionaries.

Addressing the launching ceremony, Chief Minister said that the provincial government decided to provide free medical treatment facilities to all citizens of the province through the Health Cards.

He announced free

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QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki addressing the Balochistan Health Card launching ceremony.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting regarding progress of filling up of vacant seats for marginalized areas in civil bureaucracy through special examinations as well as rotation policy.

## General elections' decision will be implement in the country: Anwar-ul-Haq

ISLAMABAD (Online): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that he will implement the court decision regarding the holding of general elections in the country.

All political parties will get a level playing field in the elections: PM

He said that the consultation was definitely done, but the date of the elections was given by the Election Commission.

Illegal immigrant Afghans can return to their homeland and get a visa, said care taker prime minister. Talking to private TV, the caretaker prime minister said that no party has been stopped from holding rallies, they have to stay within the law.

To a question, he said illegal immigrants, Afghans can return to their homeland and bring visas.

The goal of deporting illegal residents is to regulate them. The government will not take over the business of a foreigner. The return of immigrants who today are bragging will be praised tomorrow. Caretaker Prime Minister said that it is a wrong impression that people's cases of May 9 incidents ended after holding a press conference. There are many people who are suffering cases despite condemnation. There is a big difference between detention for investigation and enforced disappearance. He said you cannot say that security agencies cannot interrogate. Do not call those who are picked up for investigation as missing persons. On another question, Anwar Haq Kakar said that the fate of Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board will decide after the World Cup.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafiqat meeting with Caretaker Provincial Home Minister Capt (ret) Muhammad Zubair Jamali.

## Solangi for media's role to reverse negative impacts of climate change

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Friday urged official media to join hands with private media houses to create awareness about negative impacts of climate change.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of establishment of climate change desk at PTV, he said today the first step had been taken by PTV management for which it deserved appreciation.

Lauding the PTV management for acting swiftly, he said that the climate change desk has been established and connected with regional stations and dedicated reporters have been appointed.

The minister urged the private media to adopt this model on coverage of climate change issues.

The minister issued

directives to Ministries of Climate Change and Information and Broadcasting to work together on this front.

He said that Information Service Academy should start providing training to reporters, researchers on this subject.

Murtaza Solangi also called for mobilization of social media and other digital platforms in fight against climate change. He said that the journalists working in climate change desk should visit the regions affected by climate change and meet the local people.

He proposed that media persons should also engage parents, teachers and experts in different fields as entire society has to be mobilized regarding climate change.

The minister said that climate change was a big change was a big

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## Governor flays attack on security forces vehicles at coastal highway

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has strongly condemned the terrorists attack on the vehicles of security forces near Pasni and Ormara.

In a condemnation statement issued here on Friday, the Governor expressed condolence and sympathy with the bereaved families of the martyrs.

He also paid homage to the martyr security personnel and said that they embraced martyrdom in line of duty.

He also said that the sacrifices of martyrs would not go wasted and no one would be allowed to sabotage the peaceful situation of province.

## Caretaker Minister Law & Prosecution meets Turkish Ambassador

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Law and Prosecution, Amanullah Kanrani called on the Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Mehmet Pecaci here at the Turkish Embassy on Friday.

During the course of meeting, the Minister Law discussed the matters of mutual interests as well as the potential of natural resources Balochistan has.

He described it very important and need of the hour to benefit from the opportunities of investment and excellent mutual harmony among masses. Mr Kanrani also termed the mutual relations between Turkey and Pakistan a beautiful bouquet of the brother Islamic countries.

## Newly-appointed NHA Chairman assumes charge

ISLAMABAD (APP): Newly-appointed National Highway Authority (NHA) Chairman Arshad Majeed Mohmand on Friday assumed charge of his office.

Earlier on his arrival at the NHA headquarters, he was warmly received by the staff and officers. Arshad Majeed Mohmand, a Grade-21 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service, has served as Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Petroleum, besides on key positions in KP and Baluchistan.

## ECP notifies Feb 8 as date for polls SC orders govt to ensure elections on February 8

Chief justice says court doesn't want to leave any "grey area"

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked general election will take place on February 08 by the grace of Almighty Allah.

He gave these remarks while presiding over 3-member bench of Supreme Court (SC) during the hearing of multiple pleas seeking timely elections within 90 days of the dissolution of the assemblies.

The document signed by president Arif Alvi on holding polls within 90 days in the country was presented in the SC.

A reply duly signed by officer of grade-22 from

President house was filed in the court. President assented to February 8, 2024 for holding general election.

Election Commission (EC) presented the notification on holding election on February 08 in the SC.

The court disposed of all the petitions with the order of the court.

The court issued written order for wrapping up petitions seeking holding election within 90 days.

It has been said in written order one Prime Minister (PM) was removed through vote of no confidence in the near past.

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ISLAMABAD: The Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa administering the oath of office to Honorable Justice Irfan Saadat Khan, Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Sindh as Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan at the Supreme Court.

## Balochistan facing natural disaster for past decades including drought: Governor

QUETTA (APP): Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar on Friday said that unfortunately, Balochistan has been facing natural disasters for the past several decades, including drought.

Earthquakes and floods have been frequent, resulting in large-scale damage to both the agriculture and livestock sectors.

Modern science and technology have enabled mankind to minimize the risks and damages faced by natural disasters with its comprehensive strategy and timely planning, he said.

He expressed these views while talking to Chairman of Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari called on him at Governor House here.

Chairman of Red Crescent Balochistan Takri Shafiqat Longove was also present in the meeting.

Balochistan Governor said that there was a strong

possibility that mankind would become stronger and more stable in the near future saying that the landlords and poor farmers of the entire province were going through a lot of difficulties and they should be provided with a special package including cheap electricity and quality seeds.

He said that to deal with any possible future emergency, we have to plan long-term and short-term and to increase the capacity of the people working in the relevant institutions.

A large number of volunteers will have to be created at the Union Council level. It is a fact that political organizations can also play an effective role in highlighting the voluntary spirit and sense of community and welfare activities and service, he mentioned.

He said that it was a tragedy for people all over

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QUETTA: Balochistan Caretaker Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai addresses to media persons during press conference, at QPC

## 14 soldiers martyred as terrorists attack security forces' vehicles in Gwadar

**RAWALPINDI (APP):** At least 14 soldiers embraced 'shahadat' when two vehicles of security forces moving from Pasni to Ormara in Gwadar District, were ambushed by the terrorists, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Friday.

"Sanitization operation is being carried out in the area and perpetrators of this heinous act will be hunted down and brought to justice," an ISPR press release said.

"Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," it added.

## CM slams attack on security forces vehicle: Terrorism incidents conspiracy to spoil peace of Balochistan: Domki

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has strongly condemned the attack on vehicle of security forces in the area between Pasni and Ormara.

In an official statement issued here on Friday, the Chief Minister said that the attack on jawans deputed for protection of life and property of the masses is a cowardly act.

He expressed sorrow and condolence with the bereaved families of those martyred in the attack.

The Chief Minister said that the incidents of terrorism are conspiracy of spoiling peace in the province. Mir Ali Mardan Domki also said that we would not let destroy peace that was restored after great sacrifices.

## Asad Qaiser arrests from Bani Gala

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has been arrested from Bani Gala.

Asad Qaiser has been arrested on charges of corruption. Anti-corruption officials have arrested him from Bani Gala.

Asad Qaiser Guju Khan Medical College Swabi is nominated for corruption in procurement of medical equipment.

## Jan, Zubair slams attack on security forces

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai and the Minister for Home, Mir Zubair Jamali have strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the security forces on the coastal highway Makran.

In the separate condemnation statement issued here on Friday, Jan Achakzai and Zubair Jamali paid homage to the security personnel martyred in the terrorism attack.

They expressed condolence with the bereaved families of the martyrs.

They said that the terrorists want to destroy peace of the province.

## Bomb blast kills 5, injures 24 in DI Khan

**Four passer-by also killed, 15 cops, civilians injured in terrorist attack on police vehicle**

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): At least five passers-by were killed and 24 others, including policemen and civilians were injured in a bomb blast targeting a police van in Dera Ismail Khan on Friday.

District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, while talking to media said, the blast occurred when a police convoy was going towards a check post near Tank Adda.

He said that an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) planted in a motorcycle exploded near the police van through a mobile phone.

The five people killed on the spot were identified as Qamar Zaman, Izzat

Ullah, Siffat Ullah and two others. The injured were identified as Marzak Khan, Abdul Hameed, Muhammad Ishaq, Qudrat Ullah, Ameer hamza, Ehtesham, Shakeel, Rajab, Aman Ullah, Jalal Uddin, Hamd Ullah, Waqas, Nasir, Zubair, Maulana Abdul Sattar, Rahif Israel, Shereen Bibi, Yasmeen Bibi, Constable Rehman Ullah and Traffic Constable Naveed Akhtar.

The DPO condemned the attack and said that it was a cowardly act of terrorism. He said that the police were in a war against terrorism and would not be

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QUETTA: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari meeting with Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

## Right of Pakistan to expel illegal immigrants: Jan Achakzai dispels impression of forced expulsion of Afghan refugees from Pakistan

**CT Minister Information says efforts expedited to repatriate illegal immigrants honourably; over 100,000 CNICs blocked in province; around 50,000 immigrants repatriated so far**

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has categorically dispelled the impression about forced expulsion of Afghan refugees and made it clear that only the illegal immigrants are being repatriated to their countries and that in an honourable manner.

While addressing press conference along with the Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat here at the Quetta

Press Club on Friday afternoon, the Minister Information said that the statement of Afghan Defence Minister is sorrowful that Pakistan is expelling the Afghan refugees forcefully.

He made it clear that only those illegal immigrants are being repatriated, who belong to any country.

He said that it is right of Pakistan to expel the illegal immigrants, and adding he mentioned that it is sort of kindness that they (illegal immigrants) are be-

ing deported only. Otherwise illegal immigrants are punished and jailed in other countries, he added.

However, Pakistan is a hospitable country that hosted immigrants for 40 years, and now it is right of the country to send them back to their country, he asserted.

Jan Achakzai also said that the efforts have been expedited for expulsion of the illegal immigrants on

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## Pakistan opens doors for foreign investment in diverse sectors: Masood

WASHINGTON (INP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan says Pakistan has opened new doors for foreign investment in the sectors of IT, energy, agriculture, mining and defense production. Addressing a two-day conference on 'Resilience and Reform in Pakistan' in Washington D.C., the Pakistani envoy said a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was established June this year to act as one window for foreign investors to facilitate speedy approval of projects, fast-track project development, and oversee implementation.

Addressing a jam-packed hall, comprising members of think-tank community, entrepreneurs,

opinion makers and media, Masood Khan said that Pakistan is a country with a destiny. "Our geography, our people and our ideals determine that destiny. We have a mission to fulfil and the resolve to go the distance," he said.

"We have outlived many doom and gloom forecasts; and so would we, this time. Our growth ran into headwinds but this year we did not default, kept our economy afloat and brought currency rates and inflation down," he said.

"We rode through the storms of floods and the pandemic. This is resilience," he added.

Acknowledging the ongoing challenge of multiple transitions, Masood Khan said that he won't call

it a 'polycrisis'. "Name any state that is not facing excruciating stress in the region and beyond. We are experiencing our share of pain as we evolve."

Highlighting the promising demographic profile and a profitable consumer market of the country that extends to East, Central and West Asia as well as to the Middle East and Africa, the Ambassador noted presence of a strong and dynamic private sector, both formal and informal, which is now buoyed by the tech sector. He said that a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was established June this year to act as one window for foreign investors to facilitate speedy approval of projects.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott addressing during inaugural ceremony of 9th Islamabad Literature Festival at Fatima Jinnah (F-9) Park in Federal Capital.

## Solangi for media's..

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threat for the planet earth establishment of Climate Change Desk in PTV was a great step in the right direction. Pakistan Television should telecast special programmes and documentaries about the disastrous impacts of climate change.

Murtaza Solangi said that general elections will be held in February next year and the caretaker government had no favourite party in the electoral race. He said it was responsibility of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to ensure that all registered political parties were given coverage without any discrimination on official media.

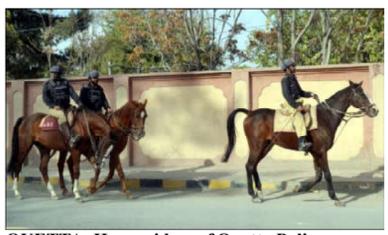
According to the spirit of the constitution, the elected representatives have the prerogative to run the affairs of country, Murtaza Solangi remarked.

The caretaker government, he added, was fully committed to holding free and transparent elections in the country.

Secretary Information and Broadcasting and MD PTV Zahoor Ahmed in his speech said that climate change and disaster reporting were specialised fields.

He said that the PTV would provide training to its staff deputed on climate change in collaboration with Ministry of Climate Change and development partners. He said that climate change reporting was a day to day activity and it was vital to work on disaster preparedness. He said that in the nations having better preparedness, loss of life in natural disasters was minimised whereas in Pakistan countless precious lives were lost due to lack of preparedness and weak early warning system. He assured the minister that the PTV would work on reorientation of its news system and attach priority to climate change related news. Earlier the minister cut the ribbon to formally inaugurate the Climate Change Desk in the PTV. The desk has been established for extensive coverage of news about environmental issues and highlight its negative impacts.

Besides Secretary Information and Broadcasting Zahoor Ahmed and Secretary Ministry of Climate Change Syed Asif Hyder Shah, senior officers from the ministry and PTV attended the ceremony.



QUETTA: Horse riders of Quetta Police are patrolling to maintained law and order situation as the security has been tightening in the city.

## Health Card..

Continued from page 1

medical treatment for the general public belonging to the province.

He said that the treatment of the CNIC holder citizens of the province would be done from over 1200 hospitals on the panel under Health Card Programme.

He said that the patients would get treatment immediately by visiting any government or private hospital on panel under the Health Card Programme.

Mir Ali Mardan Domki said that it would be ensured to take care of self-respect and ego of the patients besides providing them free medical treatment to them.

The Chief Minister on the occasion vowed to protect life and property of the masses as well as their other basic rights of education and health.

He also reiterated his government's resolve to play wholehearted part for making the exemplary Health Card Programme great success.

Earlier, the caretaker Provincial Minister for Health, Dr. Amir Muhammad Jogezeai and Chief Secretary Shakeel

Qadir Khan, Secretary Health, Abdullah Khan, Chief Executive of Health Card Programme, Asadullah Kakar, Chief Executive Officer of State Life Insurance Corporation, Shoaib Javed Hussain and Director General NADRA, Azrak Khan also addressed the launch ceremony of Health Cards.

The Minister Health said that everyone can't bear the expenditures of medical treatment in the present era.

He said that more than 1200 hospitals have been included in the Health Card programme. The hospitals operating in Quetta and Gwadar are also included in the programme, adding he mentioned.

The Minister Health said that millions of people would benefit from the Health Card facility in the province.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary said that the annual health budget of Balochistan is around Rs. 50 billion. However, most of the amount allocated in budget is spent on the salaries of employees, he added. He said that people of the province are not satisfied with performance of the health sector.

## Balochistan..

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the world that even after taking a long journey of evolution and development, people have not yet succeeded in completely controlling natural disasters. Therefore, it is not possible to get rid of the possible threats without devising a comprehensive strategy at the government level, he said.

The Governor of Balochistan warned the concerned institutions and said that Balochistan might be a victim of natural calamities at any time, for this, we have to take better and effective security measures at the government level.

He made it clear that Quetta city was located in seismic zone and if the construction of buildings was not kept in view of the dangers of earthquakes, then we might face many dangers and concerns.

Therefore, it is not possible to get rid of the possible threats without devising a comprehensive strategy at the government level, he said.

## Jan Achakzai..

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directives of the Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar and Army Chief, Syed Asim Munir.

He said that the bogus Computerized National Identity Cards (CNIC) and other documents would be blocked and duly cancelled in the province.

In this regard, NADRA has started operation all over the province, Jan Achakzai added.

He said that around 100,000 CNICs have been blocked so far in the province while only some 40,000 CNICs have been blocked in Quetta. Regarding repatriation of the immigrants, Jan Achakzai informed that around 50,000 immigrants have so far left the country on voluntarily.

The Minister said that action would also be taken against those facilitated the preparation of bogus CNICs in the province.

Moreover, those who obtained bogus CNICs after inclusion in other families have also been identified, and due action would be taken against them, he maintained.

Regarding repatriation of the immigrants, Jan Achakzai informed that around 50,000 immigrants have so far left the country on voluntarily.

The Minister Information on the occasion also referred to the Health Card Programme and told that it has been launched in the province from Friday.

He said that over 2.3 million families would benefit from the Health Card family in the province. They would get medical treatment facilities in over 1200 hospitals of the country, he informed.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Jamal Shah along with Palestinian Ambassador in Pakistan, Ahmed Jawad Rabei inaugurate the opening ceremony of "Annual Ten-Day Folk Festival Lok Mela at Lok Virsa".

## Dar, Shahzad call for free, fair, transparent elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Leader of the House, Ishaq Dar, and the Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Shahzad Waseem, in the Senate on Friday called for holding free, fair, and transparent elections in the country.

During a point of order, both leaders stressed the importance of ensuring a level playing field for all political parties participating in the electoral process.

"Elections in the country should be free, fair, and transparent, leaving no room for doubt about their credibility," they asserted.

Ishaq Dar pointed out that during the 2018 elections, the Pakistan Muslim League was not given a fair

playing field. Nevertheless, the PML-N bravely contested the election despite facing numerous challenges.

In response to a point raised by Dr. Waseem, Ishaq Dar explained that the constitution mandates that elections be held within 90 days in the event of the assembly's dissolution.

However, he pointed out that following the unanimous approval of the new census by the Council of Common Interest, it became incumbent upon the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to carry out delimitation. He further clarified that delimitation is also a constitutional requirement for the ECP.

Furthermore, Ishaq Dar revealed that the government had not allocated any funds for holding elections in the fiscal year 2022-23. However, he said that the required funding had been allocated for the fiscal year 2023-24 by the PDM government.

Regarding not releasing funds for holding elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he explained that he was bound to follow the resolution passed by the National Assembly, stating, "I have no choice but to follow the resolution of the National Assembly."

Ishaq Dar said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government derailed the IMF program during their tenure.

## Ambassador Haque says: Pak, China established solid bilateral relationship

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan and China have established a solid bilateral relationship based on political mutual trust, strategic communication and practical cooperation, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin Ul Haque said.

He also stressed the close cooperation between Pakistan and Sichuan, including through their sister cities.

Ambassador Haque inaugurated the Pakistan

National Pavilion and attended the opening ceremony of the 9th Sichuan Agricultural Expo in Chengdu last week. Hu Yun, vice governor of Southwest China's Sichuan Province, presided over the opening ceremony, Global Times reported on Friday.

The exhibition hall introduced famous tourist attractions in Pakistan and more than 10 Pakistani companies showcased some agricultural products.

## AC Chaman visits camp setup for illegal Afghan immigrants

Sardar Khondai CHAMAN: Assistant Commissioner Chaman City Zohaibullah Kibzai

visits camp of setup for illegal Afghan immigrants.

Free medical camps have been set up by various NGOs under the supervision of the district administration for the treatment of illegal immigrants, where free medical facilities are being provided and medicines are also distributed to the children by NGOs. Milk and essential items are being given to them by the

district administration and the philanthropists of Chaman city.

Tahsildar Sadar Abdul Raziq Khan Miani, Major Risaldar Naseebullah Khan Achakzai, Risaldar Haji Jahangir Khan Kakar, Dr. Akhtar Rudi Muhrina were also present on the occasion



## SC orders govt to ensure..

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Vote of no confidence led the country to political crisis. SC took suo motu notice on political matter. President dissolved National Assembly (NA) after no confidence motion. It was unconstitutional process. President cannot dissolve assembly on the advice of PM after no confidence motion. Dissolving assembly unconstitutionally falls under high treason.

SC remarked president had no authority to dissolve assembly surprisingly. But he exercised authority.

On the other hand the power of giving date which rested with the president was not exercised.

The chief justice insisted that the court doesn't want to leave any "grey area" and there shouldn't be any "ambiguity" in this regard.

The court remarked the people cannot be kept from elected representatives. The constitutional institutions can take important decisions only in the interest of people.

In the court order it was said the date for election was agreed upon after November 2, 2023 meeting.

The SC observed that the matter was supposed to be addressed between the President and the ECP, but

the assembly could pass a no-confidence motion.

A political crisis arose in the country after the no-confidence motion, and the SC took notice of the political issue, it added.

The order said the President dissolved the National Assembly after the no-confidence motion, which was an unconstitutional act.

After the motion of no-confidence, it added, the President could not dissolve the Assembly on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The people couldn't be kept away from the elected representatives.

The constitutional institutions could make important decisions only in public interest, the order added.

The court said, "It is hoped that all the constitutional institutions would show prudence in the future. Surprisingly, the President did not have the power to dissolve the Assembly, but he did, while he didn't use his power to give a date for elections."

On the query of the bench, advocate generals of all provinces said that they had also no objection regarding the election date. The chief justice remarked that the court was also bounding the provinces for elections.

It added that in the recent past a prime minister was removed by a no-confidence motion. The Constitution was clear that a majority of the members of

## World Cup 2023: Afghanistan beat Netherlands to keep semi-final bid alive

Sports Desk

LUCKNOW: Afghanistan on Friday triumphed over the Netherlands to secure their fourth win to keep their semi-final bid alive in the ongoing World Cup 2023. The Afghan side sailed through the relatively low 180-run target courtesy of half-centuries by Rahmat Shah and Hashmat Shahidi who scored 52 and 56 runs, respectively.

Afghanistan are ranked fifth on the points table with four wins and three losses in the seven matches of the tournament so far with today's win significantly boosting their World Cup semi-final hopes.

Batting second, Afghan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran lost their wickets in the early overs. However, Rahmat Shah and Shahidi established a much-needed

partnership to guide their side to an important win.

Shah, who has now amassed 264 runs with an impressive average of 44 in the World Cup, stepped up once again after his side lost two early wickets and scored 52 runs, combining with his skipper to form a 74-run partnership.

Shahidi (56) and Azmatullah Omarzai (31) stood till the end securing a seven-wicket win for their side. Earlier in the day, batting first, the Dutch could only score 179 runs in 46.3 overs as Afghan spinners, Mohammad Nabi and Noor Ahmed, and their poor running between the wickets troubled them the most.

Despite a bad start, losing their opener Wesley Barresi in the first over, the Dutch held their nerves and started playing good cricket but they became their own enemies.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor BUEEMS Professor Dr. Khalid Hafeez inaugurates project to measure underground water.

## FIA enhances efficiency with new zone divisions

By M.Ilyas

PESHAWAR: In a significant move aimed at improving service delivery and accessibility to the general public, the Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency, Islamabad, has officially approved the division of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zone into two distinct zones, known as the Peshawar Zone and the Kohat Zone. This restructuring, as per Notification No. FIA/PIAB/Restructuring-FIA/2023/1016-21, comes into effect with immediate notice. The areas of jurisdiction for each newly established zone and their respective Zonal Headquarters are as follows:

**Peshawar Zone - Area of Jurisdiction:** Peshawar, Mardan, Malakand, and Hazara Divisions  
**Zonal Headquarters:** Peshawar.  
**Kohat Zone - Area of Jurisdiction:** Kohat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan Divisions  
**Zonal Headquarters:** Kohat.

This crucial decision is expected to streamline operations and facilitate the efficient functioning of FIA services in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region. It signifies a proactive step in enhancing the agency's commitment to serving the public with utmost efficiency.

## Bomb blast kills..

Continued from page 1

deterred by such attacks. He also renewed his pledge to make Dera Ismail Khan a terrorism-free district.

The injured were shifted to District Headquarters Hospital for treatment. The police and security forces cordoned off the area and started a search operation.

The identification of the dead and other injured was in process.

Regional Police Officer (RPO) Nasir Mehmood Satti later visited DHQ to inquire after the health of the injured victims.

Four passers-by were killed and 15 police officials and civilians sustained injuries in an explosion that occurred near a police mobile near Tank Adda here.

According to police, the vehicle carrying elite force personnel was targeted by unknown militants.

As soon as the injured were taken to the hospital, the unknown militants opened fire on the police personnel present in the hospital. The police and security forces cordoned off the area and started a search

operation. It should be noted that the elite force team was being taken from Dera Ismail Khan to Takwara check post when the police van was targeted.

The eight injured were identified as Marzaq Sulaiman Khel, Abdul Hameed, Ishaq, Qudratullah, Nasir, Yasmeen, Shireen and Qamar Zaman while the identification of the dead and other injured was in process.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar strongly condemned terrorist attack near a police mobile in Dera Ismail Khan, in which four passers-by were killed and 15 police officials and civilians sustained injuries.

According to police, the vehicle carrying elite force personnel was targeted by unknown militants.

In a condolence message, the prime minister expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of citizens in the blast.

He also prayed for the elevation of ranks of the departed souls in Jannah and granted of courage to the bereaved families to bear this

**FINAL NOTICE**

WHEREAS, it has been brought into the notice of Competent Authority through Settlement Officer Quetta and Director Land Record Balochistan that you **M/S. Amanullah Salachi Ex-Naib Tahsildar, Hasbiullah Ex-Kanungo and Anesh Kumar Ex-Patwari, Settlement Office Quetta** have committed the following acts of omission and commission:

**That you were asked to hand over the record of Mouza Sam Khail and Mouza Tala Haiderzai to Director Land Record, but you failed to do the same and are illegally retaining and manipulating the record and not responding to show cause notices issued by Board of Revenue.**

2. WHEREAS, by reasons of above, you appears to be guilty of gross misconduct thus liable to disciplinary action, which may involve imposition of one or more of the penalties as prescribed in Section 4 (a) (b) of the Balochistan Employees Efficiency and Discipline Act, 2011 (Act, No. VI of 2011) and a Show Cause Notice No Even dated 6th October, 2023 was issued against you, but you did not produce the record.

3. **TAKE NOTICE**, that in case of your failure to submit reply and handover the record within (04) days of this publication to Director Land Record Balochistan. Failing which it would be presumed that you are willfully and illegally manipulating the official record and in that case ex-parte appropriate orders will be passed against you and under Criminal Procedure Code F.I.R be also registered against you.

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## Sindhi stresses for implementation of laws, quality education for progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Education Madad Ali Sindhi on Friday stressed the need for the implementation of laws and to improve the quality education for achieving progress in the country.

Talking to PTV, Sindhi said the caretaker government is taking tough decisions to enhance the efficiency of national institutions, including the education sector.

He said there is a need to convene an inter-provincial conference to highlight the importance of quality education and research work in the country.

Responding to a ques-

tion about the dilapidated condition of some schools in far-flung areas, Sindhi said the government has visited a number of schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

He added that the issues of dropout children and poor quality school materials will be resolved soon. A comprehensive mechanism will be adopted to address the problems faced by different institutions, he stated.

Sindhi appreciated the caretaker government's steps taken in the shortest period of time, saying law enforcement agencies (LEAs) have launched a crackdown to nab illegal

and unregistered foreigners living in the country.

He said Pakistan is facing terrorism issues due to the involvement of illegal and unregistered aliens.

To another question about a long-term strategy to streamline the system, Sindhi said the caretaker government will complete the task of providing security and necessary funds to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for holding free and fair elections in the country.

He said a democratically elected government will take concrete measures and evolve a strategy to bring improvement in the institutions.



EDG / PIO Tariq Mehmood Khan in a group photo with a delegation of Rawalpindi Islamabad Bureaus Journalists Association (RIBJA) at PID Headquarters, Islamabad.

## Wasi called upon youngsters to contribute towards Pak dev goals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs and Minister of State for Tourism Wasi Shah on Friday urged the young minds of the nation to contribute their fresh ideas and innovations to achieve the country's development goals.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that the interim government is launching various projects to provide a better life to the youth and will use our youth power for the social economy of the country.

"Creating more jobs and promoting entrepreneurship culture for youth empowerment is the top

priority of caretaker government", he added.

He said that the youth population is the lifeline of this country, adding that they are the future of the nation, so their education and understanding of national politics, democracy and economy must be comprehensive.

Replying to a question, he said the youth must struggle to achieve success as hard work is the path that leads to glory, adding, that if Pakistan wants to move forward and make progress then its key is in the hands of youngsters.

He said that the youth of Pakistan are our most valuable asset and the

young minds of Pakistan are eager and eager to contribute to the development of the country, adding that Pakistan has a rich and diverse cultural heritage which is fostered by the youth. To another question, he said that our country is blessed with great tourism potential and it is the role of youth that can bring a sense of responsible tourism among the masses as young content creators must provide positive guidance about Pakistani tourist spots to the world.

He urged the corporate and private sectors to play an active role in developing talent among the youth.

## ECP terms PTI spokesperson's statement uncalled for and baseless

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday dismissed in unequivocal terms that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson's media statement was totally baseless and in contrast with the facts, especially regarding the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commission in general.

In a statement, an ECP spokesperson noted that issuance of such statements, while the general election date had been de-

termined through consensus, was an abortive attempt to disrupt the current congenial atmosphere.

He reminded the PTI that the Election Commission did demonstrate exceptional impartiality during by-elections on July 17 and October 16, 2022. He said the Commission had so far substantiated its commitment to electoral transparency, through its initiatives and actions.

He advised the PTI to fully focus on preparations for the general elections.

## China aims to build innovation system for humanoid robots by 2025

ISLAMABAD (APP): China will strive to establish a preliminary innovation system for humanoid robots by 2025, amid the country's push to develop the future industry, according to a recent guideline.

The country will boast several small and medium-sized enterprises that specialize in the humanoid robot market and have cutting-edge technologies, and two to three humanoid robot companies with global influence by 2025, according to the guideline issued by China's Ministry of In-

dustrial and Information Technology.

By 2027, China will see a secure and reliable industrial and supply chain system and related products will be deeply integrated into the real economy, the guideline stated.

Specifically, the country will work on consolidating the production of basic components and promoting software innovation in terms of product development, while creating scenarios for manufacturing and other related sectors.



ISLAMABAD: People are visiting clothes Section at Weekly Friday Market of Sector H-9 in Federal Capital.

## 94 Pakistanis participate in 720th annual Urs of Hazrat Nizamuddin

ISLAMABAD (APP): A group of 94 Pakistani pilgrims have participated in the 720th annual Urs of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia (RA) held in New Delhi.

Charge d' Affaires at Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi Aizaz Khan also paid respect at the shrine of the 14th century Sufi saint of the Chishtia lineage, who is known for his message of love, peace and brotherhood, according to a press release from Pakistan's High Commission in New Delhi.

After placing the traditional chaadar on behalf of the people and Government of Pakistan, the Charge d' Affaires and the visiting Zaireen offered special prayers for progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

On arrival at the shrine, the Charge d' Affaires and Pakistani Zaireen were greeted by Sajjadah Nasheen Dewan Syed Tahir Nizami and other notable members of the shrine committee.

Dewan Syed Tahir Nizami did the dastarbandi (traditional turban) of the Charge d' Affaires.

The Zaireen also visited the shrine of Hazrat Amir Khusro (RA), which is located in the same compound, and offered dua.



ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in the Senate, Mohammad Ishaq Dar exchanging views with Jane Marriot, British High Commissioner to Pakistan during meeting held at Parliament House.

## COMSTECH hosts reception in honour of Ethiopian Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator General of COMSTECH Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary has hosted a reception to honour Ethiopian Ambassador Jamal Beker Abdula for his remarkable efforts to cultivate strong bilateral relations between Ethiopia and Pakistan.

The reception was attended by Senator Mushahid Hussain, DG Africa Shaiq Ahmed Bhutto and other notables including parliamentarians, government officials, diplomatic corps, civil society and media persons.

A special ceremony was also held at COMSTECH to highlight and appreciate the initia-

tives taken by Jamal Beker Abdula in last one year to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries in diverse areas.

Addressing the ceremony, the ambassador expressed gratitude to the COMSTECH coordinator general for acknowledging his efforts and role in connecting the people of the two countries. He also thanked the Government of Pakistan, the business community, media and civil society for extending unwavering support to him in implementing the needful initiatives for bringing the two big nations more close.

The ambassador appreciated the genuine warmth and hospitality ex-

tended to him by the Pakistani people during his one-year stay in the country.

"Traveling through cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Faisalabad, I witnessed diverse cultures, yet a common thread of hospitality tied this nation together," he stressed.

He said the Embassy of Ethiopia in Pakistan had recently celebrated its first anniversary, marking a successful period of strengthening bilateral ties.

"One of my primary endeavors was to bridge the gap between the people of Pakistan and Ethiopia. I focused my efforts on fostering connections, particularly through Ethiopian Airlines.

## PIO ensures fair distribution of ads

ISLAMABAD (APP): Principal Information Officer (PIO) Dr Tariq Mehmood Khan on Friday said every possible measure was being taken to ensure fair distribution of advertisements while efforts were underway to ameliorate the process.

According to a news release, he made these remarks in a meeting with the Rawalpindi Islamabad Bureaus Journalists Association's (RIBJA) delegation that was led by Sardar Shaikat Mehmood.

The delegation con-

gratulated Dr Tariq Mehmood Khan on assuming the post of PIO and apprised him about the problems faced by newspapers.

The PIO assured the delegation that he was well aware of the problems faced by regional newspapers and these problems would be solved on priority.

Murtaza Malik, Asia Khattak, Payyaz Chaudhry, Malik Asif, Waqar Chaudhry, Arshad Dev Safzai and Bilal Uzmi were also part of the delegation.

## Health minister condemns D.I.Khan blast

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Friday condemned the bomb blast in Dera Ismail Khan.

In a message, he prayed that Allah Almighty rest the departed souls in eternal peace and grant patience to the bereaved. He also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Dr. Nadeem Jan has alerted the management of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and Federal Government Polyclinic Hospital.



ISLAMABAD: Activists of Quaid-e-Azam Employees Welfare Association are shouting slogans during protest outside University top show solidarity with the oppressed Muslims of Palestine.

## Aneeq, Indonesian ambassador discuss strengthening Quranic teachings, interfaith dialogue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed on Friday held a meeting with the Ambassador of Indonesia, Adam Mulawarman Tugio and discussed matters of mutual interest.

Being the countries with the largest Muslim population, both leaders

agreed that Pakistan and Indonesia should make joint efforts to promote Quranic teachings in society in their true spirit.

They also discussed various issues related to promoting the culture of dialogue to solve the challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah.

They emphasised the

need for the effective role of clerics and scholars to enlighten the new generation with religious teachings and to deal with problems of the present age.

The two leaders expressed their determination to benefit from each other's experiences and promote relations at the public level.

## Lok Mela Kicks off in Islamabad with Spectacular Display of Pakistani Culture

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a spectacular display of Pakistan's cultural richness and unity, the National Folk Festival (Lok Mela) Islamabad commenced today at the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) with the theme "Peace and Harmony through Cultural Diversity."

The festival promises to be a vibrant celebration of the nation's heritage, bringing together people from all walks of life.

The festival will run until November 12 and will feature provincial pavilions, shopping stalls, food vendors, musical performances, highlighting the diverse cultures and traditions of all four provinces, as well as Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir.

The Minister for National Heritage & Culture,

Jamal Shah, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, emphasizing its role in fostering national cohesion and promoting cultural diversity. Shah also announced that all festival activities would be conducted in support of the Palestinian people, with a special stall dedicated to collecting funds for Palestine. The Visitors to the festival can look forward to a wide range of cultural activities, including traditional dances, folk music performances, arts and crafts demonstrations, and a delectable selection of dishes from all corners of Pakistan. An open mic program will also provide a platform for talented singers to showcase their voices. The Lok Mela will run until November 12, from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm, with an affordable entry ticket priced at just Rs 150.

## Threatening text from Israeli org received by Faryal

ISLAMABAD (Online): An Israeli organization has sent a threatening text to Faryal Makhdoom wife of former boxing champion Amir Khan.

Faryal Makhdoom is a staunch supportive of Palestinians and she has been sharing posts in favor of Palestinians on social media since eruption of war between Israel and Gaza.

She is running a successful makeup company. She shared a screenshot of a recent WhatsApp message on X, formerly known as Twitter, which she received from an Israeli organisation with a phone number from the United States. The message said "Let's make this quite simple. If you support Israel and cease posting about Palestine, we will ensure you are rewarded lucratively."

## Shah urges heritage channel to preserve Pakistani folk literature

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister Jamal Shah stressed the need to establish a heritage channel under the Culture Division to preserve and promote the collection of folk literature of Pakistani languages, especially children's folk literature.

Chairing a meeting to discuss the literary folklores collected during a recent National Conference on Children's Folk Literary Heritage at Pakistan Academy of Letters, the Caretaker Federal Minister Jamal Shah stressed the importance of teaching children. He pointed out that by introducing children to their environment and culture at a young age, they can make more informed and practical decisions in life.

During the meeting, the Advisory Committee for Children's Cultural Educational Content delved into the literary folklores collected at the two-day National Conference on Children's Folk Literary Heritage held at the Paki-

stan Academy of Letters (PAL) last month.

Jamal Shah said that the purpose of two-day conference was to collect and publish children's folk literature, proverbs, stories, songs and lullabies in the form of audio books.

He said that the National Heritage and Culture Division was diligently pursuing the project and with the cooperation of other institutions under the division, the project would be completed soon.

The meeting included the participation of Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division Humaira Ahmed, Additional Secretary National Education and Professional Training Junaid Akhlaq, Joint Secretary National Heritage and Culture, and a representative from the Sir Memorial Trust, Hassan Raza. Additionally, the meeting was also attended by Director General Pakistan National Council of the Arts, Executive Director Lok Virsa and Director Iqbal Academy.

## SSP Operations commends for effective measures in crime combating

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Se-

During the meeting, the SSP Operations reviewed the crime situation in the federal capital and commended the performance of the police officials



nior Superintendent of Police (Operations) Malik Jameel Zafar presided over a crime meeting, a public relations officer said. He said that the meeting was attended by all Zonal DPOs, SDPOs, all incharge police stations, incharge ARDU and incharge AVLU.

SSP Operations reviewed the performance of the all police stations in detail and commended the in-charges and officials of ARDU and AVLU teams and awarded them for their good performance.

for effective measures in crime combating. SSP Operations also emphasized the need for continued vigilance and proactive measures. He directed all Zone DPOs to boost the campaign against drug peddlers in different areas of the city adding that a special crackdown against proclaimed offenders and absconders should be started immediately. He further directed the officials to ensure the arrest of the suspects elements involved in vehicle and motorcycle theft.

## Lack of quorum leads to adjournment of Senate's session

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lack of quorum on Friday forced Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani to adjournment the session till Monday.

Senator Fida Muhammad pointed out the quorum soon after the Chairman gave floor to Sherry Rehman.

The Chairman ordered to ring the bell for five minutes. Count was made but the house was not in order which led to adjournment of the session till Monday's evening.

Earlier, speaking on point of order that Senator Mohsin Aziz said that although they (senators) represented their respective province in the House but

they also took oath to protect the constitution. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan played front role in war against terrorism and Afghan war, he said.

He said both the provinces remained under development as compared to other provinces. It needed to have special incentives to bring them at par with other developed areas, he said.

Mohsin Azia appreciated the current caretaker government for controlling dollar price increase, curtailing smuggling, repatriation illegal people to their countries, anti power and gas theft drive.

## Certificates distribution ceremony of wireless training program held

ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the special directives of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr.

mental wireless communication equipment.

In this regard, a certificate distribution ceremony of wireless training program was held at Police Lines



Akbar Nasir Khan, a course on the maintenance of basic wireless communication equipment was organized in collaboration with the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), a public relations officer said.

He said that, this initiative was aimed to enhance the preparedness of the Islamabad Capital Police wireless staff for maintaining and repairing funda-

Headquarters Islamabad. The ceremony was attended by the CPO Safe City/Traffic, DSP Telecommunication, INL program officers, field engineers, and other participants.

Moreover, INL officers and CPO Safe City/Traffic distributed certificates among the course participants and expressed their optimism about the future prospects of these training programs.

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## Finally, a date

A meeting held between the Election Commission of Pakistan and President Arif Alvi has yielded a specific date for the next general elections: Feb 8, 2024. Earlier in the day, the ECP had informed the court that it had scheduled the date for Feb 11, but was told to consult the president.

The agreement has come as a relief to those who believed that polls would not be held anytime soon. No doubt, it is very welcome news, even if it means that the ECP will once again be breaking its word as the date represents a slight delay from the 'end of January' timeline, which the electoral body gave in late September and affirmed last week.

It also represents a 95-day violation of the deadline to hold elections according to the Constitution. The court, while hearing the matter, had rubbished the assertion of the law ministry and ECP that the president had no authority to give election dates.

It seems this matter has now attained finality. While dictating the court's order, Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa said that whatever date is decided by the ECP and the president will have to be implemented. "The final date for polls will be announced from the Supreme Court," he said.

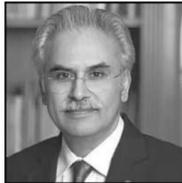
This should be the cue for the ECP and all political parties to begin election preparations in earnest. The former has three months to ensure a 'free, fair, impartial and inclusive election'.

It seems like a tall order, given the prevailing political climate and parties' repeated complaints about being denied a level playing field. The political parties, too, need to regroup, vet their candidates, organise campaigns and start mobilising voters for the big day. Because so little has been done in preparation for the exercise up till now, they have a long and bumpy road ahead of them. The Supreme Court has given them a head start, and they should take advantage of it.

Now that the fog has lifted, the ECP will be under constant scrutiny. It wilfully violated the Constitution on multiple occasions this year, justifying each violation with the excuse that it was necessary in order to hold elections that could pass a high standard of fairness.

If, after all these violations, the participating parties are still denied an equal opportunity to present their case to the public, then all of it will have been for nothing. It must, at the very least, demonstrate that it was acting in good faith.

There is also talk about giving the delay in elections legal cover under Article 254. However, this should not mean that those who conspired to violate the Constitution are let off without penalty. The consequences must be severe and exemplary for all involved.



Zafar Mirza

"There are wounds that never show on the body..."

— Laurell K. Hamilton  
Asim Jamil, a young man in his 30s, killed himself some days ago. A huge tragedy. May Allah bless his soul. My heartfelt condolences to the grieving family. He was the second son of the famous Maulana Tariq Jamil, a renowned religious scholar and a household name in Pakistan.

To quell rumours, the bereft older brother recorded and released a video message on social media, explaining the circumstances of his death. Tired of the chronic depression he had been suffering from since the age of 13, Asim took his security guard's gun and shot himself in the chest.

The brother explained that for the last six months

his depression had become severe and he was undergoing 'electric shock treatment'. This was the will of God and we are satisfied with His will, he said.

What is the depression the late Asim Jamil was suffering from?

We all feel low from time to time for various reasons. Usually, it is due to some loss or sense of failure — for example, the loss of a loved one. Sometimes one feels low without any understandable reason. But most often, the sadness goes away in a few days or weeks and we are back to normal. However, if it persists beyond two weeks and increases in severity, then a point comes when it becomes a disability — a depressive illness or a depressive disorder — and requires therapeutic intervention, like any other physical health condition.

It is just like having a common cold which generally stays for a few days and then goes away, but then, sometimes, turns into a respiratory tract infection requiring antimicrobial treatment. Rarely, it may even turn into life-threatening pneumonia.

In the manner of a

physical health condition, depression is a mental health condition. Human health, according to the WHO definition, is a state of complete physical and mental well-being, together. So, the physical and mental dimensions are inextricably woven in the word 'health'. They coexist within us, influence each other and require equal attention.

According to WHO, a depressive disorder involves a depressed mood or loss of pleasure or interest in activities for long periods of time. It can affect all aspects of life, including relationships with family, friends and community. Other symptoms may include poor concentration, feelings of excessive guilt or low self-esteem, hopelessness about the future, thoughts about dying or suicide, loss of or disrupted sleep, changes in appetite or weight, and feeling very tired or having low energy. A person suffering from depression prefers isolation.

A depressive episode can be categorised as mild, moderate, or severe, depending on the number and severity of symptoms, as

well as the impact on an individual's functioning. There can be a single episode of depressive disorder or there can be recurrent episodes. Depression can be a part of bipolar disorder, in which depressive episodes alternate with periods of manic symptoms, which include euphoria or irritability and increased activity or energy. Sometimes depressive illness runs in families.

Depression is on the rise. Globally, an estimated five per cent of adults suffer from depression. In Pakistan, in 1990 depressive disorders ranked 22nd among the leading 25 causes of Disability Adjusted Life Years, a metric calculated by adding years of life lost due to premature death and years of life lived with disability. By 2019, depressive disorders had jumped to the 16th position. Depression is about 50pc more common in women than men. Globally, one in four women suffers from pregnancy- or childbirth-related depression (perinatal/postnatal depression), the prevalence of which would be even higher in Pakistan.

Depressive illness or depressive disorder is a

treatable condition. For mild depression, cognitive behaviour therapy, a form of talking therapy or psychotherapy by a trained person is helpful. Moderate to severe depression requires high-intensity psychological intervention or antidepressant medication or both. Antidepressant medication must be taken only under continued medical supervision.

The treatment is long-term — six months or more — and the medicines have side effects (dependence is not one of them). They are usually quite effective but must be taken under professional supervision. In a few cases of severe depressive illness, psychotherapy or medication don't work.

In such cases, sometimes electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is also administered but it is a very specialised treatment and has to be administered at the advice and under the supervision of a psychiatrist. In common parlance, ECT is referred to as 'electric shocks', as Asim Jamil's brother mentioned in his message.

There is a general lack of awareness and understanding about mental dis-

orders, including depression, even among educated people. Commenting on Asim Jamil's unfortunate death by suicide due to depressive illness, a senior and popular media anchor described depression in his vlog as a special kind of madness and a contagious condition! Because of such ignorance, people suffering from mental illnesses are stigmatised, called mad, mocked and mistreated.

Our medical training also lacks the required attention to mental health. In our country, mental health issues are increasing and so common that they cannot be left to psychiatrists or psychologists alone. In any case, we have only less than 1,000 psychiatrists and less than 3,000 psychologists in the country. Globally, it is estimated that around 60pc of patients with depression lack treatment, one can well imagine the situation in an income-poor country like Pakistan. Asim Jamil's tragic death was highlighted because of his famous father. It is, however, a stark reminder of the vast amount of silent and unaddressed mental health suffering all around us. -- Courtesy Dawn

## A recipe of ruination, a lifetime of shame



Raouf Hasan

These days, the apparent vast canvass of subjects that one thinks one can write about is, in fact, a mere mirage as all of them melt into just one inherent malady: a morbid absence of sincerity and willingness to fill the gnawing crevices which are tearing the country apart.

If one were to discuss the issue with someone who, one may think, would be concerned about the fast-aggravating situation, one is stunned to see the finger pointed outward at a host of individuals, but never inward at their own failings.

This, to me, is the fundamental factor in the making of the tragedy which has dug deep into the national psyche. Everyone, most notably the ones whose hands are irremediably soiled in the framing of this disaster, pretend to be saints with not a stain on their con-

duct or character. But then, this may not be an individual's doing alone.

At times, state institutions play a major role, much bigger than the individual's, in shaping the tragedy. This is rooted in creating a situation where the difference between right and wrong is erased, and criminals are washed clean of their crimes and anointed to occupy seats of power to commence their act all over again.

Nothing could reflect this malady more gravely than the homecoming to state reception of a convict and absconder who was helped to escape prison to undergo medical treatment vide a mere guarantee provided by his brother. The initial leave of six weeks stretched to over four years when a deal was struck for him to be brought back to rule the country in the wake of Imran Khan's removal. The manner the justice system has accommodated his pleas for relief in gross and blatant violation of all principles of jurisprudence, all benchmarks of law, and all constraints of morality will be scripted as a chapter of shame and ignominy of the institution.

The much-reviled convict was accorded VVIP pro-

tol immediately upon arrival in the country, even before he had approached a court of law for provision of relief which was not his right. Instead of him landing in the prison he had escaped from, and then initiate steps for nullifying his sentence if the same were possible, the prosecuting agencies withdrew their original complaints against him, thus creating an unprecedented situation exclusively to his benefit. Additionally, the state institutions ensured presence even at airports to dispense a variety of services to him which are provided to ordinary citizens at much expense and humiliation. This completely vandalised the integrity and compromised the very existence of these institutions as also of the perpetrators of this travesty.

This was happening in a beleaguered country where the weak and the impoverished spend a lifetime begging for justice which is their inalienable right as per the statute book. It is, therefore, no wonder that a vast majority of people believe that Pakistan is afflicted with two justice systems: one is reserved exclusively for the rich and the powerful where courts do not hesitate being

present at their doorsteps under pressure of the eternally lurking shadows or in exchange for lucrative deals, and the other is meant for the weaklings of society who move around with their palms spread skywards in incessant prayer for their cases to be heard. Let's not forget that, in some instances, alleged criminals have been hanged to death only to be subsequently found innocent by the courts.

Where do we go from here? Apparently, and gauging by the manner things are presently being conducted in the political, legal, and administrative domains, a decision has already been taken to hoist a convict in power in violation of all provisions of the constitution, law, and morality, and by bulldozing whatever shred of justice may still be visible. The pillars of constitutionalism have been compromised and those speaking up for restoration of the rule of law are made to survive under the shadows of the bayonets. All avenues of peaceful protest have been blocked and those daring to disagree are made to suffer immensely.

There is also this other factor which is further ac-

centuating the already visible divide. This relates to an extreme of inflexibility and palpable unwillingness to see the other side of the story. The extent of self-righteousness and espousal of crime as an instrument of power which seem to be dictating this narrative of division and discord is frightening as this can potentially drive the country to the brink of ruin. Without a modicum of doubt, we are fast heading in that direction.

Should we, therefore, say that, in this environment of oppression and repression, this is a moment to stay quiet and pray for it all to pass soon? Or should we say that there comes a time in the history of nations, as we are witnessing at this juncture, when silence becomes a crime and that we must speak up irrespective of the cost one may have to pay? There are scores of such brave people, women and men who did so and are suffering the tyranny of the state as a consequence with relevant institutions turning a blind eye to the blatant denial of justice to them. They have suffered as they continue to, but they refuse to surrender before the instruments of absolutism.

With forces of division and hatred having taken over, and more of it likely to come, peaceful resistance assumes additional relevance. Staying quiet will only strengthen the hands of the oppressors and convince them that they can control the proponents of constitutionalism and the rule of law and subdue their valour and resilience by unleashing state brutality. If one were to skip through pages of history, one would realize that such objectives are never achieved by brandishing force which, in fact, propels the brave further to continue waging their struggle for the ascendancy of the democratic principles which give a voice to the weakest and the most disadvantaged.

The current scenario has a further damning component to it: the forces of oppression represent the forces of crime as well. He is gradually inching his way to the echelons of power through a veneer of staging fraudulent and non-representative elections.

This makes for a perfect recipe for ruination of the state. Silence is not an option any longer. -- Courtesy TheNews

## Growing millions



Zubeida Mustafa

One of the major factors contributing to the environment crisis in Pakistan is the unbridled population growth rate. Environmentalists generally focus more on issues such as climate change and global warming caused by carbon emissions, which are the result of industrialisation, deforestation and water mismanagement. It must, however, be noted that rapid population increase is at the root of all these evils. Moreover, it also has a negative impact on human development, both individually and collectively.

More shocking than the country's astounding fertility rate is the government's indifference vis-à-vis the demographic problem. We are way behind many developing states that have a phenomenal record in curbing their population growth rate. We are the fifth most populous state in the world today. I believe this is the major cause of our underdevelopment as it is not possible to meet the basic needs of the whopping numbers who constitute Pakistan today, plus the six million or so who join their ranks every year.

The census in 2023 recorded our population at 241m, an increase of 33m in just six years since the previous head count of 2017. The growth rate was 2.55 per cent. Unless drastic measures are taken the numbers will grow. As Thomas Malthus has reminded us again and again, population grows geometrically while food production in-

creases arithmetically. If this pattern continues for too long then famine, conflict and epidemics intervene to restore the balance.

To give one an idea of how this is reflected in the people's lives take a look at this data. Today, the Total Fertility Rate (the average number of children that married women of reproductive age have) stands at 3.6. It should be 1.9 if we want our population size to be stationary. The contraceptive prevalence rate is 34pc, which includes the 10pc who claim to use conventional methods that are not reliable. Worse still is the high unmet need of 17pc, denoting couples who do not want to have more children but do not have access to contraceptives. The government has failed in all respects due to a lack of political will, corruption and ineptitude.

Also at work is the planners' inability to understand the relationship between family planning and the empowerment of women. The fact is that underpinning our population programme is the low status of women in Pakistan. That creates pressure on mothers of girls to continue bearing children until two sons are born. Sons are regarded as status symbol for a family.

Interestingly, some NGO members in the family planning sector tell me that the latest trend among women who have had some education and are working is to opt for a small family, even if it means forgoing sons. The problem is that even these women generally have no control over decision-making in their homes and are as powerless in the latter as they are in society. Hence their wish with regard to family size does not prevail. It seems so unfair that women have to submit to their menfolk's diktat even though the burden of pregnancy and child-rearing falls on the

mother.

Yet our population planners are blind to this new trend. Small wonder the focus is heavily on women who are at the receiving end of all counselling on the use of contraceptives and the importance of planned families. Why are men not mobilised and made aware of how our rapidly growing population is creating problems for them as well as for the country?

There is growing evidence that mindsets can be changed by talking to people and giving them the space to talk about their views regarding their problems and how they can be resolved. This dialogue is important if solutions to people's problems are to be found and awareness created. True, these are issues of a very personal nature but they have a direct bearing on people's lives.

Hence the need of the hour is to make the subject of family planning a priority and part of the national discourse. Its implications must be discussed freely in all private and public forums. The focus should be on the 6m babies born each year. They have basic rights which neither the state nor the parents can fulfil. That makes their lives brutish. The newborns add to the backlog of poverty, illiteracy and disease, and also make development an impossible task. Ironically, this is happening in a country that is already child-unfriendly and where children are maltreated and abused.

Were the caretaker government to launch a national discourse on the population issue on various public platforms and get population departments to pull up their socks, a useful beginning could be made. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Sectarian harmony



Jan-e-Alam Khaki

Gilgit-Baltistan was recently in the news because of a sectarian stand-off. Luckily, the ulama in GB agreed to put their sectarian differences aside and help the regional government maintain law and order. The move reflected the wisdom of two communities, who in the spirit of true Muslim brotherhood, decided to resolve mutual differences through dialogue and discussion.

But putting aside sectarian strife means that it has been suppressed temporarily. How can communities in GB (and maybe elsewhere) resolve thorny faith-related issues on a long-term basis?

As an editorial in this paper rightly points out: "Communal differences may only be a trigger for the protests, as there are several underlying factors in GB fuelling disaffection in the region." Among these underlying factors is the sociocultural landscape.

GB comprises several breathtaking valleys. The region may appear like a monolith, but in fact, it is not one. Its population comprises various, distinct cultures in terms of language, outlook and faith traditions. Its religious landscape comprises four major Muslim communities — Sunnis, Shias, Ismailis and Noor Bukhshis, often found in clearly defined areas. However, many villages and towns host mixed populations. There are many intercommunal marriages, but the atmosphere

is generally very peaceful. For example, in my village in Hunza, there were a few members of the Sunni community and around a dozen Shia families some decades ago, but incidents of violence were unheard of.

They were well integrated in the same village as was the case in other villages of GB. Issues would randomly crop up in the relatively urban city of Gilgit where many communities live and earn, vying for a few jobs. The area is now a hotbed of political activity often influenced by the political orientations of southern Pakistan. This external factor often makes GB, metaphorically speaking, a 'seismically active' zone. The rise and fall of rival political parties have a direct bearing on GB politics.

Added to this factor is the contentious issue of GB's political position. Afzal Shigri, who belongs to the area, rightly calls it "a constitutional black hole", which is neither fully integrated with, nor fully independent of, Pakistan, but often referred to as a 'disputed area', leading to a confused political status. It has no representation in the federal constitutional bodies, such as the National Assembly or Senate, or access to Supreme Court, due largely to disputed relations. For as long as the area was undereducated, there was little turmoil. But gradually political consciousness rose and as of now, there are more educated and enlightened youth. As they become intellectually astute, they also acquire political sensitivity and are, therefore, in ever-louder voices, demanding a constitutional status for GB.

Sectarian differences also erupt on the pretext of some provocative issue or the other, or because of adverse statements from popular religious leaders, and can add to existing tensions. Histori-

cally, differences over the interpretations of faith have existed for a long time. Though in many regions these differences have subsided, and there is some semblance of communal harmony, contentions still exist. However, people have learnt to manage their disagreements to live peacefully.

Together, these matters exacerbate sectarian strains in some places, and have even made religion an ultra-sensitive subject though it does not affect any community's interests directly as state policies are based on non-sectarian strategies. Religion, which should, first and foremost, try and achieve the objective of bringing humanity together, has now become for many, including in GB, a factor in discord.

In my opinion, the first step towards peace would be for the ulama of all schools of thought to refrain from stirring up emotions with rhetorical and hyperbolic speeches that can lead to ill feelings for each other. We should resist the temptation to scratch old wounds, which can kindle new conflicts. The good news is that many seasoned ulama are now taking a more positive approach towards other communities, and hopefully, this trend will persist into the future.

GB, in sum, is on the highway of development — this is a strong motivation for higher education, women empowerment, greater upward mobility of its educated class, the cost-effective use of agricultural products. So, staying on this path of development is in the best interest of all communities. Therefore, communities should be proud of helping, rather than hurting, each other in the 21st century's global village. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Naqvi expresses concern over massive increase of burning crops stubble in Indian Punjab

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has expressed his deep concern over up to 740 percent increase over burning of crops stubble in the Indian Punjab.

In a statement on Friday, he said that according to an authentic report of American institution NASA, an alarming increase has occurred with regard to burning of crops stubble in the Indian Punjab. According to the pictures

released by NASA, a 740 percent increase in the burning of crops stubble incidents in only a single day is highly alarming. The reports of NASA and pictures give ample proof of Indian apathy.

The CM stated that smog has risen to an alarming level owing to burning of crops stubble on such a mega scale in the Indian Punjab. The prime reason for the rise of smog in Lahore is due to burning of crops stubble at a mega scale in the Indian Punjab. The continuous increase in

the pollution rate in Lahore owing to Indian environmental aggression is highly worrisome and alarming, he added.

The CM apprised that the Punjab government is adopting every step which is humanly possible to combat the hazards of smog. Eyes, breathing and E&T ailments are on the rise due to smog. The people especially children and elders should use masks so as to protect themselves from the detrimental effects of smog, he added.



LAHORE: A delegation of overseas Pakistanis from Saudi Arabia in a group photo with met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman at Governor House.

## KP Governor inaugurates road at Johns Cathedral church

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here on Friday inaugurated a road inside Johns Cathedral church at Peshawar cantonment which completed at a cost of over Rs7million.

He said our relations with Christian community was based on respect, and the minorities communities settled in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were highly respectable for others.

The Governor said the services of Christian community were highly praiseworthy for the country including Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, says an official statement.

The Christian community is very peaceful that always played a significant role in the province's development and their welfare and uplift was top priority of the Government. The constitution of Pakistan has ensured protection of the personal and religious rights of all minorities, he said. He said, this is our duty to stand with the state of Pakistan and to serve it with best of our abilities and professional commitment.

## Factories causing air pollution be sealed: LHC

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has ordered to seal factories causing air pollution.

A single bench of LHC led by Justice Shahid Karim took up the petition filed by a citizen Ferooz Haroon for hearing Friday. Commissioner Lahore Muhammad Ali Randhawa also appeared in the court.

The court while ordering to seal the factories causing air pollution remarked the factories which are emitting black smoke be sealed. These will not be de-sealed unless owners of these factories submit affidavit. They should give

this affidavit that if violation is committed again then factories will be demolished.

Commissioner Lahore told the court action will be taken indiscriminately against vehicles emitting smoke. We have directed traffic police vehicles causing smog be impounded.

The court remarked during the hearing of the case now we are going on right track. PDMA is sleeping. We awaken it.

Take the picture of vehicle which causes smog. We will have to take major steps from the beginning in the next year. These two months are important.

## KP government strongly condemns the D.I. Khan blast

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government expresses deep sorrow and grief over the loss of valuable human lives in the terrorist act in D.I. Khan. The government offers prayers for the martyrs, and prayers for patience and solace are extended to the bereaved families. The statement issued on Friday emphasizes that such cowardly and heinous acts will not diminish the determination of the nation and law enforcement agencies responsible for upholding the rule of law. The entire nation

stands united against terrorism, and the people of this region, along with law enforcement agencies, have played a pivotal role in the fight against terrorism.

The establishment of peace and the protection of the lives and properties of citizens are paramount for any government. The provincial government is committed to making every possible effort to achieve this goal. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police has made significant sacrifices in the war against terrorism, and these sacrifices will not go in vain.



KARACHI: Detained immigrants, who fail to provide legal documents, are transported by police in a bus to shift them in a deportation center in Provincial Capital.

## PIA's flight schedule not restored fully, 19 more flights cancel

KARACHI (Online): The flight schedule of PIA could not be fully restored, 19 more flights were canceled today (Friday), while the number of canceled flights of PIA has reached 754 in 17 days.

The canceled flights today include PK 368, 369 from Karachi to Islamabad and PK 536, 537 from Sukkur.

Dammam to Karachi PK 242, Islamabad to Sukkur PK 631, 632 have also been canceled while Islamabad to Quetta flights PK 325, 326 could not fly. Similarly PK 233 of Dubai and PK 181 of Sharjah have been cancelled.

Dubai to Multan PK 222, Sialkot to Sharjah PK 209 and PK 210. Lahore to Sharjah PK 185 is also among the canceled flights.

According to PIA sources, 4 flights PK 197 and PK 198 to Muscat, Turbat and Gwadar have also been cancelled.

## 13 more dengue cases reported in 24 hours

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 13 more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 2,382 in the district.

District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, Friday said among the new cases, eight cases had arrived from Potohar town urban and five from Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi.

He added that 50 patients were admitted to district hospitals of which 40 were confirmed cases while 2,341 were discharged after treatment.

Dr Sajjad informed that the district administration had registered seven FIRs, issued tickets to five, sealed one premise, and a fine of Rs 34,000 was imposed against the violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours.

During indoor surveillance, in the last 24 hours, the teams checked 6,268 houses and larvae were found in 173 homes. Similarly.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam addressing inaugural ceremony of a road inside Johns Cathedral church at Peshawar cantonment.

## CM KP chairs meeting to discuss matters relating to evacuation of illegal foreigners

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Caretaker Chief Minister, Muhammad Azam Khan here Friday chaired a cabinet meeting to discuss matters relating to the evacuation of foreigners residing illegally in the province.

The meeting was attended by caretaker cabinet members, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary for Interior Abid Majeed, relevant administrative secretaries and officials. The meeting was briefed about arrangements made for the repatriation of illegal immigrants.

Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan expressed his satisfaction with the administration's efforts to facilitate the return of illegal immigrants to their countries and the

facilities being provided to them holding centres.

He commended the role played by various departments and institutions including district administration and police in providing facilities and accommodations to returning migrants.

The Chief Minister directed that voluntarily returning illegal immigrants be treated with respect ensuring special care to them during repatriation. He emphasized transparency and called for maintaining a detailed record of both regular and emergency expenses.

He stressed strict adherence to rules and regulations governing these expenses and the development of mechanisms to ensure transparency.



KARACHI: Secretary Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department, Atif Rehman Khan along with Aurangzeb Panhoo, Director General Excise and Taxation addressing a press conference.

## Punjab Governor says: Overseas Pak playing vital role in the stability of the country's economy

**Independent Report**

LAHORE: A delegation of overseas Pakistanis from Saudi Arabia called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at the Governor's House, here on Friday.

During the meeting, the delegation expressed satisfaction over the political and economic stability in Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that overseas Pakistanis are the valuable asset for the country, who are playing an important role in the stability of the

country's economy by sending remittances. He said that whenever the country faced difficult times, be it floods or earthquakes, Pakistanis living abroad always came forward and helped their countrymen.

The Governor Punjab said that economic and political stability in the country is the harbinger of a bright future. He said that the journey of development will start again in the country. He further said that the young generation is the most valuable asset of the country.



LAHORE: Students wearing facemasks attends the class at a school in Provincial Capital, following Punjab's government announcement to use facemasks in schools due to severe smoggy conditions in Provincial Capital.

## LHC directs IG Punjab to submit reply to Khadija's contempt petition

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has directed the IG Punjab to submit a reply by November 10 on Khadija Shah's petition against the police officers.

Justice Ali Baqir Najafi of Lahore High Court heard Khadija Shah's request. On behalf of Khadija Shah, lawyer Sameer Khosa Advocate presented arguments, IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar appeared before the court.

During the hearing, the public prosecutor took the position that the investigation process is going on, if something new comes up, it has to be included. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar told the court that the investigation process is long and

complicated, everything is being done according to the law, there is no question of any violation of your order. On which Justice Ali Baqir Najafi remarked that you have given a very good speech.

Court inquired from the IG Punjab that you submitted the report that Khadija Shah is named in two cases, how was the arrest made in the third case? He further asked that what is the guarantee that Khadija will not be detained again if she gets bail? Justice Ali Baqir Najafi inquired that you all are bound by the law, why did you not investigate them first? Why did you wait for their bail? If you had to investigate them in a case.

## Baqar decides to beautify Shahrah-e-Faisal to improve image of Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd.) Maqbool Baqar has decided to improve and beautify the arteries of the city to enhance the image of Karachi by making its access reflective.

"The people coming out of Jinnah Terminal and going back take a very poor impression of the city because the road starting from the terminal gives a very dirty and poor look, therefore I want to beautify Shahrah-e-Faisal in the first phase."

This he said while pressing over a joint meeting of KDA, KMC and leading architects of the city to seek their advice for the purpose. The meeting was attended by

Secretary Local Govt Manzoor Shaikh, Commissioner Karachi Saleem Rajput, DG KDA Tahir Sangi, Architects - Ali Naqvi, Yawar Jilani, Adil Kirai, Hafiz Habib and others.

DG KDA Tahir Sangi briefing the CM on environmental aspects said that hard and soft landscaping, improvement of tree profiles, walkways, pedestrian movement areas and pedestrian bridges.

The CM was told that street furniture, signage schemes, regulation of billboards about sizes and standards, streetlamps, and artwork depicting the typical urban character of Karachi, monuments, fountains and water bodies would be developed to

beautify the area. The chief minister in consultation with the architects attended his meeting and decided to improve all areas at the points of flyovers, overhead pedestrian bridges and at the various neglected segments of the road.

The chair decided to improve the important sites which offer views of ugly and undesirable built structures such as that of the first effect of Shahrah-e-Faisal for visitors coming out from the Airport.

Baqar said that in the first phase, the area from Falaknaz Apartment to Drigh Road would be beautified and then the remaining areas would be developed.

## Five vehicles with smuggled goods seized

LAHORE (APP): Anti smuggling squad recovered multiple kinds of utility items worth about Rs. 10 million during a crackdown here on Friday.

The squad being constituted by DPO seized about five vehicles plying on different routes and foiled smuggling.

DPO Ahmed Mohiuddin said in this regard that as many as 384 bags stuffed with non-custom paid items including dry milk, cigarettes, gutka, almond, Chinese salt, Iranian shopping bags etc.

All were handed over to the customer authority on the spot.

DP vowed to deal with the smugglers with iron hands.

## PDWP approves five development schemes

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) here on Friday approved five development schemes of Urban Development, Transport, Irrigation & Road sectors with an estimated cost of Rs 6741.785 million.

These schemes were approved in its 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the current financial year 2023-24, presided over by Planning and Development (P&D) Board Chairman Iftikhar Ali Sahoo. Approved schemes are as follows:

Construction / Rehabilitation of Jinnah Park in Jhang City at the cost of Rs 868.915 million, Carpet Road from Nowshera Virkan to

Hafizabad via Nathu Siwiya, Buggay Including Khan Musalman Bypass, Length 31.30km, District Gujranwala at the cost of Rs 800 million, Procurement of Snow Clearance Machinery and Vehicles for Murree at the cost of Rs 580 million, Induction of Eco-friendly Buses in Cities of Punjab at the cost of Rs 3367 million and Construction of Gated Head Regulator from RD:205+000 to 283+000 of BRBD Link Canal at the cost of Rs 1125.870 million

All members of the P&D Board, provincial secretaries of departments concerned, and other senior representatives of the relevant provincial departments also attended the meeting.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Rtd) Maqbool Baqar presides over a meeting regarding the beautification of Shahrah-e-Faisal at CM House.

## 500 people reach to hospitals due to toxic smog

LAHORE (APP): As many as 500 people have fallen sick due to toxic smog and reached the emergencies of local hospitals, during the last 24 hours.

The smog has become a real threat to citizens in the provincial metropolis, as the air pollution rate in the provincial capital increased to an alarming level.

Lahore is again on the top of the world's most polluted cities these days. According to the Punjab Health Department (PHD) sources, more than 200 patients reached Jinnah Hospital, 150 patients each reached Mayo and Gangaram Hospitals.

Prof Ashraf Zia of Jinnah Hospital told APP that complaints of dry cough, sore throat, itchy eyes and difficulty in breathing are being reported due to smog. He said that number of patients have also been increased with problems of nose, ear, throat and lungs.

Medical experts have suggested that the respiratory patients should take special precautions during smog, adding they should not go out of their homes, making sure to use masks and glasses and using dry fruits and coffee.

Smog and the air pollution are one of the main factors.

## Diabetes Awareness Program organized at Mercy Hospital

PESHAWAR (APP): The Diabetes Awareness Program organized by the Diabetes and Endocrinology Department at Mercy Teaching Hospital (MTH) here was designed to inform and educate the community about diabetes, with a focus on prevention, care, and management.

The event brought together a team of dedicated healthcare professionals and diabetic patients, who shared valuable insights on various aspects of diabetes.

Dr. Faheem Ullah, the Head of the Diabetes and Endocrinology Department, opened the program with an in-depth discussion about diabetes. He shed light on its causes, symptoms, and

management, ensuring that attendees gained a comprehensive understanding of this form of diabetes.

The program featured a lineup of expert speakers who covered essential topics related to diabetes.

Dr. Nida delved into the complications associated with diabetes, emphasizing the importance of early detection and management to prevent these complications.

Dr. Umar provided valuable insights into insulin management and its crucial role in controlling blood sugar levels, making it an engaging and informative session for the audience.

Alya, a nutrition specialist,



HYDERABAD: Members of Civil Society hold banners and placards during a protest rally against Israeli aggression in Palestine, in City.

## SBP, AMF ink MoU to facilitate cross-border remittances

### Independent Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) on Friday inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate cross-border remittances between the Arab region and Pakistan through formal channels.

The MoU was signed by Director General Chairman of the Board of AMF Dr Abdulrahman Bin Abdullah Al Hamidi and SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad in a ceremony hosted by the Arab Monetary Fund in Abu Dhabi, an SBP press

release here said.

The AMF and the SBP, under the MoU, would establish a framework of cooperation between the Arab region and Pakistan to facilitate cross-border remittances between the Arab region and Pakistan through formal channels.

"The initiative will benefit individuals as well as businesses not only through instant, safe and cost-effective cross border payments, but also by strengthening economic,

financial, and investment ties between the Arab countries and Pakistan," the press release said.

Dr. Abdulrahman Hamidi, commenting on the MoU, said that the strategic collaboration with Raast underscored Bona's commitment to continue connecting different regions together and reinforcing economic, financial, and investment ties between the Arab region and its main global partners. "This resonates with the shared vision of innovating cross-border payment solutions to offer safe and efficient cross-

border instant payments access for individuals and corporates", he added.

Vowing to increase cross-border remittances by reducing costs and processing times, Dr Hamidi said that the initiative confirmed the global character of Bona which adhered to the highest compliance standards to connect the Arab region with its main global partners in line with the vision of its founders.

The SBP governor, speaking at the occasion, termed the MoU a significant strategic achievement.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad chairing a meeting with FA on FWBL.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary of the Board of Investment at the Prime Minister's Office, Muhammad Sohail Rajput, engaged in a productive meeting with the esteemed delegation led by Chief Representative, Yasumitsu Kinoshita from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

## MoNFSR says: Enough wheat stole of 6.9mmt in country for local consumption

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ministry of National Food Security and Research has said that there was enough wheat stock of 6.934 million metric tons in the country to tackle local dietary needs, besides keeping the strategic stocks as well as maintaining supply and demand smooth in local markets to provide the commodity at reasonable prices.

In a statement issued on Friday, the MoNFSR said, "Out of the total stocks, Punjab's wheat reserves comprised over 4.021 million tons, Sindh has 0.817 million tons, whereas Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 0.227 million tons of grains that were enough to meet local consumption of flour and other byproducts during the season."

The Balochistan has 0.089 million tons of wheat, whereas the wheat stock of Pakistan Agriculture Storage and Supplies Corporation (PASSCO) was recorded at

1.78 million tons, it added. "These reserves are poised to meet the country's vital requirements till May 2024 and after this period, the commencement of the new crop harvest season will see a surge in grain availability in local markets, further bolstering the carry-forward stocks," it added.

Meanwhile, the government has encouraged and supported the private sector to import wheat as so far about 700,000 tons of wheat have been imported, whereas an additional 1.2 million tons of wheat are to be imported in order to ensure smooth demand and supply till the arrival of new crop. It was worth mentioning here that due to the smooth supply of wheat, the commodity price in local markets came down from Rs4,800 per 40 kg to Rs4,300 per 40 kg. It was expected that the wheat price would further reduce and facilitate the common man in the country.

## Shell Pakistan hosts 10<sup>th</sup> Tameer Awards to honour young Pak innovators

ISLAMABAD (APP): Shell Pakistan Limited hosted the finale of the 10<sup>th</sup> Tameer Awards 2023 at Shell House to recognize the brightest, young entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

This year, more than 400 applications were received for the awards program, and 30 finalists were shortlisted in six award categories. The event was attended by business leaders, industry professionals and academia said a news release.

The finalists presented their pitches to a jury of experts for the selection of winners and runners-up in each category. As part of the event, a panel of high-profile leaders engaged in insightful discussions on innovation and entrepreneurship, inspiring growth in the start-up ecosystem. The Chief Executive & Managing Director of Shell Pakistan Limited, Waqar Siddiqui

said: "It is wonderful to see young talent take significant strides in a wide and diverse range of areas, coming up with innovative solutions to the problems faced by our country. We are proud to invest in our youth and accelerate enterprise development, through our flagship program - Shell Tameer; towards a bright future for Pakistan."

The grand winners of the 10<sup>th</sup> Tameer Awards 2023 were: Algaverse - Nayab Raza for Circular Economy - a microalgae-based biofertilizer product manufacturer that aims to resolve problems of food insecurity, energy crises and climate change has a profound impact by supporting farmers income. She Guard - Mehreen Raza for Empowering Women - a biodegradable, herbal-treated sanitary that will replace unsafe and harmful materials with safe, eco-friendly.

## Rupee sheds 89 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday witnessed 89-paise depreciation against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs284.31 against the previous day's closing of Rs283.42.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs282.35 and Rs285.1 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.65 to close at Rs302.08 against the last day's closing of Rs300.43, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen increased by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.89; whereas an increase of Rs1.89 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs346.63 as compared to the last closing of Rs344.74.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 24 and 23 paise to close at Rs77.40 and Rs75.78 respectively.

## PSX gains 466 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) gained 466.28 points, a positive change of 0.89 per cent on Friday, closing at 53,123.04 points against 52,656.76 points the previous day.

A total of 509,113,372 shares valuing Rs.15,586 billion were traded during the day as compared to 475,085,837 shares valuing Rs. 14,578 billion the previous day.

As many as 365 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 225 of them recorded gains and 115 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 25 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Kohinoor Spinning with 43,173,500 shares at Rs.2.26 per share, Pak Refinery with 41,824,973 shares at Rs.22.65 per share and TLP Properties with 29,063,599 shares at Rs.13.38 per share.

Rafhan Maize XD witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.194.90 per share price, closing at Rs.7,995.00.

## Indonesian CG for further bolstering bilateral trade

KARACHI (APP): The Consul General of Indonesia Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat stressing on further bolstering trade and investment cooperation between Pakistan and Indonesia on Friday said that both the brotherly countries with their diverse cultures and huge population were altogether a big market with lots of opportunities.

The Indonesian CG while exchanging views at a meeting during his visit to the Karachi Chamber of

Commerce and Industry (KCCI), pointed out that Pak-Indonesia bilateral trade was far less than its true potential and for enhancing the trade volume both the countries have to deeply understand the patterns and structure of challenges hindering the bilateral trade, said a statement issued here. He said that Indonesian government was always keen to support business people and the Indonesian Consulate and the Embassy in Islamabad remain extensively engaged in

identifying opportunities and fully facilitating businessmen of both countries. "Thanks to all the hard work done, this year, Indonesia imported 500,000 metric tons of rice from Pakistan which was secured within a very short time", he added. The envoy advised the business community of Karachi to participate in trade fairs, meet Indonesian business people and send business delegations so that the Indonesian business community could be acquainted about trade opportunities.

## NDRMF, OGDCL sign MoU

ISLAMABAD (APP): To promote socially responsible and environmentally friendly practices in the field of oil and gas exploration and production in line with the sustainable development goals, the National Disaster Risk Management Fund Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) agreed to work on joint projects. An MoU signing ceremony in this regard here, in which Bilal Anwer CEO NDRMF and Ahmed Hayat Lak Managing Director/CEO of OGDCL signed the agreement. Under this partnership, NDRMF intends to establish its linkages with OGDCL for larger cooperation and linkages for research and capacity development

activities for socially responsible and environmentally friendly adaptations in the field.

Collaborating for knowledge exchange and capacity building in the areas of climate change, and disaster risk reduction, through the holding of seminars, workshops and events on areas of mutual interest will play a vital role in achieving the objectives.

Bilal Anwer, CEO NDRMF said that NDRMF is legally mandated to reduce the socio-economic and fiscal vulnerability of the Country and its population to natural hazards by prioritizing and financing investments in disaster risk reduction that have high economic benefits.

## HESCO recovers 151 million rupees in recent actions

HYDERABAD (APP): Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) recovered more than 151 million rupees during the ongoing operation against defaulters and electricity thieves in the region, on 02 November, out of which 150.1 million rupees were collected from defaulters and more than one million rupees were received as fines. According to the HESCO spokesperson, in recent actions, the power supply was disconnected from four transformers, including one in Hyderabad Circle, one in Laar Circle and two transformers in Nawabshah Circle for outstanding dues exceeding 9.111 million rupees.



FAISALABAD: Workers are busy in their work at textile factory to earn daily wages for the livelihood of their families.

## BOI Secretary hails JICA's role for Pakistan economic development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary of the Board of Investment, Muhammad Sohail Rajput on Friday appreciated the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for its cooperation in different sectors for economic development of Pakistan.

He was talking to the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) delegation, led by Chief Representative, Yasumitsu Kinoshita which called on him, said a

press release issued here. The BOI secretary said that JICA's mission was to play a pivotal role in bolstering Pakistan's economic infrastructure, enhancing the investment landscape, and fostering regional connectivity for a brighter future.

The meeting marks the beginning of a promising journey to fortify partnership and explore new avenues of collaboration between BOI and JICA.

## Weekly inflation up by 0.71 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.71 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on November 02, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 279.08 points as compared to 277.11 points during the past

week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 29.88 percent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, increased by 0.85 percent.

## PTCL accords grand reception to newly elected office bearers of CBA

### Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's largest telecommunications and ICT services provider, PTCL held a grand reception in honor of the office bearers of PTCL Workers

in crucial policy-making to ensure their well-being. At the ceremony, PTCL management warmly welcomed the newly elected CBA, who expressed their happiness and hoped for the continuation of cooperation between the union and PTCL for their shared growth and prosperity. The ceremony



was graced by the presence of the guest of honor, Syed Sagheer Bukhari, Senior Programme Officer at the International Labour Organization (ILO), Country Office Pakistan, along with senior PTCL officials and newly elected office bearers and labor leaders from across the country.

The recent referendum is a continuation of PTCL's democratic tradition of protecting employee rights, and integrating their voices

Senior Programme Officer, International Labour Organization (ILO), Country Office Pakistan, Syed Sagheer Bukhari cited ILO conventions on workers' rights and quoted examples of how unions and administrations worldwide ensure mutual growth and prosperity through effective cooperation. He lauded PTCL's management for setting the right precedent of giving the union an excellent reception.

## Pakistan earns \$1,707m from services' exports in Q1

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned foreign exchange worth \$1,707 million from exports of various services during the first quarter (Q1) of the current fiscal year (2023-24), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

However, as compared to the services exports of \$1,717 during July-September (2022-23), the external trade witnessed a slightly negative growth of 0.58 percent, according to PBS data.

Meanwhile, the services' imports into the country increased by 18.10 percent by going up from \$2,028 million last year to \$2,395 million during the first three months of the current fiscal year.

the services trade deficit increased by 121.28 percent during the period under review going up from \$310 million last year to \$688 million this year.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year (YoY) basis, the services exports from the country increased by 1.08 percent going up from \$565 million in September 2022 to \$571 million during September 2023.

The imports also went up by 14.40 percent growing from \$688 million to \$787 million, according to PBS data.

On month on monthly (MoM) basis, the services exports decreased by 4.98 percent in September 2023 when compared to exports of \$601 million in August 2023.

Based on the figures,



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presenting shield to CEO State Life Insurance Corporation Shoab Javed.

## SCCI for taking stakeholders on board while framing economic policies

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq has said that the role of bureaucracy is vital in framing sustainable and growth-oriented policies.

He, however, emphasized that the chamber and relevant stakeholders should be consulted before the formation of economic policies and reforms in the taxation system.

Fuad Ishaq said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should be given due rights

of gas and electricity under article 158-A of the constitution of the country. He called for the signing of free trade agreements with Afghanistan, Iran and China along with allowing trade in Pakistani rupees with these countries so that the national economy could stabilize and trade volume be improved as well. Fuad Ishaq was speaking during an inland study tour of participants of the 38<sup>th</sup> Mid-Career Management Course (NIM) Islamabad.



FAISALABAD: People are buying used clothes from Flea Market at Kacheri Bazaar in City.

## Putin says some Western weapons for Ukraine are ending up in the Taliban's hands

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday that some Western weapons supplied to Ukraine were finding their way to the Middle East through the illegal arms market and being sold to the Taliban.

"Now they say: weapons are getting into the Middle East from Ukraine. Well of course they are because they are being sold," Putin said. "And they are being sold to the Taliban and from there they go onto wherever."

Since Russia sent troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24 last year, Western powers have sent Ukraine tens of billions of dollars worth of weapons in an attempt to defeat Russian troops. Ukraine says it keeps

tight control over any weapons supplied to it, but some Western security officials have raised concerns and the United States has asked Ukraine to do more to tackle the broader issue of corruption.

In June 2022, the head of Interpol, Jürgen Stock, warned that some of the advanced weapons sent to Ukraine would end up in the hands of organised crime groups.

A report about the Ukraine war and the illegal arms trade by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime said in March that there was "currently no substantial outflow of weapons from the Ukrainian conflict zone."

"However, every precedent suggests that, espe-

cially if the threat is not addressed proactively and imaginatively, when the current war ends, Ukraine's battlefields could and will become the new arsenal of anarchy, arming everyone from insurgents in Africa to gangsters in the streets of Europe," the report said.

The eight biggest Western donors to Ukraine led by the United States have made military commitments to Ukraine totalling at least \$4 billion euros (\$90 billion), according to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, which tracks donors. U.S. military support includes 160 155mm howitzers, 109 Bradley fighting vehicles, more than 111 million rounds of small arms ammunition and 38 high mobility artillery rocket systems.



A man carries away an injured girl following an Israeli strike on the Bureij refugee camp, in Gaza Strip.

## Russia says Ukraine 'playing with fire' with drone attack near nuclear plant

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russia on Thursday said Ukraine was risking a nuclear disaster after nine Ukrainian drones were shot down by Russian forces near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear station, Europe's largest atomic power plant.

The Zaporizhzhia plant, which has been under Russian control since early March 2022, has six Soviet-designed VVER-1000 V-320 water-cooled and water-moderated reactors containing Uranium 235.

Four of the reactors are shut down while two of the reactors - No. 4 and No. 5 - are in so-called 'hot shutdown' mode, according to the Russian operator of the plant.

Russia's defence ministry said air defences had shot down nine Ukrainian drones near the Russian-held city of Enerhodar, where many workers for the plant live, in an attempt to disrupt the rotation of International Atomic Energy

Agency (IAEA) staff.

"Kyiv is continuing to 'play with fire' and is carrying out criminal and irresponsible provocations," Maria Zakharova, spokeswoman for Russia's foreign ministry, said of the drone attack.

Zakharova said the IAEA should look at a Russian proposal to rotate its staff monitoring the plant only through Russian-held territory. The IAEA did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Ukraine did not immediately comment.

The IAEA has repeatedly said that the world is fortunate that no nuclear accident has yet happened at the Zaporizhzhia plant where the Agency says nuclear safety remains extremely fragile.

Shortly after sending troops into Ukraine in 2022, Russian forces took control of the Zaporizhzhia station. Both Ukraine and Russia have accused each other of attacking the station.

## Six die as storm lashes Europe with furious winds

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: Storm Ciaran smashed into western Europe on Thursday, killing six people and forcing schools, airports and train services to shut down.

A truck driver was killed when a tree fell on him in France while a second death was reported in Le Havre, according to authorities. Falling trees also caused the death of a woman in the Spanish capital Madrid and another in the south of the Netherlands, local emergency services and police said.

Two people died in the Belgian town of Ghent — a five-year-old and a 64-year-old German woman visiting the country — the prosecutor's office said. Both deaths were caused by falling branches. In France, 1.2 million households were left without electricity. Authorities in Finistere, Brittany, urged people to stay at home and avoid winds which were hitting 207 kph (129 mph), leading to reports of 20-metre (66-foot) waves off the coast.

## Thai Muslim politicians held talks with Hamas in Iran seeking hostage release

**Monitoring Desk**  
BANGKOK: Politicians from Thailand's Muslim minority have held talks with Hamas in an effort to secure the release of around a dozen Thai hostages held by the Palestinian Islamist group in Israeli-occupied Gaza, a former lawmaker said on Friday.

At least 23 Thai nationals were among more than 240 people taken captive by Hamas militants when they burst out of Gaza on Oct. 7 and went on a killing and kidnapping spree through southwestern Israeli communities. Israel responded by relentlessly bombarding the enclave, then invading it.

Areepen Uttarasin, a veteran Thai politician and former education minister, said he travelled to the Iranian capital Tehran and met senior Hamas officials there on Oct. 26 for over

two hours.

"They told me that the Thai hostages are living comfortably and are out of danger," Areepen told Reuters, declining to name the Hamas officials he met. "I told them that I am here not to negotiate but simply to ask for their release."

The 23 Thais form the largest group of captives in Gaza from any single foreign country.

Thailand's foreign ministry did not confirm the politicians' talks with Hamas but said it welcomed assistance from all parties as the government seeks the release of the Thai hostages via multiple channels.

The foreign ministry said Qatar, Iran and Egypt had agreed to formally convey Thailand's request for the release of the hostages to Hamas immediately.

## Ex-crypto mogul Sam Bankman-Fried found guilty of massive fraud

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW YORK CITY: Sam Bankman-Fried, the one-time cryptocurrency golden boy accused by US prosecutors of stealing billions of dollars of his customers' money, was found guilty on Thursday on all counts and faces up to 110 years behind bars. The jury reached its decision in just five hours after a trial in New York lasting five weeks. Sentencing for the man widely known as "SBF" will take place on March 28, 2024.

US Attorney Damian Williams said in a statement after the verdict was announced that Bankman-Fried had "perpetrated one of the biggest financial frauds in American history, a multibillion-dollar scheme designed to make him the king of crypto." "The cryptocurrency industry might be new, players like SBF might be new, but this kind of fraud.



Members of Tunisia's parliament hold the Palestinian flag as they observe a minute of silence for civilian deaths in the Gaza Strip.

## Bahrain halts trade ties with Israel; envoys return

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANAMA: Bahrain's parliament said on Thursday that the Gulf state's ambassador to Israel had returned home and economic ties had been suspended in protest over the Israeli aggression in Gaza.

However, the government did not confirm the moves, and Israel said it had received no word of any such actions, saying its relations with Bahrain were "stable."

In its statement, the parliament — a consultative body with no powers in the area of foreign policy — said the moves "confirmed Bahrain's historic position in support of the Palestinian cause."

"The Council of Representatives affirms that the Israeli ambassador in the

kingdom of Bahrain has left Bahrain and the kingdom of Bahrain has decided on the return of the Bahrain ambassador to Israel," the parliament said in a statement. "The cessation of economic relations was also decided," it said, without making clear who had made the decision.

Abdulnabi Salman, parliament's first deputy speaker, confirmed the decision, saying the "ongoing conflict in Gaza cannot tolerate silence."

Israel's foreign ministry said in a statement: "We would like to clarify that no notification or decision has been received from the government of Bahrain and the government of Israel to re-open the countries' ambassadors. Relations between Israel and Bahrain are

stable." The parliament's statement was not carried by the kingdom's state television or its official news agency.

Any suspension of diplomatic and economic ties, if confirmed, would mark a significant setback for Israel.

Bahrain, which is home to the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, is a signatory of the Abraham Accords, a series of normalisation agreements between Israel and several Arab nations signed in 2020.

Last month, speaking at an investment conference in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain's finance minister Sheikh Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa had said it was important to continue to build bridges when asked about the Abraham Accords.

## Fire at drug rehabilitation centre in Iran kills at least 32: report

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: At least 27 people died in a massive fire that broke out at a drug rehabilitation centre in northern Iran early on Friday, the judiciary said.

"Twenty-seven have died and 12 others were taken to hospital after a fire erupted at a drug rehabilitation centre in Langarud," a city in Gilan province north of Tehran, said the judiciary's Mizan Online news website, quoting provincial chief

justice Esmail Sadeghi.

The cause of the fire was not immediately clear but Sadeghi said an investigation "was under way," according to Mizan, which said the centre could accommodate up to 40 people.

Local ISNA news agency shared footage of the fire which lit up the night sky and sent huge plumes of smoke into the air.

Other images showed the heavily damaged site after the fire was contained.

## Five killed as floods hit Italy's Tuscany region

**Monitoring Desk**  
FLORENCE: Five people have been killed after rivers overflowed following torrential rain in the central Italian region of Tuscany, local authorities said on Friday, as Storm Ciaran continued to lash western Europe.

There had been fears that the River Arno could burst its banks in the historic city of Florence but Tuscan Governor Eugenio Giani said the high water point had passed around 10:20 a.m. (09:20 GMT) without major incident.



Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida signs the guestbook beside Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos at Malacanang Palace in Manila, Philippines.

## Japan, Philippines agree to hold talks on reciprocal troops pact

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: The leaders of Japan and the Philippines on Friday agreed to start negotiations on a reciprocal troop access deal, strengthening military cooperation amid rising maritime tensions in the region and an increasingly assertive China.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr had agreed to work together closely with the United States, and, in a veiled reference to China, shared concern about "unacceptable" attempts to "unilaterally change the status quo by force" in the East and South China Seas. "A further decision was made to start negotiations on a reciprocal access agreement and we agreed to further strengthen trilateral cooperation," Kishida, who was on an official visit to the Philippines, told a joint press conference. Both the Philippines and Japan, two of the United States' closest Asian allies, have taken a strong line against what they see as aggressive behaviour by Chinese.

Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida signs the guestbook beside Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos at Malacanang Palace in Manila, Philippines.

## Uber, Lyft to pay drivers \$328m over wage theft claims

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW YORK: Uber and Lyft will pay \$328 million to settle a New York probe alleging that the companies "cheated" drivers in an accord that also establishes paid sick leave, state officials announced on Thursday.

The agreement — which was hailed by Uber as a "landmark" in codifying rules around gig work — follows state investigations that found the companies improperly deducted sums from drivers that should have been charged to passengers.

## New Zealand election results show National needs other parties to form government

**Monitoring Desk**  
WELLINGTON: Final results from New Zealand's Oct 14 election released on Friday show the centre-right National Party will need the support of both the ACT New Zealand and NZ First parties to form a government.

The Electoral Commission said the conservative National Party won 48 seats and right-wing ACT 11 seats, giving them 59 seats in the 122-seat parliament. New Zealand First's eight seats would give the three parties a majority.

The Commission said Labour New Zealand won 34 seats, the Green Party

15 seats and Te Pati Maori six seats.

New Zealand Prime Minister-elect Christopher Luxon told a press conference that the result was much as expected and his party had been in discussions with both ACT and NZ First since the election. "There is goodwill and good faith from all three political party leaders to move through the (negotiation) processes constructively and as quickly as possible," Luxon said. Although the Labour Party conceded defeat in the election, right-wing parties were waiting for the final vote to be counted before finalising coalition agreements and forming a new government.

## Air pollution in New Delhi turns 'severe', some schools shut

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: People in New Delhi woke up to a thick layer of toxic haze on Friday, and some schools were ordered to be shut for two days as the air quality index (AQI) entered the "severe" category in several parts of the Indian capital.

A filthy smog forms over Delhi every winter as cold, heavy air traps construction dust, vehicle emissions and smoke from crop stubble burning in neighbouring states, causing a surge in respiratory illnesses among the city's 20 million people.

## Islamophobia won't be allowed to take root, says US President

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden said on Thursday that his administration wouldn't watch silently as Muslims in America are targeted by hate-mongers.

The White House announced on Wednesday the administration will develop a strategy to counter Islamophobia in the United States. "We can't stand by while hate against Muslims, and those wrongfully perceived to be Muslim, including Arabs and Sikhs, is given oxygen," President Biden said in his statement.

"Silence is complicity. We won't be silent," he said, adding that his administration was developing a

national strategy to counter Islamophobia and related forms of hate. Vice President Kamala Harris said taking on hate was a national priority and that's why "we are developing a strategy to combat Islamophobia." "This action is the latest step forward in our work to combat a surge of hate in America," she said.

The strategy is a joint effort led by the Domestic Policy Council and the White House National Security Council. It aims to create a comprehensive and detailed plan to protect Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim "because of their race, national origin, ancestry, or any other reason, from discrimination, hate, bigotry, and violence."

## Hezbollah leader says Hamas Oct 7 assault was '100pc Palestinian'

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIRUT: Celebratory gunshots rang out over Beirut as thousands packed into a square in the Lebanese capital's southern suburbs on Friday to watch a televised speech by Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of the Lebanese Hezbollah group.

It was Nasrallah's first public remarks since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war, sparked by the Palestinian militants' deadly Oct 7 incursion into southern Israel.

The speech came a day after the most significant escalation in clashes between Hezbollah and Israeli forces on the border since the war started and on the same day as a visit to Israel by the top US diplomat. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to urge protections for civilians in the fighting with Hamas, as Israeli troops tightened their encirclement of Gaza City.

In his lengthy remarks, Nasrallah praised the Hamas attack four weeks ago in which the Hamas attacked farming villages and military posts in southern Israel. More than 1,400 people were killed in Israel in the attack, that the operation launched by the Hamas militant group against Israel on Oct. 7 was "100% Palestinian."

"This great, large-scale operation was purely the result of Palestinian planning and implementation," Nasrallah said, suggesting his militia had no part in the attack.

## South Korea lining up banks to help finance \$22 billion arms sale to Poland

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: After hitting statutory limits on import-export lending, South Korea is gathering local banks to help Poland buy \$22 billion worth of weapons in Seoul's largest arms sale, five people familiar with the matter told Reuters.

"Five local banks are reviewing a syndicated loan as a support measure" to help Poland finance its purchase of South Korean rocket artillery systems and fighter jets, a South Korean government official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing planning.

Two officials from a Korean defence company confirmed the syndicated loan plan. Two officials at South Korean banks said there would be loans, but did not specify the type.

It is the first indication that Seoul is working to remove Poland's financing hurdles to enable the two countries to strike South Korea's biggest-ever weapons arms deal, estimated at around 30 trillion won

(\$22.72 billion). The discussions are a follow-up to the comprehensive arms agreement between the two nations signed last year, under which South Korean companies including Hyundai Rotem Co. and Hanwha Aerospace Co. will supply tanks, howitzers and fighter jets.

That deal was worth \$13.7 billion, South Korea's largest to date. Spokespersons at both Hyundai Rotem and Hanwha Aerospace declined to comment for this story. The South Korean government didn't immediately provide a comment when asked for one. The South Korean government official did not elaborate on the size of the potential syndicated loan. Such a loan is provided by a group of lenders to a single borrower, often to finance large deals.

The defence company official said that if the syndicated loan for the next proposed sale wasn't enough, "there could be other financing measures on the way".

## North Korean art sells in China despite UN sanctions over nuclear program

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: For sale at a recent Beijing art exposition was a painting with an asking price of \$2,460 that depicted the snow-capped Mount Paektu, the mythical birthplace of the Korean people.

A portrait of a prim young lady in bright brushstrokes was being sold for \$5,190. For buyers on a budget, there were colorful landscapes being offered for a few hundred dollars.

The dealer hawking the art made no effort to disguise who produced the pieces, despite stiff U.N. sanctions prohibiting the sale of such goods: "They were painted over there," the dealer said, "in North Korea."

The dealer, who had salt-and-pepper hair and refused to divulge his name, was a representative of an art gallery that trumpets itself as China's premier seller of North Korean art. The gallery, The Paintings Say Arirang, also operates a studio for North Korean artists in the outskirts of Beijing.

Housed in a fenced and heavily surveilled compound, the North Koreans paint glorified, idyllic visions of life back home. For the right price, the Arirang

studio says, the artists will render "exquisite" portraits at "unimaginable prices."

The gallery's existence and conspicuous sales tactics, experts say, highlight China's lax enforcement of U.N. sanctions targeting North Korea to stymie Pyongyang's nuclear program. A. The U.N. has sanctioned a long list of North Korean goods, including arms, coal and art. The U.N. has also sought to block North Koreans from working overseas in the hopes of preventing North Korea from garnishing the wages of such laborers to fund its nuclear program. U.N. report in March singled out Arirang for selling North Korean art and hosting North Korean artists in apparent violation of sanctions.

China has a long history of rebuffing efforts by the U.N. to rein in such suspected sanctions violators, and last year vetoed a U.N. resolution that would have toughened such restrictions. The U.N. reported that Arirang did not respond to requests for information. Arirang was not hard for the U.N. to find. That's because the gallery is actively seeking to tap a niche audience drawn to the unique, socialist realist style of North Korean artists.



Pedestrians walk past the blown-off roof of a residential building in Brest, France.

# IMF assured of no 'new tax amnesty' as talks underway

LAHORE (INP): The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has assured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission visiting Pakistan of not introducing 'any new tax amnesty scheme' as talks underway for the next installment of \$710 million this week.

An IMF review mission landed in Pakistan on November 2 and reviewed the country's progress on targets set in a \$3 billion programme approved in July this year to bail out the struggling economy.

The IMF executive board had approved the nine-month standby arrangement (SBA) with Pakistan "to support its economic stabilisation

programme". Following the approval by IMF board, the lender disbursed an installment of \$1.1 billion to Pakistan.

If the second quarterly review is successful, it will allow for the release of the second tranche worth \$710 million.

Sources said that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), in its first meeting with IMF review mission, presented a report regarding the tax performance of July-September.

The report encompassed revenue target, payments of refunds and tax rebates as dictated by the IMF during its previous meeting with Pakistan delegation.

The report mentioned that the target of income tax refunds during the period of July-September has been achieved.

The revenue board also assured the delegation of achieving the revenue target of Rs9.415 trillion. Moreover, the review mission was also assured of not introducing 'any new tax amnesty scheme'.

The FBR report stated that income tax refund payments were being gradually reduced according to the plan. The board did not give tax exemption during the first July-September quarter as agreed in the loan programme.

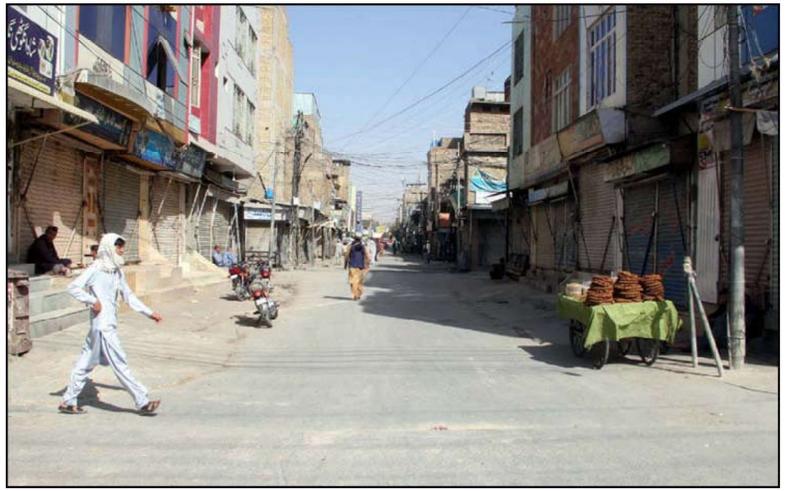
It is pertinent to mention here that the caretaker

government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) kicked off the much-awaited loan review talks.

A day earlier, interim Finance Minister Shamsah Akhtar briefed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission on the steps being taken by the government to "improve the economic situation".

A statement issued by the Ministry of Finance said that the finance minister welcomed the delegation and shared progress on the SBA.

"The minister briefed the mission on fiscal measures being taken by the government to improve the economic situation," the statement said.



QUETTA: View of business activities seen closed due to shutter-down strike called by political parties against deportation of Afghan Refugees, in Quetta.



KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari talking to media persons after inaugurating ceremony of Free Diagnostic Lab set up by JDC Foundation Pakistan.

## Alliance with Tehreek-e-Insaf has not been decided: Bilawal

KARACHI (Online): Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that the decision of alliance with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has not been taken.

All political parties, including PTI, should join the democratic charter.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that you all have a blessed election month, the election will be held on February 8, and the PPP will form the government.

It would have been better if the Supreme Court (SC) did not have to inter-

vene for the election, the People's Party did not get a level playing field in any election, so they do not have hope. He expressed these views while talking to journalists in Karachi. In response to a question asked about the eviction of immigrants, he said that no political party can support any illegal activity.

Bilawal Bhutto said that we are currently seeing the genocide of Palestinians on social media, the rulers of the world are silent but the people are not. According to spokesperson Bilawal House,

Bilawal Bhutto also visited the residence of former President People's Party Central District Sohail Ansari.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also issued a condolence message for the late Sohail Ansari's widow Nasira Sohail and said that the late Sohail Ansari endured the hardships of the dictators era. He said that Sohail Ansari held the flag of Bhuttoism till his last breath, his struggle is exemplary for the PPP workers, his sacrifices for the supremacy of democracy and constitution will not be forgotten.

## President directs FIO to ensure conflict of interest disclosure before selling policies

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday asked the Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO) to ensure that insurance companies disclosed the conflict of interest to the purchaser of the insurance policy before selling the policy as there had been instances of grave mis-selling of policies which required a serious re-look at product structure and front-loaded commission of the agents of insurance companies.

He gave these directions while deciding upon a representation filed by the Pak-Qatar Family Takaful Ltd (the petitioner company) against the order of the Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO). As per details, Anwar ul Haq (the complainant) had alleged that he purchased the Kafalah Takaful Plan from the petitioner company in February 2017 for the sum assured of Rs 4.5 million and an annual premium.

## AJK PM meets with UNFPA delegation to discuss dev. projects

MIRPUR (AJK): (APP): The Country Director of UNFPA, Dr Luay Shabaneh on Friday led a delegation to call on the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu Kashmir, Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, in the federal metropolis to discuss UNFPA's projects in the AJK State.

Dr. Shabaneh briefed the Prime Minister on UNFPA's ongoing projects in AJK, which are focused on accelerating action to end children's marriages, controlling population growth, and curbing mortality rates at birth. He also expressed

UNFPA's willingness to play a more significant role in the development of various sectors in Azad Kashmir and announced the launch of a comprehensive package for this purpose next year.

Prime Minister Haq appreciated UNFPA's contributions to public welfare projects in the region and assured the delegation of his government's full cooperation and support. He also directed the formation of a special contact group to coordinate all matters with UNFPA.

## PM directs Holding of regular CSS special exams to fill up posts reserved for minorities, marginalized areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday directed the formulation of a comprehensive policy for the appointment of competent civil servants in remote areas of the country including Balochistan.

He also ordered the restoration of rotation policy of civil servants in line with its original spirit and to ensure its strict implementation.

The prime minister was chairing a meeting to review progress on filling up vacant seats reserved for marginalized areas in civil bureaucracy through special examinations as well as rotation policy.

PM Kakar directed to regularly hold the competitive examinations to fill the vacant seats in civil bureaucracy reserved for minorities and people from marginalized areas.

He stressed persistent awareness campaigns to encourage minorities to participate in the competitive examination for government jobs. The prime minister said the country's constitution provides equal rights and opportunities to minorities and people belonging to underprivileged areas. He said the govern-

ment was fully committed to ensuring equal opportunities for progress for every citizen. The meeting was briefed about the recently held special examination of the Central Superior Services (CSS). It was informed that 15,000 candidates appeared in the examination, out of which 3,500 belonged to Balochistan. The examination has over 60 seats reserved in quota for Balochistan. The meeting was attended by PM's Adviser Ahad Khan Cheema, the PM's secretary, the Secretary Establishment, and the Secretary Federal Public Service Commission.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Domki presenting shield to Asadullah Kakar Chief Executive Officer Balochistan Health Card.

## Bugti lays SBP annual report in Senate

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti on Friday laid before the Senate the annual report of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on the country's economy for the year 2022-23. The Interior Minister also tabled in the House the Annual Report for the year 2022 of the Election Commission of Pakistan and the Federal Public Service Commission's Annual Report for the year 2021.

## Only PML-N has ability to steer country out of crises: Nawaz

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid and former prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif has said that his party has the ability to steer the country out of crises and put it on the path to development.

Talking to the party workers at Jati Umra here on Friday, he said the time was not far away when problems of the people would end, the country would be freed from the vortex of inflation and unemployment and Pakistan would once again take the path of development.

Nawaz Sharif said that the PML-N had always served people with dignity and dedication and preferred national interest over personal interest. He added that whenever his party got

a chance to serve people, development graph of the country showed an upward trajectory. The PML-N had laid the network of development projects in the country in each of its tenure, he added.

The former premier said that only PML-N could get the country out of all crises if given an opportunity to form the government after elections. He said after getting people's votes, they would work day and night to include Pakistan in the ranks of developed countries. Mian Nawaz Sharif asked workers to start vigorous public relations campaigns in preparation for the elections, saying that his party would clean sweep the upcoming general elections across the country.



LAHORE: Sardar Awais Laghari meeting with President PML-N Shahbaz Sharif.

## Jamali stresses need to pay special attention on security of immigrants' evacuation places

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali has underlined the need to pay special attention on the security of places from where the Afghan refugees are being evacuated.

He also stressed that it should be our responsibility to give priority to safely repatriate the illegal immigrants to their country.

In this regard, special measures are unavailable to improve security arrangements.

The Minister Home was speaking to the Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat and Deputy Commissioner Saad bin Asad who called on him separately here at his office on Friday. During the meetings, the overall law and order situation was discussed and reviewed.

The Minister Home on the occasion expressed concern over recent incidents of law and order and directed to take concrete measures for improving law and order situation.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott gossips in happy mood with Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi during 9th Islamabad Literature Festival at Fatima Jinnah (F-9) Park in Federal Capital.

## Special cleansing campaign initiated in province including Quetta City: Noor Pirkani

QUETTA (APP): Municipal Secretary Noor Ahmad Pirkani on Friday said that a special cleaning campaign has been started across the province including Quetta city from November 1 to 30. He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of journalists here.

Secretary Noor Ahmad Pirkani said the Provincial Local Government Minister Sheikh Mehmoodul Hasan Mandukhel had issued or-

ders to start a one-month special cleaning campaign across the province. Under which a special cleaning campaign has been started from November 1 to 30, during which, along with cleaning in other areas of the province including Quetta, the piles of garbage will be removed and they could be disposed of.

He said that strict instructions have been issued to all chief officers and local councils to ensure a spe-

## Mehmood Achakzai will hold a press conference on 5th of November

Independent Report QUETTA: In the statement from Central press release of Pashtoonkwa Milli Awami Party it was stated that the Chairman Mehmood Khan Achakzai will hold a press conference on 3:00pm, Sunday 5th of November in Quetta.

Mehmood Khan Achakzai will address the press on Pakistan's trade policy with Afghanistan, Afghan Refugees problem, and Chaman sit-in. The party has requested print, electronic, and social media activists to join the press conference.



QUETTA: Afghan Nazim of affairs posted in Quetta Gul Hassan called on Caretaker Provincial Information Minister Jan Achakzai.

## Jan Achakzai tells Afghan Nazim Umoor in Quetta: Pak 2nd homeland of Afghans, wants to expand mutual relations at diplomatic level: Achakzai

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Minister for Information Balochistan, Jan Achakzai has stated that Pakistan is second homeland of Afghans and we want to expand mutual relations with Afghanistan at the diplomatic level.

He said that Pakistan is a hospitable country and as such we would continue hospitality of the Afghan refugees.

He said that Afghans are our brothers and our culture of the hospitality would remain continued.

Jan Achakzai said that

there are around 1.7 million illegal immigrants in Pakistan and those having UNHCR's cards would not be bothered at all.

These views were expressed by the Minister Information while speaking to the Afghan Nazim Umoor based in Quetta, Gul Hasan, who called on him here at his office on Friday evening.

During the course of meeting, there was consensus on increasing two-side engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Jan Achakzai took the Afghan diploma into confi-

dence over the matter of repatriation of illegal immigrants.

The Minister Information said that the flag meetings would also remain continued with Afghan authorities at the border.

He mentioned that state of Pakistan has decided to expel the illegal foreigners, which is its right.

He said that Pakistan has the full right to make policies and implement the decisions.

He assured that the decision is not against any specific community, rather it is for all illegal foreigners.

## Pakistan needs super system, not superstar, for prosperity: Tareen

HAFIZABAD (INP): dressing a rally in Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) chief Jahangir Tareen stated on Friday that the country doesn't need a superstar; instead, it requires a super system for its development and prosperity.

Tareen's statement was evidently directed at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman. While ad-

ressing a rally in Hafizabad, Tareen offered hope to the people of Pakistan, urging them not to be disappointed, as the need of the hour was to unite all political parties. He deplored the damage caused to Pakistan due to the conflicts among political groups, and stressed that it was not the personalities.

## PTI chairman files bail plea in SC in cipher case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman PTI Imran Khan has filed bail plea in Supreme Court (SC) in cipher case.

Chairman PTI has submitted bail plea under article 185 of the constitution.

The petition said cipher case was instituted on political grounds. High Court could not bring the political grounds of the case under consideration.

The petition further said the ill-intent of FIA which is subordinate to interior ministry is very clear. Cipher and foreign funding cases indicate malafide intent of FIA.

The court was requested to release the accused on bail in the case.

## JI Emir for establishment of Pak-Afghan commission on repatriation of refugees

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Sirajul Haq has proposed the establishment of a Pak-Afghan commission aimed at formulating a viable plan for the repatriation of Afghan refugees to their home country.

In his address to a gathering on Friday, he warned against the propagation of propaganda and conspiracies by adversaries of both nations regarding the refugee issue. Haq welcomed the Election Commission's election schedule, which was released following a meeting with the president and in compliance with the directives of the Supreme Court. He emphasized that both the parliament and the top court should issue clear guidelines for the execution of all future elections,

strictly adhering to the timeline stipulated in the constitution.

Expressing the desire for the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to operate independently in both administrative and financial realms, Haq underscored the need for the commission to ensure that every contestant adheres strictly to the election code of conduct. The JI chief demanded the rulers of Muslim world make practical step to save Gaza from Israeli atrocities. "Are you (Muslim rulers) waiting for the complete destruction of Gaza and genocide of Palestinians?" He said the approval of the 14.5-billion-dollar aid by the US House of Representatives to Israeli was tantamount to issuing a killing license to Zionist regime.



QUETTA: Secretary C&W Qambar Dashti inspecting the ongoing developmental projects of Quetta Zone.