

# Independent

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ISLAMABAD: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar meeting talking with members of the committee formed led by the caretaker Federal Minister Fawad Hasan Fawad regarding the Baloch Yakjethi March

## PTI loses electoral symbol 'bat' as ECP voids intra-party polls

Barrister Gohar announces to knock at court's doors against ECP decision to take away 'bat' electoral symbol

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday declared the intra-party elections conducted by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) null and void, withdrawing the party's electoral symbol - bat.

The electoral watchdog ruled that the party did not hold the elections in line with its constitution, the Election Act, 2017, and the Election Rules, 2017, and was thus ineligible to obtain the election symbol of 'bat'.

A five-member bench, led by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, gave the decision on the petitions challenging PTI's intra-party elections.

Other members of the bench included ECP members Nisar Ahmed Durrani,

Shah Muhammad Jatoi, Babar Hassan Bharwana and Justice @ Ikrumullah Khan.

The reserved verdict was announced a day after the Peshawar High Court directed the ECP to decide the petitions filed against PTI's intra-party elections in accordance with the law.

In its decision, the ECP observed that "the PTI did not comply with the Commission's directions rendered therein order dated 23rd November, 2023 and failed to hold intra-party election in accordance with PTI prevailing Constitution, 2019 and Election Act, 2017, and Election Rules, 2017.

Therefore the certificate dated 4th December, 2023 and Form-65 filed by the alleged Chairman, is hereby regretted and rejected accordingly.

The provisions of Section 215 of the Election Act, 2017 are hereby invoked and PTI is hereby declared ineligible to obtain the Election Symbol, for which they have applied for."

It may be noted that the ECP rendered the intra-party polls as invalidated hence, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, who became the party's chairman, would no longer be the party's top head.

The development came shortly after the PTI held discussions with ECP authorities, prompted by the Supreme Court's directive for the ECP to allow PTI's reservations regarding lack of a level-playing field. As per the PTI, the ECP assured its delegates that it would redress their grievances.

## Hold telephonic conversation President, PM express concerns over inappropriate police treatment against Baloch protestors

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi and Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday held a telephonic conversation wherein they expressed concerns over the inappropriate police treatment with the Baloch protestors.

Discussing the situation, both the president and the prime minister viewed that the police should not have dealt with the protestors strictly, a President House press release said.

During the conversation, the prime minister told the president that the detained protestors were being released on personal

bonds. Meanwhile, Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar also called on President Alvi and discussed the overall situation in the province as well as police maltreatment against the Baloch protestors.

The governor viewed that the police should show restraint towards the protestors.

In the meeting, the two sides believed that the police should not have acted beyond their limits and powers.

Both leaders emphasized the measures to improve the law and order situation in Balochistan.

## Malik Abdul Wali Kakar reaches Islamabad: Governor calls for taking tense situation and sensitivity emerged due to Islamabad's arrests serious

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has underlined the need to take the tense situation and sensitivity of matter seriously, which otherwise emerged due to the arrests of people of Baloch Yekjehti Committee (BYC) in Islamabad. The Governor believed that the issues being faced can be sorted out after knowing the same with mutual understanding.

The Governor was speaking to the mem-

bers of the committee formed led by the caretaker Federal Minister Fawad Hasan Fawad regarding the BYC march in Islamabad on Friday morning.

The committee was comprised of the caretaker Federal Ministers Murtaza Solangi, Jamal Shah and Khalil George.

The Governor stressed that we need to take steps immediately in view of the tense situation of the region just because we can't afford more hatred and disputes. He said it is high

time that all government functionaries as well as political elders, religious leaders, media persons and other leading personalities may play their wholehearted role in the public interest.

Earlier, the Governor was briefed about the latest situation and informed that the arrested women and children have already been released.

While the legal requirements are being fulfilled in the case of the remaining other arrested persons, it was informed further.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in a group photo with the President, Directing Staff of National Defence University and graduating Civil Service officers of National Security Course-2024.

## Cipher case: SC approves bail pleas of PTI founder, Qureshi

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has approved bail plea of founder PTI and Shah Mehmoode Qureshi against surety bonds of Rs 10 lac each in cipher case.

Justice Athar Minallah has remarked offence has not been proved against founder PTI and he is innocent.

Acting Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Sardar Tariq Masood remarked Shah Mehmoode was wise person. He saved himself and asked founder PTI to read cipher.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Acting CJP Sardar Tariq Masood took up the bail pleas for hearing Friday.

Counsel for PTI founder said trial court has recorded statements of 12 witnesses in haste.

The acting CJP re-

marked speedy trial is right of every accused. Why do you want that trial is not completed speedily.

Justice Athar Minallah remarked foreign ministry informs government about cipher so that help could be sought in foreign policy. Objective of official secret act is only this the sensitive information could not go out to any one.

Counsel Suleman Safdar said we have to see this sensitive information has been shared or otherwise. Justice Athar Minallah remarked the original cipher is in ministry of foreign affairs. If it has gone out then it is offence of ministry of foreign affairs.

Suleman Safdar said former Prime Minister (PM) had said in a public meeting that the letter held by him is evidence of conspiracy.



KHUZDAR: President Balochistan National Party Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal participating in a protest held against arrest of participants of Baloch Yakjethi March in Islamabad

## Passport making for Chaman people eased to facilitate in cross border movement

QUETTA (INP): The passport making for people has been eased under One Document Regime to facilitate them in movement across Pak-Afghan international border.

Earlier, there was only one room of the Passport Office Chaman, but now it is expanded and ten counters have been established. Two counters have been allocated for women only.

Similarly, a new Passport Office with five counters has also been established in Qilla Abdullah under One Document Regime.

People from Chaman, Qilla Abdullah and other surrounding areas are now approaching to these offices for making passports.

Residents of Chaman, who were present at the Regional Passport Office, have lauded the government's initiatives.

## Quetta Development Package roads: Caretaker CM acknowledges meritorious services of Commissioner Quetta

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has acknowledged the services and untiring efforts made by Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat for the Quetta development package and especially for completion of the Sariab link Badini road.

In recognition of the outstanding performance of Commissioner Quetta, the Chief Minister presented him a commendation certificate here on Friday.

The Chief Minister also expressed best wishes for him. Needless to mention here that the Commissioner Quetta played key role in completion of different department projects especially Sariab and adjacent roads.

## 5 laborers killed, one injured in firing on under construction police station

PESHAWAR (APP): At least five laborers were killed and one sustained injuries in an armed attack on an under-construction police station in Wanna, district of South Waziristan, confirmed Farmanullah, District Police Officer (DPO).

The DPO told media that the attack was carried out late Thursday night resulting in the tragic loss of five lives, with one worker sustaining injuries. The bodies and the injured were shifted to district hospital Wana he said adding that further details would be shared after the investigation. The victims, hailing from Punjab, were identified as Mohammad Uzair, Baqar Ali, Shehbaz Ahmed, and Shehzad Ahmed.

## JUI-F chief submits nomination paper for NA-265 Pishin

QUETTA (APP): Nomination Papers of Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman, Chief of the Jameet Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) were submitted on Friday for NA-265 Pishin for the upcoming general elections.

Provincial Ameer JUI-F Maulana Abdul Wasey, on behalf of the JUI-F central Ameer, submitted the nomination papers at Pishin district of Balochistan.

Senator Kamran Murtaza, Asghar Tarin were prominent among other leadership of the party who accompanied the JUI-F provincial Ameer.

## EC extends date for filing nomination papers

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has extended the date for filing nomination papers for two days.

Date has been extended on the pleas of political parties.

Political parties including MQM, JUI-F, PML-N and Balochistan Awami party had requested the EC to extend the date for filing nomination papers without changing the date for polls.

The EC while accepting the plea of political parties extended the date for filing nomination papers for two days.

EC has said the candidates now can file the nomination papers till December 24. Political parties can file preferential list of reserved seats till December 24.

The scrutiny of papers will be conducted from December 25 to 30.

EC had earlier fixed the date from December 20 to 22 for filing and receiving nomination papers.

The political parties while raising objection over it had demanded of EC to extend the date for filing nomination papers.

## PM dispels doubts about election on Feb 8

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Thursday said there should be no doubt about polls on February 8 as the election process had started with the candidates filing their nomination papers and the political parties busy in building narratives to attract voters.

In an interview with a private television channel, he said it was a constitutional requirement to hold elections which would be held on February 8 after which a new elected government would be formed.

To a question, he said the government would provide security to political leaders, including the three time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Maryam

Nawaz, Imran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and others.

Prominent political leaders could be targeted and the government would be blamed for any lapse in their security, he continued.

"It is the responsibility of the government to provide security to political leaders and voters of Pakistan."

He said the caretaker government would fulfill its responsibility during the holding of elections.

It would be illegal to stop the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) from taking part in the elections, he said and clarified there was no policy to stop the PTI from organizing public meetings.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi addresses the graduation ceremony of 38th MCMC Domain Specific Training and 40th Specialized Training Program at Information Service Academy Auditorium.

## Full confidence in EC, elections will be held on time, Solangi

ISLAMABAD (Online):

Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi has said that general elections will be held as per schedule. We have full confidence on Election Commission (EC). I cannot comment on internal matters of political parties.

PEMRA act provides job protection to journalists.

While talking to media, Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi said that legal steps will be taken to protect the employment of journalists.

The demands of protestors from Balochistan are long standing. Women and children have been released. Most of the men have also been released. Committee is doing its work. Governor of Balochistan also joined the

committee. Caretaker Federal Minister for Information has further said that today there is also meeting of this committee with Prime Minister. Security is being provided to women and children who have come from Balochistan.

APP adds: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Friday the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) extended the date for submission of nomination papers by two days on the demand of various political parties. Talking to the "Dawn News", he said the ECP had not made any changes in the date of elections, which would be held on February 8, 2024.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar calls on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## 52 nomination papers filed for reserved seats in Balochistan, says Ejaz Anwar Chohan

Independent Report

QUETTA: A total of 52 nomination papers have so far been submitted for the reserved seats of the national and provincial assemblies from the Balochistan province.

According to the Provincial Election Commissioner Ejaz Anwar Chohan, the process of submission of the nomination papers is continued for the seats reserved for the women and minorities.

He informed that eight nomination papers were submitted for the women reserved seats in the Na-

tional Assembly on Friday. Similarly, in all 15 nomination papers were submitted for women in the provincial assembly.

The Provincial Election Commissioner told 10 papers were submitted for the seats reserved for minorities in the provincial assembly.

It may be mentioned here that the Provincial Election Commissioner Ejaz Anwar Chohan has been appointed as the Returning Officer for the reserved seats of the provincial and National Assemblies in the province.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting



## IPMG meeting urges Fortifying gender data collection to promote gender equality

LAHORE (APP): The participants in the Inter-Provincial Ministerial Group (IPMG) discussed the use of data more effectively in efforts to promote gender equality in Pakistan.

The two-day 21<sup>st</sup> IPMG meeting, held under the auspices of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), and with support from UN Women and the United States, concluded here on Friday during which speakers shared vision of a more inclusive society, where every woman can thrive and contribute to the nation's progress. The IPMG was established in 2009 to enhance coordination on gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan.

Nilofar Bakhtiar, chairperson NCSW, said: "This assembly serves as a crucial platform, fostering collaboration and initiating positive change on the path to gender equality and empowerment of women in Pakistan. Together, let's unite to construct a society where every woman's voice echoes, and her rights and contributions are valued."



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman in a group photo with during function organized in connection with the Quaid Day at the Governor House.

## Christian community playing key role in Pak development, prosperity: Mushaal

RAWALPINDI (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussean Mullick, congratulating the Christian community on Christmas, has said that the Christian community was playing a key role in the development and prosperity of the country.

She said that the Christian community members were performing significant services while all the minorities including the Christian community had equal rights in Pakistan.

Addressing a ceremony organized by

Archbishop Rawalpindi-Islamabad Dr Joseph Arshad in connection with Christmas celebrations, Mushaal said that atrocities were being committed on minorities in India and the international community should take notice of that.

Station Commander Rawalpindi Brig. Ahmad Nawaz, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leaders Chaudhry Tanveer, Barrister Danyal, Chaudhry Osama, Malik Abrar, Ziaullah Shah and Rashid Khan, Pakistan Peoples Party's Sib-ul-Hasan Bukhari, businessman Sheikh Muhammad Hafeez,

Shoab Sadal, Member of the peace committee, Babu Sajid Amin Khokhar, Frayad Francis, Napoleon Gomez, Sanobar Gill, ambassadors of various countries, Hindu, Sikh and Christian leaders, Ulema Izhar Bukhari, Hafiz Iqbal Rizvi and Pir Azmatullah, and administrative officers attended the ceremony.

Archbishop Dr Joseph Arshad, in his remarks, said, "Christmas gives us the message of peace and brotherhood, and the Christian community will continue to strive for the development and prosperity of the beloved country like before."

He urged the Christian community to remember their needy and deserving brothers in the festivities of Christmas and share them in their joy.

He congratulated the Christian community on Christmas, which, he said, was a message of peace, reconciliation and love. The community would continue its efforts for the promotion of love and affection. On this occasion, special guest Mushaal Mullick lit the candle of peace along with Dr Joseph Arshad and other distinguished guests. A Christmas cake was also cut later.

## KARACHI: PPP Senator Saleem Mandviwala talking to media persons after submission of nomination paper for NA 241 General Elections 2024 at Assistant Commissioner office.

**Firdous says: Every political step of IPP will lead to the country's construction, development**

SIALKOT (APP): Central Information Secretary Isteekam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and former Federal Minister Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan has said that every political step of Isteekam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) will lead to the country's construction and development and to divert the resources of a strong and powerful Pakistan towards the development and prosperity of the people of NA-70, there must be sincere and honest leadership from the constituency.

In a statement issued here to the media on Friday,

## RPO orders foolproof security on Christmas

FAISALABAD (APP): Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan has issued instructions for ensuring foolproof security arrangements on Christmas. He directed the capital police officer (CPO) Faisalabad, district police officers (DPOs) of three districts including Jhang, Toba Tek Singh and Chiniot to make foolproof security arrangements in churches, Christian settlements, special markets and celebration points on Christmas.

## KP Cabinet reiterated commitments to provide level playing field in Election

PESHAWAR (APP): The Caretaker Provincial Cabinet of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Friday reiterated its commitment to provide a level playing field to all political parties and has asked them to follow the Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) during their election campaigns.

Besides the directives of the Election Commissions, these SOPs include holding large political gatherings in designated areas notified by the provincial

government during daylight to ensure efficient security and safety of the participants.

The cabinet met under the Chairmanship of the Caretaker cabinet, Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Arshan Hussain Shah finalized preparations for the upcoming general elections in light of the directives of the Election Commission reiterating that every effort will be made to ensure free and fair elections in the province.

The Chief Minister said that all resources have

been mobilized for the purpose and every effort is being made to ensure transparency and efficient utilization of the taxpayer's money. The Cabinet was briefed in detail about the preparations for the upcoming general elections. It would ensure the availability and placement of human resources, mapping of missing facilities, and placement of IT staff and equipment. The Cabinet assured that provision of ramps at polling stations.

## CM orders 24/7 CT-Scan, MRI reports facility

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has directed the health secretary that all hospitals must adhere to a 24/7 facility for providing CT scans and MRI reports to patients.

He made a surprise visit to Children's Hospital on Friday where parents raised concerns regarding delayed issuance of CT scans and MRI reports. The CM was informed that CT scans and MRI reports were issued three days after the tests. The CM warned that hospitals found to be causing delay in delivering CT scans and MRI reports would face administrative action.

During his visit, the CM inspected various wards, interacted with parents of children and inspected the medical facilities. The CM also inspected up-gradation work, engaged with the labourers and assessed progress.



MULTAN: Senior Vice Chairman PPP, Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani submitting his nomination papers with his supporters at the Commissioner's office.

## Kristin Hawkins sees women become agents of change through sports

LAHORE (APP): US Consul General in Lahore Kristin Hawkins has said women become a source of positive change in societies through the life transforming skills and confidence gained from sports.

Speaking at a four-day US funded sports workshop for women at University of Education (UoE) Township here on Friday, she said sports contribute to character-building and help women become positive agents of change and reminded the workshop participants of their unique role as educators, coaches, and mentors in helping young women develop their leadership skills.

With the sole purpose of empowering young women, the workshop was conducted by coaches, trainers, and educators from Baylor University and University of North Carolina, Wilmington, in partnership with the UoE, Township. Female sports educators, trainers, and coaches from 10 schools and four universities across Punjab attended the workshop.

"Not everyone, who participates in sports, will go on to play professionally, but the confidence, teamwork, and skills that we learn from sports can help us become a force for positive change, no matter what we do in life," Hawkins said.

# International News

## More than 20 countries now part of US-led Red Sea coalition, Pentagon says

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: A total of more than 20 countries have agreed to participate in the new US-led coalition safeguarding commercial traffic in the Red Sea from attacks by Yemen's Houthi movement as more nations join the effort, the Pentagon said on Thursday.

Still, the new Pentagon total would suggest that at least eight of the countries who have signed up have also declined to be publicly named, in a sign of political sensitivities of the operation as regional tensions soar over the Israel-Hamas war.

"We've had over 20 nations now sign on to participate," Major General

Patrick Ryder said, noting declarations by Greece and Australia.

"We'll allow other countries, defer to them to talk about their participation."

The United States launched Operation Prosperity Guardian two days ago, saying more than a dozen countries had agreed to participate in an effort that will involve joint patrols in Red Sea waters near Yemen.

Each country will contribute what they can, Ryder said, dubbing it a "coalition of the willing."

"In some cases that will include vessels. In other cases, it could include staff or other types of support,"

he told a news briefing.

The crisis in the Red Sea has grown out of the war between Israel and Gaza's ruling Palestinian Islamist group Hamas.

The war began on Oct. 7 when Hamas fighters stormed across the Gaza border into southern Israel, where Israeli authorities say the militants killed about 1,200 mostly civilian Israelis and foreigners.

Israel's retaliatory bombardment and invasion of Gaza, which Israeli officials state is aimed at wiping out Hamas, has killed nearly 20,000 Palestinians, according to health officials in the densely populated, coastal enclave.



Lai Ching-te, Taiwan's vice president and the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) presidential candidate gestures during an election campaign event in Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

## No functional hospitals left in northern Gaza: WHO

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: There are no longer any functional hospitals in the north of the Gaza Strip, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said Thursday, describing "unbearable" scenes of largely abandoned patients begging for food and water.

The UN health agency said it had led missions to two badly damaged hospitals, Al Shifa and Al Ahli, in the north of the Palestinian territory on Wednesday.

"Our staff are running out of words to describe the beyond catastrophic situation facing remaining patients and health workers," said Richard Peepers-korn, the WHO representative for the occupied Palestinian territory.

His comment came amid increasingly frantic diplomatic efforts to secure a pause in the war that Hamas says has already claimed 20,000 lives in Gaza, 70 per cent of them women and children.

## Diplomatic ties with US could break down over asset seizures

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russia may cut diplomatic ties with the United States if Washington confiscates Russian assets frozen over the Ukrainian war, the Interfax news agency quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying on Friday.

The United States "must not act under an illusion... that Russia is clinging with both hands to diplomatic relations with that country," Ryabkov said.

Russia has described relations with the United States as "below zero" because of U.S. military and financial aid for Ukraine in the war now approaching the end of its second year.

Ryabkov said Russia, which sent forces into Ukraine in February 2022 in what it called a "special military operation", would not be the one to initiate a break in diplomatic ties, but such a rupture could be prompted by a variety of factors.



Czech Interior Minister Vit Rakusan and Police Chief Martin Vondrasek give a press conference in the Ministry of the Interior in Prague, Czech Republic.

## Czech police seek motive in Prague mass shooting that killed 15

**Monitoring Desk**  
PRAGUE: Czech authorities sought a motive on Friday in a student's gun attack that killed 15 people at a Prague university, where tearful mourners have left a sea of candles to grieve for the victims.

The gunfire on Thursday at the Charles University's Faculty of Arts sparked frantic scenes of students running from the attack that was the Czech Republic's worst shooting in decades.

A makeshift memorial of hundreds of candles flickered outside the university on Friday as police pursued the investigation at the campus in Prague's historic centre.

The gunman, a 24-year-old student, killed himself after the attack, shooting dead 15 people and wounding 25 others.

"We know all 14 dead and their identity. It's 15 victims of the mad gunman and the gunman himself," Interior Minister Vit Rakusan told public broadcaster Czech TV, revising down a previous toll of 14 victims. He added that three of the wounded were foreigners.

## No deal with Turkey on Swedish NATO bid: Hungary's Orban

**Monitoring Desk**  
BUDAPEST: There is no Hungarian-Turkish deal about the ratification of Sweden's bid for NATO membership as it will be up to the Hungarian parliament to decide when to vote on this, Prime Minister Viktor Orban told a news briefing on Thursday.

Orban said there was no great willingness among ruling party lawmakers in Budapest to approve Sweden's bid. Sweden's application has been held up by Turkey and Hungary's refusal to support it. Orban said in September that Hungary was in no rush to ratify Sweden's NATO accession.

## Japan prepares for missile shipments after easing arms export restrictions

**Monitoring Desk**  
TOKYO: Japan said on Friday it would prepare to ship Patriot air defence missiles to the United States after revising its arms export guidelines earlier that day, in the pacifist nation's first major overhaul of such export curbs in nine years. The announcement comes as Japan, which had long adopted a stance of not allowing exports of deadly weapons, seeks to boost its defence industry amid an increasingly tense security environment in the Indo-Pacific.

"This holds significant meaning in terms of further strengthening the Japan-U.S. alliance. It will contribute not only to Japan's security but also the peace and stability of the wider Indo-Pacific region," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said following the announcement.

Although Japan's new export controls still prevent it from shipping weapons to countries that are at war, it may indirectly benefit Ukraine in its war with Russia as it gives the United States extra capacity.

## Turkiye detains 304 over Islamic State ties

**Monitoring Desk**  
ANKARA: Turkish authorities have detained 304 people suspected of having ties to the militant group Islamic State in operations across 32 provinces, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said on Friday.

The majority of the suspects were detained in Turkey's three biggest cities of Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir, Yerlikaya said on social messaging platform X. He said the operation, "Operation Heroes-34",

## North Korea's Kim warns of 'nuclear attack' if 'provoked'

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned Pyongyang will not hesitate to launch a nuclear attack if "provoked with nukes", state media said on Thursday, while Seoul and its allies called for "dialogue without preconditions".

Kim's warning follows a meeting between South Korea and the United States last week in Washington, where they discussed nuclear deterrence in the event of conflict with the North.

The meeting's agenda included "nuclear and strategic planning", and the allies reiterated that any

nuclear attack by Pyongyang on the United States or South Korea would result in the end of the North Korean regime.

But Kim told his military's missile bureau "not to hesitate (launching) even a nuclear attack when the enemy provokes it with nukes," Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said.

Washington, Seoul and Tokyo released a statement shortly afterwards, urging the nuclear-armed country to "stop conducting further provocations and accept our call for engaging in substantive dialogue without preconditions".



Jordanian cameraman Samer Abu Daqqa during a demonstration in front of the broadcaster's office in Amman, Jordan.

## US, China top military officials speak for first time in over a year

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The top U.S. military officer held a virtual meeting with his Chinese counterpart on Thursday, the Pentagon said, in the first such conversation in over a year amid hopes by U.S. officials that it could lead to a broader restoration of ties between the two militaries.

The video teleconference followed an agreement between U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping last month to resume military-to-military ties severed by Beijing after then-House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi vis-

ited self-ruled Taiwan in August 2022.

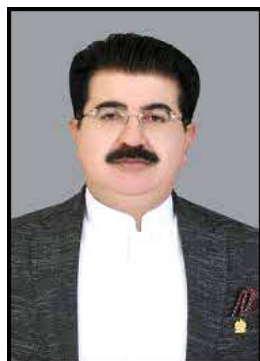
U.S. Air Force General Charles Q. Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Liu Zhenli of China's People's Liberation Army touched on "a number of global and regional security issues," Brown's office said. Liu is the chief of the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the military body responsible for China's combat operations and planning. Pentagon officials say communication between the two militaries is crucial to preventing a miscalculation from spiraling into conflict.





**Message**

**Mr. Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani**  
Chairman Senate



The Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) have consistently championed the economic growth and advancement of our beloved nation through its determination and hard work. Its commitment to nurturing businesses, promoting commerce, and upholding the highest standards of industry excellence is unparalleled. The year 2022 stands as a testament to the resilience and prowess of our business community. Through challenges and changing landscapes, our industrious professionals have not only adapted but thrived, marking significant milestones in the socio-economic development of Pakistan. Their efforts are not just of national significance,

but have resounded in international markets, making us all immensely proud. It is with great respect and admiration that we acknowledge the high achievers of this year. The FPCCI Achievement Awards are not mere accolades but a recognition of the remarkable journeys, relentless determination, and innovative ventures that have set these individuals and organisations apart. Earning this prestigious award underscores their exemplary contributions and places them among the elite in both Pakistan and abroad. Such recognitions are pivotal. They not only celebrate success but also motivate the broader business community to aspire, innovate, and contribute more profoundly to the socio-economic fabric of Pakistan. It is through these accomplishments and the continuous encouragement from platforms like FPCCI that we pave the way for a more prosperous and progressive future for our nation. May the laurels of today inspire many more success stories tomorrow, and may the FPCCI continue its commendable work in spearheading Pakistan's economic journey.

**Dr. Umar Saif**  
Federal Minister for IT & Telecom, Science & Technology



I am delighted that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry is organizing its 11th Achievement Awards ceremony this year in recognition of the services of talented people and reputed organizations and, as usual, is bringing out an Informative Achievement Award Souvenir on the occasion.

I am very happy to note that the aims of this award is to give recognition to individuals and organizations whose achievement has contributed significantly in the growth and development of Pakistan. The Awards promote healthy competition among people and encourage them to strive harder to push the boundaries of excellence. The Award recipient would have demonstrated past accomplishments and forward thinking to advance the notions of sustainability in every possible way.

**Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh**  
President FPCCI



The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry being the apex representative body of the business community of Pakistan taking pride of initiative to acknowledge the outstanding performances of business entities and individuals in their respective fields through Achievement Awards.

After successful organization of the previous events, FPCCI is holding the 11th Edition of "Achievement Awards", as a flagship event which is regularly organized to honor the achievements of enterprises in their respective fields, acclaiming as symbol of prestige and recognition at national and international level. The FPCCI Achievement Awards helps Award Winners, in the elevation of

their profile and reputation among all circles.

The performances of award winners and their achievements despite the challenges faced by the business community in Pakistan are highly commendable. This speaks of their dedication, devotion and commitment to their business interests and valuable contribution towards Pakistan's economy.

I thank my team, Convener and Members of the Awards Committee, the Senior Vice President, Vice Presidents, Coordinators, the Secretary General of FPCCI and his team for their dedication and hard work put in organizing this event. I am confident the Achievement Award will motivate and encourage others to put in more efforts into their respective areas of interest and come out with outstanding achievements which will not only reward them but will also serve trade and economic interests of the Pakistan. I congratulate all the Award Winners and wish them a continued success in their endeavors, with laurels.

**Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqar**  
Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh



The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) is organizing the 11th FPCCI Achievement Awards to recognize the outstanding performance of individuals and firms for enhancing the insignia of Pakistan. As we know that, in knowledge drive global culture and human development, progressive nations atheistically search for new ideas, people, talents creative plans innovative methods to renovate the old and obsolete systems and infrastructure with new passion and ambitions for a better future. In the era of globalization and economic integration the issues of socio-economic development is one of the category of FPCCI's achievements awards.

Despite all challenges like infrastructure, lack of knowledge creating activities and educational and health backwardness, our people are still competitive in marketing their talent in

**Mr. Ahmed Irfan Aslam**  
Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental coordination



I am pleased to know that following its past tradition, the FPCCI is organizing the 11th FPCCI Achievement Awards to confer awards to the leading entrepreneurs of Pakistan in recognition of their exceptional performance this year.

The organization of Achievement Awards is a commendable step because they recognize the achievements of exporters and service sector who dare to venture in new areas and succeed. By learning from the example of successful achievers, new entrepreneurs will also encourage to take bold initiatives and win a seal of approval from the apex body. On this occasion, I would also like to appreciate the contribution of the private entrepreneurs for the country through quality products.

**Mr. Rizwan Ahmed Bhatti**  
CEO, Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation



I am glad to know that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) is organizing its 11th Achievement Awards in order to honor the business houses who have made an outstanding contribution towards Pakistan's business performance.

Pakistan's strategic location offers our manufacturers a great opportunity to serve the markets in the region, provided they have exportable surplus of manufactures. We should, therefore, adopt innovative methods and the public private partnership model for

reaching international markets and I commend them on this achievement. On this occasion, I also applaud the role of FPCCI in promoting technology, export, economic growth, and prosperity and assisting traders and industrialist in addressing the new challenges being faced in the sphere of international market.

I believe that this event will play a role to boost the confidence of people in marketing their activities. Every successful nation always wants the quick convergence of the country, which is possible only in that condition when countries adopt export led growth and investment-led growth policies for competitiveness, diversification and value addition. I am confident that this event will open up a new vista of fresh opportunities and truly help in promoting true image of Pakistan, which need bareness at significant level.

I congratulate to all valiant winners for their dedicated efforts which are highly admirable and it is my conviction that our people will perform better in future too to accelerate the progress of Pakistan's economy which is the need of the time. I congratulate all the awardees, and convey my best wishes to the organizers for the success of the ceremony.

**Haji Ghulam Ali**  
Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



It is heartening to know that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) is organizing the 11th FPCCI Achievement Awards, to strengthen the confidence of Pakistani individuals and organizations who performed exceptionally in their respective fields and sectors.

I am pleased to learn that FPCCI's Achievement Award has generated fair competition amongst individuals and organizations and boosts their dynamism, which will lead Pakistan to the road of self-reliance. Economic development, open trade and social emancipation always take place in those countries where creativity, freedom of thoughts and actions are

welcomed and due recognition is given to the individuals who participate actively in attaining the objectives.

The industrial sector plays vital role in the economy by creating jobs, providing goods services, and stimulating economic growth. It is also an important source of tax revenue for governments. Indeed the individuals and organizations of industrial sector not only collaborate with governments to gain access to resources and develop new products but also enable government to invest in infrastructure and other important projects. Congratulate all award winners for their dedicated efforts. It is my firm belief that our individuals and organizations will perform even better future to accelerate the pace of Pakistan's economy.

I would like to convey my best wishes to the President of FPCCI, Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh and his entire team for organizing the Award successfully with this hope that FPCCI will continue its efforts by way of providing marketing opportunities to individuals and organizations both at home and abroad.

**Mr. Aneeq Ahmed**  
Minister for Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony



I am glad to learn that the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) is organizing the 11th FPCCI Achievement Awards to pay tribute to the proficient and bright people and organization who have performed well in the field of trade, industry, economic, science, academia, research and development, commercial and socio-economic development. The institution of Achievement Awards is one of the praiseworthy contributions of FPCCI towards the promotion of merit and expertise and serves to provide recognition to the unfaltering members and organization of the Pakistani Community.

In this era of competition, there is a dire need that we recognize the motivate the services of individuals and organization whose are performing well in their area

of interest to boost the economy by devising strategies that give us an edge over our competitors. These bright people are not only work in Pakistan also work in other nations to the prosperity and development of the nation.

I anticipate that the FPCCI's Awards will generate new fair competition amongst organization and individual and boost their dynamism, which will lead Pakistan to the road of self-reliance. I hope that the Achievement Awards will further encourage the country's people to perform outstanding to improve the status of country in industries, commercial and socio-economic activities and to enhance the progress of Pakistan in national and international market.

I extend my warm felicitations to the president FPCCI and his team for organizing such a prestigious event and also on bringing out an impressive souvenir on this occasion. I also extend my felicitations to the FPCCI Achievement Awards Winners on their excellent performance and hope that they will continue their efforts for the prosperity of our country.

**Mr. Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry**  
CEO, National Productivity Organization



It gives me immense pleasure to know that FPCCI is organizing the 11th FPCCI Achievement Awards in the honor of the leading entrepreneurs of Pakistan whose performance is outstanding in bringing the much-needed foreign exchange to build the reserve of the country.

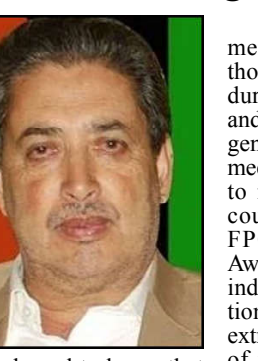
Through hard work and dedication these individuals have built efficient & commercial organizations that contribute to the economic growth and development of the communities in which they serve. The instituting of FPCCI Achievement Awards is a great initiative of FPCCI to further motivate the star performers under the prevailing conditions when global economy is slow down and affecting our economic progress.

Pakistan economy, particularly industry, agricul-

ture and services are increasingly exposed to serious challenges of competitiveness. In order to improve the competitiveness, there is immediate need to work on relevant indicators as with current performance, Pakistan cannot ideally compete and fetch a good share in the international market. Competitiveness is key in today era, it is impossible to compete in global market without being productive and efficient. I hope that the export awards would serve to encourage a healthy competition in all sectors of economy improving productivity, harnessing new markets and meeting the international challenges.

I congratulate FPCCI on its devotion and sincere efforts to promote entrepreneurship in the country. I also extend my heartfelt felicitations to all Awards Winners on their outstanding performance and contribution in economic development of country. Their achievements and contributions to our business landscape have indeed set a high bar for the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

**Syed Mehdi Shah**  
Governor Gilgit-Baltistan

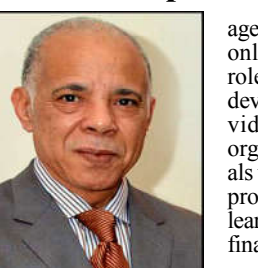


I am pleased to know that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) is organizing a prestigious event of the 11th FPCCI Achievement Awards, to leading individuals and organizations in lieu of their outstanding performance. These awards have great significance in the present competitiveness environment and they provide an opportunity to the individuals and organization to identify challenges, analyze emerging trends and devise new strategies for recognizing the talent of the country.

The FPCC Achievement Awards encourage those who have done well during the previous year, and also act as a catalyst in generating fresh efforts to meet upcoming challenges to improve the image of country. I hope that the FPCCI Achievement Awards will recognize the individuals and organizations that have contributed extraordinary in the fields of trade, industry, social sector, science, research and others and reveal the highest values of their profession.

I believe that FPCCI Achievement Awards will motivate the individuals and organizations to vigorously play their crucial role in the growth and economic development of the country. I extend my warm felicitations to Irfan Iqbal Sheikh President of FPCCI, and his entire team on organizing this splendid Award ceremony in Pakistan. I also wish all award winners to continue good fortune and success for the future.

**Mr. Mohamed Karmoune**  
Ambassador of His Majesty the King of Morocco, Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps



I am quite optimistic that FPCCI will continue to support commendable activities of recognizing and admiring high achievers, which surely motivates and encourages individuals and organizations to further explore creativity and skills that propel them to achieve even higher goals.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of FPCCI, its President Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Office Bearers and the Executive Committee Members, for holding this extraordinary event. Your support allows the winners to gain the recognition they deserve.

I congratulate all the award winners on their achievements and wish them continued success in future. It is a pleasure to be in the company of so many high-achieving organisations and individuals.

**Dr. Saifuddin Junejo**  
Chairman Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA)



It is a well known fact that export is one of the important pillars of economic development and plays increasingly important role to strengthen the national economy as it offers people and firms many more markets for their goods. In modern times one of the core functions of diplomacy and foreign policy between governments is to foster economic trade, encourage exports and imports for the benefit of all trading parties.

2. Innovation, technological advancement and policy framework have historically proven to be the primary reason behind the enhancement of export. Unfortunately, Pakistan is behind the other countries in innovation, technological advancement and consistent Policies during the recent decades. Despite above handicaps, Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA) has taken measures

to boost exports and facilitate Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs) in its established Zones in the country, hence achieved export growth in the FY 2019-20 US\$ 638.022 million, FY 2020-21 US\$ 974.600 million and FY 2021-22 US\$ 934.997 through manufacturing Sector. EPZA is trying its best to enhance its share in the national exports. EPZA efforts have resulted in the cumulative exports of US\$ 11,875.00 million till the end of FY 2022-23.

3. There is a dire need to pursue an integrated approach wherein public and private sector work as partners to facilitate and promote an innovative and modern culture for promoting exports. FPCCI being an apex body of trade and industry is undoubtedly playing a crucial role in promoting trade and industry in Pakistan. The Achievement Awards are one of the major activities which encourage the business community and the exporters of Pakistan who are working tirelessly to promote Pakistani products in the International market and earn precious foreign exchange for the country.

4. Last but not least, I congratulate all the award winners for their commendable performance and wish them success in future.

