

# Independent

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## Accuses Sharif family of trying to buy PIA Bilawal says his political rivals are contesting polls to save themselves from jail

Says neither any player nor anyone else can compete with me in politics; PPP contesting election to provide maximum relief to underprivileged: Bilawal

KOHAT (Agencies): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has said that he does not have any political rivals as "neither any player nor anyone else" can compete with him in politics.

Addressing the party's rally in Kohat district on Sunday, the PPP chief took a veiled jibe at his political opponents, saying that they are contesting elections for their vested interests.

On the other hand, the PPP chief said he is contesting polls against his rivals to resolve the issues of the masses.

"Someone is fighting

elections to get out of jail while someone is fighting to escape from jail," Bilawal said at the rally.

He said the PPP does not represent the elite as it is "representative of the workers and poor of the country".

"We will bury the traditional politics of division and initiate the politics that aims at serving the masses."

The PPP chief also expressed hope that his party would form the government after the upcoming general elections and ensure that the masses would get their rights.

The PPP chief said he was warned against holding party conventions in KP

amid security threat alerts. "But [...] our workers say they are neither scared nor they would surrender before terrorism..."

INP adds: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has accused the Sharif family of attempting to buy the national airline, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), instead of selling it.

Addressing a public meeting in Lower Dir on Sunday, Bilawal said, "I have come to know that they are trying to buy PIA instead of selling it. I want to tell that we will not let Mian Sahib (Shehbaz Shari) to buy PIA."



KOHAT: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing to workers convention at Captain Zahoore Islam Shaheed Football Stadium Babri Banda.

## Governor assures of supporting Chess tourney conduct at Int'l level

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori has assured a delegation of the Chess federation of Pakistan of his full support for the conduct of a Chess Tournament at the international level.

The delegation led by Chess Federation of Pakistan's President Hanif Qureshi called on the Governor at the Governor

House here on Sunday. Players selected from Sindh for the Asian Youth Chess Championship were also present in the delegation.

In the meeting, the promotion of the Chess game in the province, measures to attract students to this game, provision of facilities to the players and other related issues were discussed.

## Senate Chairman accepts Shaukat Tarin's resignation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has officially accepted the resignation of former Finance Minister Shaukat Tareen from his Senate membership.



The Senate Secretariat issued a statement confirming that Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, who had traveled to Dubai from Iraq, met with Shaukat Tareen during the visit. In this meeting, Shaukat Tareen tendered his resignation to the Chairman Senate, and after due consideration, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani approved the resignation.

## Israeli forces push into southern Gaza as world demands cease-fire

GAZA (INP): Israeli forces pushed Sunday into southern Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of civilians have fled in search of shelter from bombardments and intense fighting with Hamas militants. Aid groups have sounded the alarm on the "apocalyptic" humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territory, warning it is on the brink of being overwhelmed by disease and starvation.

Hamas, which runs Gaza, said Sunday that Israel had launched a series of "very violent raids" targeting the southern city of Khan Yunis and the road from there to Rafah, near the border with Egypt.

A source close to Hamas and Palestinian militants fighting with Israel forces on Sunday near Khan Yunis. At least 17,700 people, mostly women and children, have died in two months of fighting in the narrow strip of territory, according to the latest figures from Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry.

## Fuel price likely to reduce in from Dec 16

ISLAMABAD (INP): Petrol and diesel prices are likely to decrease by 13 and 15 rupees per liter respectively, effective December 16th.

According to media reports, this potential price drop comes on the back of a 5.49 dollar per barrel decrease in the global petrol market. If the government finalizes the proposed reduction on December 15th, it will bring the price of petrol down from the current 281.34 rupees per liter to 268.34 rupees. Similarly, diesel prices could drop from 289.79 rupees to 274.79 rupees per liter.

The final decision on the new prices will be announced by the government on December 15th, and the revised prices will be implemented the following day.

## As many as 186 Afghan families returned to Kabul

ISLAMABAD (INP): "Thousands of Afghans are returning to their homeland on a daily basis through Chaman and Torkham borders, thanking Pakistan for its generosity," Radio Pakistan reported.

Apart from other measures for the dignified return of Afghans to their country, transit camps equipped with all facilities have been established in various districts for their temporary accommodation.



KARACHI: Activists of Gilgit-Baltistan's youth hold a protest in favor of their demands outside press club in Provincial Capital.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing 12th Convocation of Indus University

## Intense political rhetoric testament to in-time elections: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Sunday said the intense political rhetoric in the country was a testament to the conduct of the election on a date announced by the electoral watchdog.

"With the will of the Almighty, the elections

will take place on Thursday, February 8, 2024," said the minister while talking to a private media channel on a TV talk show.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would issue the general election schedule, he said, adding all political parties would be given 54 days under the constitution and law for electioneering.

## ECP refutes claims of issuing general elections' schedule

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has categorically denied the issuance of any schedule for the upcoming general elections. A spokesman of ECP, strongly denied a news item published in daily Jang is unfounded and having no basis.

The spokesperson clarified that the schedule circulating on social media is fraudulent. The Election Commission spokesperson

noted that false information about the election is consistently appearing in both print and electronic media. He said pay attention only to statements from the official spokesperson of the Election Commission, and disregard any others claiming to be from the Commission.

Applications filed in the Commission underwent no consultations, clarified the spokesperson.



KARACHI: Workers of Jameat-e-Islami hold a protest rally against Israeli aggression on the people of Palestine.

## Govt committed to implementing labour, trade laws: Ahmed Shah

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Minister for Information, Minority Affairs and Social Security Muhammad Ahmad Shah on Sunday said that the Sindh government was committed to strictly implementing labour and trade union laws.

While addressing a conference on "Domestic Child Labour In Pakistan" and the launching of a study on Domestic Child Labour in Pakistan by Chairperson Human Rights Commission Sindh, Iqbal Ahmed Detho at a hotel here.

The Conference was organized by Sindh Human

Rights Commission in collaboration with FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG PAKISTAN (FES Pakistan). The Caretaker Minister said that civil society and every educated person had to play their role in discouraging and ending child labour.

He said that the Sindh government had taken a lead in the legislation to protect the rights of the downtrodden sections of the society to help them. He said that funds had been released by the Sindh government for the repair of all the schools that were destroyed during the floods in Sindh.

## Army Chief off to US on official visit

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir has left on Sunday for United States of America (USA) on his maiden official visit.

During his visit, General Syed Asim Munir is scheduled to meet the senior military and other government officials of USA, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

## WHO Executive Board meeting held in Cairo

ISLAMABAD (APP): The meeting of the Executive Board of the World Health Organization (WHO) was held in Cairo.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan participated in the meeting on video link.

The purpose of the meeting was to assess the destruction of health infrastructure in Gaza, denying access to treatment to the sick and wounded.

Dr. Nadeem Jan fully supported and appreciated WHO's position on the matter.

## SC, HCs should allocate benches in consultation with senior judges: Baqar

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar has said that being judges we may not have lived up to the expectations of the people and the colleagues and unfortunately, in recent years, relations between the bar and the bench have been strained.

"We must accept that the bar and the bench are both key stakeholders in the attainment of justice and democracy. Lack of coordination between the two not only affects them but also the entire system, therefore, we must work together to improve our relations and face all challenges together."

This he said while speaking at the annual dinner of the Karachi Bar

Association. The program was attended by Chief Justice Sindh High Court Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, Amir Saleem President Karachi Bar Association, Mumtaz Ali Mehdi Vice President, Waqar Alam General Secretary, Sabeeh Mahmood Joint Secretary, and others.

At the outset, the interim CM congratulated Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi on assuming the position of Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court. He hoped that during his tenure [Justice Aqeel Abbasi], both the bar and the bench would work together for the cause of justice and face all challenges together.

## Elections can be postponed in areas under security threat, suggests Qadir Baloch

ISLAMABAD (INP): PPP leader and former federal minister Abdul Qadir Baloch has suggested postponing elections in areas that are under security threat instead of delaying polls entirely.

Last month, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and President Arif Alvi agreed on February 8, 2024 as the date for polls. The development stirred activities in the camps of most political parties.

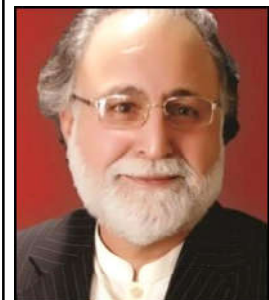
However, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali recently said it was difficult to carry out political activities in parts of KP and Balochistan due to the security situation. Similarly, JUI-F chief

Fazlur Rehman also raised questions on the feasibility of holding elections amid a "deteriorating" security situation.

Earlier this week, caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, while emphasizing the government's readiness to ensure peaceful general elections, acknowledged the terrorist threats faced by political leaders in the run-up to the polls, highlighting a general threat to political figures, with a specific alert for the JUI-F chief. In an interview with a private TV channel on Saturday, PPP's Baloch said it was more suitable to delay elections in sensitive areas and hold by-polls there later.

## Rehmat Shah Afridi laid to rest

PESHAWAR (APP): Funeral prayer of Rehmat Shah Afridi, Editor-in-Chief of Frontier Post Peshawar was



offered here on Sunday. Funeral prayer of the deceased was held at Hayatabad Peshawar and was attended by a large number of people, journalists, civil society members and well wishers.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori participating in concluding ceremony of Sindh Craft Festival. Caretaker Provincial Minister for Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Junaid Ali Shah and Information Minister Muhammad Ahmed Shah are also present.

## MQM-P to defeat opponents in elections: Zafar Siddiqui

HYDERABAD (APP): The Hyderabad district organizer of Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) Zafar Siddiqui on Sunday said the revived unity and political activism of his party has given fright to the political opponents.

In a statement issued here, Siddiqui maintained that the opponents know that they would not be able to win seats from Karachi and Hyderabad if MQM-P was actively taking part in the elections.

He expressed hope that the two cities would

give a huge mandate to the representatives from MQM-P.

He reiterated that questionable delimitations were carried out before the 2022 local government elections which were boycotted by the MQM-P.

Siddiqui said the political party which enjoyed power in Sindh paid no heed to the development of the urban parts of the province.

He alleged that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) subjected those urban centers to discrimination.

## Syed Farooq Shah pays glowing tribute to Rehmat Shah Afridi

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Editor-in-Chief of Independent Group of Newspapers Syed Farooq Shah expressed his sorrow over the death of Rehmat Shah Afridi, founder and Editor-in-Chief of 'The Frontier Post' and paid a glowing tribute to him for his services in journalism. He said that the services rendered by Rehmat Shah Afridi in the field of journalism will be remembered for long.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Liberties lost

As Pakistan marks Human Rights Day today, it confronts a troubling panorama of human rights violations. Rights bodies, local and international, have consistently drawn attention to the country's abysmal record but to no avail. Despite constitutional guarantees, the reality for many Pakistanis is a pervasive sense of insecurity. The use of enforced disappearances as a tool against dissent is particularly alarming. With at least 2,210 unresolved cases, the state's role in these disappearances paints a picture of repression.

The failure to enact legislation criminalising enforced disappearances, despite repeated attempts, suggests a lack of political will at the highest levels. The cases of journalists Nafees Naeem, Arsalan Khan, Imran Riaz and Baloch student Bebagr Imdad, who were all abducted — some for months — and later released, highlight a disturbing trend of targeting critical voices.

Some progress was made, with safety laws for journalists passed first by the Sindh Assembly followed by the National Assembly in late 2021, but their implementation remains a distant dream. The curtailing of freedom of assembly and expression is another area of grave concern. The authorities' use of force to disperse peaceful protests, and the intimidation and arbitrary detention of protesters, all indicate shrinking space for civil liberties.

Religious intolerance continues to ignite violence, with blasphemy allegations leading to the lynching of both minorities and Muslims. The Supreme Court's warnings against the misuse of blasphemy laws are welcome, yet much more is needed to protect the vulnerable from societal prejudices.

Violence against women remains a pervasive issue. While the conviction of Zahir Jaffer for the murder of Noor Mukadam is a significant step, systemic changes are crucial for addressing the broader issue of gender-based violence. The lack of enactment of the Domestic Violence Bill speaks volumes about the state's failure to uphold women's rights. The rights of transgender individuals, despite legal recognition, continue to be ignored. The challenge to the Transgender Rights Act and the continued violence against this community reveal deep-seated societal and institutional biases. Torture and custodial deaths remain unchecked, and the passage of the Torture and Custodial Death Act, while a positive development, requires rigorous enforcement.

This bleak landscape of human rights is reflective of a deeper malaise affecting the country's democratic fabric. The manipulation of democratic processes, the establishment's shadow over political life, and the selective application of justice all contribute to an environment where human rights are easily trampled upon. As Pakistan prepares for national elections, it is imperative that these issues are brought to the forefront. The protection of human rights is not just a moral obligation but a prerequisite for a stable and functioning democracy. On this Human Rights Day, let Pakistan recommit itself to these ideals, not just in rhetoric but in concrete actions.



Nawaz Sharif was an outcast in Pakistan—branded a convict, an absconder, and a proclaimed offender, marred by allegations of deep-seated corruption. He had been disqualified for life and ousted from the country. Sharif's persistent defiance in challenging the establishment had resulted in multiple confrontations, leading to repeated punishments. The prevailing, widely accepted perception was that the establishment, through extensive efforts, state resources, and manipulation of the judicial, administrative, and civil systems, had imprisoned him and orchestrated his exile. It seemed inconceivable that they would, in their right mind, reinstate him to a position of power.

Contrary to all expectations, Nawaz Sharif returned in a blaze of glory, defying every perception, estimate, and logic. He, once a convicted figure whose mere mention in the media was deemed a grave offense, transformed overnight into the media's darling—a remarkable shift akin to a magical transformation. Even the Interior Minister, who initially asserted Sharif's imminent arrest upon his return due to his convict status, hastily retracted, showering him with praise, acknowledging his eminence, and granting him VVIP treatment upon arrival.

In an astonishing turn of events, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) swiftly withdrew corruption charges against him, while the courts remarkably absolved him of allegations regarding ill-

gotten wealth in London—all seemingly within the blink of an eye. The sudden about-face in treatment and legal proceedings surrounding Sharif's return left an indelible impact, defying previous norms and expectations in a manner that resonated deeply.

However, a lingering unease persisted despite these developments. The intelligentsia, thinkers, analysts, and the general public found themselves deeply unsettled by the apparent manipulation of the country's systems, initially against Nawaz Sharif and then abruptly in his favor. Individuals with analytical minds grappled with this abrupt turn of events, finding it deeply disquieting, illogical, and difficult to comprehend. As they pondered various scenarios, ironically, many did not envision Mr. Nawaz Sharif reclaiming the position of Prime Minister for the fourth time.

The political analysts were assuming that the army as an institution has deep memories. It follows a cyclical process to ensure that armed forces remain adaptable, well-prepared, and continuously evolved to meet the challenges of dynamic and diverse conflict scenarios.

The process began with the clear definition of objectives and parameters. Develop scenarios by creating a realistic setting that encompassed geopolitical factors, terrain details, and enemy capabilities. The war game unfolded through real-time decision-making. Data is meticulously collected on decisions, outcomes, and resource utilization during the war game. Insights gleaned from the war game guided the refinement of strategies, tactics, and operational planning, feeding back into future simulations and real-world military opera-

tions.

As an analyst with past experiences closely working with both civil and military establishments, I have no doubt that before absolving Nawaz Sharif of all allegations and attempting to reinstate him as Prime Minister for the fourth time, the army would have followed specific procedures. They would have developed various scenarios focusing on questions like (a) What if Nawaz Sharif returns as Prime Minister for the fourth time? (b) Why should he not receive support for a comeback, and (c) what if an alternative nominee representing Nawaz Sharif is appointed as Prime Minister?

Scenario A: Given the PTI's popularity, there's a need for a prominent leader with public appeal and experience to counter Mr. Khan. Nawaz Sharif, with his extensive experience and stature, could emerge as a unifying figure across various political factions. His ability to initiate dialogue and focus on economic stability and governance reforms makes him a strong counterweight to Mr. Khan.

Mr. Sharif's past accomplishments in economic development and public infrastructure can be highlighted through a strategic public relations campaign. He could reach out to disenchanted segments of society, pledging accountability and reforms to address prevalent concerns. Civil society, recognizing his experience and the call for stability, might lend support. The establishment could opt for a working relationship based on mutual respect and commitment to national interests, reinstalling him as Prime Minister for the fourth time.

To maintain control

over his ambitions, ensuring he holds a slim majority or no majority in Parliament, he might need to form a coalition government with members favored by the establishment. This would keep his government reliant on their support, keeping his authority in check.

Scenario B: Opposition factions and certain elements within the military consistently highlight Nawaz Sharif's past dismissals and allegations of corruption. They argue that his return to power could jeopardize national interests and financial integrity, reigniting past controversies and instability.

Nawaz Sharif, during his tenure as Prime Minister of Pakistan, had several notable confrontations with the military establishment. His political career was marked by moments of strained relations and power struggles with the military leadership. These confrontations often stemmed from differing approaches to governance, control over key policy decisions, and the exercise of authority. Sharif's attempts to assert civilian supremacy and consolidate power occasionally clashed with the military's influence and perceived interests, leading to tense standoffs and moments of significant political instability in Pakistan.

A substantial portion of the public remains skeptical of Sharif's leadership due to lingering allegations and a perception of political opportunism. His reinstatement as Prime Minister might spark protests and deepen social divisions, leading to increased unrest.

Given Imran Khan's popularity, the establishment might need to manipulate elections in favor of Nawaz Sharif, undermining the credibility of

the electoral process. Such interference could lead to widespread rejection of the resulting government. If allegations of election rigging gain traction, international financial institutions like the IMF might withhold support, worsening the country's already fragile economic condition. This could plunge the nation into further instability and turmoil. International partners are expected to express concerns about Sharif's potential return, fearing its impact on diplomatic relations and regional stability. This skepticism complicates efforts to secure international support for his administration.

Scenario C: To navigate resistance and controversies surrounding Nawaz Sharif's leadership, the Establishment might orchestrate conditions where Nawaz Sharif willingly presents his brother, Shahbaz Sharif, as a compromise candidate for the prime ministerial role. In this scenario, Nawaz Sharif could retain substantial influence behind the scenes, effectively guiding the party and Shahbaz in governance matters allowing him to maintain control while projecting a cooperative image to subdue opposition.

Unlike Nawaz, Shahbaz is perceived as less likely to challenge military authority. He has a history of cooperative dealings with the military, avoiding direct confrontations—something favored by the military in civilian leadership.

Shahbaz boasts a reputation as a competent administrator with a proven track record in delivering economic projects. He is expected to prioritize economic development, aligning with the military's desire for a stable and prosperous Pakistan. Maintaining a fa-

vorable relationship with the military gives Shahbaz more flexibility, a crucial factor for the military to retain a semblance of civilian control. His appointment ensures continuity, minimizing disruptions and safeguarding the military's interests.

Seen as a pragmatic politician willing to collaborate with different parties, Shahbaz's approach is valued by the military. They prefer leaders capable of navigating Pakistan's intricate political landscape without unnecessary conflicts.

Among the three scenarios, Scenario C emerges as the most promising compromise. By nominating Shahbaz Sharif as Prime Minister while retaining Nawaz Sharif's influence behind the scenes, it offers stability, continuity, and a leader perceived as more cooperative towards the military. This compromise could address concerns raised in other scenarios, providing a pathway to navigate the controversies surrounding Nawaz Sharif's leadership. It presents a strategic balance, potentially satisfying the military's preferences for a less confrontational leader while maintaining a sense of stability within the government.

Reflecting on the abrupt ousting and subsequent return to power of both Benazir Bhutto Shaheed and Nawaz Sharif, orchestrated by the establishment, it becomes apparent that history might repeat itself. In a few years, we could find ourselves recalculating and envisioning various scenarios for Khan's potential return to the power equation.

The pattern of leaders being removed from office and later reinstated seems to be a recurring theme, hinting at a possible similar trajectory for Khan in the future.

## “Will Nawaz’s hopes die down soon?”

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC

## Commerce News

### Incentives to overseas Pakistanis to multiply remittances: LCCI

LAHORE (APP): Trust building, encouragement and the lucrative incentives to the overseas Pakistanis can multiply the foreign remittances which are the major part of the country's economy.

Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt said in a media statement here Sunday that the overseas Pakistanis are playing a great role in the economy of Pakistan through their remittances.

They said that the remittances in 2022-23 dropped by around four billion dollars to USD 27.3 billion. It is worth mentioning that in 2021-22,

the remittances stood at USD 31.3 billion. One of the main reasons of drop in remittances in 2022-23 was the difference between the inter-bank and open market dollar rate.

Since this issue is resolved now, it is expected that remittance will pose a sound growth in 2023-24. In the first three months of the financial year (July-September 2023-24), the remittances stood at USD 6.3 billion.

They said that the government should take measures to ensure that these remittances are invested in productive sectors. They said that foreign remittances could easily reach USD 50 billion in the next few years if the government announces

incentives on the investment made by expatriate Pakistanis. They said that the government should encourage the expats to invest in energy, agriculture, telecommunication and Information Technology. They said that a large number of overseas Pakistanis are keen to invest in Pakistan. They said that the government would have to discourage the Hawala system as annually billions of dollars are being sent through this illegal way.

The LCCI office-bearers said that at a time when the country is experiencing various economic challenges, rise in home remittances would provide much-needed support.

### Railways collect Rs 67.3 million from ticketless passengers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has collected over Rs 67.3 million from ticketless passengers during a crackdown during the last two months with the help of railway police and train staffs. “Around 51,347 passengers found traveling without tickets in different trains and collected the said amount from them, which is deposited in the official bank account of the department,” sources in the Ministry told APP.

They said that it was not the first time that action was taken on a large scale against ticketless passengers, adding that these types of crackdowns had taken place daily.

The sources said that ticketless traveling was illegal, and those who were caught without a ticket were charged a ticket price for the whole journey of the train besides the penalty.



SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) delegation led by its President Muhammad Jashim Uddin, along with businessmen from South Asia called on H.E Secretary General, SAARC, Ambassador Golam Sarwar on SAARC Charter Day at Kathmandu, Nepal.

### Disbursement of quarterly tranche (Oct-Dec) of Benazir Kafaalat continues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (October-December) of Benazir Kafaalat cash assistance to beneficiaries is continuing smoothly across the country. According to an official source, the payment process has already commenced across the country, including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Kashmir, and Gilgit-

Baltistan simultaneously. The payment of Rs 8,500 per household is being disbursed among around nine million registered beneficiary families. The beneficiaries, in case of any complaint, can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil offices or call the toll-free helpline number 080026477 of the Benazir Income Support Program. The special control room has been activated in the BISP

headquarters to address the complaints of the beneficiaries promptly.

However, the beneficiaries can also contact them on WhatsApp numbers including 0305-917-1917 (Sindh), 0325-5365520 (Punjab), 0325-5365469 (Balochistan), 0325-5365476 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit Baltistan.

### Buying dry fruits becomes a distant dream for common buyers amid soaring prices

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dry fruits as the most popular and consumed delight of the winter season have turned into a lavish commodity for a common man to buy due to the exorbitant rates amid the prevailing price hike situation.

The majority of the citizens especially those belonging to the low- and middle-income groups are finding it hard to buy their daily eatables like vegetables, fruits, wheat flour etc. due to the price hike situation so buying dry fruits is no more a priority for many.

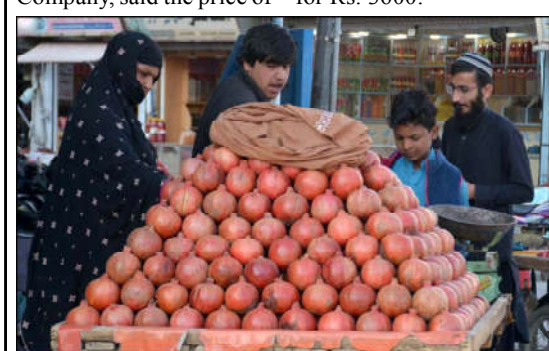
The nutritional benefits of dry fruits cannot be ignored in terms of increasing the immunity level to fight diseases due to the cold weather in the ongoing Winter season.

Sajid Khan, a dry fruits seller at Karachi Company, said the price of

dry fruits has increased along with inflation. “Selling dry fruits is the only source of income for me and it would be difficult to feed my children and run household expenditures if I didn't earn maximum profit”, he said.

“The trend of offering discounts on special occasions is no longer limited to the clothes, food items and other accessories of daily life but also being adopted by sellers like me to attract buyers due to its high price”, Sajid Khan added.

He said that he sells almonds (without shell) at Rs. 2800 per kg, Walnut (without shell) at Rs. 2200, Pistachio for Rs. 3600, apricot for Rs. 1200, dried figs for Rs. 1600, dried raisins for Rs. 1700, dates for Rs. 1200, Afghani Rewari for Rs. 1200 and Cashews for Rs. 3600.



QURTTA: A woman buying seasonal fruit Pomegranate from a roadside vendor.



HYDERABAD: Labourer women busy in sorting the good quality green chili at vegetables market.

### PCMEA calls for continuity in long-term export policy

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) has welcomed the proposed roadmap of USD 100 billion exports under Vision Pakistan and called for continuity in such long-term export policies to ensure their success.

“After final preparation, it should be declared a national policy

and its draft should be protected so that any political situation and change of governments cannot affect it,” these views were expressed in a joint media statement by the PCMEA Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf, Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Chairperson Ijazur Rahman and senior members here on Sunday.

### Time to regulate real estate for common man’s benefit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Having one's own house is dream of every citizen. But in a society plagued with exploitation and weaker regulations, this dream often lands these citizens in real trouble when they fall prey to property tycoons.

Playing with their emotion of having a house, the housing societies' owners first trap them by showing pleasant dreams and then exploit them fleecing their hard earned money.

In a desire of having

their own abode, some invest their pension or gratuity money and others sell their ornaments or household. But, after sometime they come to know that either the society was illegal or the owner had invested the collected money elsewhere delaying development and possession of plots.

The investors are charged repeatedly either in the name of development charges or other expenditures other than the specified plots price as recently surfaced in the case

of a society in the suburbs of Rawalpindi. Social media is seen flooded with hue and cry by investors against owners of this society, the heirs of a big gun in real estate business, for massively charging development expenses.

“They have become a mafia. Weaker regulations encouraged them to act without fear. Under the garb of specific laws, they freely fleece the people,” said an investor Rashid Mahmood. “It is very rare that there is any compatibility in actual

land price and the price charged by buyers.”

There is dire need to transparently maintain the data of files or property selling by housing societies by the government departments not leaving the developers to play as per their will. Moreover, strict laws must be enacted to ensure that both the developer and the investor or end user could equally benefit from these projects.

In many cases the societies' owners disappear with the investors' money

leaving them in lurch. Many societies' owners sell the same plot or file more than once to earn double or triple money against the actual price, flaring disputes among the owners and leaving them to stand for years to settle disputes.

Astonishingly these developers sometimes operate hand in glove with the government authorities with a few among them becoming so influential that they have a say in making or breaking the governments.

## No seat adjustment or alliance with anyone in Punjab: Javed

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): Javed Latif – a diehard PML-N leader – on Sunday said they had neither formed any alliance nor would go for seat adjustment with any other party in Punjab – a statement which follows reports of the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) finalising a long list of constituencies to get three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif's endorsement.

Addressing a ceremony in his hometown, Latif said the PML-N hadn't enjoyed a level-playing field – a term which is part of political debate nowadays because of the PPTI's narrative – so far and added that the party's supremacy was getting justice at a snail's pace.

Anyone creating

doubts about general elections wasn't sincere to Pakistan, he remarked and stressed that Nawaz was the last ray of hope for the people of Pakistan.

He said every party deserved level-playing field, but not the one attacking sensitive installations. "The party targeting sensitive installations is a terrorist [group], not political [entity]."

"We do not take the assertions made by Bilawal [Bhutto Zardari] seriously," said Latif, who is considered a close aide of Nawaz and believed to be regularly explaining his viewpoint on different issues.

Why they should take Bilawal's statements when even his father [Asif

Ali Zardari] didn't do so, he remarked – a reference to the interview in which the former president had told a private TV channel that his son [the PPP chairman] was inexperienced.

These remarks were in complete contrast to the speeches delivered by Bilawal who has been presenting himself as a prime ministerial material.

"We will reply when Mr Zardari speaks up," he told the gathering, adding that Zardari was used to refute Bilawal regularly.

He also advised the PPP to contest elections on the basis of its performance and said it destroyed Sindh during the 15-year-long rule in the province.



**PESHAWAR:** A delegation of teachers and students from Balochistan Residential College Zhob in a group photo with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali during their study tour.

## Punjab CM orders effective measures to prevent canal water theft

LAHORE (INP): On the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, desilting of 1,112 canals of the province will be launched from December 26 which will last until January 20.

In this regard all the divisional commissioners have been assigned the task of monitoring the desilting of canals which is being conducted after a gap of ten years. The Chief Minister while chairing a meeting on Sunday in Lahore directed that the commissioners will

remain in the field during the desilting and will supervise all other matters.

He instructed that attention should also be paid to the repair of canals along with desilting.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi ordered to take effective measures to check canal water theft.

The CM directed that administrative officers should take effective action in their respective districts to address water theft.

In the meeting, measures to prevent water

theft and desilting programs were reviewed.

Additional Chief Secretary, Chairman Planning and Development Board, Secretaries Agriculture, Irrigation, Food, Information, Commissioner Lahore and concerned officers of Agriculture Department attended the meeting.

Provincial Agriculture Minister SM Tanveer and all Divisional Commissioners participated in the meeting through video link.

## Minorities play a vital role in the development of the country; Dr Jamal

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health and Population Welfare Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir on Sunday said that minorities played a vital role in the development and progress of the country and were an integral part of the society.

He expressed these views while addressing a function organized in connection with Christmas celebrations at the IFGF Church.

The minister said that the minority communities were playing an important

and constructive role in the development of the country while leaders and followers of all religions played a key role in communal harmony in Pakistan.

Dr Jamal congratulated the Christian community on the coming Christmas and also cut the cake. A large number of Christian communities including Pastor Justin Javed, Pastor Frank Al-Aziz, Pastor Saber Khurshid, Pastor Manwar, Pastor Ilyas, and Pastor Arif Bhatti were also present on the occasion.



**LAHORE:** People visit and enjoying flower show at Race Course Jilani Park.

## Wealthy work together to reduce poverty; DG NAB

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Chairman of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Justice @ Sohail Nasir on Sunday emphasized that all the wealthy people needed to work together to reduce poverty.

While addressing the seminar on "Jinnah's Vision for Eradication of Poverty" organized by Jinnah Iqbal South Asian Forum (JISAF) at Anjuman Faiz-ul-Islam complex, he said that there was a lack of self-accountability in our society, adding every poor person who has health and safety should consider why he is poor.

"Working hard can change the financial position so we all should work tirelessly to

overcome our shorts", he added.

Justice (R) Sohail Nasir on the occasion announced to bear the expenses for the complete education of two children in the Jinnah Iqbal Education System and said that "we should do a lot of work for the promotion of education."

He paid tribute to the chairman of the forum, Rana Abdul Baqi, who every year distributes warm quilts and monthly rations to deserving families. Forum Chairman Rana Abdul Baqi, referring to the speeches of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in April 1943 and November 1944, said that the Quaid-e-Azam had declared that the new state of Pakistan.



**MULTAN:** Visitors are taking a keen interest in the calligraphy exhibition on the second day at Punjab Council of Arts.

## PPP mulls seat adjustment with ANP in Karachi, KP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leadership have contacted Awami National Party (ANP) on forming an electoral alliance and seat adjustment in Karachi and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) for the upcoming general elections.

Sources said that PPP has discussed seat adjustment with ANP on Karachi's two National Assembly (NA) seats.

Moreover, the two parties also discussed forming an electoral alliance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the upcoming elections.

PPP and ANP are

likely to make a seat adjustment in Peshawar, Swabi, Charsadda, Malakand, Mardan, Karak, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan (DI Khan), say sources. The latest development comes a day after ANP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) President Aimal Wali Khan met PPP Parliamentarians President Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at the Zardari House Islamabad.

They discussed on electoral alliance and seat adjustment in KP province for the forthcoming general elections.

## Punjab Transport dept provides relief to rickshaws

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Transport department has provided relief to ensure fitness of rickshaws till January 2.

Official sources said on Sunday that it was a golden opportunity for rickshaw owners to get fitness of their rickshaws done and get immunity from fine.

Immunity from fine had been given till January 2 and fine would be applicable once the relaxation date would end.

## PFA discards 1,000kg substandard meat

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) enforcement teams raided a meat processing unit in Shamkay Bhattian and discarded 1,000kg substandard and stinky meat, and lodged an FIR against the unit owner with the police station concerned.

The raid was conducted under the supervision of PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javed on Sunday.

## Despite efforts, smog continues to haunt authorities

LAHORE (APP): Unbridled growth, ill planned development projects and poor time management by the city authorities had led Lahore to endure another smoggy winter, once again maintaining its unfortunate position as the most polluted city during last week of November.

Even a smart lockdown for three days a week and ban on vehicular traffic on the Mall road on Sunday

could not change the situation exposing millions of historic city residents to different pollution related diseases.

Environmentalists and common people believe that untimely initiation of projects like Controlled Access Corridor on Bund Road, Shahdara, Akbar Chowk and Imamia Colony flyover and other construction work contributed to already injurious airborne dust particles.

## LWMC working on plan for dust free Lahore

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Waste Management Company has started implementing a plan to make the provincial capital dust free as per the direction of caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

According to LWMC sources here on Sunday, mechanical washing and sweeping of roads have been started during night shift in the supervision of Chief Executive Officer Babar.

# International News

## UN chief says he will not give up appeals for ceasefire in Gaza

**Monitoring Desk**  
DOHA: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Sunday he will not give up appealing for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, adding that the war undermined the credibility and authority of the Security Council.

Guterres was speaking at the Doha Forum conference as Washington vetoed on Friday a proposed UN Security Council demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the war between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas.

"I urged the Security Council to press to avert a humanitarian catastrophe and I reiterated my appeal for a humanitarian ceasefire to be declared," Guterres said.

"Regrettably, the Security Council failed to do it, but that does not make it less necessary," he said.

"I will not give up," Guterres added.

Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani told the gathering that Doha will continue to pressure Israel and Hamas for a truce despite "narrow-

ing" chances.

Qatar, where several political leaders of Hamas are based, has been leading negotiations between the group and Israel.

Sheikh Mohammed said hostages were released from Gaza because of negotiations and not because of Israel's military actions.

The head of UNRWA, the UN aid agency for Palestinians, said the dehumanization of Palestinians has allowed the international community to tolerate Israel's continued attacks on Gaza.



**Demonstrators wave flags and carry placards while calling for a ceasefire in Gaza during the 'National March for Palestine' in central London.**

## China, Japan trade blame over confrontation near disputed islands

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: China and Japan accused each other of maritime incursions after a confrontation between their coast guards in waters around disputed islands in the East China Sea.

China's coast guard said on Sunday that a Japanese fishing boat and several patrol vessels intruded the previous day into waters around the tiny islands, called Diaoyu in China and Senkaku in Japan. The uninhabited islands are controlled by Japan but also claimed by China.

China's coast guard said in a statement it had taken necessary measures in accordance with the law to warn away the Japanese vessels.

Japan's coast guard said on Saturday that two Chinese maritime patrol boats left Japan's territorial waters around the islands after receiving warnings. It said its patrol vessels were protecting a Japanese fishing boat that had been approached by the Chinese ships.

Similar incidents occurred in November and October. Asian maritime disputes involving China have been escalating. China and the Philippines traded accusations on Sunday over a collision between their vessels in a part of the South China Sea each nation claims.

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## At least 11 dead after violent clash in central Mexican town

**Monitoring Desk**  
MEXICO CITY: A violent confrontation between suspected criminals has left at least 11 people dead in the town of Texcatitlan in central Mexico, state security officials said on Friday.

Eight of the deceased were suspected to be tied to criminal activities, the security ministry for the state of Mexico said in a statement, adding that three victims were members of the community.

State police were working with the National Guard and other authorities to provide more details on the incident, the statement added.

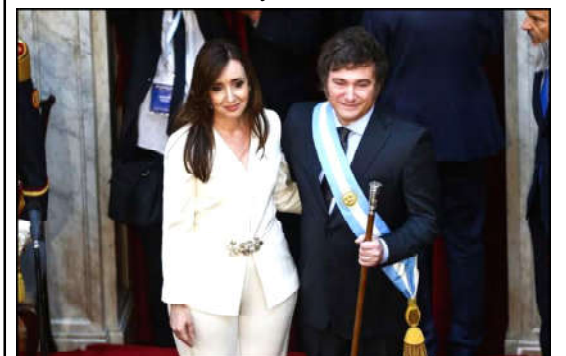
## Washington, allies to 'stand up' for stability in Taiwan's periphery

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on Saturday Washington and its Asia allies would "stand up" for stability across the Taiwan Strait, and reiterated their commitment to freedom of navigation in the disputed South China Sea.

His comments came during a joint briefing with his Tokyo and Seoul counterparts, after a trilateral meeting in South Korea. Late last month the top diplomats of South Korea, Japan and China — North Korea's key

ally and Washington's rival — reaffirmed the need to hold a trilateral summit at the "earliest" possible time. The United States and its Western allies have increased "freedom of navigation" crossings by naval vessels in both the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, to reinforce that both are international waterways, angering Beijing.

"We will continue to stand up for peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and freedom of navigation in the east and South China Seas."



**Argentina's new Vice President Victoria Villarruel and Argentina's President Javier Milei embrace during their swearing-in ceremony at the National Congress, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.**

## Navalny camp sets strategy to disrupt Putin's path to new term

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: With his hands on all the levers of power in Russia, Vladimir Putin appears unbeatable in a presidential election but opposition activists scent a chance to show he is vulnerable. Putin declared his candidacy for another six-year term on Friday and there is no serious rival to challenge him, with opposition leader Alexei Navalny serving more than 30 years in prison and other critics also jailed or in exile.

With the Kremlin in full control of state media and able to decide who can and cannot run, the Navalny camp says this is not a real election. But it sees the 100-day campaign window as a

rare opportunity to draw Russians into a political conversation and convince them that the Ukraine war and the economic strains it has brought are problems of Putin's making.

"Of course it's impossible to beat Putin in the 'elections'," top Navalny aide Leonid Volkov told Reuters. "The aim of our campaign is to change the political agenda in Russia."

The Kremlin says Putin will win another six-year term because he commands overwhelming support across Russian society, with opinion poll ratings of around 80%. So far only three people have declared their intention to run against him.



**Rohingya Muslim men are inspected by an Indonesian military officer, following their arrival in Blang Raya, Pidie, Aceh province, Indonesia.**

## Fight fire with fire: Controlled burns stem California blazes

**Monitoring Desk**  
SANTA CRUZ: In a forest in northern California, a line of people spread out through the trees, setting fire to shrubs and fallen branches in an act of intentional arson aimed at making the woodland better able to cope with future conflagrations.

The operation near Santa Cruz is part of a growing number of prescribed burns intended to reduce the amount of fuel that can feed natural wildfires in an era when human-caused climate change is increasing the likelihood of devastating blazes.

"The best way to fight fire is with fire," says

Portia Halbert, senior environmental scientist with California State Parks, who is supervising the burn.

Before the undergrowth is ignited, the earth is turned with shovels to create a containment line.

Branches and shrubs too close to fully grown trees are removed, and hoses are deployed to stop flames from getting out of control. The idea is to encourage the fire to consume only the forest floor, without spreading to the oaks and redwoods that loom over it. When wildfire breaks out in the future — as it certainly will — it will have less fuel and will burn cooler and slower.

## King Charles selects coronation photo for Christmas card

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: A photograph of Britain's King Charles and Queen Camilla newly crowned in Buckingham Palace after their coronation has been chosen for the royal couple's Christmas card, Buckingham Palace said.

Charles was crowned king in May, eight months after he ascended to the throne, in a majestic ceremony at London's Westminster Abbey that traces its history back more than 1,000 years.

Camilla, Charles' second wife, was crowned queen. Charles is pictured wearing the Imperial State Crown, Robe of Estate and Coronation Tunic, while Camilla wears Queen Mary's Crown, Robe of Estate and a dress designed by Bruce Oldfield.

The photograph was taken by Hugo Burnand in the Throne Room, the palace said.

## Iran says reviving nuclear deal 'useless'

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: Iran said on Saturday that attempting to revive its landmark nuclear deal that traces its history back more than 1,000 years, Camilla, Charles' second wife, was crowned queen. Charles is pictured wearing the Imperial State Crown, Robe of Estate and Coronation Tunic, while Camilla wears Queen Mary's Crown, Robe of Estate and a dress designed by Bruce Oldfield.

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## Iranian Nobel winner to start hunger strike in prison

**Monitoring Desk**  
OSLO: Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi will begin a new hunger strike from her prison cell in Iran as the prize is awarded in Oslo on Sunday, her family said on Saturday.

Mohammadi, who has campaigned against the compulsory wearing of the hijab and the death penalty in Iran, will go on hunger strike "in solidarity" with a religious minority, her brother and husband told a press conference in the Norwegian capital on the eve of the Nobel award ceremony.

With the US reimposing sanctions, international banks and businesses have stayed away from Iran for fear of falling foul of US regulators.

# AJK PM says Kashmiris' to continue struggle till achievement of their cherished goal of freedom

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that India was committing serious violations of human rights in Occupied Jammu & Kashmir State.

Prime Minister Haq expressed these views while addressing a seminar, which was organised by Kashmir Policy Research Institute to mark world human rights day in the federal metropolis on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, the PM said that India can not suppress Kashmiris' legitimate struggle by the

dint of force. He said that the Kashmiris' ongoing struggle for right to self determination would continue till they achieve their cherished goal of freedom from the Indian occupation. Referring to the Kashmiris' unwavering commitment to the noble cause, he said, "The torch of freedom shall remain alight as long as a single Kashmiri is alive".

He said that Kashmiris can go to any extent to get their motherland freed from Indian occupation. He said that the price of freedom has to be

paid with blood. "The freedom is something that cannot be achieved through any intellectual debate", he said.

Citing to rising ties of xenophobia, religious extremism and persecution of religious minorities in the Indian society and utter disregard for human rights, the PM said, "Human rights and values flourish in societies where humanity is alive".

While condemning induction of a regime of new laws in Kashmir by the Indian government, he said that these laws were meant

to change the region's demography and to convert Muslim majority into a minority in Kashmir. He said that India must realize that it cannot hold the Kashmiri nation hostage for a long on the basis of oppression.

India, he said, was trying to mislead the world. Drawing parallels between the sufferings of the Palestinians and Kashmiri people, the PM said that like Palestinians the people of the Indian occupied Kashmir also suffer at the hands of the Indian imperialism.



MUZAFFRABAD: Activists of Pasban-e-Hurriyat shouting slogans, to express their solidarity with Palestinians and Kashmir's during a protest rally on the eve of Human Rights Day, at Azadi Chowk in the city.



KARACHI: A delegation of Chess Federation of Pakistan led by its President Hanif Qureshi meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori.

## Caretaker CM terms atrocities in Palestine, IIOJK a violation of human rights

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Justice (Retd.) Maqbool Baqar on Sunday dubbed the Genocide in Palestine and atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) as a sheer violation of human rights.

He said that the United Nations (UN) must intervene in the violation of human rights in Palestine and IIOJK. He said this in his message on the occasion of International Human Rights Day.

The Caretaker Chief Minister on the

occasion appealed to the international community to come forward and save innocent human lives from Israeli barbaric aggression and Indian atrocities.

Baqar said that the basic responsibilities of the state included the observance of human rights.

The Caretaker Chief Minister said that freedom of expression, access to education and health were part of human rights. He said that all citizens had equal rights across the country including the Sindh province.

## APNS expresses profound grief over sad demise of Rehmat Afridi

KARACHI (PR) The APNS expresses profound grief over the sad demise of Mr Rehmat Shah Afridi, a senior journalist and founder of Daily Frontier Post.

Mrs Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani President and Samad Ali Secretary General of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society in a joint statement have appreciated the contribution of Mr Afridi in the promotion of English Journalism in the Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa province. They stated that under his leadership daily Frontier Post played a prominent role to safeguard the freedom of press in the country.

## Fawad's one-day physical remand accepted

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry's one-day physical remand in a corruption case has been accepted. After the decision, he was handed over to the Anti-Corruption Establishment and would be now presented before an anti-corruption court on Monday, December 11.

Fawad was presented before the duty judge Ghulam Mustafa at the judicial complex Rawalpindi.

The judge asked the authorities to present the accused in the relevant court after approving the plea for the physical remand.

## Police arrest drug peddler, recover illicit liquor

HYDERABAD (APP): Police in its continued drive against narcotics and criminals on Sunday arrested a drug peddler and recovered liquor from his possession.

SHO Khirpo police station Muhammad Ibrahim Soomro under the supervision of SDPO acting on a tip-off conducted raid in Hathongo area arrested a drug peddler Karam Ali Chandio and recovered 35 litres of illicit liquor from his possession and registered case against the accused under the substance of narcotics control act.

## IPP prepares lists for seat-sharing deal with PML-N

LAHORE (INP): The Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) has meticulously crafted a list of constituencies and potential candidates for a strategic seat adjustment with the Muslim League-N (PML-N).

The committee representing the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party, comprising Ishaq Khakwani, Aoun Chaudhry, and Nauman Langriyal, collaborated closely with the party's leadership to compile the comprehensive list.

The IPP leadership is scheduled to present the seat adjustment roster to the committee designated by the PML-N later tonight.

Sources reveal that the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party

aims to propose seat adjustments for 20 seats in the National Assembly, with 19 of them located in Punjab and one in Karachi. Additionally, the IPP is seeking seat adjustments in 44 constituencies of the Punjab Assembly.

In instances where the PML-N decides against seat adjustment in specific National Assembly constituencies, the IPP will advocate for proportional adjustments in the corresponding provincial seats.

A specially appointed six-member committee, comprising representatives from both the PML-N and the Istehkam-e-Party, has been established to facilitate the seat adjustment process.



HYDERABAD: Members of Awami Raj Tehreek are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held at Hyderabad press club.

## Nadeem Afzal Chan refuses to testify against ex-PM in £190 mln case

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former special assistant to the ex-prime minister on parliamentary coordination Nadeem Afzal Chan has refused to testify against Khan in court.

According to details, Nadeem Afzal Chan has denied becoming a witness against the PTI founding chief in the £190 mln settlement case. He stated that NAB had inquired into the case and he shared whatever information he had and added not to testify against the former prime minister in the court.

Nadeem Afzal Chan mentioned that since the PTI founder is in jail, he will not testify against him in court. "When he [Khan] was in power, I used to tell him these things. However, he is in jail now and my school of thought is not that of talking against someone who is oppressed or incarcerated," he stated.

Meanwhile, National Accountability Bureau has compiled the list of witnesses in NCA £190 million scandal which includes former defense minister Pervaiz Khattak, Zubaida Jalal, Nadeem Afzal Chan.

## Protest held for arrest of killer of senior journalist Jan Mahar

MIRPUR MATHELO: On the call of Ghotki Union of Journalists to arrest the killers of Sukkur's senior journalist Jan Muhammad Mahar, a protest was held in front of DHQ Press Club Mirpur Mathele and a rally was taken out.

The rally was led by General Secretary of Ghotki Union of Journalists, Taj Mohammad Tanwari, Saqib Gadani, Mumtaz Ahmed Arain, Ghulam Hussain Soomro, Ali Gohar Gabol, Tariq Mir Gabol, Zeeshan Ahmed Arain, Tanveer Ahmed Soomro Naveed Chughtai, Hakim Abro, Qazi Ishaq Kalwar and others participated in the rally. The rally passed through different routes of the city and ended at Bhatai Chowk.



## Founder's legacy upheld: Pakistani govt, nation stands firm on Palestine issue: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in the Middle East and Islamic Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, on Sunday asserted that the government of Pakistan and the nation had remained steadfastly united on the issue of Palestine since day one.

Speaking at a press conference held at the Press Information Department, he emphasized that on this International Human Rights Day, he aimed to spotlight Israeli atrocities in Gaza at the global stage.

Ashrafi who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council underlined that both Palestine and Kashmir were not only issues of humanity but also vital concerns for the Muslim Ummah. He stated that Pakistan had consistently shown unwavering support for Palestine throughout its history.

He emphasized the significance of acknowledging the vision of Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who advocated for an independent and sovereign Palestine state with Al-Quds as its capital. Ashrafi said Caretaker Prime Minister

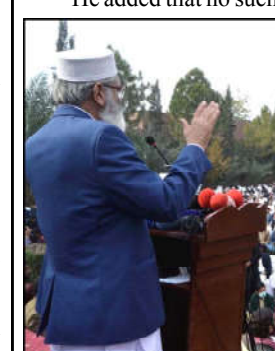
Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar reaffirmed this position at the recent Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh, aligning with Pakistan's consistent support for the two-state solution expressed in OIC meetings from 2004, 2006, and preceding years. Following the Gaza events on October 7, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, Foreign Affairs Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani, and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir had actively engaged in unwavering efforts for peace-building and voicing their concerns against Israeli aggression in Palestine.

## Solangi rebuts social media reports about GB, vows legal action against rumour mongers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister of Information and Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Sunday strongly rebutted different rumours circulating on social media regarding Gilgit-Baltistan. The rumours suggested that a proposal to hand over GB to another country for 50 years was under consideration.

In a post on X formerly Twitter, the Minister said there was no truth in such rumours. He added that no such

news was published by any newspaper. Those spreading this fake news to achieve their nefarious designs would face legal action, the minister vowed. Earlier, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting through its social media account also rejected the news as fake. "Disseminating fake news is not only unethical and illegal but it is also disservice to the nation. It is the responsibility of everyone to reject irresponsible behaviour. Reject #FakeNews," it wrote on X.



PESHAWAR: Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Chief, Siraj-ul-Haq addresses to his supporters during public gathering meeting held in Peshawar.

## Posters appeal IIOJK people to massively come on roads to save their identity, rights

SRINAGAR (INP): Posters appeared in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), asking the Kashmiri people to massively come on roads to save their identity and raise voice for the rights snatched by Bharatiya Janata Party-led Indian government on 5th August 2019.

According to a report by Kashmir Media Service, the posters were displayed by All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Kashmir Political Resistance Movement, Jammu and Kashmir Justice and Peace Initiative, Nawjawan-e-Hurriyat

Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir Justice League Forum, Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Movement, Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Youth Forum, Jammu and Kashmir Social Youth Forum, Warseen-e-Shuhada Jammu and Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Resistance Party.

The posters read, saffronized judiciary under the influence of BJP is likely to endorse its illegal actions of August 5, 2019 and Kashmiri people must come on roads massively and raise voice for the rights snatched by the BJP regime.

## Pak cuisine plays role in tourism promotion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's traditional cuisines played a significant role in the promotion of the tourism industry in the country.

Talking to APP, the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) official said that alongside Pakistan's stunning natural landscapes, its high-quality cuisine can serve as a major attraction for both local and international tourists.

He further said that witnessing the increase in participation of women in the food sector would not only create jobs but also economically empower them, adding that the government appreciated its

## Endowment fund trust has sponsored for cash prizes for children: Sobia

HYDERABAD (APP): Endowment fund trust (EFT) has also sponsored for Shah Latif festival for children.

The Deputy Director (DD) of Besant Hall cultural centre Sobia Ali Shaikh informed here Sunday, "EFT is co-sponsor in cash prizes to be given to the children who have participated in the programme."

She said, "Purpose of this cooperation is to motivate the abilities of talented children and to encourage them to involve in such activities in future."

## FIA arrests man at Karachi airport with tampered visa pages

KARACHI (INP): The Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) immigration personnel deputed at Karachi airport have arrested a man with his passport's visa pages which were tampered with on Sunday.

Naeem Akhtar, a resident of Hafizabad, had reached the Jinnah International Airport from abroad.

FIA officials said that as per the initial investigation, the man had travelled to Nigeria on a Pakistani passport bearing a genuine visa stamp.

Later, they explained, he contacted an agent in Nigeria to get a visa for an onward journey to Italy.

The officials said the suspect paid Rs2.2 million to the agent for the purpose.

But since, they went on to say, the visa was fake, he first travelled to Saudi Arabia before coming to Pakistan.

It was in Saudi Arabia, the officials informed, that Naeem removed the fake visa stamp from his passport.

They said that the suspect had now been handed over to Anti-Human Trafficking Circle, Karachi.

## Bilawal pledges to continue struggle for human rights

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that protection and promotion of Human Rights are among the top priorities of his Party and the same will manifest in the Party's manifesto for the upcoming general elections.

In his message on the occasion of International Human Rights Day on Sunday, the PPP Chairman said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto ensured the protection of human rights through constitutional means as the unanimous constitution, he gifted to the nation, prescribed equal rights to every citizen with giving freedoms to every citizen whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

He said that the People's government in

Sindh had passed a comprehensive Human Rights Policy to ensure that every segment of the provincial government plays its role in promoting and protecting the human rights of all citizens. Likewise, the People's government in Sindh also established and strengthened the Treaty Implementation Cell (TIC) under the Human Rights Department for implementation of the international human rights treaties, we have endorsed as a nation. Besides, free legal help has been provided to the poor victims of human rights abuses in Sindh.

The PPP Chairman said that all the citizens, especially the minorities are enjoying equal rights in Pakistan, and the mechanisms have been put in place to address the violations as they occur.



HYDERABAD: Jay Sindh Mahaz (JSM) Chairman, Riaz Chandio addresses to media persons during press conference, at Qasimabad in Hyderabad.

## Government likely to extend Hajj application deadline

ISLAMABAD (INP): Government is considering extending the deadline for submitting Hajj applications under the government scheme as so far, only 28,782 applications have been received.

The low turnout of applicants prompted authorities to explore alternative options to encourage more participation.

As per data, only 24,446 applications were collected under the official regular scheme on Saturday. The sponsorship scheme, aimed at facilitating pilgrims, received a modest 174 applications on the

last day. Ministry of Religious Affairs is considering extending the submission period by 7 to 10 days to boost the number of applications and ensure wider participation in the Hajj pilgrimage.

Despite slashing Hajj expenses and introducing short-term Hajj facilities, the number of applications has dropped this year too. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony had to return the quota of almost 20,000 to Saudi Arabia after dropping in Hajj pilgrims last year.



LARKANA: Members of IBA test pass Primary School Teacher (PST) are holding protest demonstration against the non-payment of 9 months salaries held at Jinnah Bagh in Larkana.

## PHDEC organizes works on Dates focused cultivation & export

SUKKUR (APP): Pakistan Horticulture Development and Export Company (PHDEC) Sukkur organised a significant workshop on dates in Sukkur on Sunday, focusing on the cultivation and export of dates.

The event served as a convergence point for industry leaders, experts, date processors, traders, progressive growers, and R&D professionals. The primary objective of the workshop was to deliberate on the future trajectory of sustainable date farming, particularly targeting premium global markets.

Pakistan ranks among the foremost global producers and exporters of dates, boasting a vast array of varieties. Unfortunately, sub-

optimal harvesting practices have led to the classification of the majority of Pakistani date varieties as industrial grades for processing, resulting in lower prices compared to global competitors.

The workshop aimed to provide valuable insights into harvesting and post-harvesting techniques, integrated processing, packaging, logistics, and effective marketing, and to raise awareness about potential insights and opportunities in the global market for date exports.

Former Director of the Date Palm Research Institute in Khairpur, Dr Ghulam Sarwar Markhand, delivered a thorough analysis of the present crop status and future preparations.