

# Independent

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## 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.

On the election day, the candidates of PTI would be in the field and the voters would be voting for them, he commented.

He said those who were involved in the incidents of May 9 were facing the law of the land. He was of the view that those involved in the May 9 incidents should not be public office-holders.

He said the Election Commission should look into complaints made by political parties about maladministration. To a question, he said overall political circumstances triggered the actions against the PTI

and lessons were learnt by the State.

He said, "It is not our job to tell overseas Pakistanis which political party they should support." However, the people should vote for a party which had an agenda for the economic revival of Pakistan, he opined. "I will vote for a party which has an agenda to revive the economy," he asserted.

The prime minister said there was a wave of terrorism in the country and there were forces which wanted to cause disruption in Pakistan and the government would make all efforts to protect the lives of people. About the disappearance and surfacing of certain politicians, he said the government had no concern with it and those individuals were responsible for their actions and stance.

Responding to a query, the prime minister said demonstrations in democratic societies were held with the permission of local administration.



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.

## Bilawal Bhutto files nomination papers for NA-128 constituency

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday filed nomination papers to contest general election from National Assembly Constituency NA-128 in Lahore.

Bilawal Bhutto submitted the nomination papers through a representative. PPP's Hafiz Ghulam Mohiuddin and Mian Misbahur Rehman also filed their nomination papers for PP-170 and PP-169 in Lahore. Meanwhile, the process of filing of nomination

papers by candidates for national and provincial assemblies in Lahore continued on the third day on Friday. Besides Bilawal Bhutto, other prominent candidates who submitted nomination papers include Isteekam-e-Pakistan Party's (IPP) Abdul Aleem Khan for NA-119 and PP-149, IPP's Shoaib Siddiqui for PP-150, IPP's Aun Chaudhry for NA-124, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Malik Saif-ul-Malook Khokhar for NA-134 and Abid Khan for NA-117.

## Agriculture backbone of country's economy: Governor

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Minister for Irrigation Eshwar Lal called on Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori on Friday at the Governor House here on Friday.

On the occasion, they discussed the improvement of the canal system in the province, the availability of water for various crops, problems of tail-end farmers and other related issues.

The Governor said that agriculture was the backbone of the country's economy. He said that crop production could be increased with better distribution of canal water. He further said that effective measures were necessary to save water from wastage.

## IGP Sindh meets thalassaemia-stricken honorary Captain

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, had a meeting on Friday with Honorary Captain Bilal, who battles thalassaemia, showcasing his fondness and dedication to the police force.

Expressing deep affection for the police and other law enforcement bodies in the country, Honorary Captain Bilal highlighted his unwavering commitment by regularly meeting them, stating that this was the essence of the day's meeting.

Welcoming honorary Captain Bilal at the Central Police Office (CPO), the IGP Sindh commended and lauded his fervent devotion, sincerity, and enthusiasm towards the forces.

## PPP carried out record development work in Karachi: Senator Mehdi

KARACHI (APP): Provincial General Secretary Pakistan Peoples Party Sindh, Senator Waqar Mehdi, on Friday, said that the PPP carried out record development and welfare works in Karachi and seeing those services citizens of Karachi voted in local body elections.

Senator Waqar Mehdi, in a statement issued here, said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari made Asia's biggest trauma center in Karachi and provided free cardiac treatment facilities at NICVD in the metropolis.

PPP Sindh government also gave gifts of flyovers, underpasses, public parks and playgrounds to the people of Karachi.

## Cold, dry weather forecast for Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department on Friday forecast cold and dry weather in most parts of Sindh province during the next 24 hours.

However, fog and smog are likely to prevail in Jacobabad, Mohenjodaro, Sukkur, Larkana, Dadu, Ghotki and Padidan during the morning and night hours.

Mainly, cold and dry weather is likely to prevail in the province.

## 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 Jatoti, 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.



KARACHI: The Caretaker Sindh Minister for Irrigation Eshwar Lal called on Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor House here.

## Governor Sindh inaugurates Ethiopian tourism desk at Karachi Feast

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor of Sindh Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori and Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan Jamal Beker Abdula opened the Ethiopian Tourism Desk on Friday.

This grand occasion, set to culminate on December 24, 2023, was attended by a diverse audience, including Honorary Consul of Ethiopia in Karachi Ibrahim Tawab, members of the diplomatic corps, government officials, business community, media, and representatives from civil society, said a news release of the Ethiopian Embassy issued here.

The pavilion, giving a captivating display of Ethiopia's multifaceted culture, rich heritage, and unparalleled tourism offerings, was a testament to the enduring bond between Ethiopia and Pakistan. Governor Tessori, addressing the media, emphasized the longstanding relations between the two nations, rooted in shared history, values, culture, and religion.

He commended Ambassador Abdula for his tireless efforts in fortifying the bilateral relations, noting the impactful presence of the Ethiopian Embassy in Pakistan despite being established just a year ago. Moreover, the Governor expressed gratitude to the Government of Ethiopia for launching Ethiopian Airlines in Karachi which played a critical role in connecting Pakistan with the whole African continent.



SUKKUR: Peoples Party (PPP) Central Leader and Candidates, Syed Khurshed Shah and Nasir Hussain Shah talks with media persons after submit nomination papers to Returning Officer for participate in General Election during meeting held at Election Commission Office in Sukkur.

## Sports activities too important for young generation: Murtaza

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that sports activities are very important for our young generation, that is the reason we are trying to establish sports fields and stadiums in every part of the city.

He said this while addressing the opening ceremony of the renovated football stadium in Korangi Nasir Colony on Friday.

Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Vice Chairman of Korangi Town, local leaders of PPP and other personalities were also present on this occasion.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that there is excellent football talent in this area of Korangi and there was a need for a quality football stadium. Sensing this need we have completed the repair and renovation work on this stadium on a priority basis to provide better facilities for sports and recreation to the youth. He said that we are soon going to build the first metropolitan university of Pakistan which will be the first university of its kind. Youths will be greatly helped in building their future, today he also proposes Korangi University campus where he will make the program according to the requirements of the residents of Korangi.



Caretaker Federal Education Minister, Madad Ali Sindhi addressing the 1st Annual Conference 2023 "Examination and Assessment Practices in Pakistan at Karachi.

## Need to reform examination, assessment system as per modern era: Minister

KARACHI (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi has stressed the need for a paradigm shift in educational examinations and assessment systems to align them with the requirements of the era of modern technology.

Addressing the inaugural session of the 2-day IBCC 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference titled "Examination and Assessment Practices in Pakistan" here on Friday, he said that examinations and assessment were pillars of the educational system and we have to adopt those measures which encourage critical thinking, creative abilities and practical

implementation of knowledge.

Organized by the Inter Board Coordination Commission (IBCC) here at a private university, the conference was attended by vice-chancellors of universities, chairmen of different boards of education from across the country, academicians, teaching faculty and students.

Speaking on the occasion, Madad Ali Sindhi said that with extensive research and advent of modern technologies educational scenarios around the globe were transforming rapidly and it was essential for Pakistan to bring necessary changes in its examination and assessment systems

accordingly.

Underscoring the significance of utilizing advanced technologies in assessment the minister stated that the use of digital technology in the examination could help improve the educational system. He also urged the need to take pivotal steps for maintaining standards of fairness, honesty and transparency in the system.

The Education Minister reiterated that there was no other option for the development and progress of Pakistan except quality education and focusing on three core factors- better curriculum, trained teaching faculty and a conducive and encouraging environment.

## President, PM hold telephonic conversation; 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.



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, General 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.



KARACHI: Youngsters from Balochistan Province are shouting slogans during protest in the favor of their demands outside Press Club.



KARACHI: Chief Justice Sindh High Court Mr. Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi along with President Justice Helpline International Nadeem A. Shaikh and others unveiling the trophy during Grand opening ceremony of 5th Law Students Cricket League 2023 at Karachi Gymkhana Ground.

## PPP will emerge winning party of country in election

HYDERABAD (INP): Former Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has stated that general elections are scheduled for February 8<sup>th</sup> and on this day, the party receiving a mandate must work diligently to solve people's issues. He asserted that Election Day will decide whether the people endorse hate politics or prioritize issue resolution.

Speaking to the media outside the RO office after submitting his nomination papers for the provincial assembly constituency PS-61 Hyderabad on Thursday, Memon said, he believes the public is now more aware and they will not get involved in politics of any conspiracy or linguistic fights. He expressed confidence that the Pakistan

People's Party (PPP) would secure 95% of the seats in Sindh and emerge as a successful party, both provincially and at the Federal level.

He further remarked that on February 8<sup>th</sup>, whichever party receives the people's mandate should wholeheartedly work towards resolving their public issues. The people are not interested in who is going to jail or getting released but they want to see their issues resolved. Sharjeel Memon said that PPP has a sustainable manifesto to solve all problems because our chairman Bilawal Bhutto is saying that if he comes into power, he will make ensure to double the salaries of government employees, give jobs to the unemployed and construct houses for the homeless people.

## ECP takes action on complaints of obstacles in electoral process

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has taken note of complaints concerning obstacles faced by political groups and independent candidates in the electoral process. In response to these concerns, the ECP has issued letters to the provincial election commissioners, chief secretaries and all police inspectors general, stressing the need to address the complaints in accordance with the law.

The letter highlights that complaints, relayed through the media, have surfaced regarding difficulties in obtaining and collecting nomination papers.



## 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): Archbishop Rawalpindi-Islamabad Dr Joseph Arshad in connection with Christmas celebrations, Mushaal Hussain 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

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 Mandiwala 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 Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and former Federal Minister Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan has said that every political step of Istehkam-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,

Central Information Secretary Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and former Federal Minister said that the President of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Abdul Aleem Khan issued instructions to his candidates participating in the elections to receive nomination papers and submit them in time. Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan said that the People's friendly manifesto of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and the implementation of ongoing struggle in the interest of the country.

## 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 Chinot 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.

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."

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.

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



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 univer-

sity 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

We all know that Pakistan has unique location and talented people, but the platforms to recognize the services of these people are very few. At this time, the organizing of achievement award is really praiseworthy. Such important Award ceremonies play a major role in motivating the corporate sector of any country to reach out to new heights of excellence. In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, Apex trade bodies play a vital role in both national and international affairs and make significant contributions that benefit society at large, from spurring economic growth to promoting good governance.

On this joyous occasion, allow me to congratulate FPCCI on its devotion and sincere efforts to promote talent of the country. I also felicitate all Award Winners on their performance and hope that the business community will continue its efforts for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. I hope that the award winner will not only maintain the record of their best performance but also become role models for other people to compete for this coveted accomplishment.

**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 (ret'd) 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 promoting the image of 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 unflinching 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 gives 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 for Pakistan's Industry. 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.

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)



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.

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.

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

