

# Independent

Member APNS &amp; CPNE

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www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. EC-116 B/ID-445 Vt XXV No 115, Jamadi-us-Sani 01, 1445 AH Friday December 15, 2023 Pages 12, Price Rs.15

## PM reaffirms Pakistan's support to Kashmiris; rejects Indian SC verdict as politically motivated

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday reaffirmed Pakistan's moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of Kashmir, and rejected the recent verdict of the Indian Supreme Court calling it a politically motivated and a tool to consolidate Indian illegal occupation.

The prime minister, in his address at the special session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly (AJK LA), called for India to desist from consolidating its occupation, revoke the illegal unilateral actions of August 5, 2019 and not change the demography of the disputed territory.

Chaired by AJK LA

Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, the session was attended by AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq and Assembly members.

PM Kakar also stressed upon India to halt the human rights abuses in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK), repeal emergency laws, withdraw heavy military presence and provide unhindered access to the United Nations bodies and the international media.

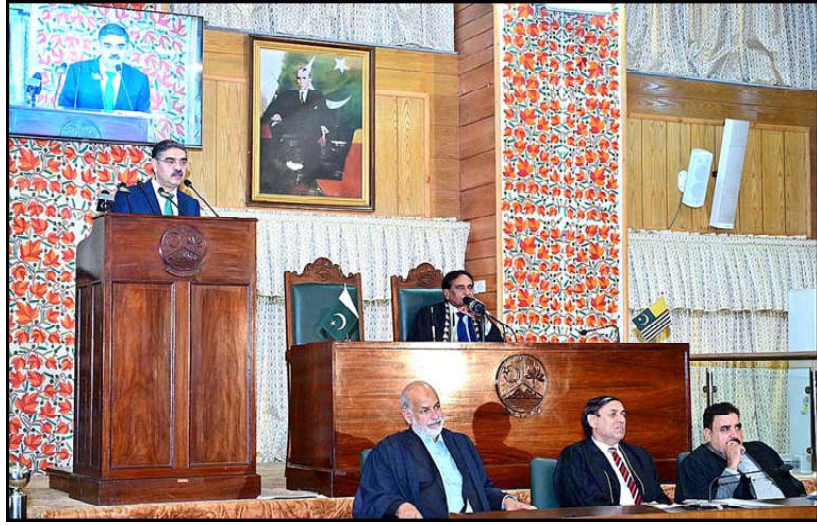
The prime minister, who was the first-ever caretaker PM to address the AJK Legislative Assembly, paid tribute to the martyrs of the Kashmir movement and those living along the Line of Control and suffered losses due to the Indian

ceasefire violations.

He said Pakistan would continue to stand alongside the people of Kashmir in their struggle and wished them to enjoy their due rights.

"Kashmir is Pakistan's jugular vein. The word 'Pakistan' is incomplete without Kashmir. The people of Pakistan and Kashmir are bound by unique affinity. We share joys and sorrow. Pakistan cannot remain indifferent to the situation in Kashmir... Kashmir runs in our blood. Jammu and Kashmir remains an important facet of Pakistan's foreign policy," he remarked.

He said across the political divide, the entire Pakistani leadership stood united to support the



MUZAFFARABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses the special session of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

## LHC suspends EC notification for holding general election through bureaucracy

ECP stops training of poll officials following order; PML-N accuses PTI of conspiring to delay elections; In 2018, bureaucracy had carried out the responsibility of DROs, says Shehbaz

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has suspended Election Commission (EC) notification to conduct general election through bureaucracy.

The notifications issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan appointing district returning officers, returning officers and assistant returning officers from executive in the upcoming general elections has been suspended by the court.

A single bench of LHC led by justice Ali Baqar Najafi has announced reserved judgment on PTI petition.

Justice Ali Baqar Najafi while recommending to constitute larger bench to hear the petitions against conducting the general election through bureaucracy in Punjab sent the file to Chief Justice (CJ) LHC.

It has been said in the decision that billion of rupees of the nation are spent on holding election. If larger parties don't accept the result of the election then the money of the nation will stand wasted. EC has to conduct free and fair election. Level playing field has to be provided to the candidates and voters to turn transparent election into reality.

Justice Ali Baqar Najafi wrote in his decision the desired results cannot be achieved from general election in the prevailing situation which can weaken future of democracy.

National issues have been highlighted in the pe-

## Institutions are not bad, people are bad: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked country is heading towards democracy, therefore, democracy is coming in Supreme Court (SC).

He further remarked institutions are not bad. People are bad. Destruction comes in the country because institutions are scolded rather than people. Institutions are run by people. We will not allow any one to allege some one behind one's back.

The CJP gave these remarks while presiding over five members larger bench of SC during the hearing of former judge Islamabad High Court (IHC) Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui dismissal case here Thursday.

Hamid Khan counsel for Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui gave assurance to file application to make Justice (Retd) Anwar Kansi and others respondents.

Federal government raised question over maintainability of Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui petition.

The CJP remarked now a days people become

journalists by holding phone. Those who become journalists by holding mobile should think that decision has come on practice and procedure act. Justice Tariq Masood and Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan had refused to join the bench. I have not removed any judge from bench. It is my Endeavour that we should proceed with consensus or in democratic way in the committee. We are heading towards democracy and democracy is coming in the court as well.

Hamid Khan read out the speech which led to dismissal of justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui.

The CJP inquired who was the chief justice of high court then. How Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) came to know about the speech.

Hamid Khan replied Anwar Kansi was chief justice in Islamabad High Court (IHC). Registrar SC had written note to SJC.

The CJP inquired who had asked Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui to give decision of whim.



LAHORE: Chief of Pakhtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party Mehmoood Khan Achakzai meeting with PML (N) quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

## People to vote for progressive, developed Pakistan on Feb 8: Nawaz

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Thursday said that he firmly believed that the people would make a decision in favor of a progressing and prospering Pakistan on 8th February elections.

Expressing gratitude to Allah Almighty and the people of Pakistan for standing by him all throughout, he said that he was happy that the truth had vindicated him, but he would be truly happy the day people of Pakistan would be freed from the suffering of excruciating inflation and economic strife inflicted upon them in the aftermath of his ouster.

Addressing the nation from the PML-N Secretariat in Model Town here, the PML-N Quaid said, "I had to knock repeatedly at the doors of the courts to be finally vindicated and provided justice, and freed.

You (people) are the courts and the judge and you shall liberate and free yourselves from this sentence of misery and suffering imposed on you since my ouster, by voting for a prosperous, progressing and developed Pakistan."

He raised a plethora of questions to those who hatched a conspiracy against him and the people of Pakistan. He called for an explanation for plunging the country and its hardworking people into unspeakable crisis, economic strife, and suffering.

Nawaz said that he was grateful to Allah Almighty for being vindicated in the baseless and false cases. He said that he was thankful to the people for standing by him in these tough times. He pointed out that the verdicts given against him exposed the lies and deception as all cases

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: DG FIA Mohsin Hassan Butt inaugurating National Trafficking in Persons Hotline for National Referral Mechanism & Management Information System.

## FIA launches TIP Hotline for reporting human trafficking cases

ISLAMABAD (INP): For first time in the country, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Thursday launched a national Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Hotline for national referral mechanism and management information system (MIS) for the general public to ensure the provision of services to victims of human trafficking under one roof, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Shireen Malik Sher, sharing the main features of the project, told APP that this was the first-ever initiative which would have the mechanism to ensure a prompt response. After receiving the complaint on hotline, the official concerned at TIP facilitation center would send complaint against the traffickers to the concerned police stations across Pakistan with a single click and trafficking victims will be referred to the concerned departments for welfare, she added.

## COAS meets US Defence Secretary Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir met with US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin in Washington to discuss the regional security situation and defence cooperation between the two countries.

Pentagon spokesperson Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said on Wednesday that Austin received Munir, who arrived in Washington on Sunday for a weeklong visit.

"The two officials discussed recent regional security developments and potential areas for bilateral defence cooperation," said Ryder.

FO rejects reports, speculations of talks with TTP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has vehemently rejected reports and speculations of talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Responding to the queries of media persons at her weekly briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mument Zahra Baloch said there is absolutely no dialogue taking place with TTP. The spokesperson said we have noted the statement of the interim Afghan government that it will investigate Tuesday's terror attack that took place in Dera Ismail Khan. She said Afghanistan should take strong action against perpetrators of this heinous attack and hand them over to Pakistan along with the TTP leadership in Afghanistan.

The spokesperson urged the Afghan authorities to take concrete and verifiable steps to prevent the use of their soil by terror entities against Pakistan.

Jamadi-us-Sani moon sights

ISLAMABAD (Online): Moon of Jamadi Al-Sani has been sighted. Ministry of Religious Affairs has issued a notification. Jamadi-ul-Sani moon was sighted in Islamabad, Peshawar, Multan, and other areas.

DG Ministry of Religious Affairs Syed Mushahid Hussain Khalid, representatives of Department of Meteorology, SPARCO, Ministry of Science and Technology also participated. Announcement of Zonal Sighting of Crescent Committee, Chairman of Central Sighting of Crescent Committee from Madinah Al-Munawrah and prayed.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Health, Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezaei addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

## In all 8,217 patients benefitted from Balochistan Health Card, says Dr. Ameer Jogezaei

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Health, Dr. Ameer Muhammad Khan Jogezaei has stated that in all 8,217 patients have so far benefited from the Health Card in Balochistan.

This was informed by the caretaker provincial Minister for Health, Dr. Ameer Muhammad Khan Jogezaei while addressing a press conference at Quetta

## BAP senators did wholehearted representation of Balochistan in Senate: Sanjrani

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has stated that the members of Senate belonging to Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) did wholehearted representation of the province in Senate.

The Chairman Senate was speaking on occasion of the joining ceremony by PTI's leader and Provincial Minister Mobin Khilji here on Thursday.

Also present on the occasion were President of BAP, Nawabzada Khalid Magsi and other leaders.

Sadiq Sanjrani said that at first we should understand that what actually the rights and representation is?

He said that we did work to the best of our capabilities in Senate. He said that we didn't leave any stone unturned in making representation of the people and province in Senate.

In this regard, the BAP's Senators made wholehearted representation in Senate and took well care of rights of all, he maintained.

He also said that Chairman Senate represents the whole country and provinces.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Jan Achakzai meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## Directs to finalize result of entry test: IT initiative program to help decrease unemployment: Kakar

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that a comprehensive information technology initiative programme has been launched in modern lines for providing opportunities of livelihood and training to the unemployed youth of the province for the first time.

He said that the IT initiative programme would help decrease unemployment and bring improvement in overall economy of the province through online.

The Governor directed the concerned authorities to finalize the result of the entry test of the IT initiative programme within a week.

The Governor was addressing a meeting held to review different aspects of implementation on IT initiative programme and the entry test of the aspirants conducted for it, here on Thursday.

The Principal Secretary to Governor, Hashim Khan Ghilzai as well as representatives of the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences and Ultra software system were present.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor expressed pleasure that the IT initiative programme has been launched for the first time.

He appreciated the conscious efforts made by all the public sector universities, Ultra Software system and officers of Governor House and Secretariat for materialising the dream of providing opportunities of livelihood to the unemployed but educated youth of the province.



QUETTA: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani addresses to media persons during press conference, in Quetta.

## Mobin Khilji part ways with PTI, joins BAP

Independent Report

Ahmed Khan Kakar, provincial President, Sardar Muhammad Saleh Bhotani and other leaders of the party.

The BAP's leadership welcomed Mobin Khilji in the party and hoped that it would strengthen with his joining.

Addressing the ceremony, Nawabzada Khalid Magsi welcoming Mobin Khilji in the party announced to appoint him as provincial Secretary General of the party.

The Secretary General of BAP Manzoor Kakar said that former Minister and PTI leader Mobin Khilji joined BAP after reposing confidence in the party leadership.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan addressing participants of National Security Workshop Balochistan

## Pakistan warns against any move to change ongoing UN process to reform Security Council

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has called the current Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) on reforming the U.N. Security Council as the "best platform" to accomplish the objective, saying, any "hasty or rushed process with a piecemeal approach" will disrupt efforts to reach an agreed outcome in the process to expand the 15-member body.

"Any new process will have to start 'de novo' and face the same challenges as those being addressed in the IGN process," Ambassador Usman Iqbal Jadoon, deputy permanent representative to the UN, told delegates when the long-running negotiations aimed at restructuring the Security Council resumed on Wednesday.

The Pakistani envoy's remarks came amid a renewed push by India, Brazil, Germany and Japan—known as the Group of Four -- for permanent membership of an expanded Security Council.

"Only through a patient exchange, mutual accommodation, and compromise can we broaden the areas of convergence and reduce the points of divergence and thus evolve a 'model' for the reform that can be accepted by the widest possible majority of Member States," Ambassador Jadoon said.

"We all want to see a Security Council that is more representative, more democratic, more transparent, more effective, and more accountable," he said, adding, "This

goal can only be attained through a comprehensive reform that caters to the interests of all Member States — small, medium, and large."

Referring to reform 'models' proposed by various groups and member states, Ambassador Jadoon said, "Any artificial move to propel the reform process towards a disproportionate focus on 'models' is likely to polarize positions and pull the member states further apart."

"Instead of breathing new life, this will further complicate the prospects of a meaningful outcome," he said in his remarks during the session.

The Security Council reform process, which began in February 2009 have so far remained stalled. The IGN process deals with five clusters—the categories of membership, the question of veto, regional representation, size of an enlarged Security Council, and working methods of the council and its relationship with the General Assembly.

Despite a general agreement on enlarging the Council, as part of the UN reform process, member states remain divided over the details.

The Group of Four, which is campaigning for permanent seats on the Council, has shown no flexibility in their campaign for expanding the Council by 10 seats, with six additional permanent and four non-permanent members.



MUZAFFARABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar visits the Yaadgaar-e-Shuhada to pay tribute to the martyrs.



QUETTA: A delegation of lawyers led by Advocate Asif Tareen meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## David Warner slams 164 as Australia take control against Pakistan in first Test

### Sports Desk

PERTH: Veteran opener David Warner hammered a gritty 164 to silence the critics and steer Australia to 346-5 against an inconsistent Pakistan attack in the first Test at Perth on Thursday.

The 37-year-old batted for much of day one before finally departing to Aamer Jamal, two balls after smashing the debutant for six.

At stumps, Mitchell Marsh was unbeaten on 15 and Alex Carey not out 14.

Pakistan have never won a Test series in Australia and have failed to win a Test in the country since 1995, with the team again facing a daunting task.

Pakistan bowlers showed flashes of brilliance and were rewarded with the

wickets of Usman Khawaja (41), Marnus Labuschagne (16), Steve Smith (31) and Travis Head (40).

But until Jamal struck, they had no answer to a near-flawless Warner who smashed 16 fours and four sixes in a majestic 211-ball innings.

He padded up under pressure to score runs with an emotional goodbye from Test cricket at the third Test in Sydney in front of his hometown fans his stated goal.

In the lead-up, former Australian paceman Mitchell Johnson questioned whether Warner deserved a hero's farewell given his recent poor red-ball form and involvement in the 2018 ball-tampering scandal.

After Pat Cummins

won the toss and opted to bat, Warner took a confident single off his first ball in an opening over from Shaheen Shah Afridi that leaked 14 runs and never looked back.

It was his first century since a battling 200 against South Africa at the Melbourne Cricket Ground a year ago.

He was dropped by Khuram Shahzad soon after bringing up his milestone but was otherwise in command until Jamal tempted him with a short ball and he was caught near the ropes by Imamul Haq.

Khawaja, wearing a black armband in solidarity with the people of Gaza, was happy to play second fiddle in a 126-run opening stand.

## PM visits Yadgar-e-Shuhada, lays floral wreath to pay homage to martyrs

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday visited Yadgar-e-Shuhada to pay tributes to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the freedom movement of Jammu and Kashmir.

On the occasion, the prime minister laid floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada to pay homage to the valiant soldiers of the armed forces.

PM Kakar was also presented guard of honour by a smart contingent of

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Police.

Earlier, the prime minister arrived here on his two-day visit where he was received by Prime Minister AJK Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq.

The prime minister's visit is an expression of solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in the context of the confirmation by the Indian Supreme Court of India's unilateral and illegal move regarding the status of Jammu and Kashmir.

## IHC rejects Imran's request to stay cipher case trial

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday rejected the request of former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman to stop his trial in the cipher case and sought comments from the respondents.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the petition of former PTI chairman.

Petitioner's lawyer Sikandar Zulqarnain Saleem argued that no notification had been issued regarding the jail trial when the trial court passed an order regarding his client's indictment on December 4. The court inquired regarding the Federal Government's notification for the jail trial. The lawyer said that it was the responsibility of government to specify place for the hearing of a case.

Justice Miangul Hassan observed that it was the authority of the judge concerned to decide about the place for holding the trial. The lawyer prayed the court to issue a stay order against the trial.

The court, however, served notices to the respondents and adjourned the hearing till December 20.



ISLAMABAD: DG FJA, Mr. Hayat Ali Shah presents a shield to DG KP Judicial Academy, Ms Farah Jamshed during a ceremony at the Federal Judicial Academy. Mr. Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Judge, SCP also seen in the picture.

## PM reaffirms Pakistan's support...

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Kashmiris for their right to self-determination.

Giving a historical account, the prime minister said the Kashmiris had suffered enormously from conflicts in history. Even today, the situation had not improved as the majority was still under the subjugation of an oppressor with a different name.

Prime Minister Kakar told the House that Kashmir was the oldest unsettled agenda of the United Nations as the UN Security Council resolutions remained unimplemented and the Indian government was bent upon consolidating its occupation of disputed territory through a series of legislative and administrative measures.

Referring to the Indian decision to take the Kashmir issue to the United Nations and repeated Indian leaders recognizing it as a dispute, he said the current Indian government must honour its long-standing commitment to the UN resolutions.

He said the Indian SC verdict was politically motivated instead of grounded in law to validate the illegal unilateral measures of August 5, 2019.

The prime minister said considering its massive human rights abuses, the title of 'world's largest democracy' for India should be changed to the 'world's largest hypocrisy' where hollow slogans of democ-

cracy and diversity were raised to cover up the marginalization of minorities, state-sponsored terrorism and illegal occupation.

Calling the Indian actions in IIOJK a breach of the UN Charter, the UNSC resolutions and international laws, he said the main objective of the Indian measures was to convert Kashmiris into a disempowered community in their land.

However, he said, the domestic legislation and judicial verdicts could not absolve India of its obligations.

He said on the one hand, India wished to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, while on the other its leadership took pride in trampling upon international laws. Such contradictions reinforced by the Hindutva ideology should be an eye-opener for the international community, he added.

He said thousands of Kashmiris had been killed, thousands faced forced disappearances and pellet gun injuries, and thousands of the women suffered molestation, while the human rights abuses were also documented in two of the UN reports.

Questioning the conscience of the international community, he said despite killings, illegal detention of Kashmiri leaders and destruction of structures, In-

## Govt to ensure affordable healthcare for all citizens: Dr Jan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan on Thursday reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to provide accessible and affordable healthcare for all citizens. The minister, in a statement in connection with the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day, said, "The UHC Day serves as a powerful reminder of the collective commitment to building equitable and accessible healthcare system across the country."

It also served as a global reminder of the importance of health as a fundamental human right and the need for collective efforts to achieve health coverage for everyone, leaving no one behind, he added.

The minister said that this year's theme, "Health for All: Time for Action," resonated with "our ongoing efforts to build a healthier and more equitable society." He said, "Despite the considerable improvement in the UHC service coverage index from 40% in 2015 to 52.7% in 2023, the real challenge still lies ahead. "With our expected enhanced investment in essential health services at the community and pri-

mary healthcare levels, we need to ensure efficiency and effectiveness while addressing equity issues."

Dr Nadeem affirmed

the government's relentless efforts to fortify the healthcare system, enhance infrastructure, and elevate the quality of healthcare services. Emphasizing the importance of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Dr Nadeem Jan highlighted that the Ministry of Health was involved in the implementation of various reforms dedicated to expanding healthcare access, particularly for vulnerable populations. The Health Ministry, he added, had

implemented various UHC reforms aimed at expanding healthcare access to vulnerable populations.

The Universal Health Coverage, he said, "is a key pillar of our commitment to the well-being of our citizens. Our focus is on building a robust and resilient healthcare system that meets the diverse needs of our population." He said approximately 500 Basic Health Units across the country would be upgraded in a short time under an agreement between the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

## MoU Signed between OIY and NAMYO



QUETTA (PR): A momentous Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Organisation of Islamic Youth and the Non-Aligned Movement Youth Organization.

The signing ceremony took place at the Headquarters of the Non-Aligned Movement Youth Organization in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Hammad Khan Kakar, President of the Organisation of Islamic Youth, and Leyla Hasanova, Head of Secretariat of the Non-Aligned Movement Youth Organization, were the signatories of this historic MoU.

This collaboration marks a significant milestone in fostering greater understanding, knowledge exchange, and joint initiatives between the youth of the member countries in both organizations. It aims to empower young individuals and lead to positive developments in regions represented by the Organisation of Islamic Youth and the Non-Aligned Movement Youth Organization.

## People to vote for...

### Continued on page 1

against him turned out to be false, and the court acquitted him of all charges.

"What sin was committed by Pakistan and its people to be pushed into a crisis during my tenure?" he questioned.

He thanked the nation over the messages of congratulations pouring in from all over the world.

"The prayers of the people have always given me strength, and the nation also deserves congratulations on my success," he said.

The PML-N Quaid said, "Even if my opponents found it necessary to oust me, entangle me in false cases, and impose unjust sentences in false cases. What crime did the people of Pakistan commit, that they were subjected to such torment? It saddens me that despite unprecedented development during my tenure, Pakistan, which was making progress, was pushed into darkness. I left the country with a growth rate of 6.1%, ended load-shedding by adding 12,000 megawatts of new electricity to the national grid, and brought in more than \$50 billion in foreign investment. However, the PTT's government stopped the process of local and foreign investment in Pakistan. While PML-N took Pakistan out of the FATF grey list, the country was placed on the FATF's grey list because of the terrible policies of the imposed government, turning the country into a beggar once again and pushing Pakistan into darkness," e said. "We had obtained relief from the IMF's program in our era, and we had bid it farewell. But PTI, in its government, once

again placed the begging bowl in front of the IMF, burdening the country with more loans. We crushed terrorism, but unfortunately, after we left, terrorism raised its head again, and under the PTI government, Pakistan once again became a victim of extremism and terrorism."

Nawaz Sharif said, "I regret that after my ouster, due to wrong economic policies, the value of the Pakistani rupee has been lost, which was the strongest in the region. The country has become the victim of the most frightening inflation in history. How did the rate of inflation, which was at 3 to 4 percent, skyrocket to 40 percent? How did the price of a 'roti' jump from Rs 5 to Rs 30? Why and how did we reach a point where the people of Pakistan were pushed into starvation? He asked why was sugar sold for more than Rs. 300 per kilogram. All this was the worst economic murder of the people in the history of the country."

Nawaz Sharif said, "During our era, the poor used to get free medicines in hospitals and free treatment," adding, "Protecting the rights of women is our top priority, and InshaAllah, I will be truly happy when the people are freed from the punishment of poverty and inflation."

He said that it would take hours if he shared the organized conspiracy woven against him after 2013.

He said it all started with the August 2014 sit-ins, and its first phase ended on 28 July 2016 when he was not only ousted from the office of prime minister but was also disqualified for life over not taking salary from his son.



QUETTA: Former Provincial Minister Hafiz Hussain Ahmed Sharudi and others meeting with Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Balochistan Rashid Razaq

## 'BISP Saving Scheme' to change poverty landscape; make people self-reliant: Dr. Saqib

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr Amjad Saqib Thursday said that the newly launched 'BISP Saving Scheme' will change the poverty landscape in the country by focusing on savings which can help make the people self-reliant. Addressing the launching ceremony of the BISP Saving Scheme held at a local hotel, the chairperson said "Like many other schemes of BISP, the Saving Scheme can change the poverty landscape with our focus on savings which is extremely important". He said that poverty is like a poison and poverty eradication is the first and prime responsibility of every person on this planet. The chairperson said that around 150,000 people will be selected under this scheme on a first come first serve basis through Pakistan's selected districts however the scope of this scheme will be further expanded in future. The beneficiaries have to save a small portion of their income in their 'savings accounts while the government will pay additional forty percent of consumer

savings which will come in handy for consumers to deal with any uncertain situation and emergencies. The scheme is for both men and women, he said while urging those eligible to be a part of this scheme. Dr Saqib said that the objective of the BISP Savings Scheme is to inculcate financial independence and saving habits among consumers. The savings will be a protective measure to support deserving people during the emergencies when informal economy shrinks and people lose jobs. He said that BISP is an internationally acclaimed and largest social protection program which has been working for the last 15 years through gaining strength and implementing many pro-poor initiatives. The primary initiatives of BISP include Benazir Kafalat, Benazir Education Stipends, Benazir Nashonuma, and Benazir Undergraduate Scholarship however one of the biggest achievements is the creation of the National Socio-Economic Registry which is truly reliable and benefits the deserving ones

besides extending support in emergencies. The chairperson of BISP said that microfinance is one of the most important strategies for poverty alleviation which means the provision of financial services to the poor in the form of credit, savings, insurance, transfer of money etc. Speaking on the occasion, Additional Secretary BISP, Dr Tahir Noor said that the scheme, as a pilot project, has been launched in Gilgit and Astor in Gilgit Baltistan; Muzaffarabad and Neelum in Azad Jammu and Kashmir; Peshawar and Lucky Marwat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Lahore and Multan in Punjab; Quetta and Qila Saifullah in Balochistan; Karachi and Sukkur in Sindh and Islamabad. Dr Tahir Noor said that the BISP saving scheme as a hybrid social protection initiative has been launched to support vulnerable communities, making them self-sufficient. The hybrid scheme blends social assistance with social risk mitigation elements to promote savings that the vulnerable segments can fall back on in case of shocks.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed launches the reports of National Time Transfer of Account & Provincial Transfer Accounts in collaboration with UNFPA and PIDE at local hotel.

## Dr. Umar Saif terms role of technology as crucial for economic development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Umar Saif Thursday emphasized the crucial role of technology in achieving economic development. He underscored its ability to drive innovation, boost productivity, and enhance efficiency across diverse industries. During the event, Dr. Saif Umar expressed his vision for IRADA, envisioning a collaborative effort involving NUST, universities, industry, and the Defense Agency, and the Defense sector. He emphasized the potential for joint projects and products that can be commercialized to contrib-

ute significantly to the country's economic development. Drawing a historical parallel, the minister referred to the launch of Sputnik by Russia in 1957 and the subsequent creation of DARPA by the USA. He highlighted the success of connecting the defense sector, academia, and industry, resulting in the invention and commercialization of transformative technologies such as the Internet, GPS, and cryptography. The minister informed that NUST has graciously agreed to host IRADA and provide the necessary ecosystem for its success.

Highlighting the objective of IRADA, he emphasized its role in fostering collaboration between the defense sector, academia, and industry in Pakistan for technological advancement. He noted that while linkages between these sectors have existed, IRADA aims to formalize and institutionalize these connections. During the event, Dr. Saif Umar expressed his vision for IRADA, envisioning a collaborative effort involving NUST, universities, industry, and the Defense Agency, and the Defense sector. He emphasized the potential for joint projects and products that can be commercialized to contrib-

## Religious scholars denounce DIK attack; vow to root-out terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Religious scholars on Thursday condemned the terrorist attack on the security personals in Dera Ismail Khan, urging the masses to identify anti-social elements to protect the country from the scourge of terrorism. Dr. Abdul Rehman, Head of the Shaykh Zayed Islamic Research Centre, Islamia University Peshawar, said the country is going through a critical situation and the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its brave soldiers who are always ready to lay down their lives in defense of the motherland. Speaking to Radio Pakistan, he paid rich tribute to security personnel who embraced martyrdom during this cowardly attack. "No power on earth can undo Pakistan and such cowardly acts cannot weaken the spirit of armed forces," he remarked. Maulana Muhammad Tayyab Qureshi, Chief Khatieb, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said the mar-

tyrs are our real heroes; their great sacrifices will not go in vain, adding that the whole world recognized the eternal sacrifices of the security forces in the war against terrorism. "These cruel people want to destabilize the country; they are not only enemies of Pakistan but of the whole humanity and the entire Ummah," he added. Maulana Dr. Atta-ur-Rehman, Secretary General of Rabi-ul-Madaras Pakistan, denounced the act, saying that such elements had no religion and were ultimately destined to face defeat. Maulana Muhammad Shoaib, a prominent scholar, expressed deep sorrow and regret over the martyrdom of the soldiers in the terrorist attack and prayed for the high status of martyrs. He vowed that the terrorists could never succeed in their nefarious aims and the entire nation was standing with the security forces in the war against terrorism.



Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Umar Saif visiting National Science and Technology Park at NUST in Islamabad.

## PMIC extends deadline to complete PIMS HVAC project by Dec 25

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Prime Minister's Inspection Commission (PMIC) on Thursday gave a five-day extension to the authorities concerned to complete the project of installation of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) plant at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) by December 25. Earlier, the PMIC had given the deadline for project's completion by December 20. A PMIC team made another visit of the project and reviewed the progress on ongoing work of the HVAC regarding installation of the centrally air conditioning system in the whole buildings of the hospital. The visit took place in wake of the deep concerns expressed by the prime minister over the un-

warranted delay in completion of the PSDP projects including "Replace and Upgradation of HVAC Plant Room Equipments and Allied Works at PIMS, Islamabad". Following dissatisfaction on the reports from Ministry of Housing and Works and Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination, the matter had been referred to the PMIC for effective supervision, said a press release. PMIC Chairman Brigadier (Retired) Muzaffar Ali Ranjha had assigned the task to the inquiry team headed by Zahir Shah for vigorously persuading the project and ensure its completion at the earliest. The inspection team that visited the project, comprised PMIC Member Zahir Shah and Co-opted Member Safdar Ali.

## Annual canals closure to start from Dec 26: Spokesman

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has decided to close down canals for annual maintenance and de-silting between December 26, 2023 to January 30, 2024. According to Director Operation and Spokesman IRSA Khalid Idrres Rana the Mangla command canals would be closed from Dec 26 till January 13 in stage wise, and Tarbela command canals would remain closed from January 13 to 30, 2024.

## CUST awards degrees to over 1075 graduates

ISLAMABAD (Online): As many as 1075 graduates have been awarded degrees during the Convocation 2023 of Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) held here the other day. Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr Mukhtar Ahmad was the chief guest while Syed Ahmed, a renowned IT professional, was the Guest of the Honour. Prof. Dr. M. Mansoor Ahmed, Vice Chancellor delivered an inaugural speech and welcomed the graduate students. He highlighted the contribution made by the University in the field of higher education and hoped that the graduates would contribute towards scientific development.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Higher Education Commission Dr Mukhtar Ahmad is presenting degree to Laiba Hashmi after conferring the Gold medal during 19th Convocation of Capital University of Science and Technology at Jinnah Convention Center in Federal Capital.

## HEC, Microsoft signs ETA to modernize tech education in country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Under the long-term cooperation between the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Microsoft signed the Education Transformation Agreement (ETA) the other day, aiming to further modernize technological education in the country. At the same time, the Imagine Cup competition, Founders Hub and AISkilling for students was launched, in which participants will present their innovative projects and entrepreneurial endeavors. The event was graced by the presence of Nasir Jany, Federal Secretary for Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication. "In the era of

AI, education stands at the threshold of unprecedented transformation. The collaboration between Microsoft and HEC through the Education Transformation Agreement is a testament to our commitment to fostering innovation and equipping the youth with the skills needed for the future," remarked Jibran Jamshad, Country Principal Officer and Regional Education Lead at Microsoft. The event commenced with address by Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum, Executive Director HEC, setting the tone for an insightful day of discussions and partnerships and highlighting the important role of the

Founders Hub and AI Skilling. In his notable speech, the Secretary Information Technology and Telecommunication stated that embracing Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence was not just a choice, it was a strategic imperative in our rapidly advancing world. These innovations act as a compass, guiding us through progress and unlocking new frontiers, shaping a future marked by innovation, efficiency and endless possibilities, he concluded. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman HEC, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad expressed his optimism about the collaboration and stated.

## Former chairman PTI can be awarded death sentence in cipher case: Aleema

ISLAMABAD (Online): Aleema Khan sister of former chairman PTI has said Imran Khan can be awarded death sentence in cipher case. "Whenever we come out of our residence, we are followed and threatened, she said this while talking to media men outside Adiala jail Thursday. She went on to say cells have been made in the court room. I can not comprehend they are afraid of what thing inside. The whole family was inside and it was locked from outside. Justice does not seem to be done amid what is happening, she underlined. It seems as if we are sitting in some other country, she added. It pains us what treatment is being meted out to us in our own country. We are chased after we come out of our homes, she added. It is said to us that we will be put into jails. But we are not afraid of anything.

## 271 domestic workers data from 574 houses registered

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Police has completed the registration of the data of 271 domestic workers of 574 houses in the limits of the police station secretariat for the registration of employees and tenants. In the campaign, different teams of Islamabad Police are going to streets and neighborhoods to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers. According to the details, the Islamabad Police is taking important steps to ensure the safety of citizens.



Zahir Shah, Member, PMIC is getting site visit briefing on PSDP project titled "Replacement and Upgradation of HVAC Plant Room Equipment and Allied Works at PIMS, Islamabad" at PIMS Hospital Islamabad from the Park PWD, PIMS officers and Contractor.

## CPO Safe City/Traffic addresses AIR University students on drugs awareness

**Independent Report** ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has launched an awareness campaign in federal capital to eradicate drug abuse and secure the young generation from the curse of narcotics. As part of this initiative, the Capital Police Officer Safe City/Traffic conducted an enlightening lecture at AIR University, focusing on the damages of

threat to both health and future prospects. In a bid to safeguard themselves and their communities from this menace, attendees were urged to take proactive measures. Recommendations were made to educational institutions to organize seminars and anti-drug marches. During the lecture, the CPO Safe City/Traffic addressed queries from attendees and shed light on Islamabad Capital Police's legal actions against drug-related offenses. It was

## Nadeem visits King Hamad University of Nursing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan on Thursday visited the under-construction King Hamad University of Nursing reviewed the construction work and expressed his satisfaction. The project manager while giving a detailed briefing about the construction work said that the project was to be completed by the end of 2024. The minister directed to complete the remaining work of the university within two months, on which the project manager assured to complete it within two months. Dr. Nadeem Jan said that King Hamad University of Nursing is a state-of-the-art university from which 500 nurses will receive their diplomas every year. He said that the university is a gift from Bahrain to the government of Pakistan which has a capacity of 200 nurses to study in the nursing university. He said that nursing was the backbone of the health sector and this sector is of utmost importance in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan is facing a shortage of nurses and the government has formulated an integrated strategy to meet this shortage. He said that large-scale reforms are underway to improve the field of nursing.



Islamabad: The outgoing Resident Coordinator of United Nations in Pakistan, Mr. Julien Harnes calls on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## SPARC highlighted harms of addictive nicotine products

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) unraveled the misleading narrative peddled by the tobacco industry about the purportedly "less harmful" nature of nicotine products. During a seminar organized by the SPARC at a local hotel here Thursday, the speakers showcased insightful discussions and contributed profound insights into this critical public health issue, particularly as it pertains to Pakistan. Former Senator Muhammad Ali Saif passionately underscored the role of policymakers in safeguarding Pakistani citizens. "Safeguarding our people from the harms of nicotine products demands not just attention but concrete legislative measures tailored to our cultural and social context. All political parties should leave their differences aside when it comes to public health, especially that of children. Everyone must stand united against the tobacco industry", he expressed. Dr. Maheen Malik, Director Tobacco Control South Asia Region-CTFK, emphasized the significance

of sustained efforts within the specific challenges faced in Pakistan. "A holistic and long-term approach is essential to counter the nuanced threat posed by new nicotine products within our unique cultural and social landscape. CTFK is committed that, with the support of its partners, it will keep countering the efforts of the tobacco industry to derail Pakistan's health and economy." Dr. Ziauddin Islam, former technical head, Tobacco Control Cell, Ministry of Health, offered an in-depth exploration of traditional and new types of nicotine products. He said, "The myth of 'less harm' has been meticulously dispelled, exposing the specific health threats these products pose for both adults and children in the Pakistani context. The so-called 'less harm' is enough to cause serious risks to the physical and mental health of consumers." Malik Imran Ahmad, Country Head, CTFK Media and New Nicotine Products shared the insights from the field, stating, "Our scrutiny uncovered the target audience of these products.



ISLAMABAD: The First Lady, Samina Alvi is taking keen interest in different kinds of flowers on stall during a workshop on the topic of "New Trends and Techniques in Floral Art" by Aisha Zahid at local hotel in Federal Capital.

## 34 outlaws arrested, drugs and weapons recovered

**Independent Report** ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police on Thursday apprehended 34 outlaws from different areas of the city and recovered drugs and weapons from their possession. According to details, Aabpara police team arrested Anwar Masih and Waqar Ahmed and recovered 1,230-gram hashish and 25 liters of alcohol from their possession. Police also arrested Sharon Masih for decanting gas in cylinders illegally. Karachi Company police team arrested Danish Shakeel and Saddam and recovered two 30 bore pistols from their possession. Shams Colony police team arrested an accused Hamza Ali and recovered 180 gram hashish from his possession. Kirpa police team arrested an accused named Khalid Hayat involved in illegally refilling gas cylinders



substance abuse and measures for prevention. The lecture witnessed participation from professors, students, and university staff. The Capital Police Officer highlighted the detrimental effects of drug usage, especially among the youth, emphasizing its



## Governor advises students to look at the positive side of life and be grateful

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: A delegation of students and teachers of Balochistan Residential College Loralai, headed by Farooq Kakar, met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore. The delegation comprised children from 31 districts of Balochistan province. Governor Punjab welcomed the students

from Balochistan to Governor House Lahore. Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman while addressing the students asked them to look at the positive side of life and be grateful. He said that this country has given us so much that we cannot pay back to our country and soil.

Governor Punjab said that an educated person evaluates everything rationally. Governor Punjab further said that before 2018, students of Balochistan were not only included in the laptop scheme but record number of laptops were distributed among them. He said that transparent and public welfare schemes like laptops were discontinued after 2018. Governor Punjab said that between

2013 and 2018, special measures were taken to bring Balochistan into the stream of development. He said that a special quota has been fixed for the students of Balochistan in the universities and medical colleges of Punjab. Governor Punjab said that the continuation of public welfare policies is very important for the development of the country.



LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur-Rehman in a group photo with teachers and students of Balochistan Residential College Loralai.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali in a group photo with under training ASPs and Senior Officers of National Police Academy during their study tour to Governor House.

## George highlights services of unsung heroes of Christians for country's development

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George on Thursday highlighted the services of unsung heroes of minority communities, particularly Christians, for the development of country. He was addressing an event "Unfaded heroes of Christian Community in KP" held at the Governor House, in collaboration with the Pak Mission Society.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan in general.

Minister George said, "Pakistan is our country and we are living here happy and getting equal rights. Pakistan came into being after the sacrifices of our forefathers."

He called for creating an environment where everyone, regardless of their background, could thrive and contribute to shared progress.

Ghulam Ali, in his address, reinforced the significance of diversity, unity, and interfaith harmony in the province.

Acknowledging the rich diversity that defines Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he emphasized its role as a strength that contributed to shared prosperity.

The governor reaffirmed a commitment to a future marked by tolerance, inclusivity, and prosperity for all.

He called for continued collaboration and understanding to build a province that "serves as an example of unity in diversity".

The minister stressed the importance of ensuring that development initiatives were inclusive and considerate of the needs of all communities.



KARACHI: Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar inaugurates 18th International Book Fair at Expo Centre.

## Minister hands over vehicles' keys to colleges' principals

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Minister for Higher, Primary and Secondary Education, Professor Dr Muhammad Qasim Jan on Thursday said the provincial government, despite its limited resources, was taking steps for the uplift of the education system. He said resolution to the problems of all colleges of the province including the newly merged districts was the utmost priority of the government.

among nine male and female colleges here.

The function besides others was also attended by Additional Secretary Higher Education, Sayeed Mazhar Ali Shah, Director of Higher Education, Dr Faridullah Shah, and principals of the relevant colleges.

On the occasion, the minister was told that under the first phase of the AIP Program, 55 Hiace vehicles and buses were approved, of which 46 vehicles were distributed in the first phase while the remaining nine were distributed in today's function.

## Dr Jamal inaugurates Health fair at DPS

RAWALPINDI (APP): A free health fair in collaboration with the Red Crescent and District Health Authority was organized at the Divisional Public School (DPS) and College here on Thursday. Caretaker Provincial Minister Primary and Secondary Health and Population Welfare Punjab Dr. Jamal Nasir and Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaqat Ali Chatha inaugurated the health fair.

Around 850 students were checked in OPD while Eye, dental, hepatitis, blood screening, and general screening of the students of government colleges were conducted in the fair.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Jamal Nasir said that organizing such fairs would help in developing a healthy environment. He said that the students of government educational institutions benefited from organizing free health fairs.

In the next phase, a complete health screening of all DPS students will be carried out.

## PTI making conspiracy to delay election

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial spokesperson of Awami National Party (ANP), Samar Haroon Balour, has stated that the petition of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the Lahore High Court against the Election Commission's notification was an attempt to delay the general elections, which was not acceptable at all.

In a statement here Thursday, she expressed that due to the PTI's petition, preparations for February 8 were disrupted and PTI would be responsible for the delay.

## 'Timely elections need of the hour'; KP Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali on Wednesday said that timely elections were the need of the hour, however, a conducive environment was imperative to conduct free, fair and transparent polls in the country.

Talking to the media here at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women's University (SBBWU), he said that holding the general elections was the responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the caretaker governments were the facilitators, adding the concerns of the stakeholders should also be addressed by the ECP.

He said that currently Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces were facing two challenges one is the security situation and the other is extreme weather conditions.

He said the ECP should consult all the political parties and stakeholders for the

election date as harsh weather conditions coupled with the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan could affect the election.

He said that the economic situation of the country could only be streamlined if an elected government came to power for which a fair and transparent election was imperative.

Referring to the Dera terror attack, he said that he met with the injured as well as the bereaved families and all of them were determined and in high morale.

Earlier, he inaugurated badminton and squash courts at SBBWU and said that women's education was the top priority of the government for a peaceful and developed society, adding that the role of women in any sector could bring prosperity.

He said that equal opportunities should be given to females in all walks of life.

## First lady urges vigilance, creating breast cancer awareness

LAHORE (APP): First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi emphasized the urgent need for spreading awareness about early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer, particularly among women, at a seminar, organised by the University of Lahore on Thursday.

At the event, held at the Governor's House in collaboration with the World Health Organisation, various medical institutions and NGOs addressed the significance of self-examination in detecting breast abnormalities.

Begum Alvi urged women to conduct monthly self-examinations and consult a doctor promptly if any lump or cyst is detected.

Addressing the societal importance of combating breast cancer, she highlighted the statistic that one in nine women in Pakistan is suffering from the disease.

Emphasising the urgency of early diagnosis, Begum Alvi underscored that breast cancer is curable at any stage, but delays can increase risks and reduce survival chances. She commended the progress made in overcoming societal taboos around discussing breast cancer, attributing it to increased awareness.

The First Lady acknowledged the media's crucial role in disseminating information, stating that the awareness campaign, ongoing for five years, has led to more



LAHORE: Chairman Mashaikh Peace Alliance Pir Maqdoom Muhammad Haroon is addressing during "Solidarity Kashmir Conference" at local hotel in Federal Capital.

## PPP wants to develop the urban, rural areas alike: Mayor Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that Pakistan People's Party wants to develop the urban and rural areas alike and his party does not believe in the politics of discrimination and prejudice.

He said this while addressing the opening ceremony of the road construction and expansion project from Razaqabad to Sheedi Goth Power House on Thursday.

He said that his party is completing development projects in all districts of Karachi, while the next provincial government will be ours and we will be in the center as well.

Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Mayor Karachi Spokesperson for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi, former Member of National Assembly Jam Abdul Karim Jokhio, Chairman Gadap Town Tariq Aziz Baloch and other leaders and activists were also present.

He said that if the infrastructure of Karachi is better, the city will develop. Work has been done on Jatoi Sahib's UC in the area, fifty thousand square feet of pavement work has been done, a huge star ground has been inaugurated in Sherpao Colony, development work is also in progress on Shershah Road, Malir Kala Board Road will also be inaugurated soon.

## Federal, provincial govts, LEAs committed to wipe out terrorism: KP CM

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on Wednesday said that the federal and provincial governments, law enforcement agencies and the people were on the same page to wipe out terrorism and extremism from the country in all forms and manifestations.

country. "Whoever is against the country is the enemy of all of us and whoever does not follow the country's Constitution will be dealt strictly," the chief minister said.

Talking to a delegation of trainee Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASPs) here at his office, he said that the morale of the law enforcing agencies and security institutions was high and they were ready to cope with any challenge for peace in the

government and a formal plan had been chalked out for the areas. He, however said that due to financial problems at national level, the welfare and development of the merged districts was being affected.

He said that the role of police was important in maintaining law and order in the society and protecting the lives and properties of the people, adding that KP police always fought against terrorism bravely in the province and had rendered great sacrifices.

He said that the promises made at the time of merger could not be fulfilled adding that due to this reason, the process of development in the merged districts was hampered.

The chief minister said that the issue of funding for the merged districts had been raised by the Prime Minister and he had assured to address this issue.

He said that the welfare and development of the merged districts was a priority of the

## CJ PHC visits Kohat Jail

KOHAT (APP): Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC), Mohammad Ibrahim Khan on Thursday visited District Jail Kohat. The chief justice was warmly welcomed and received by the District & Sessions Judge & Superintendent Jail, Kohat.



LAHORE: Ambassador of the Philippines to Pakistan Maria Agnes M. Cervantes meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

He inspected every barrack personally and gave a patient hearing to all the prisoners by listening to their complaints.

## Sindh gov't focuses on eradication of GBV, welfare of women: Info Minister

During the visit it was pointed out that 45 prisoners of district Hangu were stationed at Kohat district Jail. The chief justice directed to make necessary arrangements for the immediate shifting of these inmates to the Jail of their home district instead.

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Caretaker Minister for Information, Minority Affairs and Social Security Muhammad Ahmad Shah, here on Thursday, said that the Sindh government was focusing on eradication of gender-based violence and welfare of women, children and all vulnerable segments of the society.

Besides, the CJ PHC also directed that cases of under-trial prisoners shall be expedited and those who were behind bars in cases involving petty nature offences shall be released forthwith after obtaining bail bonds. Likewise, the Hon'ble Chief Justice observed that the provision of a solar system, video link facility and exhaust mechanism were indispensable facilities for the facilitation of inmates therefore, these issues would be taken with the concerned department for immediate action.

He was addressing the second conference of the Multi Sectoral Coordination Committee (MSCC) on gender based violence that was organized by Pathfinder International in collaboration with UNFPA Pakistan funded Sehat Mand Khnadan (SMK) Project and MSCC on Gender Based Violence.

The minister said that Sindh had taken lead in very progressive legislation in all important sectors but it was not enough to make laws and their effective implementation was also necessary. Emphasizing on effective implementation of laws with full passion and determination, he said that respect and fear of the law and deterrence to crimes could only be created by strict implementation of the law. Stressing on joint efforts for welfare and betterment of all the citizens without any discrimination, he said that funds allocated by government for the purpose should reach their rightful and deserving beneficiaries.

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## LHC suspends termination of ex-PCB director media

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday suspended the termination letter of Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) ex-director media and communication Sami Burney. Justice Abid Hussain Chattha passed the orders on a petition filed by Sami Burney challenging his termination. The court also sought reply from PCB and others respondents. The petitioner's counsel argued before the court that his client was transferred from the PCB's media and communication department to special projects after the current PCB management.

## KP Minister emphasizes responsible tourism practices

PESHAWAR (Online): In a significant address during the Chitral Symposium held in Peshawar, Caretaker Minister of Information and Public Relations, Culture, and Tourism Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of the provincial government, armed forces, and institutions to foster the growth of the tourism sector.

He welcomed public-private partnerships, citing the establishment of four integrated tourism zones, with a special focus on Chitral, as a testament to the region's dedication to enhancing tourist attractions. Expressing gratitude to the Pakistan Army for their support in organizing the successful Chitral Symposium, Minister Kakakhel praised the Department of Tourism and Culture and Tourism



MULTAN: View an overturned truck that was fells down due to over speeding after traffic accident while rescue operation is underway, in Multan.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif in a meeting with Telenor and Etisalat delegation.

## CEO of PTCL, Ufone announces 100pc stake acquisition in Telenor Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): He mentioned that the joint entity, with its diverse range of products and services, was committed to delivering the best services across all sectors. The collaborative agency aims to provide consumers with an extensive range of products and services," he added. The merger of Telenor will play a crucial role in establishing a modern network infrastructure in Pakistan, contributing to the country's technological advancement. He hoped that the collaboration would bring additional benefits to consumers and stakeholders, contributing to the creation of

a historic telecommunications system that fosters connectivity and supports the digital transformation journey. He said that the completion of the acquisition was subject to regulatory approvals and customary closing conditions. PTCL is actively working towards a smooth transition process to ensure minimal disruption for employees, customers, and other stakeholders.



the digital transformation journey.

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## Bilawal assures Businessmen of playing his role in resolution of their problems

PESHAWAR (APP): PPP Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto held out assurance of playing his role with full dedication for resolution of problems being faced by business community of the country, especially of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Bilawal gave this assurance during meeting with office bearers of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and business community of KP under the leadership of Malik Mehar Elahi, Haji Fazal Elahi, Sartaj Ahmad Khan and Adnan Jilil here at Zahir Shah House on Thursday. During the meeting, businessmen appraised the

PPP Chairman about the problems they faced and hardships due to slump in business in the country in general and KP in particular. Earlier, Sartaj Ahmad of FPCCI presented a detailed briefing about the efforts being made by him and his team members from the platform of FPCCI for the betterment of business community of the province. He said majority of the districts from Chitral to D.I.Khan are deprived of official patronage from the center as a result of which, business community and industry is suffering due to non-resolution of problems they faced. He said that the

wheeling policy of electricity was not given due consideration under which the industry would be provided electricity at cheap rates. Similarly, the suggestions of business community for increasing border trade is given heed by quarters concerned, he continued. Malik Mehar Elahi, on the occasion, highlighted demands of small traders of the province. Speaking on the occasion, Bilawal Bhutto said that he would play his role for resolution of problems being faced by business community. He also made a clarification that PPP was not against corporate sector and giving undue consideration to SMEs.



HYDERABAD: Labourer women busy in packing the tomatoes in the wooden boxes at Vegetable Market.

## PARC to establish 574 m<sup>2</sup> aeroponics green houses, 21,600 m<sup>2</sup> screen houses

**Independent Report** ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) in collaboration with Korea Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA) will construct 574 m<sup>2</sup> aeroponics green houses and 21,600 m<sup>2</sup> screen houses in order to enhance output of potatoes and to achieve self-sufficiency in certified seed potato production. The facility will be established under the project "Pakistan-Korea Joint Program on Certified Seed Potato Production System" to produce 160,000 tons of certified seed potato annually, said an official of PARC here on Thursday. He said that in this regard the KOPIA signed technical cooperation projects and contract for construction of green/ screen houses for seed po-

tato production through Aeroponics. The Aeroponics potato projects will pave ways for self-sufficiency in seed potato production, he said adding that innovations in agricultural research will maximize agricultural productivity, he added. Pakistan and Republic of Korea are working jointly on agriculture technology transfer projects for seed potato production through aeroponics, fodder production, chili drying and improvement in artificial insemination in cattle, he added. He said that the conventional potato plants typically yield only five tuber seeds, whereas aeroponics plants have the potential to produce 50 to 60 seeds each, he said adding that the Pakistan currently cultivates potatoes on approximately 300,000 hectares of land.

## Mohamed Karmoune says: Collective efforts to be made to improve trade volume b/w Morocco, Pak

**Independent Report** ISLAMABAD: Vice President FPCCI, Mr. Umar Masood ur Rehman & Mr. Amin Ullah Baig visited the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Islamabad and met H.E. Mr. Mohamed Karmoune, Acting Dean of Diplomatic Corps Islamabad & Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary of Mo-

rocco. During the meeting, several areas of multilateral interests, economic and business engagement, investment, promotion of bilateral trade, economic cooperation, investment, and exchange of trade delegations and trade development were discussed in detail. Both sides also addressed the various prospects and dimensions of strengthening relations in the future. Mr. Umar Masood ur Rehman, Vice President of FPCCI, said that we should increase trade with brotherly countries for mutual benefit. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents significant growth potential for the African economy, as it establishes a structure for fostering regional economic integration, growth, and progress. The agreement has the potential to offer Pakistan fresh avenues to enhance its trade and investment connections with African nations, thus generating business and reinforcing economic relations.



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## Delegation of Telenor, Etisalat Group meets IT minister Dr. Saif

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation comprising on the heads of Telenor Etisalat Group met with Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Dr Umar Saif here Thursday. The discussion focused on advancements in the telecom sector and the transition of Telenor's operations to PTCL, said a news release. The delegation included Mikhail Gerchuk, CEO International Etisalat Group; Abdulrahim Al Nooryani, Chairman Etisalat International Pakistan; Hatem Bamatraf, CEO PTCL/Ufone; Peter Borre Furberg, Head of Telenor Asia and Khurum

Ashfaq, CEO Telenor Pakistan. The minister expressed positivity about PTCL's acquisition of Telenor operations in Pakistan. The merger would strengthen digital connectivity and contribute to the overall growth of the telecom sector, he added. The Ministry of IT, he said, is committed to enhancing telecom services, with a focus on improving quality and accessibility across the country. Dr Umar Saif asked telecom companies to proactively take measures to deliver superior services to consumers, emphasizing the sector's significant contribution to the nation's progress.

Dr Umar Saif asked telecom companies to proactively take measures to deliver superior services to consumers, emphasizing the sector's significant contribution to the nation's progress.

## Skilled manpower vital to cope with economic, social woes: Dr Iqrar

FAISALABAD (APP): Skilled manpower is imperative to cope with economic and social woes being faced by the country as a step towards knowledge-based economy, said Prof Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan Vice Chancellor (VC) University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). He was addressing the participants of two-day soft skill development training under the auspices of Punjab Educational Endowment Fund and Directorate of Financial Assistance and University Advancement. Dr. Iqrar Ahmad Khan

said that the education brings a person out of the darkness of poverty and ignorance into the light of prosperity and consciousness. He said that entrepreneurial skills should be developed among the students so that they can provide employment instead of running after jobs. He said that the students from the rural areas are admitted in UAF on the quota basis so that they can innovate in agriculture. He said that UAF is putting special attention on the handholding of financially depressed students to continue their journey of education.

## Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves reach \$12.2 billion

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan reached US\$12,206.4 million while the reserves held by the central bank stood at \$7,040.8 million. The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that SBP's reserves increased by \$21 million to \$7,040.8 million during the week ended on December 08, 2023. Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks also inched up to reach \$5,165.6 million, it added.

## Pak-Qatar Family Takaful, Instaful Solutions join hands to promote inclusive Banca Takaful

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pak-Qatar Family Takaful and the Instaful Solutions on Thursday have entered into a strategic partnership to introduce inclusive BancaTakaful, a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country. "BancaTakaful, an innovative distribution model, involves offering Takaful products to bank customers, primarily to depositors," a news release said on Thursday. Unlike traditional BancaTakaful, which typically targets a subgroup of wealthier individuals with higher deposit amounts, it added, the new initiative aimed to address the needs of the majority, middle-or

low-net-worth individuals, comprising 60-70 percent of total bank depositors. "These customers are exposed to host of savings, investment and protection needs which largely remain unserved under current model." "Recognizing the changing landscape influenced by enhanced digitalization, Pak-Qatar Family Takaful and Instaful believe that leveraging technology is key to scaling Takaful products beyond a limited niche to a mass clientele. The concept of Inclusive BancaTakaful is in essence Digital BancaTakaful and revolves around offering a range of innovative products and solutions to the currently ignored

middle segment of banks through the use of technology," it added. The transformative partnership was signed at a ceremony at the Pak-Qatar Family Takaful headquarters in Karachi, which was attended by senior leadership from both organizations. Speaking on the occasion, Azem Pirani, CEO of Pak-Qatar Family Takaful said, "Our partnership with Instaful aligns with our commitment to delivering innovative, customer-centric solutions. Through this collaboration, we aim to redefine the Takaful landscape, making it more accessible, convenient, and transparent for our valued customers."

## PSX gains 170 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 170.03 points, a positive change of 0.26 percent, closing at 65,540.19 points against 65,280.16 points the previous trading day. A total of 981,194,616 shares valuing Rs.23,743 billion were traded during the day as compared to 1,358,411,606 shares valuing Rs. 37,657 billion the last day. Some 389 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 198 of them recorded gains and 174 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 17 remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were Kohinoor Spinning with 160,178,500 shares at Rs.5.40 per share, Bank of Punjab with 89,773,616 shares at Rs.6.97 per share and Hascol Petrol with 79,313,000 shares at Rs.8.35 per share. Unilever Pakistan Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.175.00 per share price, closing at Rs.22,275.00, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Fibres with a Rs.85.00 rise in its per share price to Rs1,784.50. Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.350.00 per share closing at Rs.10,000.00.

## NPO to organize w'shop on Productivity Specialist

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Productivity Organization (NPO) is going to organize a three-day training program for "Productivity Specialists" from December 20, to introduce the latest techniques to improve efficiency and raise productivity. The objective of the workshop includes introducing the standards and requirements for APO certified Productivity Specialists based on Asian Productivity Organization APO-PS 101 Requirements for Productivity Specialists, discussing the knowledge of productivity improvement strategies at the firm and organizational level, and demonstrating the competence needed by participants to act as productivity consultants, trainers, promoters and researchers, said an NPO document issued here. The event highlights an introduction to APO PS-101, the role and requirement for productivity specialists, lean Six Sigma enterprises and manufacturing excellence. The workshop has been designed for government officials, production, inventory, supply chain, store, material managers, representatives of industrial associations, academia, professionals involved in conducting training, consultancy, research, or promotional activities

## Foundation stone of splint manufacturing unit with Canadian investment

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Tribal Affairs Dr Aamer Abdullah Thursday laid the foundation stone of the splint manufacturing unit, being established with the Canadian investment of US\$16 million at the Export Processing Zone (EPZ), Nowshera. "This unit will be the largest factory of its kind in terms of production in the world and all its production will be exported. Currently, the largest factory of this type in the world consists of three assembly lines, while this factory will have eight assembly lines," a press release said. The industrial unit would generate employment opportunities for 800 people with 60% women, who would be extended all the facilities according to international labour standards, it added. The minister also laid the foundation stone of two units of leather and plastic pipe manufacturing at the economic zone. A total investment of Rs. 210 million has been made in the projects, which will provide employment to about 330 people.

## Rupee gains 10 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Thursday gained 10 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs283.51 against the previous day's closing at Rs283.61. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs284 and Rs286 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs2.64 to close at Rs308.48 against the last day's closing of Rs305.84, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

## PEDO to be made most revenue generating institution of the province: Nisar

**Independent Report** PESHAWAR: The Secretary Energy and Power Nisar Ahmad Khan has said that several ongoing power projects are entered in the final stages of completion, which will be helpful for the stability of province's economy and the development of the industrial sector in the future. He further added that high-level forums will be contacted soon on priority basis in terms of facing problems with federation in energy sector of KP. Timely completion of energy projects is in the interest of

## Gold rates up by Rs.5,700 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.5,700 and was sold at Rs.218,300 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs.212,600 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.4,887 to Rs.187,157 from Rs.182,270 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.171,561 from Rs.167,081, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver increased by Rs.70 to Rs.2,650 whereas that of ten-gram silver went up by Rs.60.01 to Rs.2,271.94.

## CEO CBD Punjab, Chairman P&D discuss socioeconomic development of Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), widely known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), welcomed Chairman Iftikhar Ali Sahoo of the Planning & Development Board (P&D) Punjab to the CBD Punjab Complex in Lahore, for a productive visit. The primary objective of this visit was to engage in discussions regarding CBD Punjab's ongoing and forthcoming projects and their pivotal role in steering the economic development of Punjab. During the visit, Imran Amin, CEO CBD Punjab, provided comprehensive insights into the current and prospective projects under-



LAHORE: People are buying woollen clothes from vendors at road side flea market to counter the winters spell in Provincial Capital.

ognizing their potential to drive sustainable growth in the province. While expressing his views Chairman P&D Board Punjab, Iftikhar Ali Sahoo said, "The projects initiated by CBD Punjab showcase a promising future for Punjab's economic prosperity. We are committed to extending our support and collaboration to ensure their success." CEO CBD Punjab, Imran Amin, extended his profound gratitude for Chairman Iftikhar Ali Sahoo's visit, while talking on the occasion he said, "We appreciate the recognition of CBD Punjab's projects by Chairman P&D Board Punjab, signifying our joint commitment to Punjab's progress.

## Putin says there will be no peace in Ukraine until goals are achieved, while offering rare details

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin vowed that there would be no peace in Ukraine until his goals are achieved and said those objectives remain unchanged at a year-end news conference. Offering rare detail on Moscow's operation, Putin dismissed the need for a second wave of mobilization of reservists, saying there are some 617,000 Russian soldiers currently in Ukraine, including around 244,000 troops who were called up to fight alongside professional Russian military forces.

The Russian president, who has held power for nearly 24 years and announced recently he is running for reelection, was greeted with applause as he arrived in the hall in central Moscow.

Putin did not hold his traditional press conference last year after his military failed to take Kyiv and as the Ukrainian army retook swaths of territory in the east and south of the country. But with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy now returning to Washington to plead for U.S. aid, a stalling counteroffensive and reports of fracturing Western support for Ukraine, the Russian president has decided to face the media once more — though the broadcast remains heavily choreographed and more about spectacle than scrutiny.

This year, ordinary citizens have the chance to phone in questions along with those asked by journalists, and Russians have been submitting questions for Putin for two weeks. It

is the first time Putin, who has heavily limited his interaction with foreign media, will potentially face multiple questions from Western journalists since before the fighting in Ukraine began.

The press conference opened with questions about the conflict in Ukraine and highlighted concerns some Russians have about fears of another wave of mobilization, which has proved unpopular. In September 2022 Putin ordered a partial military call-up as he tried to boost his forces in Ukraine, sparking protests.

"There is no need," for mobilization now, Putin said, because 1,500 men are being recruited into the Russian army every day across the country.



A view of destroyed cars next to a damaged residential building following a Russian missile strike.

## COP28 yields 'historic' accord on transition away from fossil fuels

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: For the first time on Wednesday, nations approved a call to transition away from fossil fuels as UN negotiations in Dubai tackled the top culprit behind climate change, but at-risk countries said far more action was needed. More than 100 countries had lobbied hard for strong language in the COP28 agreement to "phase out" oil, gas and coal use, but came up against powerful opposition from the Saudi Arabia-

led oil producer group Opec, which said the world can cut emissions without shunning specific fuels.

That battle pushed the summit a full day into overtime on Wednesday, and had some observers worried the negotiations would end at an impasse. But after 13 days of talks and several sleepless nights in a country built on oil wealth, the Emirati president of the COP28 summit quickly banged a gavel to signal consensus among 194 countries.

## Senior Taiwan opposition leader visits China month before election

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: A senior leader of the Kuomintang (KMT), Taiwan's main opposition party, is in China for meetings with the Taiwanese community, his party said on Thursday, a highly sensitive visit one month before elections on the island.

Jan. 13 presidential and parliamentary elections.

The vote will affect Taiwan's future relations with China, which views the island as its own territory and has stepped up military and political pressure to assert those sovereignty claims.

Hsia, who arrived on Wednesday, is visiting Chengde, Nanchang, Zhongshan, Xiamen and Chongqing at the invitation of the Taiwanese business community in China and will attend events with them, the party said in a statement sent to Reuters.

## Indian parliament 'disrupted' on terror anniversary

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Two men intruded into the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, releasing yellow smoke from canisters in what is being seen as a major security breach on a day that marked the anniversary of a Dec 13, 2001 terror attack on the Indian parliament.

be in the gallery were sanctioned by a BJP MP from Mysore. Parliament security staff took the duo — identified as Sagar Sharma, 25, from Lucknow and Manoranjan D, 35, from Mysore — into custody after they were caught by MPs, who also roughed up one of the intruders, reporters said. Two others — Neelam Singh, 42, from Haryana and Amol Shinde, 25, from Latur in Maharashtra — were arrested from a spot near Parliament House where they too opened smoke canisters soon after the incident in Lok Sabha.



Indian parliament building shows yellow smoke billowing out of a canister.



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro is received by the St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves before a meeting with his Guyanese counterpart Irfaan Ali amid tensions over a border dispute, in Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

## Japan, UK and Italy formally establish a joint body to develop a new advanced fighter jet

**Monitoring Desk**  
TOKYO: The defense ministers of Japan, Britain and Italy on Thursday signed an agreement to establish a joint organization to develop a new advanced jet fighter, as the countries push to bolster their cooperation in the face of growing threats from China, Russia and North Korea.

The three countries had agreed last year to merge earlier individual plans — for Japan's Mitsubishi F-X to succeed the retiring F-2s developed with the United States and

Britain's Tempest — to produce the new combat aircraft for deployment in 2035. Japan, which is rapidly building up its military, hopes to have greater capability to counter China's rising assertiveness and allow Britain a bigger presence in the Indo-Pacific region. Defense Minister Minoru Kihara at a joint news conference with his British and Italian counterparts, Grant Shapps and Guido Crosetti, said that co-developing a high performance fighter aircraft.

## Gazans face public health disaster

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: The United Nations humanitarian office said on Wednesday that Gaza faced a public health disaster due to the collapse of its health system and the spread of disease amid an offensive by Israel that has hit hospitals and displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, meanwhile, warned that the people of Gaza were "running out of time and options".

The UN and aid groups have sounded the alarm about the spread of

infectious disease in Gaza, where the internal displacement of 85 per cent of the population has caused overcrowding in shelters and other temporary living facilities.

"We all know that the health care system is or has collapsed," said Lynn Hastings, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory. "We've got a textbook formula for epidemics and a public health disaster." WHO has reported a sharp rise in acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea, lice, scabies and other fast-spreading diseases.



Palestinian children hold pots as they queue to receive food cooked by a charity kitchen, amid shortages in food supplies, as the conflict between Israel and Hamas continues, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

## Turkish MP dies after suffering heart attack in parliament

**Monitoring Desk**  
ANKARA: An opposition Turkish lawmaker died on Thursday, two days after suffering a heart attack and collapsing in front of parliament as he finished a speech criticising the government's policy toward Israel.

Hasan Bitmez, 54, a member of parliament from the opposition Felicity (Saadet) Party, died in Ankara City Hospital, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca told reporters in televised

remarks. A graduate of Cairo's Al Azhar University, Bitmez was the chairman of the Centre for Islamic Union Research and had previously worked for Islamic non-governmental organisations, his parliament biography shows.

He was married and a father of one. Parliament's official broadcast showed Bitmez collapsing to the floor after having been standing at the podium before the general assembly on Tuesday.

## Cold wave grips northern China, temperatures set to plummet in south

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: Cold weather gripped large swathes of China on Thursday, with sharp falls in temperature expected over the next few days, particularly in the south, weather forecasters said, in unusually frigid weather for December.

The cold snap is moving from several northern provinces hit by blizzards to central and southern areas such as the province of Guizhou, and pushing deep into the lower reaches of the Yangtze River delta.

"This cold wave is powerful, later this week it will be a big move south," said meteorological analyst Wang Weiyue,

according to state broadcaster CCTV.

By Sunday, temperatures south of the Yangtze could reach zero degrees Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit), while provinces just north of the Yellow River, such as Shandong, could see minus 10 C (14 F).

Further north, temperatures could approach historical lows for this time of the year or even surpass records, national weather forecasters warned.

In Beijing, snow has been building since Monday in the capital of nearly 22 million. Temperatures are expected to further slide to minus 12 C (10.4 F) on Friday from about minus 3 C (26.6 F) on Thursday.

## 53 injured in Russian missile strikes on Kyiv

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: A volley of Russian missiles wounded several people and damaged a children's hospital on Wednesday, the worst attack on Kyiv in months, Ukrainian officials said, as the country pleads for Western military aid.

Journalists in the capital heard several explosions before dawn, and air raid sirens sounded soon after that. Ukraine's air force said it had downed all 10 missiles targeting the city and the health ministry said 53 people had been wounded, including two children.

Most injuries were caused by "glass shards, household items and the shock wave" as missile debris fell in eastern and southern parts of the city,

the ministry added. Wednesday's strike, which caused the highest number of wounded in months, was the second in a week. In another attack overnight Sunday to Monday, eight missiles headed for the capital were shot down.

"The enemy used ballistic weapons," the Kyiv City Military Administration said, adding that Russia was "intensifying the missile terror of Kyiv".

There were also strikes in the southern port of Odesa, where officials said nine Iranian-made Shahed drones had been downed. On the edge of the port city of Odesa, a journalist saw a large hangar in which trucks and cars had been destroyed.

## Overwhelming UN vote underlines need for Gaza ceasefire

**Monitoring Desk**  
UNITED NATIONS: The UN General Assembly on Tuesday overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. The resolution also demands the prompt and unconditional release of all prisoners involved in the ongoing unrest. This marks the second such a resolution was adopted by the General Assembly, unlike the UN Security Council where resolutions calling for a ceasefire were vetoed.

The resolution, moved in the General Assembly on Tuesday, was cosponsored by more than 100 countries and passed with a large majority of 153 votes. The vote reflects an increase in support for the ceasefire's demand.

US allies Britain — which had abstained from voting on previous Gaza resolutions at the General Assembly and UN Security Council as well — and Germany were among the 23 countries that abstained.

Prominent US allies — including Canada, Australia and Japan, which had previously abstained — were among the more than 30 countries that switched their position.

## Number of journalists killed on job in 2023 declines despite Gaza: RSF

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: The number of journalists killed in the line of duty fell this year, despite reporter deaths in Gaza in the past two months, media advocacy group Reporters Without Borders said Thursday. In the first 11 months of 2023, 45 journalists were killed carrying out their work, down from 61 last year, according to the annual report by RSF. It was the smallest number since 33 died in 2002, largely due to a major drop in Latin America.

While some 63 journalists have been killed in the Middle East since the October 7 start of fighting between Israel and Islamist group Hamas, only 17 of those deaths fell under RSF's definition. "It takes nothing away from the tragedy in Gaza but we are observing a regular decline, and are very far from the 140 journalists killed in 2012 and again in 2013" because of the wars in Syria and Iraq, RSF secretary general Christophe Deloire told AFP.

## Former UK Conservative lawmaker faces suspension for 'serious breach' of rules

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: A former member of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservatives committed a "seriously serious breach" of parliament's rules and should be suspended for 35 days, the standards watchdog said, potentially triggering a by-election.

Scott Benton sits as an independent, having been suspended from the governing Conservatives in April after he was filmed in a newspaper

sting offering to lobby ministers and leak market-sensitive information on behalf of a fake company.

The findings of the independent Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, who opened an investigation in April, were published on Thursday and found he had breached rules that say lawmakers should not take any action which would cause significant damage to the integrity of parliament.

## A newly elected progressive Thai lawmaker is sentenced to 6 years for defaming the monarchy

**Monitoring Desk**  
BANGKOK: A court in Thailand convicted and sentenced a recently elected lawmaker Wednesday to six years in prison for defaming the monarchy under a controversial law that guards the royal institution.

Human Rights Watch decried the ruling, saying it "violated her rights to freedom of expression protected under international human rights law."

Rukchanok Srinork arrived for her court hearing in the capital, Bangkok, as her fellow lawmakers were convening in Parliament.

"I submitted a request to postpone (the hearing) because today the new parliament convenes for its first session, but the court refused."

So I came to hear the verdict," she told reporters, standing next to her party leader who was there to lend support.

She was charged over two posts she allegedly shared two years ago on X, the social media platform

then known as Twitter. One tweet reportedly defamed the monarchy over links to a coronavirus vaccine and an anti-monarchy quote by 18th-century French philosopher Denis Diderot was allegedly retweeted.

Rukchanok was sentenced to three years on each count under Article 112 of Thailand's Criminal Code, known as lese majeste, which protects the monarchy. She was also convicted under the Computer Crime Act, whose broad provisions covering online activities have been criticized as a threat to freedom of expression.

Late Wednesday, the court granted her release on bail of 500,000 baht (\$14,200). If it had been denied, she would have lost her lawmaker status immediately.

The parliamentarian denied she posted the tweets, calling the case against her "weak." The plaintiff reportedly provided screenshots of the posts, but the police couldn't find the links.

## Distributes gold medals Collective efforts needed to establish welfare state: Alvi

LAHORE (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday urged collective efforts to achieve the objectives of Pakistan and materialize dreams of the founding fathers for establishing a welfare state.

The president was speaking at the 29th annual gold medal distribution ceremony, organized by Tehreek-e-Pakistan Workers Trust at Nazaria-i-Pakistan Trust for those who made significant efforts for creation of Pakistan.

He said that those who had received medals rendered valuable services and it was of utmost importance to recognize their historical achievements.

"We are very fortunate that we are living in a free and independent state," he said, adding the vision behind the creation of Pakistan was very broad.

He said Sir Syed

Ahmad Khan had stressed on acquiring education while Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal talked about forging unity among the Muslim Ummah.

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah always trusted students and he discouraged sectarianism, he added.

The president said, "Efforts and vision of our forefathers was to get a piece of land from where resurgence of Muslims could take place in light of the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

"Unfortunately today those signs are not visible which can help materialize the dream of our forefathers."

Dr Arif Alvi said that there was a need to trace history to accomplish the vision behind the creation of Pakistan.

He said, "Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be

Upon Him) taught us about forgiveness, unity, justice and all these elements are very essential for establishing a welfare state."

He said that justice was highly needed all over the world so that all humans could be equally treated.

The president said that human mind without ethic and morality would lead to failure, adding that a united community always moved ahead with an objective while hatred ruined everything.

He said that the power of social media could not be denied but it was very regretful that it was a cause of spreading fake news.

Regarding the Palestine issue, he said that the international community should play its role for its durable solution.

Mian Farooq Altaf and Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed also spoke on the occasion.



LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi distributing the Gold Medals to the Honour the workers of Pakistan Movement during the 29th Annual Gold Medal ceremony of Tehreek-e-Pakistan Trust organized by Nazriya-e-Pakistan Trust and Pakistan Worker Trust.

## Robust national maritime sector base of sustainable economic future: CNS

LAHORE (INP): Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf has said that keeping in view that current state of the economy, it is imperative to realize Pakistan's maritime potential, since a robust national maritime sector can be a great enabler for transition to a sustainable economic future.

He expressed these views on Thursday while addressing the concluding ceremony of 6th Maritime Security Workshop at Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore.

Maritime Security Workshop was Pakistan

Navy's annual event which aims to generate understanding on the dynamics of maritime security, creating awareness about blue economy and exploring untapped maritime potential of Pakistan.

The workshop participants included parliamentarians, policy makers, bureaucrats, academia, entrepreneurs as well as representatives from media.

Addressing the participants, Admiral Naveed Ashraf emphasized Pakistan Navy's commitments to raise awareness on issues of National Maritime significance and underscored

PN initiatives in generating informed debate on security issues, Blue-Economy, strategic developments in the Indian Ocean Region and intense geopolitical rivalry.

He also apprised the audience that Pakistan Navy is divesting resources for the socio-economic uplift of the less privileged segments of society, especially along the coastal belt.

Earlier, Rear Admiral Javaid Iqbal, Commandant Pakistan Navy War College during his welcome remarks gave a brief rundown of various activities during the conduct of workshop.



MUZAFFARABAD: A delegation of Hurriyat leaders calls on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## Pakistan committed to ICPD agenda, gender equity: Sami

ISLAMABAD (Online): The caretaker Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed on Thursday said Pakistan was committed to the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Thailand last month.

He made these remarks while addressing the launching ceremony of two reports jointly compiled by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). "We are committed to the population conference agenda and our delegation to the regional conference made a bit of contribution in it, said the minister while appreciating the research work carried out by the UNFPA and PIDE researchers, adding that "Pakistan is the first country in the region to delve into this kind of effort which is very useful for policymakers, academicians and researchers."

The reports titled "National Time Transfer of Account (NTTA), and National Transfer of Account

(NTA)" have been meticulously developed by PIDE in close collaboration with the UNFPA. The primary objective of the NTA report is to elucidate the intricate linkages between population growth, evolving age structures, economic growth, public finances, and other pivotal facets of the macro-economy, addressing aspects of gender and generational equity. The NTA, however, has limitations in capturing unpaid work falling outside production boundaries.

The study found that in Pakistan, men typically commence their working lives at the age of 10 and reach the peak of their earnings by the age of 49. However, their consumption frequently eclipses their income during both early and later years, a gap often compensated for by other household members who possess a surplus. In stark contrast, women consistently experience a trend where their consumption surpasses their income at all ages, primarily due to their limited participation in the labor force.

## Pak, France agree to further boost economic relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and France agreed here on Thursday to further enhance economic relations, explore investment opportunities, and increase bilateral trade between the two countries.

According to press statement issued by finance ministry, Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Nicolas Galey called on Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs Dr Shamsad Akhtar, during the meeting, matters of mutual interest, economic relations between the two countries and collaborative efforts in various sectors were discussed.

On the occasion, the finance minister stated that both countries enjoy deep and historical relations, adding Pakistan highly values its bilateral ties with France including trade and economic relations.

The Finance Minister apprised the French Ambassador about the economic reforms of the government that have brought economic and fiscal stability in the country.

## Magsi lashes out at PTI for petition against DROs & ROs notification in LHC

Independent Report  
QUETTA: The President Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), Nawabzada Khalid Khan Magsi has criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) for filing a petition against the notification of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding posting of District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) for the general elections.

While speaking on occasion of the joining of PTI's leader and former Provincial Minister Mobin Khilji and others here on Thursday, Nawabzada Khalid Magsi said that he

condemns the petition of PTI against the notification of ECP about DROs and ROs for elections in the court of law.

He expressed surprise over the PTI's move saying that it is surprising that political parties are afraid of the elections.

He on the occasion also condemned the terrorism incidents in the country. Meanwhile, fateha was offered for those martyred in the terrorism incidents in the country. Also present on the occasion were Chairman Senate, Sadiq Sanjrani and other senior leaders of BAP.

## Marwat arrested from Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sher Afzal Marwat has been arrested on Thursday from outside the Lahore High Court (LHC).

Marwat, who is senior vice president of the party, was leaving the high court premises after attending a lawyers' convention when a heavy contingent of police arrested him. According to police, the PTI leader was arrested under 3MPO and shifted to Mazang police station. Last week, the PTI leader alleged an attempted "abduction" by KP police while en route to Gulabdar near Chakdara for a party convention scheduled in Bajaur.



Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed chairs the 7th Executive Committee meeting of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in Islamabad.

## NJAC decides to develop action plan for technological transformation of courts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Judicial Automation Committee (NJAC) has decided to develop a plan of action with a specific time-frame to bring about a technological transformation in courts.

Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, judge Supreme Court of Pakistan, and the Chairman of the National Judicial Automation Committee, chaired the first meeting of the NJAC, according to a press release on Thursday. During the discussion, the committee acknowledged that while high courts have made efforts to automate the court system, more robust and technology-oriented court processes and holistic data of cases, lawyers, and judgments are needed to make the system efficient and transparent.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah proposed the concept of technological transformation, which involved forming a National Judicial Data Exchange Policy.

The policy is aimed at providing stakeholders and policymakers in the justice sector with real-time data to monitor and formulate

policies that ensure the efficient delivery of justice. The policy aims to create a National Law Digest that will store all the judgments issued by the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the High Courts.

This will allow the litigants to obtain authentic copies of judgments. Additionally, the repository will be AI-equipped, which will enable legal researchers and the legal community to conduct precise and relevant legal research. Furthermore, the policy aims to implement a national AI-powered scheduler to manage court calendars and assign hearing dates, reducing delays caused by unnecessary adjournments. In addition, the vision includes the implementation of online and digital payment systems for all court-related procedures. It also involves constructing verification infrastructure and facilities to verify the identities and documents of litigants using biometrics and other advanced verification methods. Mr. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar emphasized the need for data standardization.

## Shahnawaz gets capital punishment in Sara Inam murder case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The District and Sessions Court of Islamabad has awarded death sentence to Shahnawaz Ameer, the son of renowned journalist Ayaz Ameer, for murdering his wife Sara Inam and imposed a fine of one million rupees.

Session Judge Nasir Javed Rana issued the reserved verdict on Thursday.

The verdict acquitted the Shahnawaz Ameer's mother, who was co-accused in the case.

## PM calls for resolving Kashmir dispute as per wishes of Kashmiris

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Thursday called for permanent and final settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute according to the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. He was talking to a delegation of Hurriyat leaders from Jammu and Kashmir. The leaders thanked the prime minister for condemning the Indian Supreme Court's validation of the illegal and unilateral step of India regarding the status of Jammu and Kashmir. They praised the prime minister for his participation in the special session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, saying the PM represented the sentiments of Kashmiris during his address to the Assembly.

Jammu and Kashmir that Pakistan would always extend political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiris.

The Foreign Ministry and Pakistani missions abroad would increase their contacts with international think tanks, media and academia to better highlight the case of Kashmir at the international level, he said, adding a strategy would be formulated to effectively present the case of Kashmir in Washington DC, London, Brussels and other important capitals of the world.

A meeting of the Foreign Ministry and Hurriyat leaders would be held soon so that the leaders could give their proposals to strengthen the Kashmir cause, he added.

The prime minister emphasized that the overseas Kashmiris could play a very pivotal role for the Kashmir cause.



QUETTA: Director General Excise & Taxation Aurangzeb Kasi meeting with Caretaker Home Minister Captain (Retd) Muhammad Zubair Jamali.

## Jamali assures to resolve issues of sugar dealers association

Independent Report  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Zubair Jamali has stated that the issues being faced by the sugar dealers association would be resolved.

He said that the interim government is determined to promote commerce and trade activities and provide necessary facilities to them.

The caretaker Provincial Minister was speaking to the delegation of Balochistan Sugar Association who called on him here on Thursday.

The Minister assured that all the issues facing the sugar dealers would be resolved accordingly.

He said that the objective of government is to provide facilities to the traders community.

The members of delegation of Sugar Association on the occasion apprised the Minister Home about the issues of sugar dealers.

They pointed out that the sugar permits are being given to irrelevant persons in the province.

The basic reason behind increase in rate of sugar is giving permits to the irrelevant persons, the members of delegation noted.

They demanded of the interim government to withdraw sugar permits on pattern of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

They said that if government cooperates with us, then we would sell sugar at the lowest rates in the country. The per kilogram rate of sugar would decrease to Rs. 130 from existing Rs. 190 in the province, they claimed.

## SIFC reviews progress of policy initiatives, key sector projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Executive Committee for Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) on Thursday began its two-day meeting to review the progress of various policy-level initiatives and projects in the key sectors. The meeting, chaired by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed, was attended by Federal and Provincial Ministers concerned, besides high-level government officials,

a news release said.

On the inaugural day, the ministries concerned presented progress on various projects and related aspects, recommending various measures for further improving the business and investment climate. The committee appreciated the overall progress in various sectors and level of economic engagements with friendly countries, especially the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and Agreements.



QUETTA: Senior politician and former Senator Nawabzada Haji Mir Lashkari Khan Raisani addressing a seminar during sit-in of Balochistan Yakehti Committee at Sariab Road

## CEC needs to remove reservations of all political parties: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Secretary Information Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Faisal Karim Kundi has said that the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja needs to remove the reservations of all the political parties and ensure provision of level playing field to them during the upcoming general elections on February 8.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Thursday, he said that the PPP's stance on general polls was very clear that the ECP should conduct timely, free and fair elections in the country.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that PPP's delegation has already met the Chief Election Commissioner

(CEC) and apprised him about the reservations and need to provide level playing field in the upcoming polls. The CEC has assured them that there will be no delay in the elections, he added.

He said that the masses should decide to vote for any political party in general elections as it was the right of the people to vote and elect the party to rule in the country.

The PPP leader said, "The masses will not accept any government unless free and fair elections are ensured.

The credibility of the Parliament will be nothing if free, fair and transparent elections were not conducted in the country."



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar presiding over a meeting held to review different aspects of implementation of IT initiative programme.

## All set to restore Bolan Mail, Akbar Bugti Express trains

QUETTA (APP): The Pakistan Railways has announced plans to restore passenger trains Bolan Mail and Akbar Bugti Express, linking Quetta with Karachi and Lahore respectively. "On the directives of caretaker government and PR authorities, all is set to restore the two trains" Divisional Superintendent Quetta Muhammad Yousuf Leghari told APP on Thursday. The Bolan Mail will resume its operations on 25th December 2023, while Akbar Bugti Express will be restored in March, 2024. The two trains will facilitate the people of Sindh and Punjab to travel to Balochistan and vice versa. Currently, the Jaffer Express is the only operational passenger train in Balochistan being run between Quetta and Peshawar, besides local Chaman & Hurnai trains. The DS Railway noted that the Bolan Mail would consist of 12 coaches with the facility of a dining car and bedding. The passengers would also be provided clean blankets, pillows and standard food, he added. It may be recalled that, in October last, the Pakistan Railways restored train services at Sibi-Harnai section which was suspended 18 years ago after the miscreants destroyed main bridges.

## Jahangir Tareen to contest polls from Lodhran

LAHORE (INP): The newly-formed Istehkam Pakistan Party (IPP) handed over a list of constituencies to the Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) for seat adjustment. A meeting between the parties was held at the residence of PML-N leader Sardar Ayaz Sadiq here on Thursday which was attended by IPP leaders Ishaq Khakwani, Aon Chaudhry and Nauman Langrial. Former speaker Ayaz, Khawaja Saad Rafiq, Ata Tarar and Malik Ahmed Khan represented the PML-N. According to insiders, they discussed different options for seat adjustment and agreed to continue discussions.



QUETTA: A delegation of Anjuman Tajiran meeting with Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafqaat regarding sugar crisis.