# ndenemalent

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Bat symbol case

SC will not interfere in ECP's

domain, CJP tells PTI lawyer

Its become tradition in country to level allegation of

malafide intent against every one: Justice Isa

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Muhammad Ali Mazhar PHC's written order had

and Justice Musarat Hilali

The proceedings of the

case are being broadcast live

on the SC website and

Barrister Gohar, Shoaib Shaheen, Niazullah

and Waleed Iqbal attended

court proceedings today.

PTI's lawyer Hamid Khan

in his remarks said the SC

has clarified that no insti-

tution can file an appeal

view on appeals else there

will be no worth of its deci-

sions, the CJP remarked

mits any unconstitutional and added if the argument would be allotted electoral

questions will also be raised

on its appeal in Peshawar

The CJP Isa asked

The ECP can file a re-

against the verdicts.

YouTube channel.

hearing the electoral body's

been issued or not, the lat-

ter replied that it had not

The lawyer then read out the PHC order that restored the PTI's 'bat' sym-

bol. He said that the ECP

had not yet received "any notice" of the PHC order,

to which the chief justice

said, "I have not read the

The top judge asked Makhdoom when he would

be ready to present the

case, at which the counsel

urged the SC to adjourn the

hearing till Monday. Makhdoom further said

that the political parties

that to adjourn the hearing

till Monday, the PHC's re-

cent verdict would have to

The top judge observed

symbols tomorrow.

case file either."

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Gwadar

Ph: 2841470/2841473 Vol: XIX No. 219, Rajab 01, 1445 AH Saturday January 13, 2024, Pages 04, Price Rs. 15

# **Another resolution to** delay Feb 8 polls submitted in Senate

ISLAMABAD (Online): including armed attacks in Resolution seeking postponement of general election for three months in view of security challenges in the country has been submitted in Senate.

The resolution has been filed by senator Hidayat Ullah from Independent parliamentary group with his signatures.

The resolution said there is grave concern over the attacks on the candidates. Terror incidents are on rise across the country. The general election be postponed for three months. Protecting life and property of people is re-

North Waziristan, Bajore, Swabi and Turbat wherein an elderly nationalist leader was injured critically and one candidate was killed have created the environment of fear and insecurity

in the country.

The Senate accepts it that holding general election is constitutional obligation. The constitution insists on ensuring free and fair election and protection of life and property of people equally. he senate urges on Election Commission and Supreme Court to consider sympathetically holding of election peacefully and sponsibility of state. postpone the election for three months in view of seof terrorism in the country curity challenges.

2024 at Sonmiani.

Supreme Court (SC) on Fri-

day said regulating politi-cal parties is the job of the

Election Commission of

made by Chief Justice of

Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi

Faez Isa while hearing the

Election Commission of

Pakistan's (ECP) appeal

against the Peshawar High

Court (PHC) verdict restor-

ing the Pakistan Tehreek-e-

Insaf's (PTI) electoral

symbol — bat. "SC will not interfere

in the domain of the Elec-

tion Commission of Paki-

stan. However, if ECP com-

A three-member bench

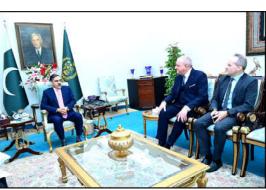
into it," the CJP added.

These remarks were

Pakistan (ECP).

Italian envoy pays farewell call on PM

### **Boosting trade, investment** ties with Italy in diverse sectors need of hour: PM



ISLAMABAD (Online): The Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan. Andreas Ferrarese, paid a farewell call on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar earlier today.

Prime Minister appreciated received throughout his the Ambassador's contri- stay in Pakistan. He also butions to strengthening bilateral relations, noting his efforts to foster economic ties and facilitate cooperation in various fields. While acknowledging Pakistan's longstanding friendly relations with Italy, the Prime Minister emphasized the need to boost trade, investment and cooperation in diverse areas including mi-ture endeavours.

gration and mobility, agricultural technology, education as well as tourism. The Italian Ambassa-

dor thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him and expressed gratitude for During the meeting, the the excellent cooperation he briefed the Prime Minister on key developments during his tenure. The Ambassador praised the valuable contributions of the vibrant Pakistani diaspora to Italy's economic develop-

> The Prime Minister wished the outgoing Ambassador success in his fu-

## BC constable on anti-polio security duty gunned down in Ouetta

**Independent Report** QUETTA: A constable of the Balochistan Constabulary (BC), Jamil Ahmed was shot dead by unknown armed assailants in the east-

ern-by pass area on Friday.

According to police, the BC constable was on duty of security of the antipolio teams in the Easternby pass area when unknown armed med targeted him and shot him dead.

The reports suggested that Jamil Ahmed sustained multiple bullets injuries and

shifted by the rescue team vided necessary medical assistance but he succumbed to the serious injuries in the evening and died Meanwhile, his funeral

prayer was offered at the police lines the same night. The commandant of BC Chaudhary Salman and other senior police officers

attended his funeral prayer. Later his body was dispatched to his native area Dera Ghazi Khan for burial

### PML-N, PPP opposes taking away bat symbol from PTI

KARACHI (Online): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) opposed taking away the symbol of the bat from Tehreek-e-Insaf.

Speaking on a private TV program, PML-N leader Javed Latif said that his election symbol should not be taken away from any

political party. People's Party leader Nasir Hussain Shah said that we have a clear stand that Tehreek-e-Insaf should be allowed to participate in elections with the symbol

Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Naeem Panjotha said that despite 26 hours of the Peshawar High Court's

(PHC) order, Election Commission Pakistan (ECP) has not allotted the bat symbol to PTI.

Senior PML-N leader Mian Javed Latif said that the resignation of Justice Ijaz-ul-Ähsan did not create a crisis in the Supreme Court. The crisis in the Supreme Court was created when Saqib Nisar started giving decisions of his own choice. Justice Ejaz-ul-Ahsan Faizabad Dharna Case has been patronizing those who gave references and those who made references against it. When you make decisions under pressure, how was justice done? Well, if the institution wants to wash away the stains of

the past, then it is good.



act then the court can look of PTI is accepted then

#### Lashari meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar Repatriation of illegal Afghan residents continues

CHAMAN (Online): The repatriation of illegal Afghan residents is contin-

> Last day, 958 illegal Afghan residents have been repatriated in which 210 men, 198 women and 550

children are present. 75 families in 51 vehicles have been repatriated

to Afghanistan. The total number of illegal Afghan residents who left Pakistan reached 465, 614 till January 11 and the

return is underway.

### Chairman PkMAP withdraws candidature in favour JUI-F chief from NA-265

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chairman Pashtoonkhaw Awami Party (PkMAP), Mehmood Khan Achakzai has withdrawn his candidature in favour of the central Ameer of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) Maulana Fzlur Rehman from NA-265.

QUETTA: A delegation led by Chairman Karawan Lashaar Pakistan Mir Abbas

According to the press release of the Party, Chairman PkMAP has withdrawn his candidature in favour of the JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman from the national assembly constituency of Pishin.

Meanwhile, the Chairman PkMAP has formed a five-member committee for seat to seat adjustment and alliance with other political parties. The committee has been formed under leadership of the party's central committee, Nawab Ayaz Khan Jogezai. Other members of the committee are included deputy chairman, Abdul Rauf Khan, central Secretary General, Abdul Rahim Ziaratwal, provincial President, Abdul Qahar Wadhanand senior provincial vice president, Syed Sharaf Agha.

### ECP delists 13 political parties over intra-party election failures

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Friday delisted 13 political parties due to their failure to conduct required intra-party elections. In a reserved judgment announced on Friday regarding 15 political parties, the ECP revoked the registration of 13 parties while permitting two, namely Jamiat Ulema e Pakistan (JUP) and Pakistan Muslim League Jinnah, to participate in the

upcoming elections. In the verdict, the ECP expressed disappointment over the lack of seriousness exhibited by political parties regarding the conduction of intra-party elections. Delisted political parties encompassed All Pakistan Minority Alliance, All Paki-

stan Tehreek, Awami Party Pakistan, Bahawalpur National Awami Party, Sab Ka Pakistan, National Peace Council Party, Pakistan National Muslim League, Pakistan Aman Party, Pakistan Brabri Party, Masihi Awami Party, Pakistan Quomi Yekjehti Party, Sunni Tehreek, and Nizam e Mustafa Party.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting to review repatriation of illegal foreigners residing in Balochistan

#### Chief of the Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir interacting with the officers and troops at the occasion of witnessing firing of different air defence weapon systems during Exercise Al-Bayza-III, Alvi accepts resignation of Justice

Ijaz-ul-Ahsan ISLAMABAD (Online): President Dr. Arif Alvi has accepted the resignation of Supreme Court's Judge Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan.

Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan has tendered resignation under article 179 and 206 (1) of the constitution.

The President has accepted the resignation of Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan on the advice of the Prime Minis-

#### Rajab Al-Murajab to start today as crescent sighted

ISLAMABAD (APP) The month of Rajab Al-Murajab will commence on Saturady as the crescent for the new Islamic month was sighted on Friday evening.

Chairman of Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Sved Muhammad Abdul Khabir Azad made the announcement in this regard after chairing the meeting of the Zonal Ruete-Hilal Committee Lahore at the Awan Awaaf Shah

Chirag Building in Lahore.

Maulana Azad informed the media that weather conditions in most parts of the country were cloudy. However, evidences of crescent sighting were received from the citof Nawabshah, Tharparkar, Umarkot Kunri, Chur, Badin, Hyderabad, Pasni, Winder Balochistan, and others, where the sky was clear.

"Consequently, it was unanimously decided that the 1st of Rajab Al-Murajab 1445 will fall on Saturday, January 13, 2024," he added.

#### Shehbaz Sharif withdraws from election in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif will not contest election from NA-242 constituency in Karachi.

Shehbaz withdrew his nomination papers after Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P refused to withdraw its candidates Mustafa Kamal from NA-242. Meanwhile, PML-N Senator Nehal Hashmi said that Khawaja Shoaib will be PML-N's candidate from NA-242 in place of Shehbaz Sharif as no consensus reached with MQM-P for seat adjustment.

#### Two terrorists killed in North Waziristan

RAWALPINDI (Online): Security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in North Waziristan District, on reported presence of terrorists.

During the conduct of operation, after an intense fire exchange, two terrorists; Abdullah Khadri and Khalid Janan were killed.

The killed terrorists remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area including target killing of innocent civilians. Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area as the Security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipeoutthemenace ofterrorism from country.

# Armed forces modernizing their systems in line with country's requirements, says Army Chief

Witnessed Air Defence exercise Al-Bayza-III

RAWALPINDI (Online): ated the remarkable achievement of engaging targets with precision and opera-Staff, (COAS), witnessed firing of different Air Defence weapon systems during Exercise Al-Bayza-III, 2024 at Sonmiani.

COAS viewed integrated fire and battle maneuvers of Army Air Defence systems which includes High to Medium Air Defence Weapons System (HIMADS), Low to Medium Air Defence System (LOMAD), Short Range Air Defence system (SHORADs) and Extended Short Range Air Defence system (ESHORADs).

In a landmark achievement and milestone in enhancing the Air Defence of the aerial frontiers of Pakistan, HIMAD system in maiden fire was able to successfully engage the target at maximum ranges along with other layered weapon systems which were tested during the exercise.

COAS highly appreci-

tional readiness of Corps of Army Air Defence.
While interacting with

the officers and troops, COAS highlighted that Armed Forces of Pakistan are modernising their systems in line with our requirements to deter and be able to respond to any threat emanating against Pa-

Corps Commander Karachi, Commander Army Air Defence, Inspector General Training & Evaluation and Inspector General Arms also witnessed the

exercise. Earlier, COAS visited Army Air Defence Center. He laid floral wreath at Yadgar e Shuhada and paid homage to martyrs of Armed Forces. COAS installed Lieutenant General Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, HI (M), as Colonel Commandant of Army Air Defence



LAHORE: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari talking to media persons during his visit to Minhaj-ul-Quran Secretariat in Lahore.

Bilawal says:

### We are contesting elections for public service; we will end unemployment & inflation

Chairman of PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that PPP is contesting elections for public service. We will end unemployment and inflation. The journey of public service was started by leader of people, Zulfigar Ali Bhutto and Bibi Shaheed laid down her life for the completion of that and we will continue this public service.

While giving interview Online Tandlianwala visit, he said that we were given the manifesto and consciousness by Shaheed Bibi, so if we get win the PPP elections then we will change the destiny of the country and nation by implementing the 10-point agenda.

He said that "Wasila Haq Wasila Rozgar" are projects of PPP and we will start such welfare projects like Benazir Income Support for every sector which will bring prosperity to every home and will end the worst inflation, poverty and unemployment. The wheel of indus-

tries will run, the workers will get employment. Agricultural revolution will come when farmer will be prosperous. New universities will be built wherever necessary, including Tandlianwala, just as 2 million houses are being built for flood victims in Sindh and Baluchistan. Similarly 3 million houses will be built in Punjab.



KABUL: JUI Chief Maulana Fazal ur Rehman met with with Afghan Interior Minister Siraj ud din Haqqani.

#### CTD arrests terrorists planning attacks on Maulana, Aimal Wali PESHAWAR (APP): In a Aimal Wali through a sui-

successful operation, the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in Peshawar on Friday announced the arrest of two alleged suicide bombers affiliated with Daesh Khorasan (ISIS) from the Matni area.

CTD Superintendent of Police (SP) Najam-ul-Hussain told the media persons that the apprehended terrorists were planning suicide attacks targeting key political figures.
According to SP CTD,

the arrested individuals were plotting a suicide attack on Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman. Furthermore, it was disclosed that the terrorists had intentions to target Awami National Party (ANP) President cide bombing.

The arrested suspects had reportedly visited the JUI-F's center and investigations revealed that they had undergone training in the Paktia region of Afghanistan. During the security operation, authorities recovered suicide jackets, three hand grenades, and propaganda material associated with Daesh. The Bomb Disposal Unit (BDU) has successfully neutralized the weapons and explosive devices.

SP CTD Najam-ul-Hussain disclosed that the outlawed ISIS had previously been linked to targeted killings of individuals representing various schools of thought in the region six months ago.

# Daily Soice of Masse Independent

#### Terror wave

A spate of deadly recent terrorist attacks illustrates the grim fact that unless the state takes comprehensive counterterrorism measures, the militancy-related bloodshed witnessed in 2023 is likely to continue in

Many of the attacks have targeted police personnel, particularly those tasked with guarding polio teams. The week began on a sombre note when at least seven policemen guarding vaccinators were martyred in Bajaur on Monday in an IED blast targeting their vehicle. On Tuesday, two police officers lost their lives in a reported gunfight with militants in Bannu. These personnel were also escorting polio teams.

Wednesday also witnessed significant bloodshed, as three law enforcers were martyred when a police post was attacked in Kohat, while two army men lost their lives in Lakki Marwat. On the same day an election candidate was gunned down in North Waziristan, while another hopeful survived an attack

In the aforementioned attacks, terrorists have struck both 'hard' targets, in the form of security personnel, as well as 'soft' ones, such as election hopefuls. They show just how vulnerable police personnel are, particularly those serving in areas of KP and Balochistan experiencing a renewed wave of terrorist violence.

As mentioned, 2023 was not a good year where terror-related casualties are concerned. According to figures compiled by a think tank, there were over 1,500 violence-linked fatalities last year from nearly 800 terror attacks. It is particularly tragic that those protecting polio vaccinators have themselves come in the line of fire. This is not a new development; around a hundred people have been killed in poliorelated incidents since 2012. A recalibration of the national CT strategy is long overdue, particularly in order to protect the lives of soldiers and police personnel serving on the front lines. While military personnel are relatively better equipped, police officers also need to be supplied safety gear that can

Moreover, those protecting polio teams should be provided multi-layered security. While the state must keep using diplomatic channels to communicate to the Afghan Taliban that their soil cannot be used by forces inimical to Pakistan, internal efforts are equally necessary to flush out militants from

Unless efforts to uproot militancy succeed, the next, and inevitable step, will require military operations that will displace communities, and require more sacrifices from security personnel and dedicated funds. And as an election looms, candidates and voters in militancy-affected areas need security in order to freely campaign, and cast their ballots without fear, respectively. All security and intelligence agencies need to be on the same page, and together with the civil administration, the militant threat needs to be neutralised.

# Two resigned, others may follow...

By Qamar Bashir

Press Secretary to the President(Rtd); Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



Saturday January 13, 2024

In Pakistan, an atmosphere of palpable excitement and tumult prevails, akin to the thick smog in Punjab and Lahore, where visibility is so limited that even one's own hands become unseen. Every passing moment is laden with significant and breaking news, constantly keeping the public on edge. Unfortunately, this pervasive frenzy is not a harbinger of hope but rather a thick cloud of war alarms that hangs over the nation, casting a shadow on aspirations for a better future. In this relentless struggle to outmaneuver rivals, the foundational pillars of the state and its institutions are engaged

ing each other down. The Senate, pitted against the Judiciary, has Supreme Court was inititaken a bold step by passing a resolution calling for an indefinite delay in the upcoming elections. This move, a direct challenge to the Supreme Court of Pakistan, which had firmly set the election date for February 8, 2024, serves as a mockery of the highest court's historic decision

in a perilous game of pull-

The Supreme Court, issued a stern rebuke to the Lahore High Court, asserting in no uncertain terms that the court is complicit with those seeking to delay elections for their vested interests.

The PTI's struggle over the BAT symbol has become a legal manding that Justice a situation where allega- Justice Naqvi's proper- vested with jurisdiction political age rollercoaster, marked by Naqvi explain the appar- tions against Isa were ties or their transactional over tax matters, escape machinations.

Despite the Peshawar financial records. High Court's back-andtempt petition, slated for tomorrow (12th Jan 2024). The Election Commission is all set to file an appeal before the Supreme choice of the Peshawar High Court, over the potentially jurisdictional Islamabad High Court, underscores PTI's reso-

The two judges of the Supreme Court have already tendered their resignations, with the than answers. Did it sigmore following suit. If this trend continues, it could plunge the credibility and impartiality of both the scrutiny, potentially renpractically dysfunctional.

The rift within the

ated by an audacious move from an unfamiliar lawyer, Mian Dawood. who, in February 2023, filed a complaint against Justice Mazahar Naqvi. The complaint alleges violations of the code of lined in Clause (8) of Article 209 of the Constitution. The accusations Naqvi include misconduct, the creation of illegal assets, and the accusistency in the handling mulation of wealth through frontmen. Later, particularly the parallel this complaint was turned allegations against Qazi into a formal complaint. Faez Isa, raises ques-The SJC issued two tions about the fairness show-cause notices, de- of the entire episode. In

conflicting decisions. ent inconsistencies in his dismissed, and accusa- intricacies.

Justice Naqvi, veheforth on allocating the mently denied any symbol, the Election wrongdoing and labeled Commission chose to the show-cause notices disregard court orders as politically motivated and withhold the em- tools wielded against blem. PTI swiftly re- him. He filed a petition sponded by filing a con- with the Supreme Court seeking a stay order. The Supreme Court's dismissal of Naqvi's petition proved to be a turning point. With the SJC inves-Court. The deliberate tigation set to move forward, Naqvi opted for a dramatic exit. In a concise resignation letter, he maintained his innocence lute belief in the latter's continuing under such a cloud of suspicion was untenable.

looming possibility of nify an admission of guilt, or was it a strategic retreat process?. Was it a tacit acknowledgement of Supreme Court and the wrongdoing or a desper-Chief Justice into intense at attempt to escape scrutiny?. As a former Deputy dering the apex court Commissioner of Income Tax with over a decade of experience, I assert with confidence that the allegations against Muzhar Naqvi, revolving around property transactions at significantly disparate values, resonate across civil and military officers, politicians, judges, and business figures. If such conduct for judges out- practices were absent, and all individuals adhered strictly to legal obligations, our nation might leveled against Justice have charted a different

> The inherent inconof similar circumstances,

tions of amassing wealth exceeding 12 billion by former Army Chief Qamar Javaid Bajwa only led to the incarceration of those disclosing this information, it suggests a unjust dimension to the

legal proceedings. Recalling the allegations against Qazi Faez Isa, pertaining to the acquisition of three London properties leased in the names of his wife and children between 2011 and 2015, raises parallels with the current situation, but acknowledged that emphasizing the need for consistency and fairness in addressing such matters across different indi-Justice Naqvi's resigviduals and institutions. nation left more questions Let us peruse, the Supreme Judicial Council

decision point wise. The reference to be from a perceived unfair of no legal effect, non maintainable whatsoever and stands quashed. Reference was filed with malafide intention, prematurity and lack of evidence".Government agencies including the FIA secretly obtained information about the petitioner and his family in interests led to the preme Court dysfuncclear transgression of sweeping abolition of Articles 4 and 14 of the laws and the abrupt halt Constitution

Similar observations can be extended to the case involving Justice Mazahar Naqvi. The petitioner, in this in- numerous army officers, stance, is a lawyer who doesn't bear any direct impact from the alleged property transactions with Justice Naqvi. There is no record of the peti- text, a pertinent question tioner engaging in property transactions with the judge, neither as a buyer nor a seller, and therefore, lacks a legitimate basis to possess detailed information about the FBR, exclusively a connection to broader

It becomes apparent

that the origin of such de-

tailed information is likely

rooted in the historical practices of influential and powerful sectors, known for exerting presnuanced and potentially sure, offering bribes, and cultivating relationships with judges. It's a recuroften filed against judges and officials who resist yielding to illegal de- contradictions and dismands made through proxies. This under- ments and proceedings pressures faced by those within the judiciary who choose to uphold their integrity and indepenreviewed the income tax and wealth tax returns of numerous politicians, bureaucrats, and military ure, the reality is that the tax returns of many indi-

viduals. The narrative takes a disconcerting turn when defending vested of critical surveys. During an economic survey in 2001 that documented immovable properties of not only was the wealth tax abolished, but the entire survey was abruptly terminated.

In light of this conapplicant who filed the reference not summoned sources of information Justice Naqvi's proper- vested with jurisdiction

admonishment for leaking sensitive in formation against an honorable judge? Why did the SJC encroach upon the exclusive jurisdiction of the FBR? The inconsistency in arguments, notably the acceptance of similar arguments in the case of Qazi Faez Isa but ring pattern that refert heir rejection in the case ences or complaints are of Justice Mazahar Naqvi, raises eyebrows.

These apparent

crepancies in the argu-

scores the challenges and of the SJC likely contributed to Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan dissent and subsequent resignation. In his dissenting note, he dence in the face of ex- unequivocally called for ternal influence. Having the withdrawal of the show cause notice issued to Justice Mazahir Naqvi. Expressing concern over the council's actions, he officials during my ten- criticized the hasty and unconventional proceedallegations leveled ings, deeming them conagainst Justice Mazahar trary to established tradiare likely applicable to the tions and legal requirements. The looming possibility of other judges with similar reservations following suit in resigning could render the Sutional for a considerable period. A political dimension becomes apparent in what is perceived as part of the London plan, previously undeclared as articulated by spokesperson Aurangzeb. In response to the resignations of Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, she declared that the alleged conspiracy bench against former emerges: why was the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had reached its conclusion. This politifor an inquiry into the cal interpretation adds a layer of complexity to the within the FBR? Why did resignations, suggesting

# Commerce News

# 1st special credit guarantee company for SMEs inaugurated

Ministry of Finance and Karandaaz here Friday launched Pakistan's first special credit guarantee company namely the National Credit Guarantee Limited (NCGCL), with an objective to provide financial assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the

The inauguration ceremony, among others, attended representatives from the British High Commission, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCP), State Bank of Pakistan, and the Ministry of Finance.

NCGCL, the joint venture of Ministry of Finance and Karandaaz aims, to enhance financial accessibility through

financial reach for businesses operating at the small and medium scale across the board.

Speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad highlighted the revolutionary initiative. She said, private credit for SMEs in Pakistan stands at a mere 5.2 percent, declining from 7.7 percent in the last five years in the country.

She said the credit level was significantly lower compared to other South Asia, which has an average of over 17 percent, undoubtedly they do better on exports and they do better on competitiveness.

ISLAMABAD (APP): special credit guarantee 90 percent of formally facilities, particularly registered businesses, focusing on expanding contributes to around 40 percent of GDP and employees around 80 percent of non-agriculture labour forces, offering an opportunity to low income strata.

> She was of the view that inadequate investment in SME sector, globally significance of this recognized to enhance competitiveness countries and industries and value addition as well as employment generation, has hindered Pakistan's sustainable growth and development.

She said launching of NCGCL was a far reaching institutional reform that is being launched, adding the purpose of this transformative step was to

facilitate smoother capital She said, reality is investment paths for small that SMEs sector accounts businesses



KARACHI: Workers prepare different political parties flags and banners ahead of the forthcoming general election in Provincial Capital.

# Zong 4G, ASA Pakistan signs agreement for communication & data connectivity solutions

ISLAMABAD (INP): partnership on behalf of The Zong 4G, Pakistan's their respective leading digital communication company, has signed a corporate partnership agreement with industry-leading with ASA Pakistan Limited, tailored solutions that can a leading Microfinance enhance their business Bank, to provide data and voice services for their their processes," a news customers

signed

organizations.

"Zong Business team strives to provide each client productivity and streamline release said. A spokesperson Farooq Raza Khan, Director Govt. & partnership with ASA Corporate Sales & Services Pakistan (MFB) Limited is Zong CMPAK and CEO a testament to our ASA Pakistan Saeed Uddin commitment to excellence the and innovation

#### 1st cross-border oil project hits 300,000 tons mark: SCODA

BEIJING (APP): The first international bulk oil trade project, a collaboration between the Pakistan-China Center, Pakistan, and East Sea Group, China, was launched recently in the China-SCO Local Economic and Trade Cooperation Demonstration Area (SCODA), Qingdao, Shangdong, China.

Under the project, the initial batch of Malaysia blend crude oil, totalling 300,000 tons, underscores a deepening investment

cooperation between SCODA and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member countries, China Economic Net (CEN)

reported on Friday. Fang Yulong, Chief Executive Officer of East Sea Group, expressed confidence in expanding into the SCO member countries markets, attributing it to the support and assistance received from as compared to 313.66 SCODA.



# Pakistan to be connected

# with high-speed 'optical fiber network soon: Aisha

Ministry of Information Technology Telecommunication (MoITT) Additional Secretary Aisha Humera Chaudhry Friday said that the government is all set to launch a landmark project broadband connectivity and to boost deployment of digital infrastructure across the country.
Talking to PTV news

channel, she said that the government and telecom the country. She further would mentioned that the

ISLAMABAD (APP): strengthen urban and remote areas with highspeed broadband connectivity, adding, that all available resources and facilities were being provided for the digital gateway initiative. She said the government was 'optical fibre' to improve striving hard to ensure the availability of affordable high-speed Internet service to the citizens, particularly the students, and for that purpose, it was focusing on laying 'optical fibre' across

Ministry of IT and Telecom cooperating with the telecom industry.

Replying to a query, she highlighted that said that the provision of broadband services to the residents of the un-served and under-served areas of Pakistan is as much needed as for the big cities.

By increasing the optical fibre cable, the connectivity will be faster, and better internet facilities will be provided to the users, she added.

# Weekly inflation up by 1.36 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of combined consumption groups during the week ended on January 11, the Statistics (PBS) reported

on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the abovementioned group was recorded at 317.92 points points during the past

As compared to the measured by the Sensitive corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption 1.36 per cent for the group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 44.16 per cent. The weekly SPI with the Pakistan Bureau of base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs. 17,732, increased by 1.20 percent and went up to 312.23 points from last week's 308.53 points.

#### Gold rates up **by Rs.200** ISLAMABAD (APP): The

per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.200 and was sold at Rs. 216,500 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs. 216,300 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 172 to Rs. 185,614 from Rs. 185,442 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.170,146 from Rs. 169,989 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,650 and Rs.2,271.94 respectively.

# the need to revisit the economic policies Independent Report leading role in development SLAMABAD: President of Pakistan as well as to

**President FPCCI stresses** 

FPCCI Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh said that the Unemployment also. business community is the backbone of the economy and the FPCCI would take address their key issues. He said that we strongly believing in teamwork, he participation of the business Community Pakistan. representing different Chambers Associations of the

solve the problems of He reiterated that

now it's our duty to take steps to resolve the issues all possible measures to and problems of Business Community of Pakistan without any differences for the betterment of Pakistan would ensure maximum and for the betterment of Business Community of

He was addressing different delegations of the members of Islamabad country for economic Chamber of Commerce &



prosperity development of the country, along with welfare of the business community.

He further said that we will play positive role and take necessary problems faced by business community of Pakistan and FPCCI will play therecent elections of FPCCI.

Industry (ICCI), Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association (POEPA) & Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry who visited FPCCI Capital Office for initiatives to solve the presenting bouquets and felicitations to the whole team

# **IMF tranche: LCCI sees** positive impact on economy

LAHORE (INP): Office- The LCCI office-bearers Industry including President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mehmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt on Friday welcomed the approval of a \$700 million tranche by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for Pakistan, hailing it as 'excellent news for the economy'. They commended the present regime for its efforts, acknowledging the approval from the IMF Executive Board after completing the

bearers of the Lahore anticipated that the Chamber of Commerce & approved \$700 million would invigorate economic indicators, confidence in both local and foreign investors, stabilize the rupee, and positively impact the stock market. Highlighting importance of encouraging expatriate Pakistanis, they urged for increased home remittances and support export-oriented

industries to boost exports. In the wake of this positive development, the LCCI office-bearers urged authorities to focus on two first review of Pakistan's key areas for economic economic reform programme. reform.

# Women empowerment is very important for gender equality: Baligh

**Independent Report** LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman attended a ceremony organized by the National Commission on Status of Women, Government of Pakistan, regarding

empowerment of women as chief guest at a local hotel Chairperson National Commission on Status of Women Nilofar Bakhtiar and others were present on this occasion.

Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that women empowerment is very important for gender equality. He said that

religion, Islam, and the Constitution of Pakistan guarantee equal economic, social, and human rights for all citizens. In our religion, the example of Hazrat Khadija (RA) is in front of us, who was a successful business woman

He said that in order to empower women, it is very important to provide them with easy access to educational institutions and facilities in educational Addressing the institutions. He said that economic independence not only increases the confidence of women but also reduces the burden on other family members.

In our society, women women are contributing to are working in every field the development of and proving their mettle, country by working side adding he said that today by side in various fields Pakistani women are along with looking after aerospace engineers, their families and children. pilots, police officers. Even

'Navigating Voluntary Carbon Markets in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa' was aimed

realize its significant

capacity for nature-based

solutions and renewable

highlighted the adverse

ecosystems emphasizing

energy projects.

He was the Chief impacts already affecting

Aid-funded Sustainable the need for innovative

Energy and Economic approaches to mitigate

Development (SEED). The environmental risks and

titled build resilience.

Guest in a workshop that communities

to explore how KP can

Caretaker minister

PESHAWAR: Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Squash Association Qamar Zaman. Called on

Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

**Minister underscores** 

urgency to address climate

change challenges

Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah.

**Independent Report** 

PESHAWAR: Provincial

Caretaker Finance Minister,

Ahmad Rasul Bangash here

Friday underscored the

urgency of addressing

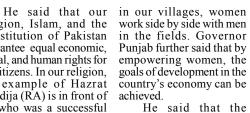
climate change challenges

recognizing them as a global

imperative that demands

was organized by UK-

collective action



performance and skills of women are much better than men in many fields Governor Punjab said that the governments that started institutions like Commission on Status of Women and projects like Women on Wheels to empower women should be appreciated. Governor Punjab said that the Government of Pakistan and many institutions of the Government of Puniah are active for women's welfare, economic independence and poverty

#### women with easy loans. Dr Javed says: Govt has introduced AI in hospitals

alleviation by providing

AHORE Caretaker Punjab Health Minister Prof Dr. Javed Akram said that the government had introduced historic artificial intelligence systems in government hospitals across the province

Speaking at a book event, emphasized the need for innovation in daily life and highlighted the pivotal role of technology in the development of powerful economies worldwide.

During his address Dr. Akram stressed the importance of evidencebased policies in addressing Pakistan's challenges and advocated for local technology development instead of relying on imports. He lamented the absence of biotechnology plants in Pakistan and urged a collective effort, suggesting an all-party conference to enhance the



ceremony regarding Women Empowerment organized by National Commission on Status of Women.

# KP Govt ready for transparent conduct of elections: CM KP

Syed Arshad Hussain Shah here on Friday said that transparent conduct of elections was the primary responsibility of the caretaker government and the government was ready in this regard.

Addressing a ceremony, he said that the Supreme Court and the Election Commission had been informed in connection with the free elections, adding that there was a shortage of 56,000 officials to perform the election duty. He said that the

provincial government was actively working for peace. order, better governance and provision of facilities to the people and taking pragmatic steps in this The CM said that the

government was working for the welfare of the people and taking measures to train 500,000 youth to send them to Gulf countries for better opportunities. After the inclusion of

rform the election duty.
The chief minister is

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has

PESHAWAR (APP): also taking steps for the Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the people increased, adding that the Prime Minister was keen to address the problems Prime Minister was keen here and had established a committee in this regard.

Meanwhile, as an important step towards good governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Caretaker Chief Minister Justice ® Sved Arshad Hussain Shah on Friday launched a Digital Dashboard under the "Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" Initiative for real-time monitoring of provincial departments, and other public service delivery outlets divisional and district

### Naqvi visits **Mayo Hospital** LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin

Naqvi has directed to install appropriate-sized signboards for the convenience of patients and their attendants at Mayo Hospital, during an inspection of upgradation of the hospital's emergency block, which is in its final stage on Friday.

He further directed that the finishing touches should be completed expeditiously with high

The CM also emphasized the need for the timely completion of all

was also present.

#### Minister Mohsin Naqvi improvements expressed displeasure over poor cleanliness, marks of dust and stains on tiles and

Naqvi displeased with

poor cleanliness in PIC

**Independent Report** AHORE: Punjab Chief counters during his inspection of the newly constructed emergency of the Punjab Institute of

Cardiology (PIC). He summoned the contractor, officials from the C&W department and the medical superintendent immediate explanation. He pointed out the signs of neglect in cleanliness arrangements and dust on tiles, expressing dismay over the situation. Inspecting the emergency, the CM questioned why the cleanliness conditions were so subpar. He summoned

the commissioner and directed cleanliness arrangements. He emphasized that poor cleanliness in the new emergency unacceptable.

He also enquired about the well-being of a patient in a wheelchair, lifting a fallen file from the floor and placing it back on the wheelchair. The patient expressed gratitude to the CM for his gesture. He also addressed the complaint of a patient from Gujrat about delayed scheduling for angiography. Ordering immediate action, he instructed the MS to expedite the angiography procedure. The health secretary and others were also present.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi enquiring about the health of patient sitting on a wheel chair during his visit to (New Emergency) Punjab Institute of Cardiology.

# Real beauty of Abbottabad to be restored thru KPCIP

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Irrigation, Communications and Works Ahmad Jan and Caretaker Provincial Local Government Minister Amir Nadeem Durrani Friday have said that we all have to restore the original beauty of Abbottabad city by working responsibly on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

City Improvement Project (KPCIP).

water, cleanliness, traffic restoration, shifting of solid waste and installation of solid waste plant and construction Abbottabad Motorway Interchange. Both expressed these

views while presiding over a high-level meeting of officers of departments Commissioner House Abbottabad following the directives of caretaker Chief Minister Khyber They said that the Pakhtunkhwa Justice major issues of Abbottabad Retired Syed Arshad city are clean drinking Hussain Shah.

### Six dacoits killed in two police encounters RAWALPINDI (APP): Six Race Course area late on

dacoits were killed here as a result of heavy crossfiring during two police killed. encounters in the jurisdiction of Race Course and Morgah Police Stations, said a police spokesman.

He informed that Rawalpindi District Police Thursday in an important action in the case of the murder of a British citizen during a robbery three days ago, succeeded to kill four dacoits, members of an inter-provincial gang who were involved in the incident.

the dacoits opened firing special teams to arrest the on the police party in the accused.

Thursday night and during cross-firing, four were

The suspects had shot dead a citizen namely Tasaraf Mehmood on his return from the UK in the Race Course area. The gang used police uniforms during the robbery incidents. Members of the interprovincial gang were also involved in dacoits in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi.

City Police Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani had taken notice of the incident of murder of a British citizen during According to details, a robbery and formed

#### tasks while maintaining the quality of work. The KEMU principal

# International News

# US, British militaries launch massive retaliatory strike against Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen

Houthi rebels say US-led strikes in Yemen killed 5 of their forces, raising Mideast tensions

WASHINGTON: The U.S. and British militaries bombed more than a dozen sites used by the Iranianbacked Houthis in Yemen on Thursday, in a massive retaliatory strike using warship- and submarinelaunched Tomahawk missiles and fighter jets, U.S. officials said.

The U.S. Air Force's Mideast command said it struck over 60 targets at 16 sites in Yemen, including "command-and-control nodes, munitions depots launching systems, production facilities and air defense radar systems.3

President Joe Biden said the strikes were meant to demonstrate that the U.S. and its allies "will not tolerate" the militant group's ceaseless attacks on the Red Sea. And he said they only made the move after attempts at diplomatic negotiations and careful deliberation.

Meanwhile: U.S.-led airstrikes on Yemen's Houthi rebels in response to their attacks on Red Sea shipping pulled the world's focus Friday back on the yearslong war raging there,

even as tensions rise across a Middle East already torn by Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The strikes killed at least five people and wounded six, the Houthis said, without elaborating on what was targeted.

Associated Press journalists in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, heard four explosions early Friday local time.

Hodieda, Amin Ali Saleh and Hani Ahmed, said they heard five strong explosions hitting the western port area of the city, which lies on the Red Sea and is the largest port city controlled by the Houthis. Eyewitnesses who spoke with the AF also said they saw strikes

in Taiz and Dhamar, cities

# Russia condemns US and UK for 'irresponsible' strikes on Yemen

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia condemned the United States and Britain on Friday for their military strikes on Yemen, which Moscow said amounted to an irresponsible adventure that risked sowing chaos across the entire Middle East.

The United States and Britain launched strikes from the air and sea against Houthi military targets in Yemen in response to the Iran-backed movement's attacks on ships in the Red Sea since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

Russia, an ally of Iran and a partner of key Arab powers, called for an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council on Friday to discuss the issue. "We strongly condemn these irresponsible ac

tions by the United States and its allies," Maria Zakharova, Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman, told reporters.



South Africa's Minister of Justice Ronald Lamola stands near pro-Palestinian protesters after addressing the media near the International Court of Justice (ICJ), on the day judges hear a request for emergency measures by South Africa to order Israel to stop its military actions in Gaza, in The Hague, Netherlands.



President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan posing for photos during a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Blast kills two

# Erdogan accuses US, Britain of trying to turn Red Sea into 'sea of blood'

ANKAR: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on Friday slammed the US and British strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen as a disproportionate use of force

**Monitoring Desk** 

and accused the two countries of trying to turn the Red Sea into a "sea of blood". Turkey, a NATO member, has strongly criticised Israel for its war in Gaza aimed at wiping out Palestinian militant group Hamas, and has repeatedly slammed Western countries for supporting Israel's campaign.

Asked by reporters about the overnight air and sea strikes by U.S. and British forces across Yemen in retaliation against Iranbacked Houthi forces for attacks on Red Sea shipping, the Turkish president said these were not proportionate. "All that has been done is a disproportionate use of force," Erdogan said after Friday prayers in Istanbul.

At the moment, they are trying to turn the Red Sea into a sea of blood and Yemen, with the Houthis and by using all of its force.

# World watches as Israel faces genocide case

**Monitoring Desk** 

THE HAGUE: South Africa accused Israel on Thursday of carrying out genocide in Gaza and demanded that the UN's top court order an emergency suspension of Israel's devastating military campaign in the Palestinian enclave.

On the first of two days of hearings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), also known as the World Court, South Africa said Israel's attack on Gaza, which has demolished much of the coastal enclave and killed more than 23.000 people, aimed to bring

about "the destruction of the (territory's) popula-

"The intent to destroy Gaza has been nurtured at the highest level of state,' Tembeka Ngcukaitobi, advocate of the High Court of South Africa, told the court. He said Israel's political and military leaders, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, were among 'the genocidal inciters".

That is evident from the way in which this military attack is being conducted," he said.

Israel rejected the accusations of genocide as

#### in Kabul's Hazara enclave **Monitoring Desk**

KABUL: Two people were killed and 12 wounded in an explosion in western Kabul on Thursday, police said, in the third deadly blast to hit the Afghan capital in less than a week.

Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadran said a grenade was detonated outside a commercial centre in the Dasht-e-Barchi area, an enclave of the historically oppressed Hazara community. "The initial information

shows that unfortunately two civilian compatriots were martyred and 12 others were wounded," Zadran said in a statement. By early evening the road in front of the centre was open but dozens of security personnel.

#### China urges all parties in Yemen to prevent conflict expansion

**Monitoring Desk** BEIJING: Expressing concern over escalation of tensions in the Red Sea, a Chinese foreign

ministry spokesperson on Friday called on all sides to prevent the Yemen conflict from expanding.

"We urge the relevant parties to keep calm and exercise re-

straint to prevent the conflict from expanding," Mao Ning said during the regular briefing.

# Finnish presidential frontrunner seeks 'more European' NATO

HELSINKI: Finnish presi-

frontrunner Alexander Stubb said on Thursday NATO should become "more European" and that his country would remain an important partner for the United States whether or not Donald Trump is re-elected.

In an interview with Reuters, Stubb promised unconditional support for Ukraine and ruled out an improvement in Finland's relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin until Moscow stops the

war against Kyiv. Stubb, 55, leads opinion polls before Finland's Jan. 28 presidential election, which precedes presidential elections this year in neighbouring Russia and the United States.

The former prime minister hopes to succeed Sauli Niinisto, who is retiring at 75 after two six-year terms, having been nick-named "the Putin our own defence."

keeping lines open with Russia's leader before the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Helsinki's relations

with Moscow deteriorated after the invasion and sank further when Finland, in a historic break with tradition prompted by the invasion, joined NATO last April. Stubb signalled clearly that he would lean towards

the West if elected president and said it was "very important that we in Europe take care of our own defence.' "So in that sense, I'm

very much along the lines of the current Finnish president, Sauli Niinisto, who said that we need a more European NATO," he said in the interview.

"I think the Americans will not leave us alone (on our own), but it's always useful to be prepared in the situation whereby we have to take more responsibility for

### Serbia says it is disappointed with possible US sale of anti-tank missiles to Kosovo

Monitoring Desk
BELGRADE: The United

States has received Kosovo's request to purchase Javelin anti-tank missiles, the U.S. ambassador to Serbia on Thursday told President Aleksandar Vuèiæ, who expressed "deep disappointment."

The U.S. State Department said later Thursday that it approved the possible sale of the 246 missiles and related equipment to Kosovo for an estimated cost of \$75 million.

"This proposed sale will support the foreign policy goals and national security of the United States by improving the security of a European partner which is an important force for political and economic stability in Europe," the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs said. A statement by

Vuèiæ's office said U.S. Ambassador Christopher Hill told him that the U.S. State Department will send Kosovo's request to Congress, which reviews foreign arms sales. Kosovo is a former

Serbian province which declared independence in 2008. The U.S. and most Western nations recognize Kosovo's statehood, while Serbia as well as ally Russia and China don't. Serbia's president said that "for us, it is of great

importance that the peace in the region is not broken and that Serbia will continue to act responsibly and contribute to stability in the Balkans.

The proposed sale of the missile system to Kosovo comes during tensions in the region.

# Pakistan, Egypt agree to continue working together to enhance cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Egypt on Friday agreed to continue to engage further and work together to advance mutually beneficial cooperation and dialogue between the two

The bilateral relations were discussed in a meeting between Additional Foreign Secretary (Middle East) Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh with Egyptian Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Ahmed

Pakistan's Ambassador to Egypt, Ambassador Sajid Bilal was also present in the meeting.

The two sides reviewed the broad range of bilateral relations including political, trade and invest-

ways to further strengthen bilateral relations including by convening the next round of Joint Ministerial Commission meetings and Annual Bilateral Consultations later this year in

Additional Foreign Secretary and the Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia appreciated the successful holding of the Fourth Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference and Single Country Exhibition held in Cairo from January 9-11 2024, which coincided with the 75th-anniversary celebrations of the establishment of diplomatic relations

between Pakistan and



Demo of Anti Narcotics Operation being conducted during Exercise Sea Guard 24.

# Bilawal, Tarar to lock horns as PML-N announces candidates from Lahore

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Attaullah Tarar are set to lock horns as PML-N on Friday released list of its candidates for the National Assembly and Punjab Assembly from Lahore District for the Feb 8 general elections.

As per the PML-N's released list issued on X, it has fielded veteran politician Sheikh Rohail Asghar for the NA-121 constituency in Lahore.

The PML-N has issued the ticket to Ayaz Sadiq for NA-120, who was earlier planning to contest the polls from NA-121.

PML-N fielded former holder from NA 143.

minister Attaullah Tarar against Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal-Bhutto Zardari in

Meanwhile, the PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif will contest from NA-130, President Shehbaz Sharif from NA-123, Hamza Shehbaz from NA-118, Maryam Nawaz from NA-119 and NA-159 and Khawaja Saad Rafique from

For the provincial assembly seats, Shehbaz Sharif will also contest polls from PP-164 and PP-158, while Hamza and Maryam from PP-147 and PP-159 constituencies, respec-

Earlier, it was reported that differences The biggest contest of among the PML-N ranks country would be wit- emerged as the party could nessed in Lahore between not decide on its ticket

# PML-Q announces not to forge any seat to seat adjustment with PML-N

LAHORE (Online): PML- didates against our other forge any seat to seat adjustment with PML-N.

PML-Q has made it clear that party has played its role for the development and prosperity of the country always and it will not accept any seat to seat adjustment to the extent of interest of some person.

The emergency meeting of PML-Q was held under Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain here Friday.

The party spokesperson said in a statement after meeting that PML-N

PML-Q had sought 14 seats of National assembly from PML-N but PML-N has agreed to give has issued tickets to its can-maximum 3 seats.



QUETTA: Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem and Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh presenting memorial shield to Additional IG & Commandant Balochistan

candidates. We will not allow our candidates to become victim to double standard and will not forge seat to seat adjustment with PML-N. Čhaudhry Salik Hussain said PML-N has issued tickets to its candidates against him and his brother Chaudhry Shafay Hussain in Gujarat. We are ready to contest election without seat to seat adjust-



**Independent Report** QUETTA: One-day workshop was held on the District Disaster Risk Management (DDRM) and Data

Collection in Sibi on Friday. Organized by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), the workshop was at-tended by the Deputy Commissioner Sibi, Dr. Khuda-e-Rahim Mirwani, Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Ali Asghar Magsi and officers of other concerned departments including PDMA.

The General Manager Project, PDMA, Ahmed Ali and DDRM Expert,

Muhammad Ismail Khan briefed the participants about the identification of the risk threats and preparations of the Disaster risk management plan on the scientific grounds in Sibi and

its adjoining areas. They also informed about the disaster risk management and data collection under the Geological Information System besides other related activities of the institution.

Addressing the workshop, Deputy Commissioner stressed the need to make effective planning for managing risk in case of natural disasters in the onHe also stressed that

we should make preparations in advance well before the possible disasters like floods and rains.

hope that all line departments would deliver and provide best services with cooperation of PDMA. The PDMA's expert



LAHORE: A German delegation of international food wholesaler, METRO Group, led by its CEO Dr Steffen Greubel, calls on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

#### Government taking steps to boost FDI: President Alvi

ISLAMABAD (APP) President Dr Arif Alvi or Friday said the government was taking steps to promote Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan.

Talking to a German delegation of international food wholesaler, METRO Group, led by its CEO Dr Steffen Greubel here a Aiwan-e-Sadr, the presi dent said Pakistan was an attractive destination for the foreign investment and

The president also appreciated the METRO Group for their investment in Pakistan. The delegation briefed

the president about business and investment of the METRO Group in Paki The delegation told that keeping in view the

conducive environment for the foreign investment in Pakistan, the METRO Company desired to further expand the business activities in the country. Besides, the delegation

was of the view that Pakistan was an attractive des tination for business, investment and tourism.

#### **Steps being** taken to improve law & order situation

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Hamood-ur Rahman on Friday said that measures were being taken to improve the law and order situation in the Ziarat district.

He shared these views while chairing a meeting of Levies Force Officers regarding the law and order situation

In the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner was given a detailed briefing about the law and order situation in the Ziarat dis-

The meeting was at tended by Assistant Commissioner Muhammad Noorzai, Assistant Commissioner Sanjavi Moeem Baloch and in-charge of

#### police stations. **PTA conducts** raids against illegal issuance of SIMs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Zonal Offices in Lahore and Sukkur, in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Circles, successfully conducted raids against franchises of two mobile phone companies in Sharaqpur Sharif and Kandhkot. The aim was to curb the illegal issuance of SIMs, which is often associated with criminal activities such as fraud, identity theft, and other illicit operations said a news release

#### disaster risk management plan in Balochistan" going development projects and in future so as to save precious lives of the people.

He expressed the

Ismail Khan told the workshop that the services of engineering consultants comprising experts have been hired for disaster risk man agement plan in the prov

# **COAS terms NASTP** a project of national, strategic significance

RAWALPINDI (Online): General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff, (COAS) attended inauguration ceremony of the second chapter of National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP) Silicon, held at Karachi. COAS was Chief Guest at the occasion. COAS

NASTP a project of national and strategic significance that would yield manifold benefits for the country since it would spur technological progress and foster self-reliance by offering a platform for the nation's youth and future generations.

COAS praised the efforts of PAF, its leadership and its skilled personnel in the achievement of yet another milestone of NASTP

shared the vision for NASTP to become one of the best Aerospace, Cyber & IT Clusters and transform national landscape with design, R&D and innovation centers for emerging and disruptive technologies to accrue maximum social, economic, security and scientific dividends for the

On his arrival at the venue, COAS was received by Air Chief Marshal, Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. Chief of the Air Staff.

Later, COAS also visited Corps Headquarters Karachi. Corps Commander Karachi Corps welcomed the COAS and briefed him about operational preparedness, fraining matters and administrative measures being taken for the welfare of the troops and Shuhada fami-



**QUETTA: A delegation of Joint Action Committee** University of Balochistan led by Nazeer Ahmed Lehri meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

# Pakistan wants good, equal relations with countries: Hamza

QUETTA (APP)-Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s Balochistan President's Political Adviser Hamza Khan Nasir on Friday said that Pakistan's economic interests were linked with

America. Pakistan is a dream of good and equal relations with all countries, both the countries are working for the elimination of nationalized terrorism and the establishment of peace and harmony, he mentioned.

In a statement issued here, Hamza Khan Nasir said that Pakistan was a free and independent country, Pakistan wanted good relations with all countries including America on the basis of equality.

He said that America has had friendly relations with Pakistan for 75 years,

which would become stronger with passage of time.

He said that the economic interests of Pakistan and America were connected with each other. both countries should further strengthen and stabilize economic relations so that the people and businessmen of both countries could be benefited.

He said that America has always supported Pakistan in difficult times and the relations between the two countries would become stronger with passage of time adding that America was also cooperating fully with Pakistan to end terror-

He said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf has always tried to establish relations with all countries on the basis of equality.

# **Muhammad Asif Tareen says:** Role of BLEP exemplary in development of Agri. & farmers in Balochistan

**Independent Report** QUETTA: There is an exemplary role of BLEP in development and growth of agriculture sector and farmers in Balochistan.

This would bring improvement in the economy besides creating opportuni-ties of livelihood for the

The Pishin Chamber of Commerce would work together with BLEP for development of the agriculture sector and wellbeing of the farmers.

This was stated by the Patron-in-Chief of PCCI and Executive Member of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and

Industry Muhammad Asif Tareen in a statement issued here after his visit to the BLEP on Friday He said that the

source of income of majority of the people is associated with the agriculture. He said that the loss in agriculture in Balochistan means the loss of people and their livelihood in the

He regretfully pointed out that the agriculture sector and farmers have suffered a lot rather reached at the brink of destruction because of the drought, lack of electricity and attention of the government.

province



General Secretary, Jamal Shah Kakar addresses to media persons during press conference.

# Mushaal Mullick says **Kashmir Consultative Committees to raise** awareness at grassroots level

RAWALPINDI (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister(SAPM) for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, on Friday, said that the primary objective of the districtlevel consultative committees was to address the Kashmir issue at the grassroots level for comprehensive understanding, engagement with the community and to create a platform for meaningful discussions, advocacy, and ac-

Speaking at the inaugural session of the Rawalpindi District-level Kashmir Consultative Committee, she highlighted the significance of such meetings and emphasized that similar gatherings would be organized in various districts

tions that resonate with the

local population.

Mullick announced that the inaugural sessions

of the District-level Kashmir Consultative Committees in Lahore, Faisalabad, and Guiranwala were in the preparation phase and would be convened shortly.

She further said that

that these gatherings would play a pivotal role in organizing and propagating the Kashmir cause at the grassroots level. She under-

reverence for the Kashmir cause, and through these district-level consultations, the aim was to solidify this unity further.

District-level Committees comprise intellectuals spanning various age groups and diverse backgrounds. Mushaal emphasized

scored that Kashmir stood as a symbol of unity for Pakistan, transcending diverse beliefs and affiliations.
The SAPM further said that people from all walks of life hold profound

She urged students ing zeal and courage of the and academics to contrib-

ute by writing articles, research papers, and essays on the Jammu and Kashmir issue to raise local and global awareness. She expressed her commitment to personally lead door-todoor campaigns to unite people for the Kashmir cause and promote collective efforts to advocate for justice and the rights of the oppressed people of IIOJK. Mushaal voiced deep concern over the ongoing demographic changes being implemented by In-dia in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). She highlighted the persecution faced by peace-ful leaders of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and emphasized that such actions were intended to demoralize the Kashmiri people. She asserted that these tactics employed by India would never diminish the unwaver-

Kashmiri people.



KARACHI: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir inaugurating the second chapter of National Aerospace Science and Technology Park Silicon.

#### JUI leader withdraws nomination papers in favour of Achakzai

QUETTA (APP): The Central Deputy General Secretary of Jamiat Ulema Islam Pakistan, Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rozi Khan, withdrew his nomination papers from NA-263 Quetta in favour of Mehmood Khan Achakzai, the head of the Pashtunkhwa Mili Awami

A statement issued by the Spokesman of JUI Quetta district Abdul Ghani Shehzad said that the decision was made on the in-structions of JUI chief

Maulana Fazlur Rehman. It may be noted here that, Mehmood Khan Achakzai had also withdrawn his nomination papers from NA- 265 Pishin in favour of JUI chief Maulana Fazal Rehman the

#### **Martyrs rendered** sacrifices of lives remembered in Chaman Muhammad Ali Achakzai, **Independent Report**

QUETTA: The martyrs rendered sacrifice of their lives for cause of country remembered at a ceremony in Chaman on Friday.

The district administration of Chaman and social organizations celebrated the Martyrs' Day at the ceremony.

A grand rally was also taken out marking the Mar- tyrs. tyrs Day.

belonging to different social organizations, leaders and members of the traders' community participated in the rally.

The participants paid homage to the martyrs for their sacrifices rendered for defence of the country and protection of life and property of the masses.

The rally was led by Additional Deputy Commissioner Arif Khan Kakar,

Saeed Ali Shah and Malik Barat Khan Durrani. The participants

of rally were carrying the placards and banners inscribed with the slogans marking the Mar-

They also chanted slogans of long live Pakistan and in favour of the mar-

Meanwhile, Deputy Commis Chaman, Captain (Retd) Raja Athar Abbas appreciated Muhammad Ali Achakzai and district administration for organizing the Martyrs Day in

Chaman. He said that we have to be proud of the sacrifices of martyrs who rendered sacrifices of their lives.

He also said that the martyrs have sacrificed their lives for defence of the



HARIPUR: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq addressing Workers

# **CPDI urges effective regulation** of trans-fats in all foods, banning unhealthy foods

QUETTA (APP): The Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) has issued an urgent appeal to the Chief Secretary Balochistan, Secretary Food Balochistan and other key officers of the provincial government to address the increasing incidence and prevalence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in According to the lat-

est health statistics, around 60 percent of deaths are attributed to NCDs such as cardio-vascular diseases, diabetes, obesity and hypertension. In addition, the NCDs are a leading cause of not only premature mortality i.e., before the age of 70, but these are also increasing burden of disabilities and unhealthy life years causing people huge financial losses as well as reduction in life years. The three dietary risk factors that the CPDI letter warns against include the excessive use of unhealthy oils and fats, added sugar in foods and drinks, and high content of

sodium in food items. In a letter, the CPDI, a non-partisan civil society

organization, has urged the Balochistan Government to implement concrete measures banning such unhealthy food and beverages from public procurements, official meetings, and functions. Highlighting the rising numbers of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases in Pakistan due to the unregulated consumption of food containing harmful ingredients like sugar, sodium, and trans-fatty acids (TFAs) in fats, CPDI emphasizes the urgent need of proactive official policies and regulations aimed at mitigating dietary risk factors and improving public health.

Studies reveal that approximately 33 million people in Pakistan suffer from diabetes, additional 10 million are pre-diabetic, and 918 cases per 100,000 individuals are affected by cardiovascular diseases. The CPDI has also

urged the provincial government to engage with the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) to expedite the formulation of mandatory and enforceable standards for all food items to regu-

the availability of unhealthy food in schools, hospitals, and public parks; eliminate government subsidies on harmful products such as sugars and banaspati ghee; and implement public awareness campaigns to inform consumers about dietary risk factors. CPDI has suggested the government to "provide subsidies to healthy foods so that people enjoy better health status and contribute more to the GDP as mentally and physically active citizens". Mukhtar Ahmad Ali, Executive Director, CPDI, expressed the hope that these measures will significantly and positively address the NCDs related public health crisis in the country. "Medical research shows that the national burden of diseases, deaths, and disabilities in Pakistan is changing, and we need to take serious measures to control dietary risk factors so that our healthcare system does not

late unhealthy content, for

example, the quantity of

TFAs should not be more

than 2 percent. Moreover,

CPDI has urged to restrict