

# Independent

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the National Security Committee, in the Federal Capital.

## Interim Govt decides to hire services of retired security personnel for election duty in Balochistan

Caretaker Chief Minister directs to bring more improvement in measures taken for law and order for elections; create conducive environment for voters

### Independent Report

QUETTA: Expressing satisfaction over the measures taken for law and order to conduct the general elections in Balochistan, the caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has directed the concerned authorities to bring more improvement in the measures taken so far.

He also directed to the concerned high ups to remove the complaints and reservation of the election candidates and the general public about the elections.

In addition to this, contingency plans should be prepared for restoration of

peace during the elections as per the regional circumstances.

These and similar other directives were issued by the caretaker Chief Minister while chairing a high level meeting about law and order and general elections in the province, here at the Chief Minister secretariat on Friday morning.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Home, Zahid Saleem, administrative secretaries of the concerned departments, divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners, police high ups besides

other concerned senior officials.

Certain important decisions were made about security deployment, installation of CCTV cameras and timely supply of the election material in the province.

The Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary Home and Divisional Commissioners briefed the meeting about the steps taken and being taken for restoration of peace and conducting elections in the province.

The Chief Minister also directed to create conducive environment for the voters to use their right of franchise.

## President pays tribute to Pak Army soldiers

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday paid tribute to the soldiers of Pakistan Army who embraced martyrdom in an attack in Lakki Marwat on January 10.

Talking to the family members of Sepoy Muhammad Afzal and Abrar Hussain over telephone, the president offered deep condolence and prayed for elevation of ranks of the martyred in paradise. He also expressed sympathies with the family members of the martyrs.

The president, on behalf of the entire nation saluted the martyrs for sacrificing their lives for the sake of the country's security.

## Election will be held on Feb 08 despite Pak-Iran tension: ECP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has said it is focusing on holding election on February 8 despite border tension between Pakistan and Iran. According to ECP spokesperson EC is determined to hold election according to schedule and date announced in this regard.

He said EC is engaged in the preparations for holding election. No such proposal or option is under consideration that election date could be reviewed in the wake of Pakistan-Iran tension.

## Maryam lauds PML-N's steadfastness against challenges

KHANEWAL (INP): Pakistan Muslim League Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif heaped praise on the steadfastness of the party despite facing a litany of challenges.

She emphasised, "good and bad times are very part of politics but the PML-N has not left the field and is always ready to serve the masses with a renewed zeal." She made these remarks while addressing a rally in Khanewal where the PML-N chief organizer said she could not be more grateful as a lot of people have come to attend the PML-N's power show despite the inclemency of the weather.

## Earthquake of magnitude 3.6 jolts Harnai, surroundings

QUETTA (INP): An earthquake of magnitude 3.6 on Richter scale jolted Harnai and surrounding areas of Quetta city on Friday afternoon, reported Pakistan's National Seismic Monitoring Center (PNSMC). According to PNSMC, tremors measuring 3.6 on Richter scale were felt in Harnai and surrounding areas of the provincial capital Quetta.

The epicentre of the quake was stated to be at distance of 45 kilometres in Harnai Southeast at a depth of 15 kilometres. People of the areas where quake was felt rushed out their homes and office in panic reciting verses from Holy Quran and Kalma e Tayyeba.

## Pakistan, Iran should address each other's security concerns: NSC

Reiterates resolve to safeguard its sovereignty, territorial integrity at all cost; Security and safety of the people of Pakistan was of paramount importance and no stone would be left unturned to ensure it; Forum also reiterated the resolve to deal with the menace of terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, with an iron hand

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Security Committee (NSC) Friday observed that Iran was a neighbourly and brotherly Muslim country and existing multiple communication channels between the two countries should be mutually utilised to address each other's security concerns in the larger interest of regional peace and stability.

The committee, which met with Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in the chair to deliberate upon matters of national security, hoped that in line with the universal principles governing the conduct of good neighbourly relations, the two countries would mutually be able to overcome minor irritants through dialogue and diplomacy and pave the way to further deepen their historic relations.

The forum reviewed the overall security in view of the situation between Pakistan and Iran. It undertook a wholesome review of the situation and lauded the professional, calibrated and proportionate response by the Armed Forces of Pakistan against unprovoked and unlawful violation of Pakistan's sovereignty.

During the meeting, participants were briefed about political and diplomatic developments bearing upon the prevailing situation between Pakistan and Iran, and its impact on the overall security milieu in the region. The forum also took stock of the 'Operation Marg Bar Sarmachar', which was successfully executed against Pakistani origin Baloch terrorists residing on the un-governed spaces inside Iran.

## Iran, Pakistan's interest in restoring relationship to pre-Jan 16 status: PM

Cabinet discusses situation arising from Iranian attack on Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Friday briefed the Caretaker Federal Cabinet about the situation arising from the Iranian attack on Pakistan on January 16.

The details of the attack, as well as Pakistan's response, were shared in the meeting of the Federal Cabinet held under the chairmanship of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

The cabinet lauded the high professionalism with which the Pakistan Armed Forces responded to the breach of Pakistan's sovereignty and how the entire government machinery worked in unison in that regard.

Addressing the cabinet, the prime minister affirmed that Pakistan was a law abiding and peace loving country, and it sought friendly and cooperative relations with all countries, particularly its neighbours.

PM Kakar said that Pakistan and Iran were two brotherly countries that had historically enjoyed fraternal and cooperative relations marked by respect and affection.

## Agencies issue security alert for Baloch protesters in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (INP): The intelligence agencies have issued a security alert for the participants of a protest being held these days in the Red Zone area of Islamabad, reported on Friday.

The Baloch Yakjehti Council (BYC) and Balochistan Shuhda Forum (BSF) have been staging a protest camp outside the Islamabad National Club for the last several days.

According to the letter by the agencies, due to tension on the Iran-Pakistan border, there is a security threat as anti-national elements and terrorists can target these protest camps to sabotage peace and order in the country.

The letter further says that it should be clear that Balochistan National Party (Mengal) leader Jamal Raisani is already facing a security threat.

## Three shot dead over children conflict, accused attempts suicide

PISHIN (INP): An accused gunned down three including father and two sons over children conflict and attempted suicide with same weapon here on Friday.

According to details, the incident took place in Lamaran area of Pishin where an accused shot death three including father and two sons over dispute among the children.

The culprit attempted to suicide with same weapon after committing triple murder and hospitalized in serious condition.

The bodies were shifted to hospital and later handed over to heirs after legal formalities.

The police registered a case into the incident and started an investigation.

## UN Chief urges Pakistan, Iran to de-escalate & resolve all issues peacefully

WASHINGTON (INP): United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has expressed deep concern over the current tensions between Pakistan and Iran, urging them to de-escalate and resolve all their issues peacefully.

The UN Secretary-General in a statement asked both sides to exercise maximum restraint to avoid any further escalation.

Antonio Guterres underlines that all security concerns between the two countries must be addressed by peaceful means in accordance with the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and good neighbourly relations.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presiding over a high level meeting to review steps taken for holding of peaceful elections in the province

## Pak's armed forces gave befitting response to elements challenging sovereignty of Pakistan: Jan

### Independent Report

On this, the people of Pakistan especially of Balochistan are indebted to the Army Chief, he said adding that not only the network of terrorism of India has been exposed but those exploiting the issue of missing Balochs in Islamabad has also been exposed with his (COAS) very initiative.

The caretaker Minister Information was addressing a hurriedly called press conference at the Sikandar Jamali Auditorium, Civil secretariat on Friday.



Caretaker Home Minister Captain (retd) Muhammad Zubair Jamali visiting District Jail Dera Murad Jamali

## IHC orders police to provide record of FIR registered against Baloch demonstrators to counsel

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has directed Islamabad police to provide record of FIR registered against Baloch demonstrators to the counsel of petitioner.

A petition has been filed by Sami Din Baloch in IHC requesting the court to order the respondents not to harass Baloch demonstrators besides directing police provide record of FIR registered against the protesters to the counsel.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani resumed the hearing of the case Friday.

The petitioner Bushra Bibi appeared along with her counsel Atta Ullah Kundi. Advocate General Ayyaz Shaukat and AAG

## 90 percent soldiers will vote PTI: Imran Khan

RAWALPINDI (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan has claimed 90 percent soldiers of Pakistan army will vote for PTI

"Gen @ Bajwa told me the entire army is with me. Decisions of Bajwa ruined Pakistan. But army is not at fault, he said this in his informal talks with journalists here in Adiala jail.

He went on to say Nawaz Sharif has come out to launch election campaign. Tell me who 'arailo katta' ruled the country for 16 months. The economy was devastated for 16 months. 15 lac professional left the country.

The biggest problem was external deficit which they had left behind, he added.

Our government left growth rate 6.7 percent which they reduced to zero, he remarked.

In our tenure inflation remained 12.4 percent which they took to 36 percent. Terrorism graph desended. Our relations with the government of Afghan president Ashraf Ghani were good, he remarked.

## PEMRA advises media to abide by ECP's code of conduct

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority has advised national electronic media to abide by code of conduct issued by Election Commission.

The directives issued by the PEMRA stated that all its licensees are obliged to abide by code of conduct issued by Election Commission in the run of elections being held on February 8.

The ECP specified any violation of code will be treated seriously and allegations made by one candidate against another will require confirmation from both sides before prosecution can commence.



RAHIM YAR KHAN: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing the public gathering in in Liaquatpur.

## Speaks with Iranian FM Jilani expresses Pakistan's readiness to work with Iran based on trust

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on Friday spoke with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

Underlining the close brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran, the foreign minister expressed Pakistan's desire to work with Iran based on spirit of mutual trust and cooperation.

He stressed that respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty must underpin the cooperation. The two foreign ministers agreed that working level cooperation and close coordination on counter-terrorism and other aspects of mutual concern should be strengthened.

They also agreed to de-escalate the situation. The return of ambassadors of the two countries to their respective capitals was also discussed.

This is the second telephonic interaction between the two foreign ministers this week, as earlier Jilani had received a call from his Iranian counterpart on Wednesday after Iran had violated Pakistan's airspace.

FM Jilani also underscored the need for closer cooperation on security issues.

## PPP to facilitate destitute, end subsidies of elites after elected to power: Bilawal

LIAQUATPUR (INP): Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said, after elected to power, his party would facilitate the marginalized sections of the society and end Rs1500 billion subsidy being 'given' to elites every year.

While addressing a public gathering in connection with the General Elections 2024 in Liaquatpur on Friday, the PPP Chairman said that his party presented a 10-point agenda to combat inflation, unemployment and poverty. He said that Rs. 300 billion were spent on seven 'unnecessary' federal ministries, vowing to abolish the same.

He said that Rs300 billion being wasted on unnecessary ministries would be spent on welfare



QUETTA: National Party's Chief Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch addressing press conference regarding upcoming election in Quetta Press Club.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Bilateral breakdown

In a shocking turn of events, Pakistan-Iran ties have hit rock bottom in a matter of days, sparked by Tehran's unprovoked strike in Panjgur.

On Tuesday, the caretaker prime minister and the Iranian foreign minister were exchanging pleasantries in Davos, while both navies were conducting joint drills in the Strait of Hormuz.

Later that day, Tehran would strike Pakistani territory in an unprecedented move, claiming to have hit anti-Iran terrorists. Pakistan insisted two children were killed in the ill-advised action. After downgrading diplomatic ties, Pakistan on Thursday struck Iranian territory.

According to ISPR, terrorists belonging to Baloch separatist outfits were neutralised in Operation Marg Bar Samachar near Saravan. Iran claims "foreign nationals" were killed in the Pakistani action.

The immediate need is to de-escalate matters, and prevent the conflict from spiralling further. While Iran's action in Panjgur was highly condemnable, both states must handle the fallout with care.

It is easy to dial up tensions, but this would not be in the interest of either country. There must be a frank discussion between both capitals about the common problem of militancy. Pakistan says Baloch separatists find shelter in Iran, while Tehran claims Baloch extremist groups such as Jaish al-Adl operate from this side of the border.

Over the years, both states have lost security men as well as civilians in border clashes and acts of terrorism, and a robust mechanism needs to be discussed in order to prevent the soil of either country from being used against the other.

Relations between Pakistan and Iran have been cordial since independence, and even after Iran took an ideological turn after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, matters did not deteriorate, despite Pakistan's closeness to the American and Saudi camp. While the current crisis is indeed a grave one, both sides can still roll back and prevent further acrimony, if they choose to do so.

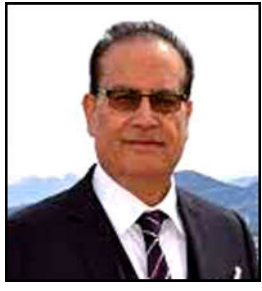
Admittedly, it will take time to rebuild trust, but neither state can afford hostility. For Pakistan, two borders — India and Afghanistan — remain tense; therefore, it is not in this country's interest to see hostilities break out at its frontier with Iran. Pakistan should seek iron-clad guarantees from the Iranian leadership that its territorial sovereignty will not be violated again.

Thereafter, diplomatic and security officials need to engage regularly to thwart the stratagems of violent non-state actors. Common friends, primarily China and Türkiye, have offered their services to mediate, Tehran and Islamabad should consider these offers positively. Moreover, bilateral contacts need to be established at the highest levels in both states in order to build confidence and prevent a worsening of the situation. Malign forces would like to see this crisis explode; leaders in both capitals must ensure this does not happen.

# After India, Iran learnt a bitter lesson

By Qamar Bashir

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



The Pakistani Armed Forces, renowned for their professionalism and tactical expertise, executed Operation Marg Bar Samachar (translated as "Death to Fighters") with remarkable precision and effectiveness. This operation, a direct response to Iran's intrusion, showcased their strategic prowess through a meticulously planned and executed strike, approximately 80 kilometers inside Iranian territory. Utilizing advanced military technology, including killer missiles, loitering ammunition, and standoff mortars, the operation targeted and successfully neutralized hideouts of the Baloch terrorist outfits BLA and BLF.

This carefully calibrated retaliation, far from being an act of aggression, was a necessary measure of self-defense. The operation's flawless execution, coupled with its strategic restraint, underscores Pakistan's position as a responsible military power, fully capable of defending its national interests while adhering to international norms and standards of warfare. This decisive action sent a strong message about Pakistan's ability to respond to threats with precision and professionalism, cementing its status as a formidable force in the region.

In total disbelief, the unprovoked and aggressive action by Iran was perceived in Islamabad and across Pa-

kistan as a profound betrayal and deceit by a nation long regarded as a close ally. It sparked a deep-seated anguish among the Pakistani armed forces, government, and citizens alike. It was not just the act itself but the sense of treachery from a country considered a brotherly friend that intensified the emotional response. The people of Pakistan felt an acute sense of being backstabbed, not by a known adversary like India, but by a nation with whom they shared a bond of brotherhood and solidarity. This event has not only caused a strategic reevaluation in Islamabad but has also left an indelible mark on the collective psyche of the Pakistani nation, reshaping perceptions and potentially altering the course of regional alliances and diplomatic relations.

Perhaps soon after the attacks, Iran realized that it has committed a strategic and tactical mistake by equating Syria and Iraq with Pakistan in terms of military retaliation capabilities, especially considering Pakistan's status as a nuclear-armed nation with highly trained armed forces. It realized that while Syria and Iraq due to various internal and external factors, were not in a position to respond with equivalent military might, Pakistan, a nuclear-armed state with a well-trained and equipped military, presents a vastly different scenario. The capacity for significant military response from Pakistan is considerably higher, making any aggressive action towards it riskier.

Pakistan's status as a nuclear power adds a critical dimension to its defense capabilities. The nuclear deterrent is a significant factor that any adversary must consider before engaging in military actions against Pakistan. Nuclear capabilities are not just about the potential use of nuclear weapons, but they also serve as a strategic deterrent in international relations, signaling severe consequences in the event of escalated conflicts. This incident resurrected the memories of India's similar incursions in the past and the stern lesson it learned from Pakistan's decisive and skillful retaliation. It seemed as though Iran had overlooked or disregarded the clear message Pakistan had sent in the past about its military capabilities and resolve to defend its sovereignty.

In 2019, Pakistan's response to India's Balakot airstrike was a masterclass in military strategy and diplomatic tact. Swiftly intercepting an Indian aircraft and capturing its pilot, Pakistan turned a potential escalation point into a diplomatic opportunity. The release of the Indian pilot was a calculated gesture of de-escalation, earning global acclaim for Pakistan's commitment to restraint and peace. This move significantly bolstered Pakistan's international standing, projecting it as a nation prioritizing stability and diplomatic engagement over extended conflict, especially crucial given the nuclear capabilities of both countries.

In stark contrast, the recent tensions with Iran, sparked by Iranian missile strikes resulting in civilian casualties in Pakistan, prompted a different kind of response. Pakistan's military retaliation, precisely targeting militants within Iran's borders, demonstrated a carefully avoiding a broader military engagement. This situation diverges from the 2019 scenario with India, reflecting a more intricate and evol-

ving diplomatic challenge. These two episodes collectively highlight Pakistan's sage approach to regional challenges. The nation has shown its capacity to blend decisive military action with diplomatic sensibility effectively. The response to India in 2019 displayed Pakistan's adeptness in conflict resolution and peacekeeping. Conversely, the current situation with Iran tests Pakistan's ability to navigate ongoing regional disputes, maintaining a balance between self-defense and a commitment to regional and international peace.

These instances underscore Pakistan's role as a key player in a volatile regional landscape, capable of managing complex international relations while steadfastly upholding its national security and sovereignty. Amidst the already tumultuous landscape of the Middle East, where Israel conducts airstrikes in Gaza and Hezbollah faces off in Lebanon, the region is a tinderbox of conflict and human suffering. The United States' operations against the Houthi tribe in Yemen, aimed at ensuring the Red Sea's strategic trade route remains open, add another layer to this complex scenario. In such a volatile environment, Iran's decision to launch attacks on three Muslim countries is not only ill-timed but also exacerbates the region's instability.

This period is especially harrowing for civilians caught in the crossfire. Daily, innocent lives are lost as collateral damage in the ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel, while many more suffer the brutalities of winter without adequate food

or shelter. It's a time when leadership and unity among Muslim nations are more critical than ever. Instead of opening new battlefronts, exacerbating existing conflicts, and adding to the regional turmoil, this moment calls for a concerted effort towards de-escalation and peace. Iran, with its significant influence in the region, had the opportunity to exercise leadership by working alongside other Muslim countries to douse the flames of conflict. Such actions could have fostered a much-needed sense of unity and purpose among nations already burdened by war and strife. In these pressing times, the focus should be on humanitarian assistance, diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts, and steps towards lasting peace, rather than engaging in actions that further ignite the volatile landscape of the Middle East.

In the wake of the highly charged and volatile episode between Iran and Pakistan, it is imperative that both nations exercise prudence and seek a path towards de-escalation. The hope is that this unfortunate incident will soon be relegated to the background, paving the way for the restoration of normal diplomatic channels. It is crucial for Iran and Pakistan to collaboratively develop a robust, credible strategy to dismantle safe havens for militants within their borders. This approach should be transparent, verifiable, and based on mutual trust and cooperation.

To effectively counter the menace of terrorism, both nations must engage in regular, in-depth dialogues at various levels, particularly among intelligence agencies and military

units. These discussions should aim to foster understanding, share critical information, and coordinate efforts more efficiently. Additionally, conducting joint and coordinated operations along the border regions could prove instrumental in uprooting the entrenched terrorist networks that threaten the security and stability of both countries.

Such collaborative efforts would not only signify a commitment to combating terrorism but also demonstrate a shared dedication to regional peace and security. By joining forces, Iran and Pakistan can set a powerful example of how cooperation and strategic partnership can overcome challenges and contribute to a safer, more stable region. The urgency of re-establishing a constructive and cooperative relationship between these two nations cannot be overstated, especially in a region that has long been plagued by conflict and instability.

The leadership of both countries should recognize that their people aspire not for war and conflict, but for growth, development, and peace. The path to a prosperous future lies in creating conditions that enable citizens to lead happy and contented lives. This can only be achieved by avoiding war and channeling resources towards the betterment of their nations. Iran and Pakistan have the opportunity to exemplify how countries can contribute positively to regional peace, emphasizing diplomatic engagement over military confrontation. Such efforts would not only benefit their own citizens but also set a precedent for conflict resolution and humanitarian consideration in international relations.

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## Commerce News

### Minister sets ambitious goals for Pakistan's economic self-reliance

LAHORE (APP): Federal Caretaker Minister for Commerce, Industries and Investment Dr. Ejaz Gohar expressed confidence in the government's efforts to steer the country's economy towards self-reliance.

Addressing the 3-day 3<sup>rd</sup> Engineering and Healthcare Show organized by the Ministry of Commerce and Industries in collaboration with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) at the Expo Centre here on Friday, Gohar outlined key strategies for sustained

economic progress. The minister emphasized the need for the upcoming elected government to uphold the current administration's pace and policies, particularly focusing on achieving a formidable 100 billion dollar export target within the next ten years. Gohar stressed that the primary focus should be on increasing exports, and to facilitate this, the government is introducing export-friendly facilities. Identifying economic challenges as Pakistan's major issue, Gohar underscored the

importance of increasing exports tenfold and strengthening various sectors, particularly textiles, agriculture, and the power sector. He revealed that despite IMF conditions, Pakistan managed to increase exports by 50 per cent in the past five months, when July 2023 export volumes was 2 billion dollars. Highlighting efforts to boost the exports, Gohar announced a subsidized rate of 9 cents per unit of electricity for all industries. He affirmed the government's commitment to fortifying textiles,

agriculture, and other sectors crucial for economic growth. The minister noted a monthly increase of one billion dollars in exports over the past three months, and with revised tariffs, he anticipated a doubling of the country's export figures. During his visit to various stalls at the Expo, Minister Gohar engaged with representatives from different companies who briefed him on their manufacturing processes. Gohar concluded his address by expressing optimism about Pakistan's promising economic



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar chairing a meeting on drugs pricing mechanism.



WASHINGTON: Ambassador Masood Khan addressing a jam-packed hall, comprising members of the think-tank community, businessmen, entrepreneurs, opinion makers and the media, Ambassador Masood Khan highlighted the importance of Pak-US relations.

### Govt attaches top priority to development of agri sector: Ch Hameed

FAISALABAD (APP): Director Agriculture (Extension) Chaudhry Abdul Hameed said that the development of the agricultural sector was top priority of the government as the sector provides raw materials for industries as well as meet the nutritional needs of the country's population.

He said here on Friday that all possible

measures were taken for the development of the agriculture sector. He explained that in the total agricultural produce of Pakistan, 70% of cotton, 76% of wheat, 81% of rice, 49% of sugarcane and 65% of the mangoes were produced in Punjab province. It was imperative to increase agricultural produce to meet the nutritional needs of the growing population.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity reported at the Port where six ships namely, Meratus Jayakarta, Lucky Star, Victoria Kosan, Benua, Ullswater and Jal Kalpavriksh carrying Containers, Palm oil, Chemicals, LNG, LPG and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Engro Terminal, Gas Terminal, Sui Southern Gas Terminal and Bulk Cargo Terminal respectively on Thursday.

### SECP, ADB to host workshop on "Women in Finance Thought Leaders"

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange of Pakistan and the Asian Development Bank are partnering to host a "Women in Finance Thought Leaders Workshop," featuring experts from the microfinance sector, ADB, Women's World Banking, IFC, and Google.

The workshop aims to foster a collaborative environment for thought leaders to discuss strategies

for women's empowerment through microfinance and address challenges and opportunities in financial inclusion, said a press release issued here on Friday. The event will feature a series of interactive sessions and panel discussions to highlight how non-bank microfinance institutions (NBMFI) can aid women in achieving financial independence.

### Weekly inflation up by 0.34 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.34 per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on January 18, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 319.00 points as compared to 317.92 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 44.64 per cent. The weekly SPI with the 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 0.61 percent and went up to 314.12 points from last week's 312.23 points.

### Pak-US relations set on boosting economy, trade: Masood Khan

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan-US relations are strengthening in both security and non-security areas, with a special focus on investment and trade cooperation that emphasize the utility of the recently launched platform of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Ambassador Masood Khan said.

"We must be partners... we must continue to talk to each other and resolve issues that would hinder peace and security in the region, but, more importantly, we must develop people-to-

people contacts and increase economic cooperation," the Pakistani envoy told a large audience in the prestigious University Club in Washington D.C.

The club's International Committee had invited Ambassador Masood Khan to speak on a wide array of subjects.

The audience comprised members of the think-tank community, businessmen, entrepreneurs, opinion makers, and the media. Highlighted the importance of Pak-US relations, the ambassador cited the presence of 80 US

companies in Pakistan, he said that the US has a standing advantage because of its companies' experience in Pakistan spanning decades and their existing investment infrastructure in the country.

In the field of education and technology, he termed the recently renewed Pakistan-U.S. Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement transformative and stressed that its potential should be fully utilized for higher education, research and development, and technological collaboration.

### Gold rates up by Rs.1,300

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs1,300 and was sold at Rs.215,000 in the local market on Friday as against its sale at Rs.213,700 on the last trading day. Likewise, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also went up by Rs.1,115 to Rs.184,328 from Rs183,213 and the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs.168,976 from Rs.169,945.

### President SCCI, RTO Peshawar discuss reforms in tax sector

PESHAWAR (APP): President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Fud Ishaq and Chief Commissioner RTO Peshawar Zafar Iqbal held at the Regional Tax office, said a press release issued here on Friday.

The meeting was attended by SCCI Senior Vice President Sanaullah Khan, Vice President Ijaz Khan Afridi, Commissioner Inland Revenue RTO.

## Governor directs VC IUB to resolve the financial issues of the university on priority

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Chancellor Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman presided over a high-level meeting today at Governor House Lahore to take stock of the administrative and financial affairs of Islamia University Bahawalpur. In the meeting, the committee set up to look into administrative and financial affairs of Islamia University presented a report to the Governor of Punjab. On this occasion, the Punjab Governor directed the Vice-Chancellor of Islamia University Bahawalpur, Professor Dr Naveed Akhtar and other officers to resolve the financial issues of the university on priority. He also directed the VC to hold

a meeting of the Syndicate and take decisions quickly. In this regard, Governor Punjab also emphasized that the university should send the case of additional grant immediately to the government as per its requirements so that it can be implemented soon. It is worth mentioning here that from 2013 to 2018, the federal grant of the university increased continuously, while after 2018, a continuous decrease in the grant was observed. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that timely payment of salaries of teachers and staff should be ensured. He said that quick and durable steps should be taken to set the university

in the right direction. He urged that unnecessary expenses should be reduced and the sources of income should be increased in such a way that fees are not increased. Previous inquiry reports of Chief Minister Inspection Team (CMIT), Higher Education Commission, and Higher Education Department were also discussed in the meeting. On this occasion, Governor Punjab issued instructions that the Punjab Government should take necessary steps in the light of these reports. Governor Punjab directed that all these reports should also be presented before the Syndicate so that the Syndicate can take correct decisions in the light of the report presented.



LAHORE: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al Maliky called on Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi.

## “Excise at your doorstep” service launched in Lahore

LAHORE (APP): The Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department has launched ‘Excise at your doorstep’ service in Lahore to provide facility of vehicle registration and transfer to the citizens at their homes. Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman inaugurated the ‘Dahleez App’ and ‘E-Registration Card’ at a ceremony held at

DG Excise Office here on Friday. Secretary Excise Masood Mukhtar, Commissioner Lahore Division Muhammad Ali Randhawa, DG Excise Muhammad Ali and officers of the department participated in the inaugural ceremony. Speaking at the event, the Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman said that the use of technology was inevitable to improve governance.

## Traffic Police intensifies crackdown on violations

LAHORE (APP): Chief Traffic Officer Ammara Athar on Friday issued a clear directive to the wardens to intensify the crackdown against traffic violations in the city.

According to a spokesman of the department, stringent measures will be taken against individuals driving without a license, underage drivers, one-way violators, and those not wearing helmets. The department witnessed over 16,000 motorcyclists challans for helmet violations, 264 drivers fined for underage driving, and 1,635 vehicles impounded for emitting smoke. Additionally, 57,000 fines were issued for lane violations, while 3,455 vehicles were seized for one-way traffic violations. To ensure road safety and prevent accidents, the crackdown will persist.



LAHORE: Newly appointed Ambassador of Czech Republic to Pakistan Ladislav Steinhübel meeting with Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

## NCSW to prepare gender equality strategy to be presented in UN Commission: Nilofer

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) here on Friday held a consultation with provincial stakeholders on the preparation of National Report on “Need Analysis for Financing and Strengthening Institutions with Gender Perspective for Empowerment of Women and Girls” that will be presented by the commission in 68th Session of UN-Commission on the Status of Women.

The consultation program was arranged with the help and support of consortium partners (UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women & UNDP). Event was attended by various gender experts, representatives from government departments, civil society organizations, NGOs, and media. Theme of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women that will take place from the 11th to 22nd of March 2024 is “achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening

institutions and financing with a gender perspective.” The subject consultation by NCSW in partnership Consortium members UNWOMEN, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA aimed at preparing recommendations for the report to be presented at the 68th session of UN Commission Status of women. The speakers in consultation raised related issues with a focus on economic empowerment of women and eradication of poverty.

## KP Higher Education Dept withdraws contractual lecturers termination orders

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: On the instructions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Newly Merged Districts Affairs, Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Dr. Aamer Abdullah, the Higher Education Department has withdrawn the termination order of contract lecturers serving in Newly Merged Districts under a project.

contractual basis so that the studies of the students are not affected, while the minister had assured that arrangement of fund will be made for the expenses of these teaching staff, said a press release issued here on Friday. Similarly on the instructions of minister, the termination order of 42 contract lecturers has been withdrawn by concerned department.

The Caretaker Minister had instructed the Higher Education Department that in view of lacking educational staff and dire need in the same districts, these lecturers should be reinstated on

Meanwhile, the caretaker minister has also sought a report from the concerned authorities regarding the issue of non payment of NMDs contractual nursing staff salaries.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori during his visit to Jinnah Hospital Emergency Department.

## LHC orders strict action against cafes operating late night

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday ordered for imposing fine on the cafes that stay open till late night in residential areas.

At this stage, the assistant commissioner Model Town also reported delays in closure of cafes. The court took a serious note of the situation and ordered for imposing a Rs 200,000 fine for the initial offense, escalating to a Rs 500,000 fine for the second violation. The court further ruled that the cafe in question should be sealed for the third violation. The court also directed to restore MA College ground immediately, besides adjourning further hearing till January 26.

Justice Shahid Karim passed the orders while hearing petitions filed by Haroon Farooq and others against ineffective measures to control smog. In the course of proceedings, a member of the Judicial Water and Environment Commission pointed out that a large number of cafes were operating beyond stipulated time in Johar Town area.

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## ECP for submission of postal ballot applications by Jan 22

PESHAWAR (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set the January 22 deadline for eligible individuals to submit their postal ballots for both the national and provincial assemblies' elections.

entitled for postal ballot. The ECP said that the application for a postal ballot should be written on the prescribed form which could be obtained from the concerned returning officer or might also be downloaded from the commission's website and forwarded to the respectively Returning Officer.

According to instructions issued by ECP, the government officials, armed forces personnel as well as their spouses and children, away from their constituencies, besides individuals in detention and those with physical disabilities were

## Another dengue case reported

LAHORE (APP): Dengue virus is still affecting the province and a new dengue virus case reported in Punjab on Friday. The latest Health Department revealed that so far 18 confirmed dengue cases recorded across 36 districts in Punjab. During the current year, 11 cases were reported in Lahore, 2 in Rawalpindi, 2 in Faisalabad, 1 in Gujrat, 1 in Sardogha and 1 in Vehari. While two dengue patients were currently under treatment in Lahore's hospitals. The Secretary of Health Punjab, Ali Jaan Khan, issued a compelling plea to citizens.

# International News

## ‘We are attacking Iran’ – Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (Online): Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that Israel is already carrying out direct attacks on Iran and is making every possible effort to prevent Tehran from attaining nuclear weapons.

dead, according to local health officials. The operation is aimed at wiping out the militant group, West Jerusalem says. Israel has previously openly accused Iran of aiding Hamas “with money, training and weapons and technological know-how” and intelligence.

topus and you see its tentacles all around from the Houthi to Hezbollah to Hamas.” Iran has widely been seen by Israel and the US and as the major destabilizing power in the Middle East, allegedly supplying weapons, military expertise, and training to Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Answering a reporter's question in Tel Aviv on Thursday about why Israel is conducting attacks on Iran's proxies rather than attacking the country directly, Netanyahu replied: “Who says we are not attacking Iran, we are attacking.”

“Iran is standing behind it. We are in conflict with Iran. Imagine not what Iran can do to us, to destroy us,” Netanyahu said, claiming he will only agree to a deal that grants West Jerusalem security control over all of Gaza.

The US has previously alleged that Iran is “deeply involved” in Houthi attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea, claiming that it has provided the rebels with drones, missiles, and intelligence. Tehran has denied the allegation, insisting that “resistance groups” are acting independently and “not taking orders from Tehran to confront the war crimes and genocide committed by Israel.”

Israel claims Iran was involved in plotting the October 7 attacks, when around 1,200 people were killed and scores taken hostage in the surprise Hamas raid near Gaza. Israel retaliated by launching an intense military bombardment of the Palestinian enclave, so far leaving about 24,000

Iran has denied any role in the Hamas assault on Israel, with Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani saying such accusations were “based on political reasons.” Netanyahu added that “Iran is the head of the oc-

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U.S. ambassador to Japan Rahm Emmanuel speaks at a U.S. naval ship repair facility in Yokosuka, Japan.

## North Korea tests ‘underwater nuclear weapon system’

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korea said on Friday that it had tested an “underwater nuclear weapon system” in response to joint naval exercises by Washington, Seoul, and Tokyo that involved a US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

the East Sea of Korea,” according to a statement from the defence ministry carried by state news agency KCNA. Early last year, Pyongyang said it had carried out multiple tests of a purported underwater nuclear attack drone — a different version of the Haeil, which means tsunami in Korean — claiming it could unleash a “radioactive tsunami.”

The drills were “seriously threatening the security of the North, so in response, Pyongyang “conducted an important test of its underwater nuclear weapon system ‘Haeil-5-23’ under development in

Analysts have questioned whether Pyongyang has such a weapon.

## Armenia’s PM says his country needs a new constitution

TBILISI (Internews): Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Friday that his country needed a new constitution to entrench its “democratic aspirations”, Russia’s Interfax news agency reported.

It quoted Pashinyan as telling a meeting at the country’s justice ministry: “We must have a Constitution that will make the Republic of Armenia more competitive and more viable in the new geopolitical and regional conditions”.

## Immunity must hold good even if president ‘crosses line’, says Trump

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Donald Trump on Thursday said his claim of “total” presidential immunity against criminal prosecution should extend even if his actions “cross the line.”

Trump is running for a White House comeback in November while simultaneously fighting 91 criminal charges in four separate cases that include allegedly seeking to overturn his 2020 election loss and hoarding top secret

## Chinese warplanes around Taiwan in show of force

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: More than 20 Chinese warplanes were detected around Taiwan, with 11 crossing a sensitive median line separating the self-ruled island from China, Taipei’s defence ministry said on Thursday, the first significant show of force since the weekend’s presidential election. The ministry, which releases data daily on the Chinese military presence around Taiwan, said that 24 warplanes and 5 ships had been detected in the 24 hours leading up to 6am (2200 GMT).

## NATO to hold biggest drills since Cold War with 90,000 troops

BRUSSELS (Internews): NATO is launching its largest exercise since the Cold War, rehearsing how U.S. troops could reinforce European allies in countries bordering Russia and on the alliance’s eastern flank if a conflict were to flare up with a “near-peer” adversary.

up in decades, detailing how it would respond to a Russian attack. NATO did not mention Russia by name in its announcement. But its top strategic document identifies Russia as the most significant and direct threat to NATO members’ security.

Some 90,000 troops are due to join the Steadfast Defender 2024 drills that will run through May, the alliance’s top commander Chris Cavoli said on Thursday.

“Steadfast Defender 2024 will demonstrate NATO’s ability to rapidly deploy forces from North America and other parts of the alliance to reinforce the defence of Europe,” NATO said. The reinforcement will occur during a “simulated emerging conflict scenario with a near-peer adversary”, Cavoli told reporters in Brussels after a two-day meeting of national chiefs of defence. The last exercises of a similar size were Reforger during the Cold War in 1988 with 125,000 participants and Trident Juncture in 2018 with 50,000 participants, according to NATO.

More than 50 ships from aircraft carriers to destroyers will take part, as well as more than 80 fighter jets, helicopters and drones and at least 1,100 combat vehicles including 133 tanks and 533 infantry fighting vehicles, NATO said. Cavoli said the drills would rehearse NATO’s execution of its regional plans, the first defence plans the alliance has drawn

## US Congress passes bill to avert government shutdown, sends it to Biden

WASHINGTON (Internews): The U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday approved a stopgap bill to fund the federal government through early March and avert a partial government shutdown, sending it to President Joe Biden for final approval.

hands with Democrats, form a governing coalition to do what Schumer and the Senate want to do,” House Freedom Caucus Chairman Bob Good told reporters after the vote.

The measure passed 314-108, with 106 Republicans and two Democrats in opposition. Earlier on Thursday, the Senate had easily passed the bill, with a 77-18 vote ahead of the weekend deadline.

Both chambers accelerated their votes because of a forecast for a snowstorm on Friday that could have snarled lawmakers’ departure for the weekend. The Democratic-majority Senate and Republican-controlled House are far behind in carrying out their basic duty of funding the government for the fiscal year that began on Oct. 1, with lawmakers scrambling to keep the lights on to give them more time to pass a full-year bill.

We have good news for America. There will not be a shutdown on Friday,” Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, said on the Senate floor just before the vote in that chamber. That sentiment was not shared by some far-right House Republicans.

Schumer and his House Republican counterpart, Mike Johnson, early this month agreed to a \$1.59 trillion discretionary spending level for the year that ends on Sept. 30.



Law enforcement officers detain a demonstrator protesting the court verdict against a leading rights activist in the city of Ufa in the Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia.

## EU says it is concerned by Kyrgyz crackdown on independent media

BISHKEK (Internews): The European Union expressed concern on Friday about the detention of a number of journalists in Kyrgyzstan and searches at the offices of media outlets which have been critical of the government. Kyrgyz authorities detained 11 journalists this week, accusing them of inciting unrest, and raided the offices of 24 kg and Temirov Live media outlets. The United States Department of State said on Thursday it was “deeply concerned” by the move.

In a statement the EU delegation to Kyrgyzstan and embassies of member countries expressed “concern about the extensive searches and confiscation of private property of independent media offices and the detention of journalists in Kyrgyzstan.” Expressing different opinions and engaging in independent journalism are part of exercising universal human rights and freedom of expression.

## Huthi missiles hit another US ship in Gulf of Aden

SANA’A: Yemen’s Huthi rebels claimed another attack on a US ship early Friday, after the United States launched fresh strikes on rebel targets over their aggression towards vessels in and around the Red Sea. While the Iran-backed rebels maintained they had struck the commercial vessel in the Gulf of Aden, the US military later said the group’s missiles had missed their mark.

media that their “naval forces... carried out a targeting operation against an American ship”—identified as the Chem Ranger—“with several appropriate naval missiles, resulting in direct hits”. It did not give a time nor other details for the latest attack in international shipping lanes. The US military’s Central Command, which is responsible for the Middle East, said the Huthis “launched two anti-ship ballistic missiles at M/V Chem Ranger.

documents at his golf resorts. In a social media post sent at about 2am, Trump argued that as president he enjoyed complete immunity from prosecution — and he urged the Supreme Court to rule in his favor. Trump suggested that US presidents need immunity to be able to make hard decisions and that this need outweighs the danger from presidents who break the rules.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki being briefed about Balochistan Education Endowment Fund

## Briefed about performance of BEEF: Future of country including Balochistan linked with talented youth: CM Domki

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that the future of Balochistan and Pakistan is linked with the talented youth.

He said a large number of talented students are benefiting from the fruits of Balochistan Education Endowment Fund.

He stated so during visit to the secretariat of Balochistan Educational Endowment Fund here on Friday.

Also present on the occasion were the caretaker Minister for Education, Dr. Qadir Bakhsh Baloch, Minister for Finance, Amjad Rasheed, prominent social personality and former Federal Minister

Mrs. Roshan Khurshid Bharucha besides Secretary Finance, Babar Khan and other high ups.

He distributed Cheques of scholarships among students studying in different educational institutions.

The Chief Executive Officer of the BEEF, Muhammad Zikria Noorzai about the provision of academic scholarships to the students under BEEF.

The Chief Minister said that a large number of students used to be deprived of education due to poverty and financial issues, however, the BEEF has been established for the talented students.

He said that the basic objective behind establishing BEEF is to provide academic scholarships to the

brilliant students so that they are not deprived of education because of the financial hardships.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister was informed that 73,060 scholarships of around Rs. 4.1 billion have been provided by the BEEF. It was also informed that academic scholarships are being provided by BEEF to more than 12,000 students every year.

A new scheme of Rs. 4 billion has been allocated for the residential and cadet colleges, it was also informed.

The Secretary Finance said that the performance of BEEF is appreciable and the space would be allocated for permanent secretariat of BEEF in the proposed Balochistan Finance Complex.

## Dr Amir Jogezei says Modern facilities to be provided for development of Loralai University

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Health, Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezei has stated that the modern facilities would be provided for development of Loralai University further.

He said that the modern resources are provided for the students to acquire higher education.

He said that the laptops help the students better their studies.

The caretaker Minister for Health was speaking to the Vice Chancellor

of Loralai University, Dr. Ehsan Khan and other officials during visit to the University on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the government of Balochistan has spent huge amount for construction and development of Loralai University.

Later, he distributed laptops among the male and female students of the Loralai University.

Meanwhile, the Minister formally inaugurated the walk track in the University.

## SAPM Sohrab meets with Qatar's Minister of State for Interior Affairs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (SAPM) Jawad Sohrab Malik met on Friday with Qatar's Minister of State for Interior Affairs, Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal Al Thani and both Leaders reviewed cooperation in the security fields.

A significant meeting was held between Jawad

release. During the meeting, the SAPM congratulated the Minister of State Interior, Qatar on the successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022. He emphasized the exemplary nature of the World Cup 2022 and its high standards, setting a benchmark for other countries to follow.

The SAPM highlighted the crucial role of the Pakistani diaspora in Qatar's infrastructure de-



Sohrab Malik and Abdulaziz bin Faisal Al Thani, marking a momentous occasion for bilateral collaboration and economic development, said a press

velopment and expressed the intention to continue providing highly skilled and professional manpower to support Qatar's economic modernization.

## Pak-US ties strengthening in security, non-security areas: Masood Khan

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan has stressed the need to grab opportunities of tremendous potential for investors to invest in Pakistan through Special Investment Facilitation Council.

Addressing a ceremony at University Club in Washington, he termed the recently renewed Pakistan-US Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement as transformative.

About relations with

the United States, Ambassador Masood Khan said Pakistan-US relations are strengthening in security and non-security areas.

Regarding ties with India, he said Pakistan and India should resolve their outstanding issues through dialogue.

Underscoring the need for strategic balance in the region, Masood Khan emphasized responsible nuclear stewardship from all the states to ensure security for all.

## Prince lauds armed forces on successful "Margbar saramchar" in Iran

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce, Prince Ahmed Ali Ahmedzai has appreciated the successful operation "Margbar saramchar" carried out by the armed forces against the hideous of terrorists inside Iran.

In an official statement issued here on Friday, the caretaker Minister said that the successful operations of Pakistani forces speaks high about their professional expertise and capability.

He said that Pak army

has unique place in the world because of its professional capabilities and expertise.

Prince Ahmed Ali said that Pakistan desires peace and enjoys pleasant relations with its neighbouring countries, but it's desire of peace may not be considered as it's weakness.

He also said that the success of operation of Pakistani forces is a clear message for the opponent forces.

He said that the whole nation is standing by its brave and talented armed forces.

## Govt challenges IHC cypher trial verdict in Supreme Court

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government has challenged the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) 21 November, 2023 decision to annul the jail trial of PTI founder Imran Khan in cypher case.

On 21 November last year, the IHC had declared the proceedings of Imran Khan's trial conducted in jail in the cypher case as null and void. However, the appointment of the judge to the special court formed under the Official Secrets Act was held to be valid.

An IHC division bench, comprising Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz, had pronounced the verdict on Imran's intra-court appeal against a single-member bench's decision to approve his jail trial in the cypher case and the appointment of the judge to the special court formed under the Official Secrets Act, 1923. Approving the maintainability of the appeal, the court declared that the notification issued by the law ministry on August 29 — which read that the Law and Justice Division had "no objection" to PTI chairman's trial in the cypher case.

Gazetted officers must exercise powers delegated through an Election Commission notification under Section 193. Cooperate with District Returning Officers, Returning Officers, and Presiding Officers, as mandated by Section 83(4) of the Elections Act.

## Interior secretary, chairman NAB put on notice

ISLAMABAD (Online): The petitions filed by Ali Amin Gandapur and others came up for hearing in Islamabad High Court (IHC) Friday.

The court issued the notice to interior secretary and chairman NAB after hearing the arguments besides issuing directives for providing details of the cases registered against the petitioners.

The case came up for hearing in single bench of IHC led by Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani Friday.

Raja Zahoor ul Hassan counsel for the petitioners appeared in the court and told the court the miscellaneous petition has been filed in this court. Record of FIRs and unknown cases registered against the petitioners across the country has been called.

Hearing of the case was adjourned till January 31, 2024.

ter their interest in participating in the Reko Diq project construction.

RDMC is focused on developing and building relationships with local companies where their capability and market competitiveness allows.

More than 150 companies were represented at this event which facilitated networking between the company management and local vendors. The EXPO took place in two groups in Quetta and participants were briefed on the project, the ethos of the company and the areas where RDMC would be engaging local businesses as contractors. The presentation was followed by a question-answer session. RDMC Supply Chain team leadership initiated this exercise in 2023 with an advertisement inviting interested vendors to submit their details. RDMC, in line with the philosophy of its parent organization Barrick, believes that supply chain is a core enabler for local development and the achievement of Barrick's sustainability strategy.

## Aneeq underscores need of spreading message of harmony

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed Friday underscored the need of spreading the message of harmony and peaceful coexistence among the masses particularly the youth.

He was addressing to a seminar on "Bridging beliefs: Interfaith Harmony in Pakistan" organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony in collaboration with Dawood University of Engineering and Technology (DUET) Karachi. The minister said that young generation was our future and message bearer of Islam's message of Husn-e-Akhlag (moral excellence) and hoped that they would spread it further across the globe for realizing the dream of establishment of an inclusive and holistic society. He said all the religions have identical divine message inculcated with

their ideology because they are interrelated in the string of Creator's guidance from Adam AS to Muhammad SAW who announced completion of the 'Deen'.

Islam attaches a dignified status to human being declaring him 'Naib of the Allah' on the earth while the Quran narrates that every human is member of the Allah's family. Aneeq Ahmed said and questioned, "How one can claim having love for Allah when his heart has occupied with feelings of prejudice, enmity and hatred to other humans even if they belong to a different religion." Ensuring justice to every citizen is mandatory in governance system of Islam that also requires complete freedom to non-Muslim citizens within an Islamic state, he maintained adding that injustice to a non-Muslim in an Islamic state was considered more oppressive act as compared to a wrongdoing with a Muslim citizen whereas the government was also responsible of ensuring safety and security of place of worship of all the religions.

In Pakistan, equal treatment is being made with every citizen and non-Muslim communities were living safely in a better environment while the government was providing security to non-Muslims, the federal minister said and emphasized that all citizens- irrespective of their beliefs- have to play their due role independently for development of the country.

Speaking at the seminar, Bishop Fredrick John, Bishop of Karachi and Balochistan emphasized on living our lives while following the religious ideologies in letter and spirit. "We are meant to develop and encourage others and accept and respect each other in their own capacities as God has created the human without any difference.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the Caretaker Federal Cabinet.

## Karachi becomes second most polluted city worldwide

KARACHI (INP): The Air Quality Index (AQI) of Karachi, the largest metropolitan city of Pakistan, becomes the second most polluted city in the world.

## Provision of best health facilities at hospitals govt's top priority: Ijaz

JHAL MAGSI (INP): Deputy Commissioner Jhal Magsi, Ijaz Sarwar has said that provision of best health facilities and free medicines to people at primary health centers and official hospitals was top priority of the Balochistan government.

These views were expressed by him on Friday while chairing a monthly review meeting of PPHI. District Health Coordinator Dr. Rukhsana Magsi, District Support Manager PPHI Tanveer Ahmed Buledi, District Monitoring Officer PPHI Dr. Azhar Hussain Magsi and other health department officers in charge of Basic Health Centers (BHUs) attended the meeting. During the meeting, District Support Manager PPHI Tanveer Ahmad Buledi gave a detailed briefing to the participants regarding the provision of medical aid in primary health centers BHUs across the district.

Addressing the participants of the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Jhal

Magsi Ijaz Sarwar said that the doctors and paramedical staff related to the health department should ensure their attendance along with their sanitation staff, all doctors and other staff should consider the health sector as a sacred duty and be busy fulfilling their duties. He urged all the doctors and other staff that the priority of the Balochistan Government was to provide free medicines and medical facilities to people in primary health centers and government hospitals.

For which all the resources are being utilized by the government of Balochistan on an emergency basis so that the poor people can benefit fully from these measures of the government, he said.

Ijaz Sarwar said that for this reason, it was important that doctors and other health-related staff avoid any kind of negligence in the performance of their official duties and devote all energy to providing facilities to people.

## Miners trapped in coalmine in Quetta

ISLAMABAD (APP): Three coal miners were reported trapped and unconscious on Friday due to purported gas emissions in a coal mine in the Dukki area of Quetta.

According to a private news channel, a coordinated rescue operation led by the Chief Mines Inspector was underway to rescue the trapped coalminers. Rescue and District Administration officials have also reached the spot to facilitate the rescue operation.



QUETTA: Banners and flags of different political parties has been placed on Sariyab road in connection of upcoming General Election 2024.

## Mainly cold, dry weather forecast for Balochistan

QUETTA (APP) The Met Office has forecast mainly cold and dry weather with partly cloudy condition in most parts of the province during next 24 hours.

While patchy fog may remain during morning time in coastal area and Nasirabad division. However, light rain, drizzle may expect in Bakhan and its surroundings.

According to the Met Office, the minimum temperature in Quetta was recorded at -0.1 degree centigrade and -4.0 degree centigrade in Kalat on Friday..

## China donates sportswear to Gwadar players

GWADAR (INP): Chinese Government has donated Sportswear to local youngsters of Gwadar.

Around 200 shirts and trousers were distributed with the help of China Overseas Ports Holdings Company (COPHC), operator of Gwadar Port.

The young boys playing on beach and playgrounds expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the Chinese government for the generous assistance.

By now, there are 22 football teams registered under District Football Association (DFA). Whereas 18 clubs are enlisted to District Cricket Association Gwadar. The need for providing kits to the young players was felt when they were observed playing in random cloths. Facilitating the local sportswear with basic sportswear is first of its kind friendly gesture in Gwadar.

"This gesture has opened up a new era of cementing people of people bond between China and Pakistan and promoting local players in Gwadar," local football player Zahid Baloch told Gwadar Pro.

COPHC official said that such act of benevolence

will steer to engender people to people connectivity and boosting up social contact with local people of Gwadar. "In my opinion, it will also lay down robust foundation of resilient relationship between Gwadar sports community and China.

He added saying continuous cooperation in games will bring beget deep harmony and closeness between both the countries.

China also patronized 1st of its kind "Pak-China Friendly Football Match" at Futsal Football ground alongside Marine Drive on September 14, 2022.

District Football Association official said that current Chinese donation to local sportsmen as well friendly Football Match was a tangible success of China's sincere efforts of nurturing warm bond and ties with local people of Gwadar. "Gwadar youth possess natural talent and they need just a pat on their back. Fortunately, China is with us to extend maximum financial and other sort of assistance to them so that Gwadar footballers may prove their mettle on national, regional and international arenas," he added.



LORALAI: Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezei distributing laptops among students at University of Loralai