

# Independent

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DAVOS: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addressing the Pathfinder's Pakistan Breakfast meeting held on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum.

## PM optimistic about political, economic stability after Feb 8 general election

DAVOS (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday expressed confidence that a stable government would be formed after forthcoming general elections, scheduled for February 8, eventually leading to sustainable economic stability in the country.

"I do see and project that there will be great growth in Pakistan. There will be a sense of stability. The growth will be slow but it will be sustainable," the prime minister said in an interview with CNBC on the sidelines of the 54th annual meeting of World Economic Forum (WEF).

He said that the speculation regarding holding the elections, had been addressed and everyone was certain about the election date of 8th of February. PM Kakar said it was the top priority of the caretaker setup to bring economic revival and to focus on growth and other economic indicators.

He said the next government had to follow a clear principle of spending less and earning more to achieve economic stability. "We need to bring back the non-documented economy into the documented economy and transform our state to a more viable economic entity," he added.

He highlighted that the caretaker government would publish a white paper on its 4.5 months performance. "We did introduce and revamp the programme within taxation system, we brought structural changes that would be passed through the Cabinet formerly by the end of the month, after that it would be in place as policy." Further, he said the caretaker government opted for aggressive privatization, it cut its expenditures at the federal level and it was also carrying out talks with the provinces so they could rationalize their expenditures.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. Sultan Raja, presiding over a meeting on General Elections at ECP Secretariat.

## President directs IESCO to refund Rs 139,000 to a complainant

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has directed the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) to refund Rs 139,860 to a complainant who had been wrongly issued an additional demand notice for the installation of an electricity connection along with a transformer due to cost escalation.

The president issued these directions while deciding upon a representation filed by IESCO assailing the order of the Wafaqi Mohtasib directing IESCO to refund

the amount to complainant Haji Akhtar Raheem and adopt proper procedure/rules/regulation, which were violated by IESCO, resulting in maladministration. The IESCO had violated its own procedure by not installing the connection within 30 days and later sent an additional demand notice to the complainant, who had already paid the original requisite amount, on account of the escalation of the cost of the material. The complainant had applied with IESCO for an

electricity connection along with a 25 KVA transformer. Subsequently, a demand notice of Rs 305, 656, including the cost of allied material was issued to him. He deposited the amount, however, IESCO instead of installing his connection timely, issued an additional demand notice of Rs 139,860 on account of the escalation of the cost of the material. He approached IESCO for withdrawal of the demand notice but to no avail.

## Japan announces \$3.62m grant to support Pakistan's polio programme

**Independent Report** ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has announced a new US\$ 3.62 million grant to procure essential oral polio vaccines as part of its continued support to polio eradication efforts in Pakistan. Pakistan Polio Programme will use these funds to procure more than 21 million doses of vaccines to support polio campaigns in 2024, said a news release.

Pakistan is one of only two countries globally that has yet to stop polio. In 2023, Pakistan reported a total of 6 cases of polio. With polio cases cornered to only a few locations in the country, the Government of Pakistan and partners are preparing to launch an aggressive plan of activities in 2024 to stop this life altering disease for children. Each national immunization drive targets over 44 million children under the age of five, with more than 370,000 frontline workers, predominantly women, playing a crucial role to ensure the Polio Programme's out-

## Court drops charges against PTI founder and wife

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad court has dismissed the case alleging an illicit relationship against the founder of PTI, Imran Khan, and his wife Bushra Bibi. The District and Sessions Court in Islamabad presided over the hearing on the marriage case between Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi, ultimately rejecting the accusations of improper relations.

Talking to the media here on Wednesday, he said that 250 million people would use their right to vote wisely on February 8 and decide on the future of the country. He said the PML-N had launched its election campaign vigorously and, under the able leadership of party Quaid Nawaz

## Expels Iranian ambassador; Recalls envoy from Tehran Pakistan suspends diplomatic ties with Iran over completely unacceptable airstrike

Pakistan reserves right to respond, FM warns Iranian counterpart

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Wednesday decided to recall its ambassador from Iran and suspend all high-level visits following the unprovoked violation of its airspace by Iran on Tuesday night.

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, in a televised press statement, said that Pakistan had also conveyed that the Iranian ambassador to Pakistan who was currently visiting Iran might not return for the time being. "We have conveyed this message to the Iranian Government. We have also informed them that Pakistan has decided to recall its ambassador from Iran and that the Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan who is currently

visiting Iran may not return for the time being," the spokesperson remarked. She said that the unprovoked and blatant breach of Pakistan's sovereignty by Iran was a violation of international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. She said that the said illegal act was completely unacceptable and had no justification whatsoever. "Pakistan reserves the right to respond to this illegal act. The responsibility for the consequences will lie squarely with Iran," she said. The spokesperson said that Pakistan had also decided to suspend all high-level visits which were ongoing or were planned between Pa-

kistan and Iran in the coming days.

Earlier, warning Tehran of "serious consequences", the FO had lamented that the "unacceptable violation" of Pakistani sovereignty took place despite the existence of several channels of communication between the two neighbouring countries.

Islamabad has already communicated strong condemnation of Tehran's move to the Iranian Charge d' affaires who was told that the consequences of such an unprovoked move lie squarely with Iran.

Reiterating Pakistan's stance on coordinated action against the scourge of terrorism, the spokesperson had underscored that

such unilateral acts are not in conformity with good neighbourly relations and can seriously undermine bilateral trust and confidence.

Online adds: Foreign Minister, Jalil Abbas Jilani, who is currently leading the Pakistan delegation to the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Kampala, Uganda, received a telephone call from the Foreign Minister of Iran, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, today. The Foreign Minister firmly underscored that the attack conducted by Iran inside Pakistani territory, on 16 January 2024, was not only a serious breach of Pakistan's sovereignty but was also an egregious violation of international law and the spirit of

bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran.

Expressing Pakistan's unreserved condemnation of the attack, the Foreign Minister added that the incident has caused serious damage to bilateral ties between Pakistan and Iran. The Foreign Minister added that Pakistan reserved the right to respond to this provocative act.

Stressing that terrorism was a common threat to the region and required concerted and coordinated efforts to combat this menace, the Foreign Minister underlined that unilateral actions could seriously undermine regional peace and stability. No country in the region should tread this perilous path.

## Kalashnikov culture will have to be eliminated from country: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has issued a big order for elimination of Kalashnikov culture from Pakistan.

The court has sought all details from concerned authorities on how many arms licenses of prohibited arms were issued all over the country.

Supreme Court (SC) has issued notice to interior secretary, all provincial home secretaries and inspectors general police. While issuing notice to Attorney General (AG) the court has directed to send copy of the order.

This order was issued on Wednesday.

The SC approved bail against surety bonds of Rs 50000 in respect of accused Kashif nominated in theft case.

A three member bench of SC presided over by the CJP Qazi Faez Isa took up

the case for hearing Wednesday.

The CJP remarked the police have not even asked about license from the person from whose home the arms were stolen. The owner is pleading the guilty himself that two Kalashnikovs, one pistol and other valuable things were stolen. I have been offered that I should get license of Kalashnikov, Drugs and Kalashnikov ruined Pakistan. Likewise no one wanders in the world by holding Kalashnikov in large vehicles with black glasses. He asked the petitioner from where Kalashnikov reached him.

The CJP remarked if IG is giving papers of Kalashnikov this way then as to why action should not be taken against him. We write to interior secretary all should return Kalashnikov and their licenses.



SANGHAR: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addresses to his supporters during public gathering meeting in connection of General Election 2024 coming ahead, in Sanghar.

## PTI founder among other PTI leaders out of election race

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday upheld the election Appellate Tribunal's decision that dismissed the appeals of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and other party leaders regarding the rejection of nomination papers by the returning officers (ROs) for upcoming general elections.

The former prime minister had submitted his nomination papers from NA-122 Lahore and NA-89 Mianwali for the general elections scheduled for Feb 8, both of which were rejected by the respective ROs. Subsequently, he contested these decisions before the election appellate tribunals, where his appeals were also dismissed.

## Solangi says Elected govt will have to work seriously to cope with challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday expressed the hope that the government coming to power after the February 8 elections would work for the betterment of the country and its people.

The country was facing economic difficulties, coupled with political polarization and the next elected government would have to work seriously to cope with the challenges, Solangi said during an informal conversation with journalists covering the activities of Election Commission of Pakistan at a luncheon.

The minister said it was the people's responsibility to elect a leadership who could amicably tackle the challenges being faced by Pakistan. "We need national consensus to solve the country's problems," Solangi remarked.

## 'Lion wants someone else to hunt for him', Bilawal takes dig at PML-N

SHAHADAPUR (INP): Amid rising political temperatures ahead of the February 8 general elections, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has thrown shade on Nawaz-led Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) once again.

Political parties are expediting their electioneering with a series of manifestos, new vows, and past performances. Besides, PML-N and PPP are eyeing the premier's office and desperately swaying voters to elect them to power.

"Only jiyalas are

present in the electoral field and fully ready to contest [general polls]," said the PPP chairman while addressing a public meeting in Shahadapur.

"On the other hand, 'lion' [PML-N's electoral sign] is hiding like a cat and wanting someone else to hunt for him," he said taking a dig at the Nawaz-led party. "It is a bloodsucking lion who wants blood of labourers, farmers, and the nation. PML-N has an electoral sign of 'lion' in Punjab, (and in Sindh) 'star' — grand symbol of Grand Democratic Alliance — is its facilitator."



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister of Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed addressing during Conference on Sirat-un-Nabi (SAW) and Contemporary Challenges and their solution at Iqra University.

## Quran, Seerah solution to all contemporary issues of world: Aneeq Ahmed

KARACHI (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed has said that Quran and Sirat-e-Tayyaba provide us guidance and set basic principles concerning to every field of life urging students to develop comprehension of religion as well as contemporary issues. While addressing a conference on "Sirat un Nabi (SAW) and contemporary challenges and their solutions" jointly organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Iqra University here on Wednesday, he said that it had been imperative that students not only understand the religion of Islam but also comprehend requirements of the contemporary era as well as economic, social and other issues in the light of teachings of Islam and keep themselves abreast of developing global situation.

that religious obligations (Deen) and demands of worldly pursuits (Duniya) are intertwined and we have to search the solution of contemporary issues in the light of Quran and Sirat-e-Tayyaba adding that true comprehension of religion could not be achieved without understanding the worldly affairs.

Islam emphasizes on practical action and application of knowledge and life of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) is a guiding example for every human being, he noted and added that Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) set standards for individuals, society and state and those must be followed. While referring to his recent visit to Saudi Arabia, the federal minister informed that Hajj agreement was signed in Hajj Conference in Madina Munawwarah which was attended by delegates from 80 countries.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Dr. Nadeem Jan witnesses the grant signing ceremony between Pakistan and Japan to support Pakistan's Polio Program.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

### Iran's unprovoked airspace violation of Pakistan - a heinous crime

Iran has carried out missile strike violating the Pakistan's airspace in Panjur area of Balochistan the other day. Undoubtedly, the Iran's unprovoked airspace violation is a heinous attack on Pakistan's sovereignty and integrity, which can have serious consequences in future.

The otherwise unexpected strike has claimed lives of two innocent children and left three girls injured. While Iran is claiming that the missile strike was carried out against a terrorist organization, but death of innocent children in the unprovoked strike is sheer denial of Iran's claim.

There's no denying the fact that the entire responsibility of this attack rests with the Iranian government, IRGC and Iranian intelligence. Despite existence of multiple channels of communication between the two countries, the operation was carried out contrary to international law, which clearly violated Pakistan's airspace. It is also a mockery that a fake press release was also issued from an organization called Jaish-ul-Adl to justify this incident. Seeing Pakistan's reaction, Iran realized its wrong and foolish action.

Matter of fact remains that the organization namely Jaish-ul-Adl, is being run by the IRGC itself. Now they want to get rid of this problem, that's why a false statement was issued from Jaish-ul-Adl again that these rockets went across the border by mistake and actually the target was Jaish al-Adl camp inside Sistan, Iran.

It is very ridiculous that a terrorist organization itself is giving explanations for rockets fired by the IRGC, accidentally crossing the border. This clearly shows that the accounts attributed to Jaish-ul-Adl are being operated by IRGC and Iranian intelligence itself. While on the other hand, there is great anger in Pakistan over this action by Iran.

It is also a reality that the banned militant organizations including Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) have camps inside Iran. The world knows that the Indian spy Kaloboshan Yadav had also been operating from Iran. This unprovoked airspace violation of Pakistan by Iran is a great mistake and no doubt, this incident can never be ignored. As a result of this action, the entire Pakistani nation is now demanding a strong and similar response from the state. Pakistan reserves the right to respond in any way. Foreign office has summoned the Iranian Charge d'affaires and a strong protest has been recorded. The announcement for Iranian ambassador not to return and the recalling of the Pakistani ambassador from Iran came as a very strong response from Pakistan. Even before this incident, infiltration and terrorist activities took place from the territory of Iran. In January 2023, in Panjur District, four security personnel were martyred in terrorist activities from inside the Iranian border, while in April 2023, terrorists from Iranian territory attacked Pakistani forces in Kech. It is worth mentioning here that Iran's security agencies are not on the same page due to which the Iranian government is facing serious challenges at the diplomatic level.



**Touqir Hussain**

Nearly three years have passed since the announcement regarding Pakistan's pivot from geopolitics to geo-economics. So far, this policy shift has proved nothing more than rhetoric.

A country's geopolitical value signifies its relevance in international relations beyond its own region, especially its capability as an ally or partner in Great Power rivalry. The country has a place in geo-economics if, by virtue of its geopolitical location, infrastructure, or resources, it can play a meaningful role in the global economy — perhaps as a manufacturing base or a link in supply chains. Or it could be a source of energy, or serve as a hub for transit trade or energy flows. Pakistan is relevant to both geopolitics and geo-economics. But its policy planners should ask themselves if they really have to choose between the two. Or whether such choice is indeed possible. Also, is geopolitics the problem and geo-economics the solution to Pakistan's economic woes? The truth is, Pakistan did not prioritise its people's socioeconomic well-being. Its governance model preferred the elite over the people, security over development, dependence over self-reliance, and status quo over progress. The system is now damaging more than the economy. Pakistan may be eligible for geo-economics but is not yet qualified for it.

Geopolitics is only partly to blame. It remains important to Pakistan's foreign policy, though the extent of its relevance has

### Ready to shift?

changed. Situated between South Asia, Central Asia, Iran and the Middle East, and living in the strategic shadow of China and Russia, Pakistan has geopolitical salience, putting it at the crossroads of geopolitical rivalries and ambitions it can take advantage of. But geopolitics can only be an asset if Pakistan is stable. For an unstable country, it is a liability and poses risks. For instance, if a big power loses, its ally loses too, as has happened to Pakistan in America's wars.

Washington's war aims have always been different from Pakistan's, and its strategy often flawed. If the pivot to geo-economics means Pakistan would no longer be part of such high-risk geopolitics, this is to be welcomed. America's wars also incited Pakistan's own geostrategic ambitions, that brought it as much harm as did US policies. If Pakistan has relinquished this policy, it is a good step.

Geopolitics remains a guiding principle for US-Pakistan ties except that it now provokes conflict in the context of US-China rivalry. Pakistan is seen as advancing China's geopolitical aims. It will have to re-ach some understanding with Washington on strategic and security issues, otherwise these will keep colliding with prospects of cooperation with the US, a crucial economic partner, and thus limit Pakistan's geo-economic role. Even in the Gulf countries, Pakistan's traditional friends, economics now beats to the rhythm of geopolitics as these states navigate between the US-Europe-India axis and China's geopolitical outreach. Geopolitics will figure in Pakistan's relations with them, too. Pakistan must rethink not only geopolitics but also geo-economics. The fact is, its real value in geo-economics won't be evident until Afghanistan stabilises, ties with India improve, and it becomes a hub for pipelines and trade with Central Asia. However, given its structural economic weaknesses, poor governance, and lack of political stability, Pakistan's economy is not quite prepared for geo-economics. The change will not come easily, as there is a clash between elite interests and sound economic policies.

Pakistan's poor economic policies have been a way to safeguard its elite-led system. Policies, especially those related to taxes, subsidies, tariff--fs, and exports, were designed so as not to lead to the erosion of the social structure that maintains the feudal system, or collide with the financial interests of the business/industrial elite, not to mention the extraordinary allocation of resources to the defence sector. The system must reform. Pakistan must be able to improve the economy on the margins without systemic changes, and have a higher growth rate. But what good is the growth rate if it makes little difference to poverty, social indicators and human security? A population with poor education and healthcare is hardly producing economically. Martin Raiser, World Bank regional vice president for South Asia, recently spoke of Pakistan's "poor human development outcomes and increasing poverty", and underlined the necessity of addressing the "acute human capital crisis".

Pakistan cannot abandon or escape geopolitics. And geo-economics will remain beyond its grasp if it fails to make the necessary reforms. The alternative: Pakistan will be stuck where it is, at best. -- Courtesy Dawn

### Lenin's legacy



**Mahir Ali**

An intriguing triptych included in Iqbal's second volume of verse, Baal-i-Jibreel, envisages Vladimir Lenin in the presence of God, explaining why the state of the world prompted his disbelief and wondering when divine intervention would rectify global ills. In rhythmic verse, the angels sent to investigate report back, corroborating the Russian revolutionary's narrative.

In the last and best known of the three poems, the angels are commanded to investigate the overthrow of the existing order, kicking off with a verse that echoes The Internationale — in Victor Kiernan's translation, "Rise, and from their slumber wake the poor ones of my world! Shake the walls and windows of the mansions of the great..."

That's a reflection of the extent to which the Russian upheavals of 1917 affected the rest of the world, not least the vast expanse of the colonised Global South. The direction Russia took towards the end of World War I inspired shock and awe. The overthrow of the tsar and the prospect of replacing absolutism with bourgeois democracy was dramatic enough, but by the time Lenin returned in April from his exile in Switzerland, he realised the meagre gains were unsustainable.

Even some of Lenin's closest comrades were taken aback by his enthusiasm for a takeover, but the pros-

pect of 'all power to the soviets' — the elected bodies of workers', soldiers' and eventually peasants' representatives that shared power with the post-tsarist government — and the promise of land, bread and peace — resonated with the proletariat of Petrograd (as St Petersburg had been renamed to banish the German influence).

The takeover was eventually almost painless, but the survival of the new regime was unlikely. The tsarist White Army, assisted by American, French and British forces (among others), joined hands to bury the Bolsheviks. But a late recruit to the Bolshevik cause, Leon Trotsky, turned out to be a formidable commander despite his military inexperience and, after much death and destruction on both sides, the nascent Red Army ultimately triumphed.

The Russia that emerged from this maelstrom was a far cry from what Lenin had envisaged, and he set about trying to rectify its wayward course. And he made no secret of it. Laid low by an assassination attempt in 1918 and subsequently stricken by strokes that led to bouts of paralysis, Lenin was just about well enough to speak at the fourth congress of the Communist International in November 1922, in what turned out to be his last public speech, acknowledging that "we have done, and will still do, a host of foolish things".

He knew by then that his days were numbered, but from his sick bed later that year he still sought to alter the revolution's trajectory with a series of dictated notes that focused on reorganising both the Communist Party and the economy, banishing the tsarist bureaucracy that had survived the

revolution, and sidelining Joseph Stalin, who had acquired too much power within the party and could not be trusted to use it wisely. He obviously could not have known at that stage that Stalin's absolute power would lead in the 1930s to the execution of Lenin's closest comrades.

The common misperception shared by both friends and foes of the transformative Bolshevik endeavour is that Stalinism flowed seamlessly out of Leninism. There can be little doubt, though, that the Soviet Union would have emerged as a rather different entity if Lenin had survived for another decade, or been succeeded by a collective leadership. Lenin was adamant that accession to the USSR must be voluntary.

It didn't quite work out that way, but the relatively peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union nearly seven decades later testified to his reluctant opposition to the 'great Russian chauvinism', epitomised by Vladimir Putin's stupid invasion of Ukraine. Mikhail Gorbachev remained an admirer of Lenin, and his glasnost and perestroika in the 1980s-1990s were partly echoes of what Lenin sought to achieve in the 1920s.

Even the most strident enemies of Bolshevism acknowledged that Lenin's death on Jan 21, 1924, stripped the Soviet Union of an invaluable guide. The worship of Lenin thereafter, with little understanding of what he stood for, was a travesty he would have detested. Notwithstanding the USSR's fate, if a different world is to emerge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the triumphs and tragedies that embellished or thwarted Lenin's audacious project cannot be ignored. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### PM Kakar for equitable chances to all to benefit from modern technology

DAVOS (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday called for providing equitable opportunities to all nations and regions to grab the fruits of modern technology. Speaking at a forum titled "Trade Tech's Trillion-Dollar Promise" on the sidelines of the 54<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), the prime minister said utilizing the state of the art technology was vital to achieve the targets of fast development.

Stressing the need to ensure equitable opportunities to all to secure the technology, the prime minister said equitable opportunities were key to ensure

sustainable global development. Keeping in view the development of technology, PM Kakar maintained that the digital economy would attain more importance in the days to come. He said every region of the world should be benefited from the development being made in the technology sector.

As regards the issues of trade and business, he said the private sector should be encouraged to boost investment.

Further he added that the private sector should take a lead to help the government resolving the challenges of trade and business. "The government do think in a

different way and manner when it approaches towards challenges of trade and business, while the private entities and the business people have different opinion," he said adding the private entities should become the opinion maker and influencing and contributing more towards it. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar held a meeting with Chief Executive Officer of CocaCola Company, James Quincey on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos today.

In the meeting, the Prime Minister highlighted the steps taken by the government to facilitate business and investment in Pakistan.



CEO of CocaCola Company, James Quincey calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

### Senate body seeks details of budget, following austerity measures

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: The Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue on Wednesday directed the Finance Division to provide details of the budget saved following the issuance of austerity measures notification, issued by the Finance Division. The Secretary of the Finance Division stated that the Government was complying with austerity measures, resulting in government spending for the current fiscal year, staying within the budget.

A meeting of the Committee was held at Parliament House on Wednesday with Senator Saleem Mandviwalla in the Chair. The Senate deliberated on the Bill titled "State Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) (Amendment) Bill, 2023." Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi, the bill's mover, stated that the primary objective was to restrain the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officers of the state owned enterprises from using company assets for political and monetary purposes, proposing disqualification for such actions.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

**KARACHI (APP):** Shipping activity reported at the Port where three ships namely, MSC United VII, High Challenge and Poly World carrying containers, palm oil and coal, berthed at container Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Bulk Cargo Terminal respectively on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2024. Meanwhile another containership 'Maersk Cape Town' also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on today January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

### Gold rates down by Rs.3,600

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.3,600 and was sold at Rs.213,700 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs.217,300 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.3,087 to Rs.183,213 from Rs.186,300 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.167,945 from Rs.170,775 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.50 to Rs.2,600 whereas that of ten gram silver declined by Rs.42.86 to Rs.2,229.08.

### Dr Saif says: ICT exports increased by 22.67% in Dec 2023

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr Umar Saif on Wednesday said that the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) export remittances had increased by 22.67 percent in the month of December 2023. A total of \$303 million ITC exports proceeds were received in December, following a 13% increase in November 2023, the minister said in statement.

Dr Umar Saif said that facilitative measures, such as allowing to retain 50%

of the dollars, digital payment systems, and initiatives for freelancers had played a crucial role in boosting ICT exports growth. Expressing gratitude to Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and the Special Investment Facilitation Council for their efforts in providing facilities for the IT industry, he said that the objective behind the policies was to bolster the national economy and advance the IT and telecom sectors in the country. Dr Saif said it was a beginning, which would usher in significant industry's growth.



DOHA: SAPM, Jawad Sohrab Malik meets Dr. Al bin Samikh Al Marri, Labour Minister of the State of Qatar.

### Punjab Green wheels program to provide E-bikes, E-rickshaws

**LAHORE:** Caretaker provincial minister for transport of Punjab Ibrahim Hasan Murad on Wednesday marked a pivotal moment in Punjab's history by integrating 26,000 electric vehicles into its urban fabric. Talking to a private news channel, he said the initiative caters to students, low-income citizens, women, and people with disabilities. Through this program, the government has decided to give the university students 10,000 electric bikes on a subsidy, he added.

The major announcements were interest-free e-bikes for women, three-wheeler

bikes for the disabled and also interest-free e-rickshaws for deserving people.

Recognizing the pressing need to combat pollution, the Punjab government's program addresses the root cause by targeting the 70-80% pollution contribution from the transportation sector, he added. He said, "Punjab's commitment to sustainable transportation is not just a step forward; it's a leap into a greener, cleaner future."

The minister said that another historic milestone was achieved with the issuance of electric vehicle (EV) licenses for the first time in Pakistan.



LAHORE: Regional Chairman FPCCI Zaki Ejaz in a group photo with participants during round table discussion on packaging sector in his visit to Regional Office Lahore.

### Pakistan secures second LNG cargo from SOCAR

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** The government on Wednesday announced securing the second LNG cargo from the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) under the Government-to-Government Framework Agreement between Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL) and SOCAR. "The cargo is scheduled for delivery in February 2024, further

strengthening the energy partnership between Pakistan and Azerbaijan" the Ministry of Petroleum said in a news release.

PLL and SOCAR signed a landmark Framework Agreement under the Government-to-Government arrangement, marking a significant milestone in the bilateral energy cooperation between the two countries.

### FBR denies reports of protest by IRS officers

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Wednesday has rebutted the baseless news circulating in certain sections of the media regarding a planned protest by IRS officers. According to the FBR's official Twitter handle, the FBR clarified that no such protest was taking place and assured that its offices would continue to function as per routine.

### FPCCI seeks industry status for packaging sector

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Chairman and Vice President Zaki Ajiz on Wednesday demanded the government grant industry status to the packaging sector. He expressed these views while addressing the FPCCI's Round Table Discussion on the 'Packaging sector: Challenges and opportunities', here at FPCCI Regional Office. Managing Director and CEO of Packages Limited, Syed

Hyder Ali, Director & CEO of Century Paper & Board Mills Limited Aflab Ahmed, Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt, Chairman Pakistan Association of Printing And Graphic Arts Industry Saad Halem Khan, Senior Vice Chairman of All Pakistan Corrugated Cartons Manufacturers Association (APCCMA) Khawaja Tariq Mehmood, Chairman of Flexible Packaging Association of Converters of Pakistan Mujahid Ali Shaikh.

## Naqvi visits Ring Road Southern Loop-3 project, inspects construction work

### Independent Report

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a detailed visit to the Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3-project, here on Wednesday.

He inspected the 8-km long whole route from Maraka Multan Road up to Adda Plot and reviewed asphalt laying work and shook hands with the labourers. Mohsin Naqvi also checked the temperature of asphalt along with construction of the walls. He while ordering to expedite asphalt laying work directed to increase the resources so that the project could be completed

within the stipulated time frame.

"The support of the whole Punjab government's team stands with you," the CM said that hopefully, this project would be completed at the earliest. Mohsin Naqvi in order to accelerate pace of work on the project, issued directions to the Provincial Minister Bilal Afzal and Secretary Communication & Works in this regard. He inspected ongoing construction activities on the project. FWO officials gave a briefing about progress being made on the project.

The CM underscored that people would be provided excellent

transportation facilities with the completion of Ring Road Southern Loop-3 Project, adding that 8-km long Southern Loop-3 project would be opened for traffic soon. It was informed during the briefing that 6 out of 8 main structures have been completed while 20 small structures have also been completed. Approximately, 70 per cent work of the project has been completed. Provincial ministers Azfar Ali Nasir, Bilal Afzal, Secretary C&W, Commissioner Lahore/DG LDA, Chairman Lahore Ring Road Authority, MD NESPAK, Project Director LESCO and FWO officials were also present.



LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister and Chairman Pakistan Ulema-e-Islam Council, Allama Tahir Ashrafi is presenting shield to Saudi Arabia's ambassador Noor Al Lamki during Haramain al-Shareefain conference at local hotel.

## Govt making efforts to facilitate pilgrims: Tahir Ashrafi

LAHORE (APP): Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said on Wednesday the government was making efforts to provide optimal facilities to prospective pilgrims.

Addressing the Tazeem-e-Haramain Al-Sharifain Conference, organised by Hajj Organisers Association of Pakistan (HOAP) Punjab zone, at a hotel here, he said

Saudi Arabia was dedicated to enhancing facilities for the Hajj and Umrah pilgrims.

He said that an effective system had been put in place to ensure effective monitoring of facilities to be provided to Hajj pilgrims. Under the system, Hajj pilgrims' complaints would be resolved speedily. Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council, said the relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is strong.

## UAE artificial rain experts calls on CM

LAHORE (APP): Members of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) team, who orchestrated artificial rainfall in Lahore recently, called on Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office on Wednesday. The CM greeted the team members, expressing gratitude individually during the meeting.

Among those present were Ahmed Al Kamal, Head of Cloud Seeding for the UAE NCM Team, Pilot Col. Obaid Halaf, Pilot Michael Anstis, Head of Cloud Seeding Department Abdullah Al Haman, Arnold Ningala and Verglottedoloto.

## May-9: ATC issues arrest warrants of 24 accused

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Wednesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants of 24 accused, including leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), in a case of torching a container in front of National Park Gulberg. The court issued the arrest warrants of Shah Mehmood Qureshi, his son, Zain Qureshi, Farukh Habib, Dr Azeemud Din, Shakil Ahmad Niazi, Khawar Shahzad and Rana Bilal Ijaz.

## KP CM chairs meeting to discuss traffic issues of Abbottabad

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on Wednesday chaired a meeting to discuss traffic issues of divisional headquarter Abbottabad.

Spokesperson to Chief Minister Brigadier (R) Syed Mujtaba Tirmizi and high ups of the transport department and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Urban Mobility Authority (KPUMA) attended the meeting.

The meeting was briefed about the proposed Urban Mobility Plan for Abbottabad and, it was told

that under the Urban Transport Package-II, consultancy services are under process to develop Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPS) for three major cities of the province including Peshawar, Abbottabad and Mingora.

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPS) will have concept designs of priority urban mobility projects for aforementioned cities.

The participants were also informed about different options for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service in Abbottabad on the model of BRT project of Peshawar.



PESHAWAR: Peoples Party (PPP) Leader, Asma Alamgir along with Syed Zahir Ali Shah and others addressing a press conference in Peshawar.

## Govt to start rehabilitation center for women drug addicts soon

### Independent Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Caretaker Minister for Social Welfare, Justice Retired Irshad Qaisar has said that very soon government would start a rehabilitation center in Peshawar for women drug addicts.

She was chairing a meeting being convened to discuss progress on projects of social welfare department under annual development program.

The meeting was attended by Additional

Secretary Social Welfare Farooq Khan, Senior Planning Officer and the relevant officials of the department.

Secretary Social Welfare Anela Durrani participated in the meeting through video link.

The minister said that the facility would be first government level rehabilitation center where only women suffering from drug abuse would be rehabilitated and treated.

## ACS South Punjab visits BVH to inspect ongoing work

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Captain (ret) Saqib Zafar visited the under-construction Outdoor Department of Bahawal Victoria Hospital.

He inspected the ongoing upgradation works in various wards of the hospital. Secretary of Communication and Works South Punjab Jawad Akram was also present with him.

He inspected the revamping and renovation work of the outdoor department of Bahawal Victoria Hospital. He directed that officers of the Buildings Department should complete the construction works within a specific period. Secretary Communication and Works Department Jawad Akram briefed ACS South Punjab about the degradation work. He said that various wards including TB Ward, Medical Ward, Surgery Ward, Emergency Block, and Old CCU are being renovated. He informed ACS about the details of ongoing construction works in CU and other wards.

## KP HCIP conducts workshop to upgrade primary healthcare services

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Capital Investment Project (KP HCIP) Health Department here Wednesday conducted a day long workshop to upgrade Primary Healthcare Services (PHS) in selected districts of the province. The workshop focused on the assessment of stakeholder needs for development of training modules improving the availability, utilization and quality of healthcare services. The workshop

aimed to gather crucial information about existing training manuals or modules, evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, aligning them with on-ground needs and identifying potential improvements in a clear and concise manner.

Advisor to Caretaker Chief Minister for Health, Dr. Riaz Anwar commended KP HCIP and said that the initiative would play pivotal role in fostering positive changes within the health system.



LARKANA: Women and girls on the way back to their homes after filling water in pots.

## QWP flays social media campaign against SC

PESHAWAR (APP): Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Wednesday condemned the malicious social media campaign against the judges of the Supreme Court.

Addressing a gathering at Mandani area in Charsadda district, he said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lost its electoral symbol but due to its own follies. He said that PTI founding chairman Imran Khan was responsible for the situation his party was facing.

The QWP chief said that the recent decision of the Supreme Court upholding the ruling of the

Election Commission of Pakistan about the intra-party election of the PTI was based on merit and in accordance with the law. However, he expressed resentment over the launching of the smear campaign against the judiciary.

He said that the country was already facing a host of issues and it could not afford confrontation and unrest. Aftab Sherpao said that some elements were out to create disturbance for their vested interests.

The QWP leader said that holding a free, fair and transparent election was the only way to take the country towards economic and political stability.

## International News

## Cease fire in Gaza or risk 'greater war', warns UN chief

### Monitoring Desk

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has emphasised the urgent need for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza after more than 100 days of escalating violence.

"Tamp down the flames of wider war because the longer the conflict in Gaza continues, the greater the risk of escalation and miscalculation," he warned in a statement issued on Monday evening.

He stated that "an immediate humanitarian ceasefire" was necessary to ensure an uninterrupted supply of emergency aid and to facilitate the release of prisoners.

Guterres noted that the onslaught on Gaza by Israeli forces over these 100 days "has unleashed wholesale destruction and levels of civilian killings at a rate that is unprecedented during my years as Secretary General".

He pointed out that "the vast majority of those killed are women and children, adding that "nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people".

Stressing the need to end the hostilities, he said: "The humanitarian situation in Gaza is beyond words. Nowhere and no one is safe."

Guterres expressed serious concern about the daily exchanges of fire

across the Blue Line as well, warning of potential broader escalation affecting regional stability. "Stop playing with fire across the Blue Line, de-escalate, and bring hostilities to an end in accordance with (relevant) Security Council resolutions," he said.

The Blue Line refers to the border demarcation between Israel and Lebanon, established by the United Nations in 2000 following the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon. Earlier this month, Israel carried out a drone strike across the Blue Line to kill Hamas's deputy chief Saleh Al Arouri, leading to regular clashes across the border.



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres attends the 54th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

## Chinese PM sees trade barriers as a threat to global economy

### Monitoring Desk

DAVOS: Chinese Prime Minister Li Qiang told the world's political and business elites in Davos on Tuesday that "discriminatory" trade barriers were a threat to the global economy, in a not-so-subtle dig at the United States.

Li's remarks came as the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 54th annual conference is preoccupied with a slew of global risks, including war in Ukraine and bombardment in Gaza, climate change and the rapid

rise of artificial intelligence. Li shared the spotlight with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who attended the forum in person for the first time in an effort to maintain military support from Kyiv's allies after nearly two years of war with Russia.

Li spoke just days after a tense presidential election in Taiwan, the democratic island that Beijing claims as part of China.

But the most senior Chinese official to attend the WEF since 2017.

## UK PM Sunak faces major test in showdown over Rwanda asylum plan

LONDON (Internews): British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak faces a major parliamentary showdown on Wednesday over his plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, with many of his own lawmakers threatening to rebel after they lost an initial bid to toughen his proposed law.

The government comfortably defeated attempts to strengthen the bill late on Tuesday that had been backed by almost a fifth of lawmakers from Sunak's Conservative Party in what was the biggest rebellion yet against the British prime minister.

## Muslim youth stabbed to death in Delhi

NEW DELHI (INP): A 19-year-old Muslim youth was stabbed to death by three individuals in New Delhi.

The incident took place in the Jamia Masjid area of the Indian capital.

The deceased was identified as Armaan alias Kasim, a resident of Loni area of Ghaziabad city of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

As per reports, the deceased and his father used to work as street vendors in Meena Bazar area of New Delhi.

## Nazis, no thank you'; Germans take to streets to call for AfD ban

BERLIN/COLOGNE (Internews): Protests against the far-right Alternative for Germany party are gaining momentum in the wake of a report that two senior party members joined a meeting to discuss plans for the mass deportation of citizens of foreign origin.

While the party has long railed against immigrants, the proposals for "unassimilated citizens" to be deported to "a model state in North Africa", reported by outlet Corrective, has struck a nerve in Germany. Some have compared them to the Nazis' initial plan to deport European Jews to Madagascar.

The line has long since been crossed," protester Stephan Kalsh said at a demonstration in Cologne on Tuesday evening, where many protesters called for the party to be banned.

It was the latest in a wave of protests around

the country that have attracted tens of thousands since the story broke last week. Some have been attended by high-ranking officials like Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock.

The AfD, which is polling second in nationwide surveys, has denied the plans are party policy. Co-leader Alice Weidel parted ways with one of her advisers who participated in the talks.

Still, Germany's domestic spy chief Thomas Haldenwang has warned of extremist movements within the AfD, which is under security surveillance.

The reports of the plans have drawn widespread condemnation from political and security leaders. Scholz urged democrats to stand against far-right "fanatics" while Haldenwang called for the "silent majority" to wake up.

## Trump attends rape defamation case in New York

NEW YORK (INP): Donald Trump went straight from his victory in the Republican Iowa caucuses to a New York courtroom Tuesday for the start of a defamation trial brought by writer E. Jean Carroll after an earlier jury found he had sexually assaulted her in the 1990s.

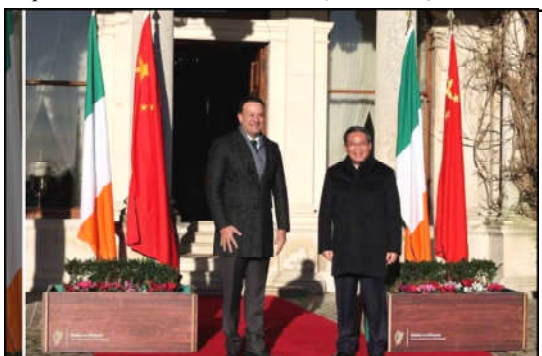
In court, the former US president did not make any statements, and he and Carroll avoided looking at each other while jurors were being selected, according to reporters allowed inside the courtroom.

But Trump continued attacking Carroll on his Truth Social platform, reposting a clip from an interview she gave to CNN and writing, "Can you believe I have to defend myself against this woman's fake story?!"

Addressing supporters at a rally in New Hamp-

shire later in the day, Trump said he planned to attend daily court proceedings in the "phony" case in New York over the next several days, while continuing campaigning. "Early in the morning I go to a Biden witch hunt," Trump said in the northeastern state, which will hold the nation's second presidential nomination contest next Tuesday. "And then I come here in the afternoon, and I stop, we make speeches and we get the votes."

The shocking defamation case, which would likely once have been enough to wreck any politician's career, has had no visible impact on Trump's bid to retake the White House—and if anything is boosting his standing with his party's right wing. Carroll, 80, is seeking more than \$10 million in damages in the civil trial.



Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Ireland's Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar meet at Farnleigh House, in Phoenix Park, Dublin, Ireland.

## Russia is developing ties with North Korea in all areas: Kremlin

MOSCOW (Internews): Russia is developing its relations with North Korea in all areas, including "sensitive" ones, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Wednesday.

North Korea's foreign minister lauded comradeship ties with Russia on Tuesday and then held rare talks in the Kremlin with President Vladimir Putin, who has been invited by Kim Jong Un to visit the reclusive nuclear-

armed country. Asked about the talks in Moscow, Peskov said the situation on the Korean peninsula was discussed, but that the main focus was on developing bilateral relations.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is our very important partner, and we are focused on the further development of our relations in all areas, including in sensitive areas," Peskov told reporters.

## Lithuania found guilty in CIA torture case

### Monitoring Desk

STRASBOURG: The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on Tuesday condemned Lithuania over the torture of a Saudi man in a secret CIA prison, the second case to target the Baltic nation.

Judges found that Lithuania had violated several provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, which it upholds, especially articles 2 (right to life) and 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment), the court said.

Lithuania must also pay Mustafa Al Hawsawi 100,000 euros (\$109,000) in damages for "blinding or hooding, solitary confinement, the continuous use of leg shackles, and exposure to noise and light".

Such techniques were "standard CIA practice under the secret detainee programme at the time", although not "the harshest" applied in Lithuania, the court added. Al Hawsawi, born in 1968, was captured in Pakistan in 2003 and suspected by US authorities of involvement in the Sept 11.

## ADR essential to alleviate strain on judiciary: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD. (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has said that Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR) is gaining considerable recognition in Pakistan due to its potential to alleviate the burden on the overburdened court system.

She was addressing a Workshop organized by Legal Aid and Justice Authority (LAJA), Ministry of Human Rights. The Workshop was aimed at capacity building and imparting training to ADR practitioners in ADR methods such as mediation, arbitration, and negotiation.

The workshop was addressed by a distinguished panel consisting of Senior Judge Federal Sharia Court Justice Syed Muhammad Anwar, DG National Police Bureau Ehsan Sadiq, DG LAJA Dr. Rahim Awan, DG HR Ministry of Human Rights Abdul Sattar, and Executive Director PCHR Choudhary Shafique. The workshop was attended by

a large number of aspiring ADR practitioners.

In her address she said that the Government, legal community, and various institutions had been taking initiatives to promote ADR and integrate it into the legal framework. She further said that ADR had many advantages to benefit from including; efficiency, cost effectiveness, Confidentiality, and Flexibility.

Mushaal underscored the transformative potential of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in alleviating the strain on the judicial system. She emphasized that the core objective of ADR was to complement traditional courts and mitigate the backlog of cases. She pointed out that there were 750 cases per judge in Pakistan rendering the conventional court trial process resource intensive and time consuming.

She said that one of the key functions of LAJA was to provide legal aid/assistance to poor and vulnerable groups, particularly women and children and enhance public awareness

of legal aid and laws in Pakistan. She further said that ADR if institutionalized would prove to be a valuable tool in empowering women, girls and marginalized communities because of its quick dispensation of justice.

Mushaal acknowledged the efforts of the Legal Aid and Justice Authority formed under the LAJA Act 2020 to institutionalize the concept of ADR and establish reconciliatory committees across Pakistan. She further said that these efforts by LAJA would help to prepare a pool of Master Trainers on ADR in the country through capacity building and training sessions on modern ADR techniques and enable the ADR practitioners in dispute resolution mechanisms.

Mushaal emphasized that training ADR practitioners should be our key priority. She further said that the workshop was an important avenue to explore the challenges, opportunities, and new developments in alternative dispute resolution in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: PM's Advisor on aviation Air Marshal Farhat Hussain Khan (retd) poses for group photo on the eve of inauguration of newly established Aircrew examination licensing centre (North) at Islamabad International Airport.

## Director UNESCO calls on Minister for Culture Jamal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director and Representative of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Islamabad, Dr. Youssef Filali-Meknassi, met with Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah here at his office. Secretary National Heritage and Culture Humaira Ahmed, Adviser National Heritage and Culture Division Muhammad Kashif Irshad and other senior officials were also present on the occasion.

The Federal Minister and UNESCO Director agreed upon the need for policy and procedural changes to improve coordination and information sharing among various governmental departments working on culture and heritage. Public Relations Officer Akhter Munir said while talking to APP. The minister said that National Heritage and Culture Division has prepared a comprehensive plan for revival of cultural and literary heritage. He informed the Director UNESCO about the strategy for preservation and development of historical sites in federal capital including Mai Qamro Mosque, Muqarab Khan Tomb, Rawat Fort and Shah Alla Ditha caves. Jamal Shah opined that historical sites should be properly documented and conserved, promoting the country's valuable heritage. He said that federal government was taking solid measures for the preservation and development of the national heritage.

## Efficient utilization of resources in health programmes urged

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary Health Ifkhar Ali Shallwani has emphasized the need for an integrated approach to ensure the efficient utilization of resources in health programmes. Addressing the meeting at the common management unit for a coordinated approach for managing AIDS, TB and Malaria grants, he urged for the implementation of evidence-based interventions. Shallwani affirmed the commitment of the government and its partners to the shared goal of creating

healthier communities and preventing the spread of AIDS, TB, and Malaria.

He expressed optimism about the outcomes of the meeting, stating, "By working jointly and harnessing our collective strengths and with the wisdom of National Coordinator CMU, Dr Razia Fatima, we can make significant strides in combating AIDS, TB, and Malaria."

The meeting was held to ensure a concerted effort to address the pressing health challenges posed by AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB), and Malaria.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Chief Minister Of Gilgit-Baltistan, Gulbar Khan at Parliament House.

## EPI director for timely Pneumonia vaccination for kids

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Awan, has emphasized the importance of timely vaccination against pneumonia for kids below the age of two to keep them safe against this deadly disease. "Parents should not delay the vaccinations of kids, as it ensures their well-being and overall health," said Awan while talking to Radio Pakistan. He clarified that free pneumonia vaccines were ensured at all health centers

under EPI, with recommended doses at six, ten, and fourteen weeks. Parents may visit major hospitals, Tehsil and District Headquarter Hospitals, as well as centers for the immunization extension program, primary health centers, and rural health centers to get their kids vaccinated. Emphasizing the severity of pneumonia, especially in young children, Dr. Mukhtar stresses the significance of immediate medical attention if symptoms like cough, fever, or difficulty breathing arise.

## Refugees land allotment case: Physical remand of CDA employees approved

ISLAMABAD (Online): Physical remand of 3 employees of CDA has been approved in refugees land allotment case.

3 days physical remand has been approved regarding patwari Abid Hussain, Rashid and Assistant Aftab Aslam.

According to FIA revenue staff caused loss to CDA amounting to Rs 1 billion through illegal compensation.

CDA patwari and other staff members are

nominated in FIR. The heirs of Akbar Ali received compensation of illegal plots in connivance with CDA revenue staff members.

The original file has to be recovered, therefore, 7 days physical remand of the accused persons be given. Members of land mafia have to be arrested on pointation of the accused.

Judicial magistrate Abbas Shah approved 3-day physical remand of the accused persons.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Muhammad Hamayun Mohmand, Chairman Senate Standing Committee On National Health Services, Regulations And Coordination presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament Lodges.

## China urges Iran, Pakistan to 'exercise restraint' following air strike

BEIJING (INP): China on Wednesday urged Pakistan and Iran to show "restraint", after Islamabad denounced what it described as the "unprovoked violation of its airspace by Iran".

According to a statement released by the Foreign Office (FO) after midnight, strikes in Pakistani territory resulted in "deaths of two innocent children while injuring three girls".

Speaking at a regular briefing on Wednesday, China Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning said: "We call on both sides to exercise restraint, avoid actions that would lead to an escalation of tension and work together to maintain peace and stability." "We consider both Iran and Pakistan as close neighbours and major Islamic countries," she added.

## SC dismisses IB employee's appeal against termination

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed the appeal of an employee of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) against his termination from service.

A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa heard the case.

The petitioner's lawyer informed the court that his client was terminated from service on charges of using a non custom paid vehicle. He had used a friend's vehicle for a day, he added.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar noted that the government's number plate was also displayed on the vehicle.

The chief justice remarked that the Bureau did not do its own projection or what it was doing. How the institution would function with such persons as its employees, and the IB had a specific standard in that regard, he added.

The court, subsequently, dismissed the appeal.

## NA Speaker strongly flays breach of Pak airspace by Iran

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf on Wednesday strongly condemned the breach of Pakistan's airspace by Iran.

The Speaker, in a statement, termed Iran's missile attack into Pakistan territory "an irresponsible and unacceptable act", asserting that the breach of Pakistan's border limits was not acceptable under any circumstances.

"This violation of Pakistan's border limits is an attack on national security," he added.

Raja Pervez said that Pakistan, as a peaceful nation, had always prioritized friendly and brotherly relations with all neighbouring countries, including Iran.

"Pakistan believes in the policy of non-aggression, but any violation of our border limits will not be tolerated," he added while asserting Pakistan's inherent right to retaliate against any aggression.

The Speaker also expressed deep sorrow and regret over the loss of precious human lives caused by the missile attack and sympathized with the affected families.

## Sherry stresses timely electoral process, level playing field amid symbol allocation concerns

ISLAMABAD (Online): Senator Sherry Rehman, Vice-President of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), on Wednesday, reiterated her party's commitment to a timely electoral process for a seamless democratic transition and stressed that a level playing field in the polls can only be guaranteed once all PPP candidates receive their electoral symbols on time.

Senator Rehman's statements came in response to concerns raised by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding potential delays in certain constituencies, as revealed in their announcement on Tuesday. While ballot paper printing for the 2024 elections has commenced, apprehensions linger over possible polling delays due to numerous pleas for a change of election symbols in related constituencies, peaking to reporters, Senator Rehman said: "The PPP is the only party in the country that adopted a proactive approach to electioneering by launching its formal campaign on December 27, 2023, while Chairman Bilawal Bhutto and Aseefa Bhutto Zardari have been actively participating in campaign activities. Moreover, President Zardari is set to inaugurate Chairman Bilawal's election office in Lahore, too. However, concerns persist regarding the allocation of electoral symbols to some PPP candidates in Punjab."



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Public Service Commission Lt. General (Retd) Hidayat-ur-Rehman meeting with Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhary Anwar-ul-Haq.

## Toshakhana, Al-Qadir trust references: IHC sends the file to CJ for constitution of division bench

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) while hearing the petitions of former Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan in Toshakhana and Al-Qadir trust references has sent the file to Chief Justice (CJ) for constitution of division bench.

PTI founder while challenging jail trial in Toshakhana and Al-Qadir NAB cases has filed petition in IHC.

A single bench of IHC led by Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb took up the petitions for hearing Wednesday.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb remarked don't talk about judge Muhammad Bashir.



Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah presenting a shield to Director and Representative UNESCO Dr. Youssef Filali-Meknassi after meeting in his office.

## Police implement stringent security measures in high security zone

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police is leveraging all available resources to maintain peace and tranquility within the federal capital and beefed up the security measures in high security zone.

Efforts include rigorous data registration, verification of identification documents, and systematic searches of individuals entering the high-security zone on a regular basis. In the past week alone, police spokesperson said the Islamabad Capital Police took action by removing tinted glasses and improper number plates from 1,511 vehicles, impounding 109 vehicles without proper documentation at various checkpoints within the high-security zone. Police officers and



Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick addressing a workshop on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) organized by Legal Aid and Justice Authority (LAJA), Ministry of Human Rights, in Islamabad.

## Azerbaijan declares 2024 as "Green World Solidarity Year": Amb Farhadov

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov said on Wednesday 2024 has been declared as "Green World Solidarity Year" in the Republic will host the COP29 International Climate Conference in December in Baku.

He was addressing as the chief guest at the special session on climate The Center of Climate Diplomacy, in collaboration with COPAIR (Center of Pakistan and International Relations), organized a thought-provoking roundtable conference on the topic "Shaping Tomorrow's Resilience."

The event aimed to shed light on the urgent and immediate challenges posed by climate change and the need for collective attention and collaborative action.

The guests and experts from various fields gathered to address the conference, emphasizing the pressing nature of climate change and the necessity for immediate action.

Ambassador Farhadov said President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has signed an Order on declaring 2024 as the "Green World Solidarity Year" in



the country. "The focal points of our current energy policy revolve around the development of green energy and the facilitation of its transport to global markets. Liberated Karabakh and East Zangezur, as well as the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, have been declared green energy zones," he added.

The ambassador said the protection of the environment stands as a priority in the extensive restoration and redevelopment processes unfolding in the liberated territories. Innovative approaches such as "smart city" and "smart village" are implemented in these areas, contributing to ecosystem restoration. Shedding light on the impact of conflicts on the environment, he informed that Armenia's three-decade occupation of Azerbaijani territories extensively damaged the ecosystem, wildlife and natural resources.

## FAO, GoS jointly hold Strategic Planning Workshop for SWAT project

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant collaborative effort, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in partnership with the Government of Sindh (GoS), organized a two-day strategic planning workshop on Tuesday.

The event aimed at evaluating the progress of the Sindh Water Agriculture Transformation (SWAT) Project, identifying achievements, and strategically planning activities for the year 2024.

The workshop served as a platform for project partners including team leads and subject specialists from the World Bank, Sindh Irrigation & Agriculture Departments, SIDA, Directorate of Sindh Water Sector & Barrages Improvement Project, to engage in brainstorming sessions, address bottlenecks, and draw valuable lessons from past experiences.

Dr. Robina Wahaj, Senior Land & Water Specialist FAO, highlighted the organization's longstanding and successful collaboration with the Government of Sindh.

She emphasized FAO's commitment to supporting the implementation of various projects, including WSIP, SBIP, SWAT, and the formulation of crucial policies such as Sindh Agriculture Policy, and Sindh Water Policy. She assured continued support from FAO to enhance water and agriculture productivity in Sindh.

Dr. Aamer Irshad, Assistant FAO representative shed light on alarming statistics regarding the decline in agriculture productivity in Pakistan, emphasizing the need for a transformative approach.

The decrease from 4% in 1960-2000 to 2% in 2011-2022 underscores the urgency for innovative methods.