

# Independent

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## Witnessed Air Defence exercise Al-Bayza-III Armed forces modernizing their systems in line with country's requirements: COAS

RAWALPINDI (Online): General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff, (COAS), witnessed firing of different Air Defence weapon systems during Exercise Al-Bayza-III, 2024 at Sonmiani.

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

In a landmark achieve-

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

COAS highly appreciated the remarkable achievement of engaging targets with precision and operational readiness of Corps of Army Air Defence.

While interacting with the officers and troops, COAS highlighted that Armed Forces of Pakistan are modernizing their sys-

tems in line with our requirements to deter and be able to respond to any threat emanating against Pakistan.

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

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



Chief of the Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir interacting with the officers and troops at the occasion of witnessing firing of different air defence weapon systems during Exercise Al-Bayza-III, 2024 at Sonmiani.

## Bat symbol case SC will not interfere in ECP's domain, CJP tells PTI lawyer

Its become tradition in country to level allegation of malafide intent against every one: Justice Isa

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday said regulating political parties is the job of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

These remarks were made by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa while hearing the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) appeal against the Peshawar High Court (PHC) verdict restoring the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) electoral symbol — bat.

"SC will not interfere in the domain of the Election Commission of Pakistan. However, if ECP commits any unconstitutional act then the court can look into it," the CJP added.

A three-member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa

and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarat Hilali hearing the electoral body's appeal.

The proceedings of the case are being broadcast live on the SC website and YouTube channel.

Barrister Gohar, Shoaib Shaheen, Niazullah and Waleed Iqbal attended court proceedings today. PTI's lawyer Hamid Khan in his remarks said the SC has clarified that no institution can file an appeal against the verdicts.

The ECP can file a review on appeals else there will be no worth of its decisions, the CJP remarked and added if the argument of PTI is accepted then questions will also be raised on its appeal in Peshawar High Court.

The CJP Isa asked Makhdoom whether the PHC's written order had been issued or not, the latter replied that it had not been.

The lawyer then read out the PHC order that restored the PTI's 'bat' symbol. He said that the ECP had not yet received "any notice" of the PHC order, to which the chief justice said, "I have not read the case file either."

The top judge asked Makhdoom when he would be ready to present the case, at which the counsel urged the SC to adjourn the hearing till Monday.

Makhdoom further said that the political parties would be allotted electoral symbols tomorrow.

## Baqar directs Education Dept to provide hard, soft copies of textbooks to students

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar has directed the School Education Department to ensure that both hard and soft copies of textbooks are provided to students for online studying. We are in a digital age where children prefer digital content over hard copies and carrying them around, he added.

This he said while speaking at the launching ceremony of the website of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Mirpurkhas at CM House here Friday. Secretary U&B Noor Ahmad Samoo, Chairman Mirpurkhas Board Zulfikar Ali Shah, Secretary Board Anisuddin, Controller of Examination Anwar Aleem and others were also present.

In a simple ceremony,

the chief minister punched the key to the computer and launched the website of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Mirpurkhas.

The Chairman Mirpurkhas Board Zulfikar Shah, while briefing the CM about the key achievements of the website, said that it would offer an online Enrolment facility/Enrolment Cards, examination forms and Roll Number Slips.

The website will also offer online affiliation facilities, Real-time facilitation for students, online verification facility, online all duplicate documents, online registration of examiners and supervisory staff, availability of informative videos for students and teachers, availability of online results of all examinations, and availability of correction forms, he said.



KARACHI: Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar inaugurates website of Mirpurkhas Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education. Secretary U&B Noor Ahmed, Zulfikar Ali Shah are also present.

## Pak-Malaysia bilateral cooperation to boost economies: Governor Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori has said that bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Malaysia was in the interest of both the countries as it would boost the economies mutually.

This he said while talking with the eleven-member delegation headed by Tan Sri Rastam Bin Mohd Isa, Chairman Felda Global Venture, engaged in Palm oil production.

Renowned Industrialists Bashir Jan Muhammad and Rasheed Jan Muhammad were also present on the occasion.

Governor Sindh further said that Pakistan wants to learn from the experience of Malaysia in Palm plantation. "The coastal but from Karachi to Thatta was ideal for this purpose and we have already started a pilot project in this regard", he added.

Kamran Khan Tessori said that there were ample opportunities for investment available in agriculture, health, energy and education sectors and the investors from Malaysia can benefit from the conducive investment environment in Sindh. "We would extend all possible help and assistance to them, he assured.

While emphasising close cooperation in the agriculture sector, the governor said that agriculture was the most important sector in Pakistan and cooperation of Malaysians would boost this sector.

Mohd Hairul Abdul Hamid, Chief Financial Officer FGV, Fakhruddin bin Othman, Director FGV, Zulfitri bin Othman, Head of Marketing FGV, Mohd Azami Rajab, Chief Executive Officer Felda Trading, Tan Sri Dato Seri Lee Oi Thatta, CEO K1 Kepong Malaysia, Ooi Liang Hin, CEO Astra KLK, Tan Kwan Yung, Executive Director KLK, Lim Jit Uei, CEO Ioi Edible Oils, Malaysia were present on the occasion.



KARACHI: Caretaker Minister for Local Government, Housing Town Planning and Rehabilitation, Mubeen Jumani talking to media persons during Gul-e-Daudi Flower Show 2024 organized by Karachi Development Authority (KDA) held at Civic Centre in Karachi.

## Nawaz, Shehbaz, Maryam to lead PML-N charge in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has finalised its candidate lineup for both provincial and national assembly seats in Lahore. Nawaz Sharif is set to contest from NA-130, while Shehbaz Sharif will vie for NA-123, and Maryam Nawaz is fielded from NA-119.

The PML-N has revealed its candidates for various provincial assembly seats in Lahore, including Samiullah Khan from

PP-145, Ghazali Saleem Butt from PP-146, Hamza Shahbaz Sharif from PP-147, Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman from PP-148, Rana Ahsan Sharafat from PP-170, Khwaja Imran Nazir from PP-150, Sohail Shaukat Butt from PP-151, Malik Mohammad Waheed from PP-152, Malik Ghulam Habib Awan from PP-154, Naqem Shahzad from PP-155, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif from PP-158, Khawaja Salman Rafiq from PP-153.



LAHORE: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari exchanging views with Khuram Nawaz Gandapur, Secretary General of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT), Raja Zahid Mehmood, Senior Vice President, Mian Zahidul Islam, Vice President and other leaders during meeting held at Minhaj-ul-Quran Secretariat in Lahore.

## Bilawal Bhutto Zardari says: We are contesting elections for public service; we will end unemployment & inflation

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

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

He said that "Wasila Haq Wasila Rozgar" are projects of PPP and we will start such welfare projects like Benazir Income Sup-

port for every sector which will bring prosperity to every home and will end the worst inflation, poverty and unemployment. The wheel of industries will run, the workers will get employment. Agricultural revolution will come when farmer will be prosperous. New universities will be built wherever necessary, including Tandlianwala, just as 2 million houses are being built for flood victims in Sindh and Baluchistan. Similarly 3 million houses will be built in Punjab.

He said that the path of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Ms. Benazir Bhutto could not be blocked and PPP could not be destroyed and our way could not be hindered because we are ready to compete in the electoral and political field and we will win the elections on February 8. PPP will win with an overwhelming majority.



KARACHI: Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab cutting inaugural ribbon during inauguration of Annual Marigold Festival organized by Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC) held at Frere Hall in Karachi.

## PTI objects to maintainability of ECP appeal against PHC verdict

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Friday objected to the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP's) appeal filed in the Supreme Court against PHC ruling on PTI's intra-party polls and election symbol.

A three-member Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarat Hilali con-

ducted hearing of the appeal.

ECP counsel Makhdoom Ali Khan and other legal team members were present in the court as the hearing started. PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, Hamid Khan, Shoaib Shaheen, PTI Chief Election Commissioner Niazullah Niazi were also present. Barrister Ali Zafar joined the proceedings through video link from Lahore Registry.

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

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

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

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

Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Naeem Panjtoha said that despite 26 hours of the Peshawar High Court's (PHC) order, Election Commission Pakistan (ECP) has not allotted the bat symbol to PTI.

## Alvi accepts resignation of Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan

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

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

The President has accepted the resignation of Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan on the advice of the Prime Minister.

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

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

Chairman of Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khair Azad made the announcement in this regard after chairing the meeting of the Zonal Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Lahore at the Awan Awqaf Shah Chirag Building in Lahore.

Maulana Azad informed the media that weather conditions in most parts of the country were cloudy.



KARACHI: A delegation of Felda Global Ventures Malaysia's leading global agribusiness and the world's largest producer of crude palm oil (CPO) led by its Chairman Tan Sri Rastam bin Mohd Isa meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori.

## Sindh Govt decides to appoint tourist guides for historical sites

KARACHI (APP): In a strategic move to enhance tourism in the province, the Sindh government has announced the appointment of professional tour guides for all tourist destinations across the province.

Provincial Minister for Tourism, Environment, Climate Change, and Coastal Development, Arshad Wali Muhammad emphasized the importance of trained tour guides for creating memorable experiences for tourists visiting historical and cultural sites in Sindh.

Highlighting the rich historical and tourist sites, Minister Arshad Wali Muhammad stated that the presence of professional tour guides is crucial for making the experi-

ence of tourists unforgettable.

Trained tour guides possess the knowledge to provide comprehensive information about these historical sites, enhancing the global tourists' overall experience.

In this regard, Secretary of Tourism and Culture, Khalid Chacha, has written to the Finance Department, referencing the directives of the High Court, requesting the release of funds for the recruitment of tourist guides.

The decision aligns with the commitment to promote Sindh as a premier tourist destination, ensuring that visitors receive expert guidance, contributing to the overall growth and positive perception of tourism in the province.



NAWABSHAH: Peoples Party (PPP) Leader, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari inaugurating the Free Medical Eye Camp, in Nawabshah on Friday, January 12, 2024. Former Sindh Health Minister, Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho is also present.



## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### Terror wave

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

The PTI's struggle over the BAT symbol has become a legal rollercoaster, marked by

conflicting decisions. Despite the Peshawar High Court's back-and-forth on allocating the symbol, the Election Commission chose to disregard court orders and withhold the emblem. PTI swiftly responded by filing a contempt petition, slated for tomorrow (12<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024). The Election Commission is all set to file an appeal before the Supreme Court. The deliberate choice of the Peshawar High Court, over the potentially jurisdictional Islamabad High Court, underscores PTI's resolute belief in the latter's compromise.

The two judges of the Supreme Court have already tendered their resignations, with the looming possibility of more following suit. If this trend continues, it could plunge the credibility and impartiality of both the Supreme Court and the Chief Justice into intense scrutiny, potentially rendering the apex court practically dysfunctional.

The rift within the Supreme Court was initiated by an audacious move from an unfamiliar lawyer, Mian Dawood, who, in February 2023, filed a complaint against Justice Mazhar Naqvi. The complaint alleges violations of the code of conduct for judges outlined in Clause (8) of Article 209 of the Constitution. The accusations leveled against Justice Naqvi include misconduct, the creation of illegal assets, and the accumulation of wealth through frontmen. Later, this complaint was turned into a formal complaint. The SJC issued two show-cause notices, demanding that Justice Naqvi explain the appar-

ent inconsistencies in his financial records.

Justice Naqvi, vehemently denied any wrongdoing and labeled the show-cause notices as politically motivated tools wielded against him. He filed a petition with the Supreme Court seeking a stay order. The Supreme Court's dismissal of Naqvi's petition proved to be a turning point. With the SJC investigation set to move forward, Naqvi opted for a dramatic exit. In a concise resignation letter, he maintained his innocence but acknowledged that continuing under such a cloud of suspicion was untenable.

Justice Naqvi's resignation left more questions than answers. Did it signify an admission of guilt, or was it a strategic retreat from a perceived unfair process? Was it a tacit acknowledgement of wrongdoing or a desperate attempt to escape scrutiny? As a former Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax with over a decade of experience, I assert with confidence that the allegations against Muzhar Naqvi, revolving around property transactions at significantly disparate values, resonate across civil and military officers, politicians, judges, and business figures. If such practices were absent, and all individuals adhered strictly to legal obligations, our nation might have charted a different course.

The inherent inconsistency in the handling of similar circumstances, particularly the parallel allegations against Qazi Faez Isa, raises questions about the fairness of the entire episode. In a situation where allegations against Isa were

dismissed, and accusations of amassing wealth exceeding 12 billion by former Army Chief Qamar Javid Bajwa only led to the incarceration of those disclosing this information, it suggests a nuanced and potentially unjust dimension to the legal proceedings.

Recalling the allegations against Qazi Faez Isa, pertaining to the acquisition of three London properties leased in the names of his wife and children between 2011 and 2015, raises parallels with the current situation, emphasizing the need for consistency and fairness in addressing such matters across different individuals and institutions. Let us peruse, the Supreme Judicial Council decision point wise.

The reference to be of no legal effect, non maintainable whatsoever and stands quashed. Reference was filed with mala fide intention, prematurity and lack of evidence. Government agencies including the FIA secretly obtained information about the petitioner and his family in clear transgression of Articles 4 and 14 of the Constitution.

Similar observations can be extended to the case involving Justice Mazhar Naqvi. The petitioner, in this instance, is a lawyer who doesn't bear any direct impact from the alleged property transactions with Justice Naqvi. There is no record of the petitioner engaging in property transactions with the judge, neither as a buyer nor a seller, and therefore, lacks a legitimate basis to possess detailed information about Justice Naqvi's properties or their transactional

intricacies.

It becomes apparent that the origin of such detailed information is likely rooted in the historical practices of influential and powerful sectors, known for exerting pressure, offering bribes, and cultivating relationships with judges. It's a recurring pattern that references or complaints are often filed against judges and officials who resist yielding to illegal demands made through proxies. This underscores the challenges and pressures faced by those within the judiciary who choose to uphold their integrity and independence in the face of external influence. Having reviewed the income tax and wealth tax returns of numerous politicians, bureaucrats, and military officials during my tenure, the reality is that the allegations leveled against Justice Mazhar Naqvi are likely applicable to the tax returns of many individuals.

The narrative takes a disconcerting turn when defending vested interests led to the sweeping abolition of laws and the abrupt halt of critical surveys. During an economic survey in 2001 that documented previously undeclared immovable properties of numerous army officers, not only was the wealth tax abolished, but the entire survey was abruptly terminated.

In light of this context, a pertinent question emerges: why was the applicant who filed the reference not summoned for an inquiry into the sources of information within the FBR? Why did the FBR, exclusively vested with jurisdiction over tax matters, escape

admonishment for leaking sensitive information against an honorable judge? Why did the SJC encroach upon the exclusive jurisdiction of the FBR? The inconsistency in arguments, notably the acceptance of similar arguments in the case of Qazi Faez Isa but their rejection in the case of Justice Mazhar Naqvi, raises eyebrows.

These apparent contradictions and discrepancies in the arguments and proceedings of the SJC likely contributed to Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan dissent and subsequent resignation. In his dissenting note, he unequivocally called for the withdrawal of the show cause notice issued to Justice Mazhar Naqvi. Expressing concern over the council's actions, he criticized the hasty and unconventional proceedings, deeming them contrary to established traditions and legal requirements. The looming possibility of other judges with similar reservations following suit in resigning could render the Supreme Court dysfunctional for a considerable period. A political dimension becomes apparent in what is perceived as part of the London plan, as articulated by spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb. In response to the resignations of Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, she declared that the alleged conspiracy bench against former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had reached its conclusion. This political interpretation adds a layer of complexity to the resignations, suggesting a connection to broader political agendas and machinations.

## Commerce News

### 1st special credit guarantee company for SMEs inaugurated

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

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

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

special credit guarantee facilities, particularly focusing on expanding financial reach for businesses operating at the small and medium scale across the board.

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

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

She said, reality is that SMEs sector accounts

90 percent of formally registered businesses, contributes to around 40 percent of GDP and employees around 80 percent of non-agriculture labour forces, offering an opportunity to low income strata.

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

She said launching of NCGCL was a far reaching institutional reform that is being launched, adding the purpose of this transformative step was to facilitate smoother capital investment paths for small businesses.



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

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

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading digital communication company, has signed a corporate partnership agreement with ASA Pakistan Limited, a leading Microfinance Bank, to provide data and voice services for their customers.

Farooq Raza Khan, Director Govt. & Corporate Sales & Services Zong CMPAK and CEO ASA Pakistan Saeed Uddin Khan signed the

partnership on behalf of their respective organizations.

"Zong Business team strives to provide each client with industry-leading tailored solutions that can enhance their business productivity and streamline their processes," a news release said. A spokesperson for Zong 4G said, "Our partnership with ASA Pakistan (MFB) Limited is a testament to our commitment to excellence and innovation.

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

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

Under the project, the initial batch of Malaysia blend crude oil, totalling 300,000 tons, underscores a deepening of investment cooperation between SCODA and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member countries, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday.

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



WASHINGTON: Chairman Investment Board Sardar Amjad Jalil met with Pakistan's Ambassador to America Sardar Masood Khan.

### Pakistan to be connected with high-speed 'optical fiber network soon: Aisha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) Additional Secretary Aisha Humera Chaudhry Friday said that the government is all set to launch a landmark project 'optical fibre' to improve broadband connectivity and to boost deployment of digital infrastructure across the country.

Talking to PTV news channel, she said that the government and telecom companies would

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

Ministry of IT and Telecom is fully cooperating with the telecom industry.

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

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

### Weekly inflation up by 1.36 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 1.36 per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on January 11, 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 317.92 points as compared to 313.66 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 44.16 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 1.20 percent and went up to 312.23 points from last week's 308.53 points.

### Gold rates up by Rs.200

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

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

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

### President FPCCI stresses the need to revisit the economic policies

ISLAMABAD: President FPCCI Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and the FPCCI would take all possible measures to address their key issues. He said that we strongly believe in teamwork, he would ensure maximum participation of the business Community representing different Chambers and Associations of the country for economic

leading role in development of Pakistan as well as to solve the problems of Unemployment also.

He reiterated that now it's our duty to take steps to resolve the issues and problems of Business Community of Pakistan without any differences for the betterment of Pakistan and for the betterment of Business Community of Pakistan.

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



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

He further said that we will play positive role and take necessary initiatives to solve the problems faced by business community of Pakistan and FPCCI will play

Industry (ICCI), Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association (POEPA) & Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry who visited FPCCI Capital Office for presenting bouquets and felicitations to the whole team of UBG on historic victory in the recent elections of FPCCI.

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

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

The LCCI office-bearers anticipated that the approved \$700 million would invigorate economic indicators, instill confidence in both local and foreign investors, stabilize the rupee, and positively impact the stock market.

Highlighting the importance of encouraging expatriate Pakistanis, they urged for increased home remittances and support for export-oriented industries to boost exports.

In the wake of this positive development, the LCCI office-bearers urged authorities to focus on two key areas for economic reform.



## Women empowerment is very important for gender equality: Baligh

### Independent Report

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman attended a ceremony organized by the National Commission on Status of Women, Government of Pakistan, regarding the empowerment of women as chief guest at a local hotel today.

Chairperson National Commission on Status of Women Nilofar Bakhtiar and others were present on this occasion. Addressing the ceremony, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that women empowerment is very important for gender equality. He said that women are contributing to the development of country by working side by side in various fields along with looking after their families and children.

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

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

In our society, women are working in every field and proving their mettle, adding he said that today Pakistani women are aerospace engineers, pilots, police officers. Even

in our villages, women work side by side with men in the fields. Governor Punjab further said that by empowering women, the goals of development in the country's economy can be achieved.

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



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur-Rehman addressing the ceremony regarding Women Empowerment organized by National Commission on Status of Women.

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

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Arshad Hussain Shah here on Friday said that transparent conduct of elections was the primary responsibility of the caretaker government and the government was ready in this regard.

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

also taking steps for the betterment of the province and the people.

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

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

After the inclusion of tribal districts, the share of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has

increased, adding that the Prime Minister was keen to address the problems here and had established a committee in this regard.

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



PESHAWAR: Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Squash Association Qamar Zaman. Called on Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah.

## Minister underscores urgency to address climate change challenges

### Independent Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Caretaker Finance Minister, Ahmad Rasul Bangash here Friday underscored the urgency of addressing climate change challenges, recognizing them as a global imperative that demands collective action.

He was the Chief Guest in a workshop that was organized by UK-Aid-funded Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED). The workshop titled

"Navigating Voluntary Carbon Markets in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" was aimed to explore how KP can realize its significant capacity for nature-based solutions and renewable energy projects.

Caretaker minister highlighted the adverse impacts already affecting communities and ecosystems emphasizing the need for innovative approaches to mitigate environmental risks and build resilience.

## Dr Javed says: Govt has introduced AI in hospitals

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Punjab Health Minister Prof Dr. Javed Akram said that the government had introduced a historic artificial intelligence systems in government hospitals across the province.

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

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

## Six dacoits killed in two police encounters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Six dacoits were killed here as a result of heavy cross-firing during two police encounters in the jurisdiction of Race Course and Morgah Police Stations, said a police spokesman.

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

According to details, the dacoits opened firing on the police party in the

Race Course area late on Thursday night and during cross-firing, four were killed.

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

City Police Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani had taken notice of the incident of murder of a British citizen during a robbery and formed special teams to arrest the accused.

## Naqvi visits Mayo Hospital

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has directed to install appropriate-sized signboards for the convenience of patients and their attendants at Mayo Hospital, during an inspection of the hospital's emergency block, which is in its final stage on Friday.

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

The CM also emphasized the need for the timely completion of all tasks while maintaining the quality of work. The KEMU principal was also present.

## Naqvi displeased with poor cleanliness in PIC

### Independent Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi expressed displeasure over poor cleanliness, marks of dust and stains on tiles and counters during his inspection of the newly constructed emergency of the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC).

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

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

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



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

## Real beauty of Abbottabad to be restored thru KPCIP

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Irrigation, Communications and Works Ahmad Jan and Caretaker Provincial Local Government Minister Amir Nadeem Durrani Friday

have said that we all have to restore the original beauty of Abbottabad city by working responsibly on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa City Improvement Project (KPCIP).

They said that the major issues of Abbottabad city are clean drinking

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

Both expressed these views while presiding over a high-level meeting of officers of various departments at Commissioner House Abbottabad following the directives of caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice Retired Syed Arshad Hussain Shah.

## International News

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

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

### Monitoring Desk

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two residents of Hodiada, Amin Ali Saleh and Hani Ahmed, said they heard five strong explosions hitting the western port area of the city, which lies on the Red Sea and is the largest port city controlled by the Houthis. Eyewitnesses who spoke with the AP also said they saw strikes in Taiz and Dhamar, cities south of Sanaa.

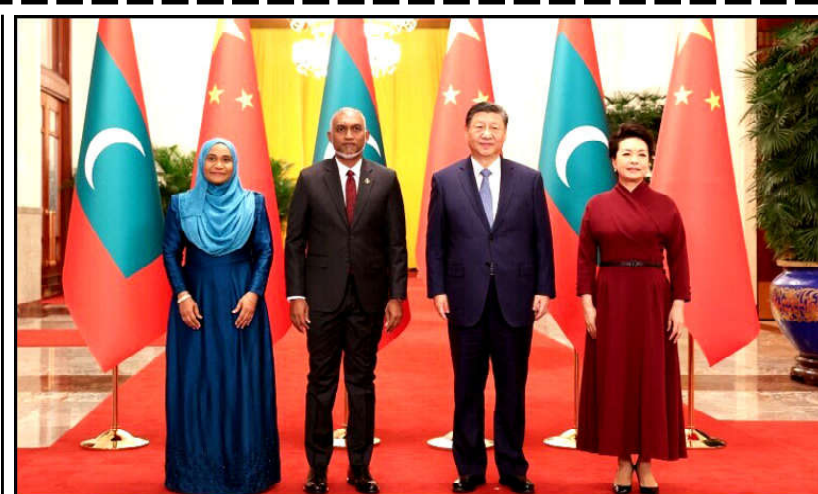
## Russia condemns US and UK for 'irresponsible' strikes on Yemen

### Monitoring Desk

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

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

Russia, an ally of Iran and a partner of key Arab powers, called for an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council on Friday to discuss the issue. "We strongly condemn these irresponsible actions by the United States and its allies," Maria Zakharova, Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman, told reporters.



Maldives' President Mohamed Muizzu, his wife Sajidha Mohamed, Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan posing for photos during a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

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

### Monitoring Desk

ANKAR: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on Friday slammed the US and British strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen as a disproportionate use of force and accused the two countries of trying to turn the Red Sea into a "sea of blood". Turkey, a NATO member, has strongly criticised Israel for its war in Gaza aimed at wiping out Palestinian militant group Hamas, and has repeatedly slammed Western countries for supporting Israel's campaign.

Asked by reporters about the overnight air and sea strikes by U.S. and British forces across Yemen in retaliation against Iran-backed Houthi forces for attacks on Red Sea shipping, the Turkish president said these were not proportionate. "All that has been done is a disproportionate use of force," Erdogan said after Friday prayers in Istanbul. "At the moment, they are trying to turn the Red Sea into a sea of blood and Yemen, with the Houthis and by using all of its force."

## Blast kills two in Kabul's Hazara enclave

### Monitoring Desk

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

Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadrani said a grenade was detonated outside a commercial centre in the Dasht-e-Barchi area, an enclave of the historically oppressed Hazara community. "The initial information shows that unfortunately two civilian patriots were martyred and 12 others were wounded," Zadrani said in a statement. By early evening the road in front of the centre was open but dozens of security personnel.

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

### Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: Expressing concern over escalation of tensions in the Red Sea, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson on Friday called on all sides to prevent the Yemen conflict from expanding.

"We urge the relevant parties to keep calm and exercise restraint to prevent the conflict from expanding," Mao Ning said during the regular briefing.

## Finnish presidential frontrunner seeks 'more European' NATO

### Monitoring Desk

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

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

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

The former prime minister hopes to succeed Sauli Niinisto, who is retiring at 75 after two six-year terms, having been nicknamed "the Putin

whisperer" for his role in keeping lines open with Russia's leader before the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Helsinki's relations with Moscow deteriorated after the invasion and sank further when Finland, in a historic break with tradition prompted by the invasion, joined NATO last April.

Stubb signalled clearly that he would lean towards the West if elected president and said it was "very important that we in Europe take care of our own defence."

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

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

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

### Monitoring Desk

BELGRADE: The United States has received Kosovo's request to purchase Javelin anti-tank missiles, the U.S. State Department to Serbia on Thursday told President Aleksandar Vučić, who expressed "deep disappointment."

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

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

Affairs said. A statement by Vučić's office said U.S. Ambassador Christopher Hill told him that the U.S. State Department will send Kosovo's request to Congress, which reviews foreign arms sales.

Kosovo is a former Serbian province which declared independence in 2008. The U.S. and most Western nations recognize Kosovo's statehood, while Serbia as well as ally Russia and China don't.

Serbia's president said that "for us, it is of great importance that the peace in the region is not broken and that Serbia will continue to act responsibly and contribute to stability in the Balkans."

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



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

## World watches as Israel faces genocide case

### Monitoring Desk

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

On the first of two days of hearings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), also known as the World Court, South Africa said Israel's attack on Gaza, which has demolished much of the coastal enclave and killed more than 23,000 people, aimed to bring

about "the destruction of the (territory's) population."

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

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

Israel rejected the accusations of genocide as



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

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

She underscored that Kashmir stood as a symbol of unity for Pakistan, transcending diverse beliefs and affiliations. The SAPM further said that people from all walks of life hold profound reverence for the Kashmir cause, and through these district-level consultations, the aim was to solidify this unity further. She urged students and academics to contribute by writing articles, research papers, and essays on the Jammu and Kashmir issue to raise local and global awareness. She expressed her commitment to personally lead door-to-door campaigns to unite people for

the Kashmir cause and promote collective efforts to advocate for justice and the rights of the oppressed people of IIOJK. Mushaal voiced deep concern over the ongoing demographic changes being implemented by India in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). She highlighted the persecution faced by peaceful leaders of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and emphasized that such actions were intended to demoralize the Kashmiri people. She asserted that these tactics employed by India would never diminish the unwavering zeal and courage of the Kashmiri people.

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



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

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

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

country would be witnessed in Lahore between PML-N fielded former minister Attaulah Tarar against Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal-Bhutto Zardari in NA-127. Meanwhile, the PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif will contest from NA-130, President Shehbaz Sharif from NA-123, Hamza Shehbaz from NA-118, Maryam Nawaz from NA-119 and NA-159 and Khawaja Saad Rafique from NA-122. For the provincial assembly seats, Shehbaz Sharif will also contest polls from PP-164 and PP-158, while Hamza and Maryam from PP-147 and PP-159 constituencies, respectively.

## Bandits loot Rs 8mn from businessman in Karachi

KARACHI (NP): The biggest robbery of the year was reported from Karachi, Korangi area, where a businessman was looted of Rs 8 million in broad daylight on Friday. According to the details, a trader who had withdrawn Rs 8 million from a bank was robbed in Karachi's Korangi area. The police have registered a case and obtained CCTV footage from both inside and outside the bank.

## Government taking steps to boost FDI: President Alvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday said the government was taking steps to promote Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan. Talking to a German delegation of international food wholesaler, METRO Group, led by its CEO Dr Steffen Greubel here at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president said Pakistan was an attractive destination for the foreign investment and business. The president also appreciated the METRO Group for their investment

## Intelligence officials nab Iranian oil smuggling ring in major crackdown

SUKKUR (APP): Acting on a tip-off, law enforcement agencies in Sukkur conducted a joint raid on a flour mill in the Ali Wahan area and uncovered a large-scale Iranian oil smuggling operation. The successful operation netted approximately 50,000 liters of illegal Iranian oil, believed to be destined for illegal sale to PS pump owners through contractor trucks.

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

RAWALPINDI (Online): General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff, (COAS) attended inauguration ceremony of the second chapter of National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP) Silicon, held at Karachi. COAS was Chief Guest at the occasion. COAS termed NASTP a project of national and strategic significance that would yield manifold benefits for the country since it would spur technological progress and foster self-reliance by offering a platform for the nation's youth and future generations.

## Young boy killed over resisting robbery bid in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): A young boy was reportedly shot dead by culprits for resisting a robbery bid in Karachi's Surjani town area on Friday. According to private news channel, the bandits on the bike opened fire, leaving the father-son duo injured after they resisted a robbery, while the robbers fled the scene. Both the father and son were shifted to Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, where the young man died during the treatment. The police officials stated that the deceased youth was identified as Faiz Muhammad, aged 20 and was a first-year student.

## PPP candidate Ajiz Dhamrah formally launched election campaign

HYDERABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) candidate for PS-64, Mukhtiar Ahmed alias Ajiz Dhamrah Friday formally launched his election campaign for the upcoming 2024 general elections by paying a visit to the Qadam Gah of Mola Ali (A.S) and shrine of Syed Abdul Wahab Shah Jilani. On this occasion, he appealed to the people to vote for the candidates of the PPP in the upcoming general elections so that we can serve the people as much as possible. He stated that he is familiar with the issues faced by Urdu-speaking brothers and, upon coming into power, he will make every effort to address these problems. He mentioned that the Pakistan Peoples Party has consistently provided untainted public service, the politics of hatred and hooliganism have ended, and now only the one who will be voted by the people will win in the general elections. He said that no one will be allowed to cheat on the public mandate and on February 8, PPP will surprise all over the country including Sindh.

## ANP withdraws from NA-242 in favour of Shehbaz Sharif

KARACHI (INP): The Awami National Party (ANP) on Friday announced the withdrawal of its candidate for the upcoming elections in NA-242 Karachi in favour of PML-N's President and former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif. The ANP had fielded Arshad Sohaill, but the party withdrew his candidacy after talks with the PML-N. The development comes after PML-N delegation held a meeting with ANP Sindh chief Shahi Syed at his residence in Karachi.

## DIG prisons plant saplings in the premises of Nawabshah jail

HYDERABAD (APP): On the directives of IG prisons Sindh Syed Manwar Ali, DIG prisons Muhammad Nisar Khan visited Nawabshah jail and planted saplings in the jail premises. SP prison Asmatullah Bharru and other officials welcomed him. On this occasion, DIG Mohammad Nasir Khan planted saplings in the jail garden and started a plantation campaign. Deputy Director Information Ghulam Abbas Ghoraho, Forest Department officials, and journalists were

## Man ambushed to death

KARACHI (INP): Unidentified armed men gunned down one person in the metropolis, police said on Friday. According to details, the incident took place Gulshan-e-Iqbal Block 2, where unknown gunmen riding a motorcycle ambushed a man. As a result of firing, he was killed on the spot and assailants fled the scene of crime. The body was shifted to hospital where identity of the deceased was yet to be ascertained. The police after registering a case against unidentified murderers started an investigation.

## Commissioner emphasizes importance of elections

SUKKUR (APP): Divisional Commissioner Sukkur, Fayyaz Hussain Mahehar on Friday emphasized the importance of national responsibility for the conduct of upcoming elections, and encouraged officers to work with dedication. He chaired a meeting in his committee room to review arrangements for the forthcoming general elections. Divisional Commissioner directed the Deputy Commissioners to finalize logistics and contingency plans for presentation in the next meeting. "Sensitive polling stations should be identified, and CCTV cameras be installed there. Alongside completing the polling scheme, transport and security officers should be ensured," he added. The Sukkur Commissioner further stated that as per the instructions of Punjab government, employees of the health department should not be deployed at polling stations. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners and all other concerned officers/officials. The Deputy Commissioners said that transportation plans had been finalized. Control rooms have been established at the district level to monitor the voting process. The polling scheme has been given the final shape whereas emergency response and security plans have also been finalized, they added.

## DC urges Transport Secretary to start Peoples, Pink bus services for students

HYDERABAD (APP): The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Hyderabad, Tariq Qureshi on Friday requested the Secretary Sindh Transport and Mass Transit Department to start Peoples Bus Service from 3 public sector universities in Jamshoro district and one in Tandojam, Hyderabad. He also emphasized the requirement of the transport facility for the people of Tandojam town and the students of Sindh Agriculture University, Tandojam. "The availability of public transport is a crucial lifeline for students and the general public commuting between those places and the city," he said.

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## Cold, dry weather forecast for Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department on Friday predicted cold and dry weather for most parts of the Sindh province during the next 24 hours. However, dense fog and smog were predicted in Jacobabad, Mohenjodaro, Sukkur, Larkana, Dadu, Ghotki, Khairpur and Padidan during morning and night hours. Mainly, cold and dry weather is likely to prevail in the province.

## GCT to hold ceremony on Jan 15 to honour hundreds of underprivileged students on securing distinction in SSC exams

Independent Report KARACHI: The non-profit Green Crescent Trust (GCT) is going to organise a ceremony in Karachi on January 15 to honour hundreds of students from less-privileged families who recently passed the Secondary School Certificate Annual Examinations with distinction. The students to be

## Woman sexually harassed by biker in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Another female was sexually harassed in Karachi in broad daylight on Friday. CCTV footage of the incident surfaced on social media, sparking outrage among the citizens over the rising incidents of harassment in the metropolis. In the video, a motorbike rider can be seen molesting a woman who was crossing the street along with a child. Meanwhile, police have said they are analyzing the CCTV footage to arrest the molester, whereas no one has registered a complaint about the incident so far.

## 9th two-day Hyderabad Literature Festival to begin tomorrow

HYDERABAD (APP): All arrangements have been finalized to hold the 9th two-day Hyderabad Literature Festival (HLF), to begin from tomorrow on Saturday. The event organizer and managing director of the Academy for the Promotion of Art, Literature and Literacy (APAL) Izhar Soomro said on Friday that various sessions, activities and events were scheduled for the participants on both the days of the event. He stated that the Festival would include cultural events such as theater, youth mushaira, musical nights, dance performance, qawwali night, stage dramas and different stalls for the participants. On this occasion, an art exhibition will also be held by the students of Institute of Art and Design of University of Sindh, Jamshoro, he said. He informed that the chief guests at the opening ceremony of the festival would be the caretaker provincial Minister for Culture, Sports, Youth Affairs, Dr. Syed Junaid Ali Shah, provincial Minister for Information, Minority Affairs and Social Security Muhammad Ahmad Shah and eminent poet and former Sindh Minister of Education, Culture and Tourism Syed Sardar Ali Shah. While Secretary Culture, Tourism, Antiquities and Archives Khalid Chachar, Secretary Aqaf and Religious Affairs Munawar Ali Mahehar.

## View of demo anti narcotics operation being conduct during Exercise Sea Guard 24 in Arabian Sea.



KARACHI: A view of demo anti narcotics operation being conduct during Exercise Sea Guard 24 in Arabian Sea.



KARACHI: Inspector General Police (IG) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar presides over a high-level meeting, at CPO Headquarters in Karachi.