

# Independent

Member APNS &amp; CPNE

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## SC seeks 'comprehensive report' from commission on enforced disappearances

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan has directed the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances to submit "comprehensive report" on missing persons' case.

A three-member bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali, heard a set of petitions, including the Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan's one, on the "unlawful practice" of enforced

disappearances.

During the hearing, the apex court instructed the commission – established in 2011 to trace missing persons and fix responsibility on the individuals – to prepare a "comprehensive report" on all the missing persons cases and provide production orders also to the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) within 10 days.

Aitzaz Ahsan, in his petition, had prayed the court to declare that enforcement of the

Continued on page 2

## Courts standing with every political party regarding elections: CJP Isa.

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa has said that courts are standing with every political party regarding the elections.

On Wednesday, a three-member bench, headed by CJP Isa and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali, heard the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) petition regarding the level playing field in elections.

The Supreme Court later adjourned the hearing in the case till January 8.

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of 8th meeting of Apex Committee of Special Investment Facilitation Council.



LAHORE: Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairman, Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari preside over Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting of the party held at Bilawal House in Lahore.

## PPP core committee picks Bilawal as prime ministerial candidate

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Central Executive Committee (CEC) on Wednesday endorsed Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as the party's official candidate for the position of Prime Minister.

The decision was met with unanimous approval during the hybrid meeting held at Bilawal House, where key party members gathered to deliberate on key matters.

Chaired jointly by Asif Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto, the meeting addressed pivotal issues such as the upcoming general elections, the party's election campaign, and the formulation of the party man-



ISLAMABAD: Kandahar Governor Mullah Shirin in a meeting with Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani during his visit to Islamabad.

## Appellate Tribunals continue hearing of appeals of candidates against rejection of papers

**BNP's Naseer Shahwani, Maqbool Lehri, Ghulam Nabi Marri, PkMAP's Nawab Jozgezi & Majeed Achakzai, HDP's Qadir Nayal, PTI's Abdul Hayee allowed to contest elections**

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Appellate Tribunals kept on hearing of the appeals of elections candidates against rejection of their respective nomination papers in the premises of Balochistan High Court here on Wednesday.

The Tribunals consisting of Judges of BHC, Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Kakar and Mr. Justice Muhammad Aamir Nawaz Rana heard the appeals of candidates filed against rejection of their papers.

At the outset, over 100 appeals were heard by the Appellate Tribunals on Wednesday. After hearing the appeals, several candidates were allowed to contest upcoming general elections in the province.

The Tribunal comprising Mr. Justice Hashim Kakar allowed PkMAP's candidate's Nawab Ayaz Jozgezi and Abdul Majeed Achakzai, HDP's Qadir Ali Nayal and Muhammad Dawood, BNP's Ghulam

festos. Meanwhile, the participants also engaged in comprehensive discussions regarding the current political landscape of the country and its diplomatic relationships.

President Asif Ali Zardari formally proposed Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as the prime ministerial candidate on behalf of the PPP, a proposal that received unanimous approval from the CEC.

Expressing unwavering confidence in the leadership of Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the members of the CEC acknowledged their pivotal roles in steering the party towards its goals.

## Pak to continue engaging with Afghanistan: FM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on Wednesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to continued engagement and mutually beneficial ties with Afghanistan. He also underscored the importance of addressing all issues of concern to harness the full potential for regional trade and connectivity.

The foreign minister received a delegation led by Haji Mullah Shirin, Governor of Kandahar and Deputy Head of Military Intelligence and Strategy of Afghanistan, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. They exchanged views on key issues of mutual concern, including peace and security, as well as people-to-people contacts.

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan for the generous support extended to millions of Afghans for over four decades and agreed to continue high-level engagement and dialogue to further strengthen bilateral relations. Earlier, the Afghan delegation led by Haji Mullah Shirin also participated in the 6th session of Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Coordination Committee (JCC). In the JCC meeting, the two sides discussed coordination mechanisms to facilitate cross border movement with a view to promoting people-to-people contacts.

## Conspiracies and nefarious designs of anti-state elements to be foiled, asserts Maulana Khabeer

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chairman Markazi Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad has stated that the entire nation and ulama karam (religious leaders) are standing by their armed forces, and as such conspiracies and nefarious designs of the anti-state elements would be foiled.

He said that Islam is a religion of peace and preaches brotherhood and harmony, and it is responsibility of the religious leaders of the country to give lesson of good things to the nation.



Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad was addressing the Patham-e-Pakistan Aman Conference (Message of peace) organized by the Majlis-e-Ulema Pakistan here at the Quetta Press Club on Wednesday.

The eminent religious leaders from different schools of thoughts as well as the leading religious personalities of different minorities participated in the conference on the crucial topic.

The chairman Ruet-e-Hilal Committee said that it is welcoming and appreciable to hold Paigham-e-Pakistan Aman conference in Quetta.

He said that the people from all religions are attending the conference and united on the platform of MUP.

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## IHC bars police, admin from using force against Baloch protesters

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday barred the authorities in the federal capital from removing the Baloch protesters sitting outside the National Press Club, ARY News reported.

The Baloch protesters filed a petition in the IHC against the "harassing" of Islamabad police with the protesters.

The IHC, responding to the plea, issued an order and barred the police from removing Baloch Family members who were sitting outside the National Press Club.

The court emphasized the importance of safeguarding the rights of individuals engaged in peaceful protests and directed the police authorities not to

"harass" the people sitting outside the National Press Club.

The court adjourned the hearing till January 05 and directed the Deputy Commissioner and SSP Operations to appear personally in court on January 5, addressing the matter in their individual capacities.

During a press conference, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that the issue of Baloch families from Balochistan was being projected in negative and in sharp contrast to realities as Balochs were standing with the state of Pakistan.

Responding to different media queries during his visit to the Business Facilitation Center, the prime minister said that terrorists

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed talking to media persons after visiting Hajji Camp.

## Govt making efforts to ensure all facilities in Hajji Camps: Aneeq Ahmed

QUETTA (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed on Wednesday said the government is making efforts to fulfill all the needs of the Hajji camps to facilitate the pilgrims better.

During his visit to Hajji Camp Quetta, he said the purpose of visiting Hajji Camp is to review the facilities provided to the pilgrims.

The minister said the government has inked various agreements to provide

better facilities to the pilgrims.

Aneeq Ahmed said the government has already completed all the Hajji arrangements which will take place in June.

He said the reason for the decline in Hajji applications is the repatriation of Afghan refugees who used to perform Hajji illegally on Pakistani passports.

He added a mobile app has been launched for the convenience of the pilgrims, which will provide many facilities to the pilgrims.

## SIFC Committee reviews progress to further improve investment climate

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Apex Committee of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday reviewed progress on various measures being undertaken to improve the investment climate.

The Committee approved various policy level interventions to further facilitate the investors including strengthening of domestic dispute resolution mechanism.

The committee also reviewed various projects and initiatives being pursued through the platform of SIFC.

It reviewed progress on

privatization and appreciated the collaborative approach of various stakeholders in timely completion of various critical benchmarks and gave directions to maintain the momentum. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim

Munir, members of the caretaker federal cabinet, caretaker provincial chief ministers and high level officials. The committee also developed consensus on fast tracking the infrastructural development to facilitate the investors, especially in remote areas of the country. The

committee appreciated the ongoing inclusive approach towards human resource development to support emerging needs in key sectors of economy. The federal ministries presented progress on the projects being steered in key sectors and gave plans for timely realization of the envisaged investments.

The PM directed all the stakeholders to vigorously pursue various SIFC's initiatives to ensure their accomplishment within stipulated timeframe. The COAS assured unwavering resolve of the Pakistan Army to support government's initiatives aimed at economic recovery of the country.

## Imran, Fawad indicted in contempt of EC case

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan and former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry have been indicted in contempt of Election Commission (EC) case. Both the accused pleaded not guilty. The contempt of EC case came up for hearing in Adiala jail Wednesday. Members of EC heard the case.

During the course of hearing EC indicted Imran Khan and Fawad Chaudhry and read out charge sheet.

Imran Khan and Fawad Chaudhry pleaded not guilty. PTI founder alleged EC members are showing partiality. The hearing of contempt of EC case was adjourned till January 16.

## Pakistan strongly condemns terrorist attack in Kerman, Iran

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Wednesday strongly condemned a dastardly terrorist attack that took place earlier today in the Martyrs Cemetery of the provincial capital of Kerman, Iran, resulting in large number of deaths and injuries. "Pakistan stands in full solidarity with the Government and brotherly people of Iran in this hour of grief and tragedy," Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

Pakistan believed that terrorism was a menace and threat to regional and global peace and security that needed to be confronted through bilateral and regional cooperation, it was added.

## Mohsin Dawar safe after attack on vehicle in Miranshah

MIRANSHAH (INP): Former lawmaker and National Democratic Movement (NDM) Chairman Mohsin Dawar remained unhurt after his vehicle came under fire in North Waziristan's Miranshah on Wednesday, police said.

North Waziristan District Police Officer (DPO) Rohan Zeb said Dawar was targeted during an election campaign in the area. "The vehicle carrying the former lawmaker was bulletproof," he told reporters.

## Nefarious designs of terrorists exposed: Revenge of every drop of blood of innocent persons to be taken: Achakzai

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has stated that the nefarious designs of terrorists have been exposed. He asserted that revenge of every single drop of the innocent people would be taken.

He said that those involved in the 9th May tragic incidents are now demanding of the level playing field.

How is it possible to harm the state and then make demand of the playing field.

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QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## Blow for PTI as PHC restores ECP order stripping party of 'bat' electoral symbol

PTI says it will approach Supreme Court against verdict

PESHAWAR (INP): The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Wednesday revoked the stay order and restored the ECP decision to declare PTI intra-party polls null and void and stripping it of its election symbol — bat.

On December 26, the high court announced the verdict on PTI's petition challenging the ECP's verdict, which had stripped PTI of using the 'bat' symbol.

A single-member bench comprising Justice Ejaz Khan announced the reserved verdict on a review plea filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) against the January 26 single-member bench order.

Meanwhile the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Wednesday announced to approach Supreme

Court (SC) against the Peshawar High Court (PHC) verdict, restoring Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) order which had stripped the party of its electoral symbol 'bat'.

Talking to journalists, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan dubbed the PHC's verdict "biggest reflection of the ECP's biasness", saying that it has decided to approach Supreme Court (SC) against the today's order.

Gohar Khan questioned over the "legitimacy of election" after the ECP deemed the PTI's intra-party polls "unconstitutional" and revoked the party's iconic 'bat' electoral symbol.

"If you take away the 'bat', the world will not recognise your election," he said.



## Dr Umar Saif announces 10,000 'E-Rozgar Centers' for freelancers from Jan 11

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Dr. Umar Saif Wednesday disclosed that the government would initiate a project to establish 10,000 countrywide E-Rozgar centers equipped with the latest facilities to facilitate freelancers and start-ups from January 11.

This historic initiative was aimed to address the current challenge faced by approximately 1.5 million freelancers who lacked suitable workspaces, he mentioned while speaking in an exclusive interview with a Private news channel.

The freelancers equipped with the tools and environment to thrive in the digital landscape is need of the hour, he further added. He explained that the estab-

lishment of joint e-centers will increase investment in the country and create new employment opportunities.

Dr Umar also urged the youth to become entrepreneurs as they could easily earn more stipends per month through E-Rozgar.

Replying to a question, the minister said from January 7 another project would be initiated to introduce a standardized test for IT graduates through the Higher Education Commission to gauge their skills and offer them internships after passing the test.

"Those who pass the test will be given a mandatory internship in the IT industry. Pakistani universities produce around 75,000 IT graduates every year, out of which, only 3,000 are eligible to be employed by IT companies,"

he added.

He also expressed hope that IT exports will increase to \$4 billion after the State Bank of Pakistan allowed the IT companies to retain 50% of their receipts in dollar accounts.

"We wanted to empower the youth of the country with info-tech skills and that it was making all-out efforts for the purpose", he added.

"IT and Telecom is working on all those projects that will create employment opportunities in the country for youngsters in the future," he mentioned.

The ministry is trying its best to move Pakistan forward in the field of education through the provision of IT skills and empowering skilled manpower in IT industries, he said.



ISLAMABAD: A view of funeral prayers of Former Federal Minister Sartaj Aziz at H-8 grave yield.

## CDA taking concrete measures to protect natural beauty of capital

ISLAMABAD (INP): Under the directions of Chief Commissioner Islamabad and Chairman CDA Capt. Anwar ul Haq, concrete and effective measures have been taken to protect the natural beauty of Islamabad from environmental pollution and smog.

In this regard, the Enforcement Wing Wednesday conducted a mega operation against the owners of the plastic factory in Islamabad's Sector I-13, Shams Colony, whose smoke was causing environmental pollution in the area.

The owners were summoned and presented before the court of Senior Special Magistrate CDA.

The Senior Special Magistrate ordered that the factories of the accused be sealed immediately and

sentenced the accused to imprisonment and fine and remanded in custody.

According to the details, Chief Commissioner Islamabad and Chairman CDA issued strict instructions to the Enforcement, Environment and Sanitation Wing a few days ago to take immediate action to keep the natural beauty of Islamabad free from environmental pollution and smog.

The operation should be carried out without discrimination and interruption, otherwise departmental action will be taken against the concerned officials.

On this occasion, the CDA administration said that no one would be allowed to destroy the natural scenery beauty of Islamabad.

## Fire guts several shops at Islamabad's Aabparamarket

ISLAMABAD (INP): A massive fire broke out at Aabpara Market in Islamabad on Wednesday engulfing several garment shops.

The blaze started in a cloth (dupatta) shop in the market in the morning which spread to other shops later.

A Rescue spokesman said that the fire completely burnt three shops while materials in the adjacent shop were damaged.

Fire brigade officials informed that smoke could be seen rising from Aabpara Market where fire spread quickly, and the police were informed of the incident by the area's residents.

The fire brigade was informed about the blaze around 9 O'clock and fire tenders were actively participating in the operation to douse the blaze.

## Dense fog disrupts air and road traffic

ISLAMABAD (Online): Thick fog enveloped the plains of the country, especially parts of the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces on night between Tuesday and Wednesday, paralyzing routine life and disrupting road and air traffic.

The flight operation at the Islamabad International Airport was also affected.

As many as 30 flights of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and other national and international flights had to be cancelled after dense fog disrupted the flights' operation at the Islamabad International Airport on Wednesday.

The flights, which were cancelled, had to shuttle between Islamabad and Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi, Islamabad and Beijing, Islamabad and Riyadh, Islamabad and Jeddah.

Similarly, PIA's flights to Gilgit and Skardu were delayed for several hours.

The situation is no different with the flights of

other airlines such as SereneAir, Airblue and AirSial which were delayed for over 12 hours.

PIA's incoming flight from Dubai landed at the airport after a delay of 18 hours.

On the other hand, the airport's management said that the flight's operation would resume as soon as visibility improved.

The thick fog has badly affected the flow of road traffic in several cities. According to a Motorway spokesperson, the Motorway M1 Section from Peshawar Toll Plaza to Rashakai Interchange in KP, Motorway M2 from Lahore to Islamabad have been closed for all kind of traffic.

The Motorway police have appealed the drivers to use Grand Trunk (GT) Road for travelling. They have also urged the drivers to drive slowly and switch on fog lights.

The Motorway police have also requested the people to stay home and avoid unnecessary travelling.

## SC dismisses bail plea of accused arrested in tax fraud

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has dismissed the bail plea of the accused arrested in tax fraud being the plea withdrawn.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked white collar crime is not an ordinary crime.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by the CJP Qazi Faez Isa heard the bail after arrest plea filed by the accused Anmar Rafiq Wednesday.

The CJP remarked white collar crime is not an ordinary crime. White collar crime causes enormous loss to the country. Such a big claim was made on fake invoices.

The CJP inquired how can one push money forcibly in some one's else account. This is not ordinary crime. On what basis we should grant bail to the accused.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked this is fraud of billion of rupees.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Parliamentary Committee on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed presenting a shield to CDA sanitation workers during the farewell party at E-7 Park.

## SC declares disqualification of PML-Q former MNA correct for holding fake degree

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has declared the disqualification of PML-Q former Member of National Assembly (MNA) Khadim Hussain on the basis of fake degree correct.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa remarked it is better not to run case after the death of petitioner. The fake degree matter ended with the death of the petitioner.

The CJP gave these

remarks while presiding over a 3 members bench of SC during the hearing of the case Wednesday. The CJP remarked has the case any criminal aspect. If it is there then we hear the case. The counsel Khawaja Haris told the court the family members of petitioner insist to abolish taint of fake degree after hearing the case. The petitioner got the entire education in the name of Muhammad Akhtar Khadim. He did politics in

the name of Khadim Hussain. He got national identity card in this name. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked had the petitioner been alive then something could be proved. He inquired how the family members of the deceased will prove correct name after death. The CJP remarked show us some affidavit or documents as evidence when the stance is about changing name then presenting evidence is your responsibility.

## Influenza causing respiratory illness among people in Pak

ISLAMABAD (INP): A subtype H3N2 Influenza A virus, causing severe respiratory illness in people across Pakistan, the National Institute of Health report said Wednesday.

The National Institute of Health (NIH) in its recent report stated that thousands of severe respiratory illness cases are being reported every week across Pakistan. Meanwhile, the NIH in its report further added that the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is causing illness among children across the country. The health experts warned the patients not to consume antibiotics if they have influenza symptoms and suggested using a mask and washing hands frequently to prevent the disease.

## Earthquake jolts Islamabad, adjacent areas

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal capital Islamabad and its neighbouring regions experienced a sudden jolt today as earthquake tremors sent shockwaves across the landscape, causing panic among residents. According to the private news channel, the seismic activity was also felt in Rawalpindi, Attock, and Chakwal. The seismological centre said that the magnitude of the earthquake was 4.9 on the Richter scale, the depth of the earthquake was 137 kilometres underground, the epicentre was the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border, and the tremors were felt at 2:24 p.m. No loss of life or property was reported from any part of the capital.



ISLAMABAD: Rescue workers are busy in fire extinguishing as fire broke out at Aabpara market due to short circuit in Federal Capital.

## PILDAT report Polls happening without requisites

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (Pildat), an NGO working for the promotion of democracy in Pakistan, has issued a report on standards of democracy in Pakistan.

According to the report, 2023 was another awful year for democracy in Pakistan. Interim governments' extended time in the offices is against the true essence of Constitution and democracy.

It further said the PTI founder was disqualified on the grounds similar to those of former US president

## CDA to auction plots in next week

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to conduct an auction of plots in Islamabad, alleviating the budgetary constraints faced by the civic body. According to the CDA official, the plot auction is set to take place from 10 to 12 January at the F9 Park in Gandhara Hall.

Plots located on Blue Area, Centers, and Park Road will be included in the auction. The auction list includes petrol pumps, Class Three shopping centers, agro farms, and apartment plots, along with fruit and vegetable shops, IT centers, and hostel plots.

## Identical rulings by ROs surprises Election Tribunal Judge

ISLAMABAD (INP): Hearing at the Election Tribunal of the Islamabad High Court on Wednesday, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir expressed astonishment at what appeared to be arbitrary decisions made by separate returning officers. The tribunal was addressing an appeal lodged by PTI leader Advocate Shoaib Shaheen, contesting the rejection of his nomination form.

Expressing concern, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir emphasized the lack of variation between the two orders, raising questions about the independence and fairness of the decision-making process. After the arguments from both parties, the Islamabad Election Tribunal reserved its decision on the matter.

During the proceedings, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir noted with surprise that the returning officers for both NA 47 and NA 48 constituencies were identical. Shaheen contested this, asserting that the officers for the two constituencies were different. However, Justice Tahir pointed out that there was not a single word of difference in the orders issued by the two returning officers, suggesting a striking similarity that raised suspicions about the decision-making process.

PTI leader Niazullah Niazi, addressing the media outside the Islamabad High Court, shed light on the unusual circumstances surrounding the objection-raising process on December 30. Niazi revealed that the returning officers spent four hours that night scrutinizing nomination papers and raised objections that he described as "ridiculous." He further stated that even the judge found some objections amusing. Notably, an identical decision was issued by three different circles of returning officers, adding another layer of suspicion to the overall electoral proceedings.

Shoaib Shaheen defended his stance, claiming that while the officers might be different, the orders seemed to be crafted in the same place, evident from their exact replication.

The Election Tribunal's decision is now eagerly awaited as questions about the integrity of the election process in NA 47 and NA 48 linger.



ISLAMABAD: General Secretary (Tehreek Nafaze-Fiqh-e-Jafariya) Allama Basharat Hussain Imami talking to media persons outside Election Commission in Federal Capital.

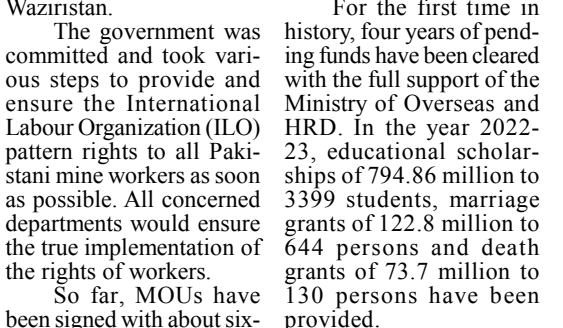
## Pakistani workers to be sent abroad through proper channel

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistani workforce would be sent abroad through the agreements under the supervision of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and no body would be allowed to use illegal ways to go abroad for a job or business.

An official source said on Wednesday that a well-educated and skilled workforce could play a vital role in the social development of the country to boost the fragile current economic situation of the state. There is a need for awareness among people regarding overseas. The shortage of staff in OPF schools will be met in any case. OPF schools will be opened in North and South Waziristan.

There is a need for awareness among people regarding overseas. The shortage of staff in OPF schools will be met in any case. OPF schools will be opened in North and South Waziristan.

For the first time in history, four years of pending funds have been cleared with the full support of the Ministry of Overseas and HRD. In the year 2022-23, educational scholarships of 794.86 million to 3399 students, marriage grants of 122.8 million to 644 persons and death grants of 73.7 million to 130 persons have been provided.



ISLAMABAD: CDA staffer busy in win work during foggy on early morning hours in capital City.

## Safe City Islamabad demonstrated exemplary performance in 2023

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Following the special directives of Islamabad Capital Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Safe City Islamabad is actively contributing to the oversight of public safety, crime control, assistance in investigations, and providing emergency help to citizens, a public relations officer said.

During 2023, Safe City Islamabad utilized all available resources for facilitating the citizens. Various facilities were provided to 1,92,144 individuals through Police Khidmat Markazs.

Furthermore, the Safe City Emergency Response Unit received 1,39,717 calls through the Pucar-15 emergency helpline. Safe City

effectively monitored 1,03,951 suspicious activities including crimes, vehicles and traffic violations throughout the city using modern high-tech cameras.

Moreover, data of 42,332 individuals was collected in the Police Station Record Management System, leading to the arrest of 16,169 individuals involved in various offenses. Safe City's Hotel Eye software allowed for the surveillance of over a million people and the arrest of 49 criminals.

Safe City significantly increased the efficiency of overall challan payments from 6% to 32%. The Dolphin Squad's Police Emergency Response Unit (PERU) app was introduced to promptly respond to any emergencies allowing

citizens to report incidents immediately.

The ICT-15 app was developed for citizen facilitation to seek immediate police assistance. The Safe City Monitoring System added 239 new high tech cameras, 23 new vehicles were branded, and 15 smart cars were included in the Police Mobile fleet.

The CPO Safe City/Traffic conducted special awareness lectures on drug prevention in renowned educational institutions across Islamabad. 92 children involved in illegal activities were apprehended by Islamabad Capital Police and handed over to their parents through the School Chalo campaign, which was made possible with the assistance of Safe City Islamabad.

Safe City expanded its coverage to 97% of the federal capital areas by adding 900 new cameras, and 50 facial recognition cameras at entry and exit points.

For better communication systems the Safe City Islamabad transitioned to the TETRA system from VHF and reactivated the 5-BTS of the TETRA network.

Safe City Data Center increased its technical capacity to 1.3 PB of data storage, commissioned IVS 3800 controllers for video surveillance and improved federal government TETRA network coverage to 100%.

A research and development section was initiated in Safe City Islamabad, where students from various educational institutions developed various soft-

ware.

However, a data hub was established in a short span of time of three months, gathering data from all provinces and dividing it into 25 different categories and providing it to all law enforcement organizations.

A survey of 4,800 private cameras was conducted, connecting them with Safe City Islamabad centralized system for monitoring plazas, metros, green and orange buses, important buildings, hotels, and motels.

Additionally, important commercial centers like the I-8 Centre, F-8 Markaz, Lake View, Blue Area, Minister Enclave, Jinnah Courts, and DHA are now accessible through Safe City cameras.



ISLAMABAD: Buildings and roads are hide to the thick blanket of Fog as such weather will be reassumes till the rainy spell in Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

Thursday January 04, 2024

## Terrorism surge

While Pakistan's leadership remains almost exclusively occupied in political machinations, militants and terrorist outfits have been spreading their vicious tentacles. Violence-related deaths, according to recently released statistics from two major security think tanks, shot to a six-year high in 2023 as the country lost hard-earned ground to inimical forces. Some 789 terror attacks and counter-terrorism operations resulted in more than 1,500 deaths in 2023, including close to 1,000 civilian and security forces lives lost. There were around as many injuries as the total number of fatalities. The state's failures seem particularly damning, considering that the trends had shown a persistent increase in violent incidents in the preceding two years as well. Despite the warning signs, the year 2023 saw a staggering 69pc increase in militant attacks over the previous year. The enemies of Pakistan operated with near impunity, striking 53 times per month on average in 2023, compared to 32 times per month a year earlier.

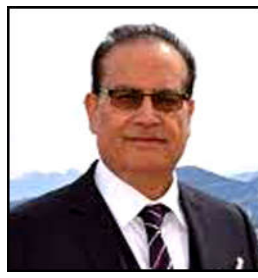
Among the provinces, KP and Balochistan were the hardest hit, with 84pc of the attacks taking place on their soil and accounting for 90pc of all deaths. Yet, considering the state's recent actions, one would be hard-pressed to find any intent to put out the fires raging there. Indeed, the state only seems to be stirring the pot further with its shortsighted refusal to deal patiently and amicably with two long-running protest campaigns in the two provinces — the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement in KP and protests by relatives of missing persons in Balochistan — even though they have merely been demanding basic rights. Another deeply concerning fact that emerged from one of the reports was that banned terrorist outfits accounted for only 17pc of all terrorist attacks, which suggests that the spectrum of threats to Pakistani interests present on its soil is growing and needs to be mapped more thoroughly.

The released data shows that the target of militant and terrorist outfits' activities has remained focused on security forces, with the overwhelming proportion of deaths recorded being those of front-line security personnel. This should be a cause for great worry for decision-makers responsible for security, as the deepening fissures between the citizenry and the state owing to the sociopolitical instability roiling the country are ripe to be exploited by hostile elements. They must not be allowed to take advantage of it — but for that, the country's security apparatus will need to reprioritise and focus its energies on countering this grave threat. This will necessarily entail putting out the fires raging through the country amidst widespread public dissatisfaction with state policies, and resisting the urge to exert control with force. We seem to be passing through a sensitive period where any misstep may trigger long-lasting repercussions that could haunt us for years.

## SC's Response to Level Playing Concerns

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



Witnessing the live streaming of the Supreme Court's proceedings to ensure a level playing field for all political parties, notably PTI, was an exhilarating and rare opportunity for me and indeed a rewarding experience for the entire nation. The courtroom drama unfolded as a battle of wits, with arguments scoring points and constitutional provisions being quoted. The determined Chief Justice persistently opposed the contempt of court proceedings against the Election Commission, Chief Secretary, and IG Police of Punjab. This was based on the contention that the Election Commission had complied with the Supreme Court's directives by issuing letters to all provincial election commissioners and the government, emphasizing the need for a fair electoral landscape.

Amidst this intense debate, Mr. Sardar Latif Khosa emerged as a persistent voice, asserting that the Election Commission's responsibility extended beyond mere letters; it was also tasked with ensuring the actual implementation of the Supreme Court's directives in both letter and spirit. He argued that the Punjab provincial administration's disregard for these instructions amounted to a violation of the court's order, constituting contempt.

Just as Mr. Khosa's argument seemed to be faltering, an unexpected turn occurred. He drew attention to a paragraph in the Election Commission's report, revealing widespread allegations of abductions, constraints on PTI candidates and their supporters, and incidents where the RO office was inaccessible due to police cordoning, preventing PTI candidates from filing

nomination papers. This revelation inadvertently bolstered Mr. Khosa's case, providing the Chief Justice with convincing evidence to admit the petition and issue notices to the Punjab advocate general, inspector general, and chief secretary. The Supreme Court sought explanations regarding the alleged lack of a level-playing field in the upcoming general elections. This pivotal moment led the court to also direct a report from officials concerning the implementation of its order, specifically addressing the party's concerns. The proceedings were adjourned till January 8, signaling the gravity and importance of the case and its potential implications for ensuring fair and transparent elections.

It goes without saying that a fair and equitable political landscape in nascent democracies like Pakistan necessitates certain critical conditions. This includes equal access to resources, transparent electoral processes, freedom of expression, impartial institutions, and fair media coverage. These conditions foster a democratic environment where all political entities have an equal chance to present their policies, ensuring a level playing field. Such fairness isn't just a democratic ideal but a necessity for the country's stability and legitimacy. It encourages trust among citizens in the democratic system, promoting active participation and ensuring that the voices of all segments of society are heard and valued.

The responsibility for creating and maintaining a level playing field is shared among various stakeholders. Government institutions such as the election commission, judiciary, and law enforcement agencies play a pivotal role in ensuring fair elections and opportunities for all parties. Political entities themselves bear the responsibility of upholding democratic principles and advocating for equitable competition. Civil society groups, along with the media, serve as watchdogs,

monitoring and highlighting any biases or discrepancies in the electoral process.

The absence of a level playing field during elections reverberates across multiple fronts, amplifying negative repercussions. Political parties suffer from eroded trust and diminished legitimacy, directly impacting their ability to govern effectively and gain public confidence. Societal unrest and disenfranchisement, eroding social cohesion. Countrywide, political instability disrupts policymaking and governance, affecting economic stability and deterring both foreign and domestic investment. Businesses grapple with uncertainty, impacting long-term planning and market stability. Internationally, a compromised electoral environment tarnishes a country's reputation, weakening diplomatic relations and eroding confidence in its commitment to democratic principles. Collectively, these consequences compromise long-term growth, stability, and global standing.

The systematic targeting and imprisonment of a major political party's leadership severely disrupt the foundational principles of fair competition in elections. Such actions not only impede the functioning of the targeted party but also undermine the democratic ethos of the nation. Similarly, when another political faction faces harassment and violent obstructions to their activities, it exacerbates the lack of fairness and safety in the electoral arena. These instances paint a troubling picture of an imbalanced and unjust political landscape, challenging the very essence of a level playing field in democratic processes. The pathways for redressal and seeking justice amidst such allegations and injustices are entrenched within established institutional mechanisms. The Election Commission stands as a pivotal entity responsible for overseeing fair elections; thus, parties encountering discrimination or hindrances in the elec-

toral process can formally report grievances to this body. Additionally, judicial avenues serve as vital forums for challenging unjust detentions, harassment, or violations of political rights, providing a means for legal recourse. Human rights commissions, both domestic and international, offer platforms to investigate and address such violations, safeguarding democratic principles. Yet, navigating these institutional channels might encounter obstacles when institutions themselves face compromise or influence. In such complex scenarios, mobilizing civil society becomes imperative, leveraging public support to advocate for fairness and justice. Engaging with international organizations, leveraging diplomatic channels, and bringing global attention to these violations serve as alternative avenues to spotlight injustices, applying external pressure to restore democratic norms. Effectively addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach, combining institutional redressal with public mobilization and international advocacy to safeguard the integrity of the democratic process. When a major political party approaches the Supreme Court of Pakistan seeking redressal for a lack of a level playing field, the court encounters certain limitations. Upholding political neutrality while addressing constitutional rights is paramount. However, the court's jurisdiction might be confined when matters directly fall under the purview of other institutions like the Election Commission or the government's executive actions. Operating within legal frameworks and past precedents, the court must tread cautiously, ensuring its interventions align with existing laws and constitutional provisions.

The court's role mandates upholding the rule of law while respecting constitutional boundaries. It should safeguard constitutional rights without overstepping its jurisdiction. While intervening to uphold democratic

principles is permissible, the court must refrain from excessive interference with the functioning of other branches of government or independent bodies, unless absolutely necessary. Many courts around the world were confronted with similar situations. In the United States, the pivotal case of **Citizens United v. FEC** marked a watershed moment in the U.S. Supreme Court's rulings on elections. The decision, affirming 'corporations' and unions' rights to unlimited independent political spending under the protection of the First Amendment, reshaped campaign finance regulations.

Within India's legal landscape, **Kuldip Nayyar v. Union of India** exemplified the Supreme Court's commitment to fostering free and fair elections. The petition challenged the existing electoral framework, arguing that voters should have the option to reject all candidates contesting in an election if they found none of them suitable or deserving of their vote. The Supreme Court, acknowledging the importance of voters' rights and the need for electoral reforms, ruled in favor of introducing the NOTA option on ballot papers, allowing voters to express their dissatisfaction with contesting candidates effectively.

Kenya's Supreme Court made history with its ruling in **Raila Odinga v. IEBC & others**, where the court nullified presidential election results due to irregularities. This landmark decision emphasized the critical importance of conducting transparent and fair elections, showcasing the judiciary's intervention to safeguard democratic principles and electoral integrity. The lack of level playing field will not only mar the result of the elections but also prompt the prolonged litigation in the post-election scenario. The aggrieved parties are most likely to approach the Supreme Court to nullify election results due to concrete evidence of rigging will involve various potential outcomes.

The Supreme court is

playing a proactive role to ensure that elections are held in a free and fair manner. There are two possible and expected decisions by the supreme court. In one scenario the SC despite compelling arguments from PTI's legal counsel court may observe procedural limitations in directly attributing contempt. After thorough scrutiny and hearing the responses from the officials, the Supreme Court might issue directives for better implementation of Election Commission orders but refrains from labeling the actions as contempt due to lack of conclusive

In an alternate scenario, the Supreme Court may take a stern stance against the alleged disregard of Election Commission directives by the Punjab administration and police. Despite the administration's counter-arguments and explanations, the court finds substantial evidence suggesting deliberate actions hindering PTI's participation, thus constituting contempt. The Chief Justice may express strong displeasure over the reported incidents of hindrance faced by PTI candidates during the electoral process, highlighting the criticality of ensuring a level playing field for all political parties. The court, after careful consideration and thorough examination of the evidence presented, holds the IG Police and Chief Secretary accountable for failing to uphold the Election Commission's directives. The Supreme Court may reprimand, possibly imposing fines or penalties, and issue stringent directives to ensure strict adherence to Election Commission orders in future elections. However, the final verdict of the Supreme Court in such scenarios would largely hinge on the evidence presented, the court's interpretation of contempt in this context, and the extent of the officials' compliance or disregard for the Election Commission's directives. It would aim to reinforce the sanctity of fair electoral processes while balancing accountability with procedural considerations.

## Election year



Mahir Ali

Around 40 countries representing almost half the world's population will either elect new rulers or endorse existing ones in the year ahead. This doesn't mean we can look forward to a global festival of democracy.

The balloting spree kicks off in Bangladesh on Sunday, and is likely to conclude with what is billed as the most consequential election of all — the Nov 5 contest that will decide whether Donald Trump returns to the helm of the unparalleled hegemonic power.

In between, there will be polls in India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Russia, along with Mexico and other nations. A British election need not be called until 2025, but Rishi Sunak is expected to go early given that, amid the rising stench of Tory incompetence, his party's prospects are likely to deteriorate. Although Benjamin Netanyahu is likely to extend the genocidal military campaign in Gaza to avoid a reckoning with voters disenchanted by his fascist government's innumerable failings, any extended hiatus in Israel's war of aggression could provoke circumstances necessitating a fresh election.

The unprecedented bloodbath in Israeli-occupied territories will also influence US elections. There is mounting evidence that disenchantment among younger Americans, including many who are Jewish by faith or ancestry, with the Biden administration's aid for a Middle Eastern country

sla-u—gathering hundreds of civilians — mostly children and women — every day will deter them from helping to re-elect Joe Biden.

Meanwhile, pro-Zionist lobbyists and their collaborators are determined to defeat the few members of Congress who dare speak up for Palestinian rights or question the subsidies that help to sustain the Israeli war machine. The success rate of previous efforts along these lines is unimpressive, but the trend is nonetheless a cause for concern in a country where cash is often king in poll contests.

Beyond that, there is no guarantee that legal or constitutional challenges will thwart Trump's quest to become only the second president in US history to serve non-contiguous terms. Would his return to the White House spell the end of the world as we know it, as sections of the US media portend? Perhaps. The appalling state of the world can hardly serve as an advertisement for the status quo, but the kind of shake-up a second Trump presidency might entail offers even more troubling possibilities. The likelihood of unwelcome eventualities is widespread, however. In the subcontinent, the common factor is waves of repression: the Awami League in Bangladesh (Hasina Wajed appears to have blocked out memories of her father's fate after he chose a similarly authoritarian route), the powers that be in Pakistan and the Modi regime in India are equally determined to perpetuate their rule. For varying reasons all three are likely to succeed. The next president of Indonesia is likely to be Prabowo Subianto, a Suharto-era general whose extended record of atrocities earned him a ban from entering the US. But it will undoubtedly be rescinded if he wins, as it was for Modi.

In South Africa, the African National Congress

—indelibly associated with Nelson Mandela, but hardly reflective of his ideals — could deservedly lose its majority after years of poor governance and corruption. For all its flaws, though, the ANC has consistently supported the cause of Palestinian liberation, and its government deserves appreciation for lodging a case against Israeli genocide at the International Criminal Court last week.

The electoral trend in Europe is broadly from the centre right to the far right, partly because, with minor exceptions, the left has effectively ceased to exist. Latin America offers clearer choices and, left or right, Mexico will get its first female president this year. In Russia, all possible alternatives to Vladimir Putin have been imprisoned or exiled, yet a fatuous poll exercise is deemed necessary to provide a dubious source of legitimacy. War-torn Ukraine, understandably, won't bother with an election that was due this year. It would have garnered a lot more sympathy had it empathised with the kindred plight of the infinitely worse-off Palestinians. But Volodymyr Zelensky left that to Putin. The presidential election in Taiwan next week, reportedly skewed by Chinese interference, could determine not only the island's fate but that of its region, depending on the winner's attitude towards Beijing. No election result is likely to help divert the planet from the fast lane towards climate catastrophe, let alone reverse the trend whereby extreme poverty, hunger and homelessness coexist with billionaires, culinary extravagance and empty palaces. The forces of the right can only offer more of the same, and the forces of the left in most parts of the world are either moribund or minuscule. Happy new year, anyone? -- Courtesy Dawn

## Forgotten schools



Naseer Memon

Flood devastation is often characterised by breached embankments, collapsed houses, broken roads, loss of crops and traumatised masses. Sindh witnessed all these forms of devastation in 2022. Consequently, rehabilitation initiatives have tried to address these aspects. But what has remained missing from the debate is the colossal loss to schools and education.

An already frail education system in Sindh suffered a further setback as 20,000 schools were partially or fully damaged by the deluge that deprived 2.3 million students of schooling for several months. Some of these students have resumed their education in dangerous, damaged buildings, while others are studying on makeshift premises. How much their learning levels have been impaired is anyone's guess.

Embankments, roads and houses are being rehabilitated, but repair and reconstruction of schools have yet to see the light of day. Sindh lost half of its school infrastructure built over 75 years. The most upsetting fact is the damage to 2,249, or 34 per cent, of government schools for girls in a province where rural female literacy is a mere 23pc. Before the floods, toilets were present in only 60pc of the schools, and boundary walls in 55pc. Of this infrastructure, 72pc of the boundary walls and 81pc of toilets have been reduced to rubble. Furniture and other fixtures were damaged when the premises were converted into camps for the flood

victims.

Schooling, already adversely affected by Covid-19, was further aggravated by the floods. The magnitude of loss warranted urgent attention but the provincial government and donors appear to ignore the situation. The provincial education department conducted an analysis of the damages and an assessment of the resources required to restore these schools on the principle of 'building back better'.

Reconstructing these schools with a minimum of six rooms requires Rs224 billion. But Sindh allocated only Rs16.5bn in the current budget for the education department's development schemes. It means that the department would need 13 years to reconstruct all schools damaged in the floods, even if the development budget for education were to be diverted fully towards this purpose.

Unfortunately, the provincial and federal governments have displayed apathy and have been able to mobilise resources for less than one-third of the damaged schools. Much of this support has been committed by donors. Ironically, the committed amount is not being spent because of restrictions imposed by the Election Commission of Pakistan, which is unable to distinguish flood rehabilitation works from routine development schemes. Its myopic approach has hindered the restoration of schools.

With the huge budgetary gap, reviving these schools seems a distant dream. The present construction model of the RCC (reinforced cement concrete) structure is neither climatically appropriate nor cost-effective. A climate-proof and financially frugal school model is needed. The model in vogue costs Rs22m to Rs25m for the construction of a six-room school with a lavatory and boundary wall. If girder T-

iron is used, with the community's direct involvement and keeping the contractors out, the same building can be constructed for Rs3.5m. In other words, seven climate-resilient schools can be constructed for the cost of one school by replacing the contractor with the community.

Community-constructed schools are likely to infuse a sense of ownership — a long-term advantage. This approach has worked well for rebuilding flood-damaged houses. Climate-sensitive structures also require structural variations for adaptation to climatic conditions and specific vulnerabilities in different areas. Making uniform structures in coastal, mountainous, desert and riverine areas is devoid of climate sense. Most schools in the flood-prone areas were constructed in low-lying areas where community-donated land was available. This practice of constructing schools on donated land has compromised site selection — a major cause of devastation during the floods.

The Boxing Day tsunami in the Southeast Asian countries in 2004 and the earthquake of 2005 in Azad Kashmir and its adjoining areas prompted engineers to rethink construction models and develop safe structures to mitigate the impact of disaster. Bangladesh, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Philippines and other coastal countries have introduced elevated structures with open-ground storeys. Similarly erecting retention walls to protect low-lying schools and constructing schools on elevated ground would make structures climate-resilient. Non-conventional and low-cost climate-proof structures can offer long-term solutions to the paucity of funding. They can also help bring millions of out-of-school children into classrooms. - Courtesy Dawn

## Daniyal Aziz rejects party's show-cause notice over disciplinary violation

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz senior leader Daniyal Aziz has rejected the show-cause notice given to him by the party.

On a three-page long response by Aziz to the party, he mentioned that he has not violated the party's code of conduct and policy.

For the clearance of any misunderstanding, he also requested a meeting with the party's leadership. He said he only highlighted the discrepancies in various projects started by former minister Ahsan Iqbal that created economic issues in the constituency.

Earlier, on December 2, PML-N Punjab president Rana Sanaulah

issued a show-cause notice to Aziz stating that the politician violated the party rules by making a 'rhetorical statement' against the PML-N leadership and damaged the reputation of the party.

Aziz was directed to submit the response to the show-cause notice within seven days.

"Daniyal Aziz has been told to be cautious while giving such statement to media," the president of PML-N Punjab Rana Sanaulah stated during a press conference.

It is pertinent to mention here that the PML-N leader Daniyal Aziz held his own party leader Ahsan Iqbal responsible for the price control in a post on X.



**LAHORE: Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider along with Secretary Aqaf Dr. Syed Tahir Raza Bukhari being briefed during their visits to the site of under construction Shrine of Bibi Pak Daman, in Provincial Capital.**

## Doctor posted at newly created post of paediatric gastroenterologist at LGH

**Independent Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Government has created a new post of Associate Professor of Gastroenterology for the Department of Pediatrics in Lahore General Hospital. According to the details Associate Professor Dr. Hassan Suleman Malik has been posted on this new vacancy and he has assumed his responsibilities as well.

Principal Ameer Uddin Medical College Prof. Dr. Al Farid Zafar welcomed this appointment of Associate Professor Dr. Hassan Suleman Malik on the new post in the Department of Pediatrics and said that this step taken by the Punjab Government for Lahore General Hospital will certainly help to improve medical facilities for children's health.

Moreover, it will be helpful for children to deal with diseases of stomach, intestines and there will be a significant increase in the treatment for better diagnostic, tests as endoscopy facilities will be available to them, which

will make it easier for the children and their parents.

Prof. Al Farid Zafar further said that all these facilities will be provided free of cost as per the existing policy of the Punjab Government, which will provide more relief to the patients and their families. Principal PGMI congratulated Dr. Hassan Suleman Malik and appreciated his services. He added that Dr. Hassan Suleman Malik is known as best medical expert and his appointment in this department will undoubtedly improve the quality of treatment and services of Lahore General Hospital.

It is noteworthy that Dr. Hassan Suleman Malik is a senior pediatric Hematologist in addition to FCPS (Pediatric Gastroenterology and Hematology) while he is known as the first specialist in this field in Pakistan for CPSP who has joined the medical team of Post Graduate Medical Institute, Ameer Uddin Medical College and Lahore General Hospital.



**HYDERABAD: Visitors take keen interest in paintings during the 18th Degree Show (Annual Thesis Display/Exhibition) held at Shaheed Allah Bukh Soomro (SABS) University of Art, Design and Heritages in Jamshoro.**

## KU Computational Chemistry Scientist elected as PAS fellow

KARACHI (INP): The Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS) has elected Dr. Zaheer-Ul-Haq, a Professor at the Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research (PCMD), University of Karachi, as a fellow of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS).

According to the spokesman of the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, only scientists of the highest merit, who have made outstanding contributions to advancing scientific knowledge, are elected fellows. PAS promotes higher studies and research on pure and applied sciences in Pakistan and disseminates scientific knowledge.

Prof. Dr. Farzana Shaheen, the Director of the ICCBS, University of Karachi, congratulated

Prof. Zaheer-Ul-Haq for his achievement. It is pertinent to mention here that Prof. Zaheer-Ul-Haq is a distinguished scientist renowned for his exceptional contributions to the field of Computational Chemistry.

He serves as both the founder and head of Pakistan's premier Computational Chemistry Laboratory, established at the Dr. Panjwani Center. He has an outstanding publication record, comprising over 250 research articles published in international journals.

His research focuses on critical health issues, including Alzheimer's, Hypertension, Cancer, Immunosuppression, Leishmaniasis, and Hepatitis. As many as 40 students have completed their M.Phil. and Ph.D. studies in Computational Chemistry under his direct supervision. He holds five US patents.



**PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali presides over the meeting to review financial issues of Universities of Province.**

## Good conduct towards citizens, effective policing hallmarks of successful police officer: Naqvi

**Independent Report**

LAHORE: 34 under-training ASPs of the 50th common training program at the Pakistan Police Academy called on Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office.

Addressing them, CM Naqvi emphasized the need to abandon the archaic policing system and embrace the new era of policing to serve the public better. He highlighted that good conduct towards citizens and effective policing are the hallmarks of a successful police officer, making their tasks

easier. He emphasized that Islamic teachings and basic human values encourage positive interactions with the public. The CM stressed the importance of maintaining a positive reputation and building a successful career through improved public handling and effective policing.

Mohsin Naqvi urged police and administrative officers to pay attention to resolving the issues faced by citizens. He encouraged young police officers to engage in positive interactions with the public, demonstrating good

behavior and dedication to problem-solving. He emphasized that both public handling and policing skills are equally essential, with a 50% focus on each.

Furthermore, he advised police officers to exhibit good behavior towards citizens, seniors, and visitors, and to handle situations that cannot be resolved according to the law with patience and empathy.

He praised the efforts of DPO DG Khan, who won the hearts of the public through open

kutchery sessions, showcasing the positive impact a police officer can have on the community.

Discussing his efforts for departmental reforms, CM Naqvi added that over 20,000 policemen have been promoted in the past 11 months. He also highlighted the promotions of more than 40,000 officers and employees in various departments.

The CM announced plans to upgrade 737 police stations, with 36 already completed. He also mentioned resolving the issue of government land.



**LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi along with Inspector General Police Punjab review the online test during his visit to Police Khidmat Markaz liberty.**

## Dr. Aamer Abdullah says: Two feasibility studies being done to bring industrial zones on solar system in the province

**Independent Report**

PESHAWAR: Under the chairmanship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Industries Commerce, Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts Affairs Dr. Aamer Abdullah, a joint meeting of Islamabad-based economic research and industrial policy think tank "Prime" and Industries Department's officers was held here at Civil Secretariat on Wednesday.

Besides Secretary Industries Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah and Chief

Executive Officer (CEO) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company Javed Iqbal Khattak, officers of all subsidiaries of the department, representatives of SMEDA, Executive Director of Prime think tank Ali Salman, lead consultant and industrial expert Intiaz Rastgar and other relevant officers participated. On this occasion consultation session was held between the representatives of the

think tank and department's officers regarding the promotion of industrialization in the province and policy matters in this regard and facilitating factors in business and trade wherein, useful views and suggestions were given from both sides.

In the meeting, the think tank also gave a detailed briefing to the caretaker minister and other participants regarding the responsibilities and services of its institution.

## 11.5 million new licenses issued to citizens in a short span of time

LAHORE: As a result of prompt steps taken by Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi to ease the driving license issuance to the public, 11.5 million new driving licenses have been issued to the applicants in a short span of time.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited police khidmat markaz at liberty late at night and inspected online tests conducted.

He directed to change broken tiles without delay and appreciated the facilities provided at the khidmat markaz.

## 8500 POs arrested, challan tickets issued to 1.75m drivers in 2023

FAISALABAD (INP): The Punjab Highway Patrol (PHP) arrested 8,500 proclaimed offenders (POs) and issued challan tickets to 1.75 million drivers over violation of traffic rules and regulations during 2023.

A PHP spokesman for Faisalabad region said here on Wednesday that patrolling police checked 17.6 million people and 9.4 million vehicles on highways and main roads of the province through e-police post app during 2023, which helped in decreasing crimes on roads up to 45 per cent,

compared to the crime ratio during 2022. During this period, the PHP jawans succeeded in arresting 500 POs of category-A and 8,000 of category-B, besides nabbing 1,300 illicit weapons-holders. The teams recovered 970 pistols, 138 rifles and 91 Kalashnikovs from the arrested people.

The PHP police also seized 3,559 stolen vehicles including 190 stolen cars, 3,184 motorcycles and 185 other vehicles. The patrolling police also arrested drug pushers along with 22,000 litres of liquor.



**KARACHI: Pakistan Association of Press Photographers (PAPP) President, Muhammad Jameel along with others are presenting the shield to Caretaker Sindh Interior Minister, Brigadier (Retd) Haris Nawaz during meeting held at his office in Karachi.**

## Even UC chairman 'can deliver more than' PTI founder: Ahsan Iqbal

NAROWAL (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Ahsan Iqbal said on Wednesday that even the UC chairman could deliver better than the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder.

Addressing the workers' convention in Narowal, the former planning minister said, "Four out of the five years had been wasted by the PTI. Few persons were involved in orchestrating the conspiracy to impose the PTI founder in 2018."

"The PTI founder had harmed the country," Iqbal said.

Speaking about the forthcoming elections, Iqbal said, "I have three basic principles of staging the politics, which are

peace, education, and development." Iqbal said on Friday there is a dire need to decide about the country's fate on February 8. Speaking to the media in Lahore, the former planning minister took a swipe at the political opponents, saying, "Some people had harmed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project."

He recalled the events that transpired on May 9, stating, "Those who were involved in May 9 vandalism cannot wash their strains by making excuses."

Iqbal maintained: "I heard that people based in Karachi are mulling to contest elections from Lahore. The city [Karachi], which was glittering was harmed."



**KARACHI: Motorists are facing trouble in maneuvering at maripur road due to the protest of the relatives of Baloch missing persons, in Provincial Capital.**

## KP Govt initiated economic plan to bring merged districts at par with other regions

**Independent Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has initiated a comprehensive economic plan "High Impact Economic Plan" with the purpose of bringing the Newly Merged Districts of the province on at par with other regions of the country and province, in the process of development. In view of the abundance of natural resources in the merged districts, have been prioritized in the above mentioned development plan so that to make maximum utilization of them, while 10 important

sectors included industry, commerce and technical education, mines and mineral development, agriculture, energy and power, livestock, forestry and environment, Irrigation and water, sports, tourism and youth affairs, roads & communication and border economy have been declared as important targets for the development process.

According to the economic plan, an estimate of Rs. 142,614 million has been earmarked for development initiatives in these districts wherein, 139494 million rupees will

be provided by the provincial government, while 3120 million rupees will be included as the share of donor funds. Similarly, about 96 ongoing and new development projects of the merged districts have been included in the overall plan.

These projects included 23 road projects, 11 industries, 12 agriculture, 5 minerals, 8 tourism, sports and youth affairs, 3 energy and electricity, 7 livestock, 7 forestry and environment, 9 water and 11 border economy projects that will be completed.

## Health condition of Pervaiz Elahi deteriorates in Adiala Jail

RAWALPINDI (Online): Health condition of former Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has deteriorated in Adiala jail and he has been shifted to RIC from Adiala jail.

Jail sources said Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi was shifted to RIC from Adiala jail being unwell. He was feeling pain in heart and there was infection in his chest. His medical check up was done in jail hospital. Medical check up of Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi will be conducted in RIC and some necessary tests will be taken.

## JI worker gunned down in Karachi

KARACHI (Online): One Wasim Siddiqui, worker of JI has been killed in firing by unknown persons in the area of Orangi Town near No 1 Jamia Masjid Musalmin here. SHO Ali Raza said the victim has been identified as Wasim Siddiqui, 42. As per preliminary information the deceased was called by some one from his home and he was a travel agent by profession.



**HYDERABAD: President Jamiat Ulama-e-Pakistan Sahibzada Abulkhair Muhammad Zubair addressing the "Khatoon-e-Jannat" conference organized by Paigham-e-Hussain International at the local hall in City.**

## Mardan DC visits WSSCM

**Independent Report**

MARDAN (INP): Deputy Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Fayaz Khan Sherpao visited Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM).

He also inspected the various sections of the company. General Manager Engineer Muhammad Khalil Akbar briefed the Deputy Commissioner on WSSCM operations and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project progress.

The Deputy Commissioner was informed that under the KPCIP project a modern Scientific Sanitary Landfill Site and Sewerage treatment

plant will be established in Mardan.

He said through the Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) project the domestic sewerage connections of six urban union councils will be connected with STP for treatment and reuse of water for irrigation purpose.

The Deputy Commissioner was informed that since 2016, WSSCM has received twenty seven thousand three hundred and fifty complaints in which twenty seven thousand two hundred and seventy have been resolved.

He said that WSSCM is collecting garbage on door to door basis from Mardan city.

## All available resources would be utilized to achieve desired results for eradication of polio

**Independent Report**

PESHAWAR: Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Abid Majeed has directed the relevant authorities to utilize all available resources to expedite efforts and achieve the desired results for eradication of polio in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He emphasized the need to address the difficulties and challenges in the complete eradication of the polio virus and stressed the importance of implementing all possible measures. He highlighted

that it is essential to remove all obstacles and adopting preventive measures and raise awareness among the public about the need of polio eradication.

Furthermore, he urged all stakeholders to strengthen their contacts to ensure the success of the polio campaigns. These directives were issued during a special meeting held in Peshawar at the Home Department, Civil Secretariat, in Peshawar, where relevant Secretaries, Commissioners, Regional Police Officers, Deputy Commissioners, District Police Officers, Coordinator Provincial Emergency Operations Center, representatives of the Pakistan Army and international partners.

During the meeting, all concerned Commissioners, Regional Police Officers, Deputy Commissioners, and District Police Officers participated through video link. Additional Chief Secretary Home received a detailed briefing about the current situation of polio in the province.

## Pakistani traders ride county's booming economy

BEIJING (APP): More Pakistani traders are settling in the Tashikurgan Tajik autonomous county of Kashgar, China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, to tap the strong business potential. As the county is close to their homes, they said it's easy to commute and fit into the local community. Booming tourism also brings more tourists, which benefits their businesses.

Murad Shah, a Pakistani jeweler, said his gemstone store in the county has welcomed about 100 to 200 tourists a day after it resumed operations in April.

He said his business is starting to recover after China optimized its COVID-19 policies. "There are a lot of tourists. The county has a

diverse culture and landscape, and so many good attractions to see," he said, adding he is hopeful about the future, China Daily reported. One good reason for him to open a store in the county is that his hometown, a small village in Pakistan, is just 200 kilometers away, which can be reached in only three hours by car. Another reason is that China is developing very fast with a sound economy, he said. "Many Pakistanis prefer to do business here because there is money here," Shah said.

At the store of Pakistani merchant Nazar Karim Ali, visitors come to buy gemstones, jewelry, blankets, cotton bed sheets, clothes and handicrafts, all made in Pakistan.



LAHORE: President Fish Market Chaudry Muhammad Aslam addressing press conference at press club in Provincial Capital.

## Punjab Governor says: Business community playing key role in the socio-economic development of the country

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: The delegation of Anjuman-e-Tajran Lahore led by Waqar Ahmad Mian called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore, here today.

Punjab said that the strengthening of the business community in the country creates employment opportunities in the country. He said businessmen not only feed their families but also become a source of employment for many families. Governor Punjab said that it is commendable that the businessmen are active in philanthropic work and are lending helping hands to the people who need support in the society. He said that the business community came forward and helped people during earthquake,

covid epidemic, and floods. On this occasion, the delegation of the traders' body informed the Punjab Governor about various problems including law and order, parking, electric wires, street lights. Governor Punjab assured to convey the problems faced by the business community to the relevant departments. The delegation comprised Imran Bashir (Pattern-in-Chief), Anjuman Tajran Lahore (Quaid-e-Azam Group), Malik Ijaz (Chief Patron), Nasir, Ahmed Ansari, Salik Ashfaq and Malik Farooq Hafeez and others.



LAHORE: Members of Awami Rickshaw Union are holding protest demonstration against massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products and inflation price hiking, at Lahore press club.

## PIF invests in Saudia Technic to establish National MRO champion in Aviation Sector

JEDDAH (INP): The Public Investment Fund (PIF) announced the signing of an agreement to invest in Saudia Technic, a subsidiary of Saudia Group. Formerly known as Saudia Aerospace Engineering Industries, Saudia Technic has a long-established presence and rich legacy in Saudi Arabia, tracing its roots back to the 1960s. It provides services across key aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul segments (MRO), including line, base, components and engines.

PIF and Saudia Group will transform Saudia Technic into a

national MRO champion by investing in infrastructure, boosting efficiency and capturing market growth in Saudi Arabia over the next decade. Saudia Technic's ambition is to become the MRO of choice for domestic airlines and global partners seeking access to the Saudi market.

The investment will support the development of an approximately 1 million-square-meter MRO village in Jeddah, including a state-of-the-art jet propulsion center that will expand Saudia Technic into the leading MRO in the Middle East.

## FBR exposes Rs16b scandal in guise of solar panel imports

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) on Wednesday exposed a Rs 16 billion financial scandal under the pretext of importing solar panels in Islamabad.

According to the FBR report, a private company made illegal imports worth Rs 1.62 billion, along with the illegal imports of solar panels worth Rs 16 billion for 11 different companies.

The report revealed that the imports were

carried out for companies with a financial position of less than Rs 4 million in total, and were not eligible to import goods through Banks.

The report further claimed that after the suspicious imports, the data of these 11 companies was systematically erased to avoid detection in the system.

Earlier to this, over Rs 69.5 billion over-invoicing was unearthed in the import of solar panels during 2017-2022.



LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman in a group photo with delegation of Anjuman-e-Tajiran led by Waqar Ahmad Mian.

## Fiscal deficit curtailed at 0.8% of GDP, primary surplus improves

ISLAMABAD (APP): Owing to consolidated measures implemented by the government, the fiscal deficit has been curtailed to 0.8 percent of GDP during the first four months of the current fiscal year, according to latest report of the finance ministry.

"Fiscal side highlights the successful implementation of consolidation measures in the first four months of FY2024, leading to a significant rise in total revenue receipts that outpaced the growth in expenditures," according to Monthly Economic Update and Outlook for December 2023.

Consequently, the

fiscal deficit has been curtailed to 0.8 percent of GDP, the report says, adding the primary surplus continued to improve owing to contained growth in non-markup spending and was recorded at Rs.1429.7 billion (1.4 percent of GDP) during July-October FY2024 from Rs.136.2 billion, 0.2 percent of GDP last year.

The breakup data shows that the fiscal deficit was recorded at Rs.861.7 billion during the period under review compared to deficit of Rs.1265.8 billion during the same period of last year, which was 1.5 percent of GDP. Meanwhile, the net federal

revenues increased to Rs.2806.6 billion in July-October FY2024 from Rs.1316.8 billion last year.

The sharp rise in revenues has been largely attributed to considerable improvement in non-tax revenues that grew by more than 300 percent during the period under review.

In absolute terms, it increased to Rs. 1586.5 billion against Rs. 346.4 billion last year. This growth in non-tax collection has been observed across all major heads, indicating a broad-based increase.

Similarly, receipts from FBR tax collections

grew by 29 percent to Rs.2748.4 billion against Rs.2138.7 billion last year. The net provisional FBR tax collection maintained its momentum with 29.6 percent growth to reach Rs.3484.7 billion during July-November FY2024 from Rs.2688.4 billion last year. Within total, domestic tax revenues grew by 32 percent driven primarily by a 62.8 percent surge in FED and a 42.2 percent rise in direct taxes.

The total expenditures grew by 35 percent to stand at Rs.3706.7 billion during July-October FY2024 against Rs.2737.2 billion last year.



RAWALPINDI: President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Saqib Raffique presenting bouquet to RPO Syed Khurram Ali during his visit to RCCL.

## 8.17 million cotton bales reach ginneries across Pak, 77% increase recorded

MULTAN (APP): Seed cotton (Phutti) equivalent to 8.17 million or 81,71,082 bales have reached ginneries across Pakistan till Dec 31, 2023 recording an increase in arrivals by 77.14 per cent compared to corresponding period of the year 2022.

According to a fortnightly report issued by Pakistan Cotton Ginner Association (PCGA) here Wednesday, arrivals to factories increased by over 3.5 million bales, hence the 77.14 per cent increase recorded in 2023 till Dec 31 compared to 2022.

Over 4 million or 40,78,769 bales' arrival was recorded at ginning

factories in Punjab, showing a surge by over 1.3 million bales compared to the year 2022 calculated at 47.66 per cent. In Sindh, arrivals were recorded at over 4 million or 40,92,313 bales, showing a jump by 2.241 million bales, recording a whopping 121.16 per cent increase compared to corresponding period of 2022.

Over 8 million or 80,82,744 bales were converted into bales at ginning factories. Textile sector continued to maintain its position as the biggest buyer with a figure of over 7.3 million or 73,14,127 bales bought while exporters and traders bought 2,92,126 bales.

## CDNS collects Rs 950bln targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has realized a target of Rs 950 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to December 31st. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Wednesday.

The senior official said this was Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. "The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of

Rs 1.4 trillion for the current financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said. In view of the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to further improve the savings culture, he said.

The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. "At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added. Replying to a question,



KARACHI: Warm clothes are being selling at roadside stalls as the demand of warm clothes increased in city during the winter season, at Saddar area.

## Atif Ikram says: FPCCI will devise charter of economy to meet the economic challenges

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Newly elected President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh arrives in the FPCCI Capital Office Islamabad with a big crowd consisting of the members of business community of Islamabad and adjacent areas. The Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik and Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail Hussain and

Various business leaders of UBG and Founder Group of Islamabad. CCII prominently Zubair Rauf Alam, Zubair Ahmed Malik, former Vice President PCCI and General Secretary UBG Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman Founder Group ICII Khalid Iqbal Malik,



Vice Presidents of FPCCI namely Ashfaq Ahmed and Tariq Jadoon, warmly welcomed him and showered flower leaves on him. On this occasion, on a festive event, special band was arranged to congratulate him and celebrated his historic victory in FPCCI's election. Earlier the crowd escorted him from his residence to FPCCI Capital House Islamabad.

Mian Akram Farid, Mian Shaikat Masood, Mohammad Ijaz Abbasi, Khalid Javed, Tariq Sadiq, Acting President ICII Engineer Azhar-ul-Islam, President Islamabad Woman Chamber Rizwana Asif, and All Officials of Islamabad and Rawalpindi All Trade Bodies, businessmen, industrialists were present on the occasion and expressed their views.

## KTH chief calls for exploiting all resources to attract FDI

LAHORE (APP): Coordinator to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman and Kyrgyzstan Trade House (KTH) Chairman Meher Kashif Younis said on Wednesday the government should fully exploit an ideal geographical location of the country, which has abundance of natural and human resources, to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and boost exports to deal with the economic challenges.

Talking to a delegation of industrialists, led by Chaudhry Faran Shahid here, he said there was pressing need for making

development and implementation of quality technological infrastructure.

A small and medium enterprises policy, with orientation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that underscores importance of technology in creating value within businesses is essential for fostering economic growth. He said despite Pakistan's aspirations to become a digital economy, its existing digital infrastructure requires significant improvements to fully realize its potential.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors selling and displaying oranges at roadside setup near G-9.

## Pak earns US \$225m from travel services' export in Jul-Oct

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned US \$225.083 million by providing different travel services in various countries during the first four months of the current fiscal year 2023-24. This shows growth of 3.25 percent as compared to the US \$218.000 million worth same services provided during the corresponding months of the last fiscal year 2022-23, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

During the months under review, personal travel services increased by 2.11 per cent, from US \$216.670 million last year

to US \$221.243 million during July-October 2023. Among these personal services, the exports of health-related expenditure rose by 428.95 per cent while the education-related expenditure increased by 94.81 per cent. In addition, the other personal services witnessed a nominal decline of 0.93 per cent. Meanwhile, the exports of business services grew by 188.72 per cent, from US\$ 1.330 million to US\$ 3.840 million, the PBS data revealed.

It is pertinent to mention here that the exports of services during July-October 2023.

## NTDC replaces circuit breaker at Guddu switchyard

ISLAMABAD (INP): The technical teams at National Transmission and Despatch Company Limited (NTDC) have accomplished the replacement of a damaged circuit breaker at the 500 kV Guddu Switchyard.

According to NTDC spokesperson the direction of management, additional staff was deployed to ensure the swift completion of replacement works.

NTDC has also successfully energized the 500kV Guddu-Muzaffargarh transmission line. The NTDC

spokesman said that dense fog in the vicinity of Guddu caused the tripping of NTDC's 500kV and 220kV transmission lines. Consequently, one pole of the 500kV circuit breaker at the switchyard was also damaged.

However, the NTDC team immediately isolated the damaged pole from the switchyard, while ensuring that the other two circuit breakers remained operational.

To address this emergency situation, NTDC had a spare circuit breaker readily available in its warehouse.

# US warns Israel, clarifies Gaza belongs to Palestinians

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States rejected the inflammatory and irresponsible statements from Israeli Ministers Smotrich and Ben Gvir and clarified there should be no mass displacement of Palestinians from Gaza. Far-right Israeli ministers Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich said this week that Israel should "encourage emigration" from the coastal enclave, home to an estimated 2.3 million Palestinians.

"If there are 100,000 or 200,000 Arabs in Gaza and not two million Arabs, the entire discussion on the day after [the war ends] will be totally different," Smotrich said on Sunday, calling for the "voluntary

migration" of Palestinians. The Israeli army has said it is "prepared for any scenario" after a strike in Beirut that killed Hamas's deputy chief, stoking fears the war in the Gaza Strip could boil over into wider regional conflict.

A high-level security official in Lebanon told foreign news agency that Saleh al-Aruri was killed along with his bodyguards in a strike by Israel, which has vowed to destroy Hamas after the movement's shock October 7 attacks.

A second security official confirmed the information, while Hamas TV also reported Israel had killed Aruri in Lebanon. Israeli army spokes-

man Daniel Hagari did not directly comment on the killing, but said afterwards that the military was in "very high state of readiness in all arenas, in defence and offence. We are highly prepared for any scenario."

Israel has previously announced the deaths in Gaza of Hamas commanders and officials during the war, but Aruri is the most high-profile figure to be killed, and his death came in the first strike on the Lebanese capital since hostilities began.

The strike adds to widespread fears that the nearly three-month-old Israel-Hamas war could become a wider regional conflagration.



A man walks past a collapsed house in Anamizu Town, Ishikawa prefecture after a major 7.5 magnitude earthquake struck the Noto region in Ishikawa prefecture on New Year's Day.

## BRICS' ranks swell as five more states join bloc

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Saudi state TV said on Tuesday that the kingdom has officially joined the BRICS bloc of countries.

The BRICS bloc that previously included Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa was set to double with Saudi Arabia joining the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Iran, and Ethiopia as new members.

Saudi Arabia's entry comes amid geopo-

litical tensions between the US and China, and the expansion of China's influence within the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister had earlier said the kingdom would study the details before the proposed Jan 1 joining date and take "the appropriate decision." Prince Faisal bin Farhan had said the BRICS group was "a beneficial and important channel" to strengthen economic cooperation.

## US to reopen border crossings as illegal immigration drops

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The United States will reopen four legal US-Mexico border crossings on Thursday as high levels of illegal immigration have receded and freed up personnel, US border authorities said on Tuesday.

The US will resume operations at an international bridge in Eagle Pass, Texas, two crossings in Arizona and another near San Diego, California, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said in a press release, adding that it will continue to prioritise border security "as necessary."

US border authorities struggled in December to process migrants as apprehensions reached nearly 11,000 in a single day, which several current and former officials said was near or at a record high.

Mexican and US officials pledged last week to work together more closely to tackle record migration at their shared border after top US officials traveled to Mexico to meet with Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador.

"We gotta do something. They ought to give me the money I need to protect the border."

## Bangladesh opposition on the run despite not contesting vote

**Monitoring Desk**  
DHAKA: As general elections approach this week in Bangladesh, opposition leader Abdul Moeen Khan says he had to hide out in the homes of a string of acquaintances until nominations closed, trying to escape a government crackdown.

The former minister and his Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) are not running in the Jan 7 vote, in which

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is chasing a fourth straight term, despite a bleak economy that needed an IMF bailout last year.

"We're not even in the election, but they are still not sparing us," the grey-haired Khan, 77, said in Dhaka, the capital, on his return home in December after nominations closed and removed any risk that he could pose an electoral threat.



People wait behind concertina wire and newly installed barriers to turn themselves to the U.S. border authorities in Brownsville, Texas, as seen from Matamoros, Mexico.



People gather at the scene of explosions during a ceremony held to mark the death of late Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, in Kerman, Iran.

## Killing of Hamas deputy leader in Beirut raises risk of Gaza war spreading

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIRUT: Israel killed Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri in a drone strike in Lebanon's capital Beirut on Tuesday, Lebanese and Palestinian security sources said, raising the potential risk of war in Gaza spreading well beyond the Palestinian enclave.

Arouri, 57, was the first senior Hamas political leader to be assassinated since Israel launched a shattering air and ground offensive against the group almost three months ago after its shock assault and

rampage into Israeli towns. Lebanon's heavily armed Hezbollah group, a Hamas ally, has been exchanging near-daily fire with Israel across Lebanon's southern border since the war in Gaza began in October. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah has warned Israel against carrying out any assassinations on Lebanese soil, vowing a "severe reaction."

Hezbollah said on Tuesday it had targeted a group of Israeli soldiers in the vicinity of Marj with missiles, following Arouri's killing.

## Tens of thousands hold anti-Israeli protest in Istanbul

**Monitoring Desk**  
ISTANBUL: Tens of thousands marched in Istanbul Monday to protest "murderer" Israel's war in Gaza and the killing of Turkish soldiers by outlawed Kurdish militants in Iraq.

The rally, called by a foundation which counts Bilal Erdogan, the son of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, among its members started after crowds performed morning prayers at Istanbul's iconic mosques, including Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque. Protesters waving Turkish and Palestinian flags rallied to the Galata Bridge on the Bosphorus chanting: "Murderer Israel,

get out of Palestine" and "Allahu Akbar" (God is the greatest).

Tens of thousands of people joined the rally "Mercy for our martyrs and a curse on Israel", the official Anadolu news agency reported.

Erdogan, a vocal supporter of the Palestinian cause, has lashed out repeatedly at Israel for the scale of death and destruction caused by its response to Hamas' unprecedented October 7 cross-border attack.

He has accused Israel of "state terrorism" and said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "no different" from Adolf Hitler.

## US reaches deal to extend military presence at Qatar base

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The United States has reached a deal to extend its military presence at a base in Qatar for another 10 years, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters on Tuesday.

The base in question is the Al Udeid Air Base, which is located in the desert southwest of Doha and hosts the largest U.S. military facility in the Middle East, the source said, asking to not be identified.

The development was reported first by CNN. The U.S. Department of Defense did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Tuesday.

The Philippines and the US first launched joint patrols in November, holding military drills for three days in waters near Taiwan and in the West Philippine Sea, Manila's term for South China Sea waters within its exclusive economic zone.

The Philippine military said their second joint patrol this week involved four vessels from the Philippine navy and four ships from the US Indo-Pacific command that include an

## S.Korea opposition leader in ICU after knife attack amid calls for stronger security

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: South Korea's opposition Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung remained hospitalised in intensive care on Wednesday, a day after a knife attack on him shocked political leaders who were vying for the upper hand in a major election three months away. Surgeons operated on Lee for more than two hours late on Wednesday to repair a major blood vessel in his neck that was sliced when an assailant lunged.



Governor of the Belgorod region, shows aftermath of a missile strike on the region as Moscow said it had downed nine missiles fired by Kyiv.

## Thailand, China to permanently waive visas for each other's citizens from March

**Monitoring Desk**  
BANGKOK: Thailand and China will permanently waive visa requirements for each other's citizens from March, Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin said on Tuesday.

Southeast Asia's second-largest economy, which relies heavily on tourism, in September waived entry requirements for Chinese tourists until February this year.

"This will upgrade the relationship between the two countries," Srettha

told reporters.

In 2023, Thailand welcomed 28 million foreign tourists, slightly above its target, generating 1.2 trillion baht (\$34.93 billion) of revenue, government data showed.

Of that, the top source market was Malaysia with 4.5 million visitors, followed by 3.5 million arrivals from China.

That compared with a pre-COVID record of 39 million arrivals with 11 million from China.

## Taiwan spots Chinese balloons over island near major air base

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: Three Chinese balloons flew across Taiwan island on Tuesday and near an air base, the Taiwanese defence ministry said, the first time it has reported them crossing the island since reporting a spate of such balloons in the Taiwan Strait starting last month.

The potential for China to use balloons for spying became a global issue in February 2023 when the United States shot down what it said was a Chinese surveillance balloon. China said the balloon was a civilian craft that accidentally drifted astray.

## Only 15pc of Israelis want Netanyahu to keep job

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: Only 15 per cent of Israelis want Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to stay in office after the Gaza crisis subsides, though many more still support his strategy in the Palestinian enclave, according to a poll published on Tuesday.

Netanyahu has said such intense military pressure is also vital to ensure that the remaining 129 prisoners still held in Gaza are returned after around 100 were freed in late November in a swap deal also involving hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

## Putin says Russia will 'intensify' attacks on Ukraine

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: President Vladimir Putin said Monday that Moscow would intensify strikes on military targets in Ukraine, after an unprecedented Ukrainian attack over the weekend on the Russian city of Belgorod.

The Ukrainian attack on Saturday, which killed 25 people including five children, came after Moscow launched a large-scale attack on Ukrainian cities.

Meanwhile, Kyiv said Russia had targeted the country with a "record" number of drones on New Year's Day.

"We're going to intensify the strikes. No crime against civilians will rest unpunished, that's for certain," Putin said during a visit to a military hospital.

His comments came at the end of a deadly week in Ukraine, with both sides hitting each other with large-scale attacks.

Putin said Russia would continue to hit what he called "military installations". "We are doing that today and tomorrow we will continue doing it," Putin announced, speaking almost two years into Moscow's military offensive in Ukraine. "What happened in Belgorod is a terrorist act," Putin told wounded Russian soldiers sitting near him in hospital pyjamas and sanitary masks.

"There is no other way to call it." Putin accused Ukrainian forces of targeting "right in the city centre, where people were walking around."

## Philippine military says second joint patrol with US underway in South China Sea

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: The Philippines and the United States began a two-day joint patrol in the South China Sea on Wednesday, the Philippine military said in a statement, a move that would likely irk China.

Security engagements between the treaty allies soared last year amid growing tensions in the South China Sea, where the Philippines and China have traded blame over a spate of run-ins.

The Philippines and the US first launched joint patrols in November, holding military drills for three days in waters near Taiwan and in the West Philippine Sea, Manila's term for South China Sea waters within its exclusive economic zone.

The Philippine military said their second joint patrol this week involved four vessels from the Philippine navy and four ships from the US Indo-Pacific command that include an

aircraft carrier, a cruiser and two destroyers.

Philippine armed forces chief Romeo Brawner said the second such joint military activity this week marked a "significant leap" in Manila's alliance with the US and its interoperability with the American military.

"Our alliance is stronger than ever, sending a message to the world. We are advancing a rules-based international order and a free and open Indo-Pacific region in the face of regional challenges," Brawner said.

The latest patrols would likely irk China amid rising tensions in the South China.

Last week, Beijing said it would not turn a blind eye to repeated "provocations and harassment" by the Philippines.

Chinese state media has also accused Manila of relying on US support to continually antagonise China.

## Overseas figures refute allegations in Hong Kong security trial for Jimmy Lai

**Monitoring Desk**  
HONG KONG: Several overseas activists, right campaigners and politicians named in a national security trial for Hong Kong democrat Jimmy Lai refuted allegations levelled by a government prosecutor in court that they colluded with him.

Lai, 76, founder of now-shuttered pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily and a leading critic of the Chinese Communist Party, faces two counts of conspiracy to collude with foreign forces - including calling for sanctions against Hong Kong and Chinese officials - under a China-imposed national security law. He is also charged with conspiracy to publish seditious publications. Before the trial opened, a supporter shouted "hang in there" to Lai, as he sat inside a glass dock surrounded by prison guards.

Prosecutor Anthony Chau on Wednesday presented dozens of news clippings of Apple Daily, including news reports of a speech by Lai and commen-

taries that were critical of China. Chau also cited Apple Daily interviews with frontline pro-democracy activists and anti-government advertisements.

Chau had earlier accused Lai of conspiring with activist Andy Li, a paralegal Chan Tsz-wah, exiled activist Finn Lau, Britain-based rights campaigner Luke de Pulford, Japanese politician Shiori Yamao, US financier Bill Browder and others to lobby foreign countries for sanctions. "Jimmy had nothing whatsoever to do with any of my work on Hong Kong at all. But Jimmy's case isn't about truth. It's about delivering Beijing's narrative," said Luke de Pulford, the head of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC), on X. IPAC, a group of over 300 lawmakers in 33 countries, condemned attempts to implicate several of its members in the "sham" trial and said in a statement it was an "unacceptable infringement of the rights of foreign citizens."

## Myanmar's 'watermelons': Soldier on the outside, rebel inside

**Monitoring Desk**  
MYANMAR: For about two years, says 24-year-old Yan, a former Myanmar police officer, he risked his life pretending to serve the military junta while secretly spying for the armed resistance.

"I freed myself from unfair orders," he told Reuters from a room in a town near the Myanmar border where he said he was taking refuge after fleeing the country in April. Yan declined to give his full name because of the threat to his life.

Myanmar's junta is facing the fiercest threat to its power since seizing control in a 2021 coup as it battles an unprecedented alliance of opponents while weakened by some internal dissent and defections.

The junta did not respond to requests for comment by Reuters. It has acknowledged some loss of control.

The junta has not commented on spies within its ranks, but pro-military

social media channels have exposed soldiers who appear sympathetic to the rebels.

Opposition groups said it was difficult to determine how many members of the security forces supplied information to the resistance, and their number was likely small given the risk, but they play a crucial role.

They have supplied intelligence, including about the transportation of military supplies, that has helped opposition groups plan attacks, a spokesperson for People's Goal, a group that supports defectors, told Reuters. "We have received information which has saved lives," the spokesperson said, referring to tip-offs about impending attacks or air strikes. Yan, who joined the police force in late 2020, following in the footsteps of his brother, said he became disillusioned after the coup when he witnessed the arbitrary arrest of protesters during a brutal military crackdown.

## More than 100 killed in terrorist attacks near tomb of Iranian Guards' Soleimani

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Two explosions caused by terrorist attacks killed more than 100 people and wounded scores at a ceremony in Iran to commemorate top commander Qassem Soleimani who was killed by a US drone in 2020, Iranian officials said on Wednesday.

Iranian state television reported a first and then a second blast during an anniversary event at the cemetery where Soleimani is buried in the southeastern city of Kerman.

An unnamed official told the state news agency IRNA that "Two explosive devices planted along the

road leading to Kerman's Martyrs' Cemetery were detonated remotely by terrorists".

Babak Yektapara, a spokesperson for Iran's emergency services, was reported as saying 73 people had been killed and 170 injured. State television said later that at least 100 people had been killed.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Videos aired by Iranian media showed dozens of bodies strewn around with some bystanders trying to attend to survivors and others hurrying to leave the blast area.

"A terrible sound was heard there, despite all the security and safety measures. We are still investigating," Reza Fallah, head of the Kerman Red Crescent Society, told state television.

Red Crescent rescuers tended to wounded people at the ceremony, where hundreds of Iranians had gathered to mark the anniversary of Soleimani's death. Some Iranian news agencies said the number of wounded people was much higher.

"We are now evacuating the wounded and injured in the area. The crowd is huge and the job is quite

hard all the paths to there are blocked," Fallah said.

The US assassination of Soleimani in a drone attack at Baghdad airport and Tehran's retaliation by attacking two Iraq military bases that house US troops brought the United States and Iran close to full-blown conflict in 2020.

As chief commander of the elite Quds force, the overseas arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Soleimani ran clandestine operations in foreign countries and was a key figure in Iran's longstanding campaign to drive US forces out of the Middle East.



ISLAMABAD: President, Dr. Arif Alvi being briefed about the role and performance of National Book Foundation held at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



QUETTA: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed inspecting building of Haji Camp

## Global Health Security Summit to explore opportunities of joint working: Dr Nadeem

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Global Health Security Summit will serve as a great opportunity of bringing together, international and national experts in the concerned field and learning by sharing of expertise and knowledge for a safer world. In a media briefing, Caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the Global Health Security Summit is being held on January 10, 11 here in the federal capital.

He said that the strategic objectives of the conference are to collaborate with global leaders in order to ensure equity-based pandemic preparedness financing for low and middle-income countries and mutual exchange of knowledge and rich experience with member states and experts around summit thematic areas which focus on vaccine equity, patent deregulation and transfer of technology.

The minister said that

the conference will secure global and regional partnership with international organizations for aligning its health security priorities with those of global and regional priorities, in order to strengthen its core capacities through technical assistance.

He said that the event will explore opportunities of joint working and pool funding for health security, across the region and globe in addition to the sustainable domestic funding for its five-year health security plan 2024-28. Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the Global Health Security Summit will be attended by top health experts from around the world. He added an integrated strategy to deal with epidemics will be formed at the global conference.

The minister said that by holding the international conference, the positive image of Pakistan will be presented.

## NIH issues advisory on JN.1 sub-variant of COVID-19

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Institute of Health (NIH) has issued an advisory for the prevention and control of JN.1 Sub-variant of the COVID-19 virus. According to NIH, the objective of the advisory was to alert and facilitate the health authorities and other stakeholders for ensuring timely prevention and control measures encompassing preparedness to deal with such patients in future. The advisory said that JN.1 is classified as a Variant of Interest (VOI) and fundamentally an offshoot of BA.2.86 sub-variant omicron variant.

The COVID-19 virus, very first reported in August 2023 by US-CDC. However, in recent weeks, JN.1 has been reported in many countries, and its prevalence is rapidly increasing globally. This rapid growth is observed across the three WHO regions with consistent sharing of SARS-CoV-2 sequences.

## Pak-China Friendship Hospital in Gwadar prepares for first patients

BEIJING (APP): The Pakistan-China Friendship Hospital in the port city of Gwadar is preparing to admit its first patients.

The foundation stone for the hospital was laid in 2020. It's part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and it's been called a symbol of the two countries' deep-rooted friendship. Zhou Wenwei, Chief Consultant, Pakistan-China Friendship Hospital told CGTN, "China and Pakistan have a long history of friendship, and in the course of the Belt and Road Initiative, China wanted to invest in this hospital in Gwadar to benefit the local people." Just days before its formal inauguration, I was given exclusive access to the 150-bed facility.

"The Pak-China Friendship Hospital is equipped with modern facilities and advanced medical technology, ensuring that residents of Gwadar

and the surrounding areas have access to high-quality healthcare. Essential healthcare services were previously limited in the region. DR Aftab Head of Indus Hospital Campus, Gwadar said.

This hospital is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, the construction is beautiful, and it will serve the purpose for the next twenty-five years.

The people of this area have a lot of respect for the Chinese people, and we are also very thankful to them that they have provided us with this health facility." China's commerce ministry funded the project which cost an estimated 30.5 million dollars and covers an area of eight acres. From emergency services to specialized medical care, the hospital can cater to a wide range of health needs, treating both common ailments and complex medical conditions.

## Secretary Health inaugurates 22-bedded CCU in Civil Hospital Quetta

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Secretary Health Abdullah Khan inaugurated the 22-bedded CCU in the Sandeman Civil Hospital Quetta on Wednesday.

Also present on the occasion were Medical Superintendent of Sandeman Hospital, Dr. Ishaq Panezai, Additional Secretary Health, Abdul Hameed Zehri, Section Officer Health Admin, Tahoor Khan, Head of Cardiology department, Professor Dr. Mujeebullah Tareen, Associate Professor Dr. Fazlur Rehman, Associate Professor Dr. Hashim Baloch and others.

Speaking of the occasion, Secretary Health said CCU established in the Sandeman provincial hospital is an excellent addition for providing treatment to the poor heart patients.

He said that the patients used to wait for days to get admission in the CCU, however, now they would get better and timely health services with establishment of 22-bedded unit.

It may be mentioned here that the CCU has been established with cooperation of UNICEF with the necessary equipment provided there.

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## President for increasing access of visually impaired to books, education

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Wednesday directed to take necessary actions aimed at greater access of the visually impaired to books and education. Chairing a meeting to review the role and performance of National Book Foundation at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president said that the intellectual and individual development was possible by promoting the culture of book reading in the country.

He said availability of books and knowledge in Braille for the visually impaired was a welcome move.

During the meeting,

Managing Director NBF Dr. Raja Mazhar Hameed briefed the president about role and performance of the Foundation. He said the National Book Foundation was taking measures for the people affected by dyslexia.

The meeting was told that the Foundation was preparing books for the dyslexic children from class prep to 8th that would be available during the academic year 2024-25.

It was informed that the Foundation's Braille Press in Karachi was producing the books to the visually impaired for Rs 10 only.

The books would help increasing the access of the visually impaired children to education.

"The Foundation would issue the books for the visually impaired children of class prep to 8th of 431 schools of Islamabad."

It was further informed in the meeting that the NBF was publishing books in Braille on a range of topics and it was also ensuring the availability of books in Pakistan and abroad.

President Alvi appreciated the role of the Foundation in promoting literacy and book reading culture in the country.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Health Abdullah Khan inaugurating 22-bedded CCU in the Sandeman Civil Hospital



HUB: View of business activities seen closed while markets gives desert look during the shutter down strike called by Baloch Yakjehti Committee against Baloch people genocide, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances

## Not holding election tantamount to surrender before terrorists: Siraj

ISLAMABAD (Online): JI Amir Siraj ul Haq has said election should be held in time and on February 8.

"Not holding election is tantamount to surrender before the terrorists and enemies of Pakistan, he said this in an interview with a private TV channel here Wednesday.

He held establishment had hand in bringing PML-N, PPP and PTI. The way one comes is ousted in the same way. Then they say "

why I was ousted. Who pushed me.

He went on to say " I want to say to establishment, judiciary and Election Commission (EC) that they should remain neutral now. I will not forge alliance or seat to seat adjustment with any one for the sake of power. He underlined the law and order situation in KP and Balochistan is worse. But elections can be held. Elections have taken place in state of war.

## Bomb blast targets JUI candidate in Bajaur

BAJAUR (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) candidate Qari Khairullah was targeted by a bomb blast in Tehsil Mamond of Bajaur district.

As per details, the bomb blast occurred near the vehicle of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) candidate Qari Khairullah in Bajaur district.

The JUI candidate survived the blast and remained safe however his vehicle was badly damaged.

## PML-N announces names of Balochistan candidates for upcoming polls

QUETTA (INP): The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) has announced the names of its candidates for national and provincial assemblies from Balochistan.

Taking to X, the PML-N said the party approved the award of party tickets to Balochistan candidates after conclusion of the interviews by the Central Parliamentary Board for the General Election 2024.

According to the list, Nawabzada Toor Gul Jugzai had been issued the party ticket from NA-251, whereas Sardar Yaqoob Nasir had been awarded the party ticket from NA-252.

Mir Dostain Khan Domki and Abdul Ghafoor

had been nominated from NA-253 and NA-254, respectively. The PML-N had awarded the party ticket to former Balochistan chief minister Jam Kamal from NA-257.

Aslam Bulaidi and Yaqoob Bizenjo had been awarded the party tickets from NA-258 and NA-259.

The party also awarded tickets to Sardar Fateh Muhammad Hassani from NA-260, Mir Atullah Langowe from NA-261, Nawab Salman Khan from NA-262, Jamal Shah Kakar from NA-263, Haji Arz Muhammad from NA-264, Saeedullah Tareen from NA-265, and Haji Abdul Mannan Khan Durrani from NA-266.

## Court dismisses bail plea of accused involved in forging contacts with RAW

RAWALPINDI (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad has dismissed the bail pleas of the accused involved in forging contacts with Indian secret agency RAW.

Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain heard the bail pleas of the accused including Arsalan Wajid and Muhammad Din Wednesday.

Prosecutor Rana Navid said in the court the accused persons received money from RAW agents

for committing the acts of sabotage in Pakistan. Police have recovered the money from the accused which was given by RAW agents to them. He said arms and ammunition have also been recovered from the accused.

The evidence against the two accused reflect their intent to commit acts of sabotage in Pakistan.

The defense counsels said in the court the case against both the accused is false and it has been framed without any reason.

## Alvi makes condolatory phone calls to families of 20 martyred soldiers

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Wednesday telephoned the families of 20 soldiers who were martyred in a terrorist attack in Dera Ismail Khan on December 12 and conveyed his condolences.

During the telephonic interaction, the president paid tribute to the martyred soldiers and expressed sympathies for the grieving families. He held telephonic interaction with the family members of havalidars Imran Khan, Muhammad Jamil, Muhammad Shahab, Fazal Subhan, Daud Shah and Riasat Khan. He also spoke with the families of Naik Mukhtar Ali, Lance Naik Muhammad Ishaq, Muhammad Hayat and Sagheer Ahmed, sopsys Rehman Shah, Ghulam Murtaza, Muhammad Fayyaz, Ameer Hussain, Adnan, Muhammad Naseer, Waqarullah Khan, Wali Khan, Zulfikar and Nabeel Akhtar.

## Robbers who usurped rights of people are hiding their faces: Zehri

**Independent Report**  
HUB: Senior leader of Pakistan Peoples Party and President of Hub District and Spokesman for Balochistan Asif Ali Zardari Mir Ali Hassan Zehri has said that nowadays it is the era of social media and it is not possible to deceive the people anymore. The era of factory extortion, smuggling, occupation, bullying threats, looting and closed room politics is now over. We will fight the mafia imposed for many decades by the power of the people and win the next elections by defeating the self-interested and anti-people elements through the democratic process.

These views were expressed by Mir Ali Hassan Zehri at the Allahabad Football Ground addressing the gathering program and rally.

He said that the opponents have become frightened by the popularity of the Peoples Party and have resorted to new tactics.

We don't just talk, we believe in practical measures and service to the people is our aim.

Meanwhile, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri reached the Allahabad football ground to address the inclusion program and Jalsa. He welcomed who joined the Pakistan People's Party. On this occasion, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri addressed the meeting.

He said that because of not being able to compete in the field of politics, now the opponents have come down to personalities and are thinking that they will fool the people by making fabricated allegations, but the people of Hub and Lasbela are not fooled by their tricks and deception and the situation is that the people are demanding an accountability of decades of deprivation and the robbers who usurped the rights of the people have been hiding their faces for forty years.

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## Jamote says: Uthal Police working day and night to eliminate crime

**Independent Report**  
UTHAL: SHO Jan Muhammad Jamote said that there is no issue regarding law and order in the Uthal city. Criminals will be dealt strictly. Drug dealers have been reined.

He expressed these views at police station Uthal while talking exclusively to the representative Bureau Chief Uthal Lasbela of Daily Independent.

Jan Muhammad Jamot said that there is no problem regarding law and order in District Head Quarter Uthal. Uthal is one of the crime free city. Strict actions have been taken against drug dealers. And if anyone will have been found in drug trade, he will be arrested.

Jan Muhammad Jamot further said that the Uthal Police is working day and night to eliminate crime so that the citizens can get relief. He said that it is a duty of Police to protect the public. Negative activities will not be tolerated at any cost, no matter how influential the accused may be.



QUETTA: A man tie dry woods on his motorbike before going home for domestic use.

## Anti-polio campaign in Chaman: DC urges parents to ensure immunization of their children

**Independent Report**  
CHAMAN: The outstanding performance of the security personnel for eradication of polio was acknowledged in border town Chaman on Wednesday.

Addressing the seminar, Deputy Commissioner said that we are proud of the services and sacrifices of our security personnel for eradication of polio virus in Chaman and other areas.

He urged the parents to ensure immunization of their children against the crippling polio disease.

The commendation certificates were distributed among the security personnel in recognition of their services and role for eradication of polio in Chaman.

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QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Information Imran Khan presiding over a meeting of Department Accounts Committee