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In boost to Nawaz and Tareen:

## SC nullifies lifetime disqualification of parliamentarians under Article 62

SC issues ruling with 6-1 majority; disqualification under Article 62 capped at 5 years; Justice Afridi differs with fellow judges; PML-N, PPP, IPP welcome SC's landmark judgment

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Monday nullified the lifetime disqualification of parliamentarians under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution with a 6-1 majority judgment.

The seven-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya

Afridi, Justice Amin ud Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali had reserved the verdict on January 5, which was announced today.

The seven-page written order read: "Article 62(1)(f) is not a self-executory provision as it does not by itself specify the court of law that is to make the declara-

tion mentioned therein nor does it provide for any procedure for making, and any period for disqualification incurred by, such declaration.

"There is no law that provides for the procedure, process and the identification of the court of law for making the declaration mentioned in Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution and the duration of such a

declaration, for the purpose of disqualification thereunder, to meet the requirements of the fundamental right to a fair trial and due process guaranteed by Article 10A of the Constitution.

"The interpretation of Article 62(1)(f) in imposing a lifetime disqualification upon a person through

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki chairing a review meeting on the law and order and preparations for the general elections in the province



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on the matters related to National Highway Authority (NHA), in Islamabad.

## PM orders completion of Karachi-Chaman Highway for improved Balochistan connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq on Monday directed completion of work at the Karachi-Chaman Highway as part of improving the road network across the country.

Chairing a review meeting on the projects relating to National Highway Authority (NHA), he said the step would not only facilitate the people of Balochistan but also prove as an alternate corridor for other areas. PM Kakar said the road infrastructure was crucial in ensuring development and progress of a country, especially the areas

having potential of foreign investment.

He stressed improved road infrastructure in Balochistan to ensure its connectivity with rest of the country.

The prime minister emphasized an in-depth planning and utilisation of resources in formulation of a policy on the road network.

Caretaker Minister for Communication Shahid Ashraf Tarar, Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Planning Minister Sami Saeed, NHA chairman and the officials concerned attended the meeting.

## Come what may, general election to take place on February 8: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (inp): Ruling out the possibility of delay in the February 8 general election, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said the polls will be held on time, come what may. Talking to journalists outside the Supreme Court on Monday, the former foreign minister said: "The election will be held on February 8 [as per schedule] even if

[they] get a resolution passed by the United Nations (UN). He asked the nation to prepare for the upcoming elections in the country.

His remarks came days after the Senate approved a non-binding resolution seeking a delay in the general elections, set to be staged next month, drawing strong criticism from mainstream political parties.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari talking with media persons outside Supreme Court

Support price of wheat fixed as Rs. 4300 per 40 KG for FY 23-24:

## Balochistan cabinet approves to continue policy of upper age limit of 43 years for Govt employments

Cabinet chaired by caretaker CM Mir Ali Mardan Domki approves six months extension in FC's deployment for restoration of peace in Balochistan

QUETTA: The interim cabinet of Balochistan has approved to continue upper age limit of 43 years for the government employments in the province.

The cabinet gave approval to this effect during its fifth meeting held with the caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki in the chair at the CM's secretariat on Mon-

day. The caretaker provincial ministers and advisors were present in the meeting. The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretaries of Planning and Home departments besides other administrative secretaries were also present in the meeting.

The interim cabinet discussed different impor-

tant matters and made certain decisions about the same.

The cabinet also gave approval to different matters.

The interim cabinet was agreed on continuing the upper age limit of 43 years for getting jobs in the government departments.

The cabinet also approved to fix the support

Continued on page 2

## Bahrain lauds Pakistan Army's counter-terrorism achievements

COAS Munir discusses military, security cooperation with Bahrain leadership

RAWALPINDI (Online): General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) is on a two days official visit to Kingdom of Bahrain.

He called upon the King, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, Crown Prince, H.R.H

Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Field Marshal Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander of Bahrain Defence Forces and H.H General Shaikh Mohammad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Commander of

Continued on page 2



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir exchanging views with Hamad Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain during meeting held in Bahrain.

## Seven-day anti-Polio campaign kicks off despite harsh weather conditions in Balochistan

QUETTA: The seven-day anti-polio campaign was kicked off all over Balochistan province including Quetta, even despite the harsh weather conditions, on Monday.

The Secretary Health Department, Abdullah Khan formally inaugurated the immunization campaign by administering anti-polio vaccine to the chil-

dren below five years of age. Also present on the occasion were the Coordinator Emergency Operation Center (EOC), Syed Zahid Shah, other concerned senior officials besides the representatives of WHO and UNICEF.

Speaking on the occasion, the Secretary Health

Continued from page 2



LAHORE: British High Commissioner Jane Marriot meeting with PML(N) quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif

## Appellate tribunals heard 40 appeals against acceptance & rejection of nomination papers

Tribunals allow Nawabzada Gazin Marri to contest polls; declare decisions of ROs regarding permission to Faiq Jamali and Jamal Raisani for contesting polls as null and void

QUETTA: The Appellate Tribunals heard in all 40 appeals against the acceptance and rejection of the nomination papers of the candidates for next general elections in the province, here on Monday. The Tribunals headed by the judges of Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Kakar and Mr. Justice Muhammad Aamir Nawaz Rana the appeals against acceptance and rejections of the papers.

The Tribunal of Mr. Justice Hashim Kakar heard 8 appeals. After hearing the same, it allowed four to contest the polls. One of the appeal filed in the Tribunal was dismissed.

The Tribunal-I deferred hearing on two appeals for today (Tuesday).

Similarly, the Tribunal-II of Justice Aamir Rana

heard 32 appeals. The tribunal allowed 15 candidates to contest elections after hearing of the appeals. This tribunal dismissed five appeals and reserved judgment on two appeals.

The Appellate Tribunal comprising Mr. Justice Rana allowed Nawabzada Gazin Marri to contest elections. An appeal was filed against acceptance of his papers by the PML-N candidate, Nawab Jangez Khan Marri.

The Tribunal deferred hearing of the appeal filed against acceptance of papers of Mir Naseebullah Marri.

Similarly, the Tribunal declared the decisions of Returning Officers regarding acceptance of nomination papers of PML-N candidate Mir Faiq Jamali and PPP's candidate, Mir Jamal Raisani as null and void.

## Preparations underway for free & fair elections in Balochistan: Services of Pak Army & FC to be taken for security in sensitive areas, says caretaker CM

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that the preparations are continued for conducting free, fair and transparent elections in Balochistan.

He said that the special measures are being taken adopted for restoring peace in the most sensitive and sensitive polling stations. The services of Pak army and Frontier Corps (FC) would be taken for security in the sensitive areas of the province.

He said that the CCT cameras would be installed in the very sensitive polling stations of the province.

The Election Commission of Pakistan and Balochistan government would set up control rooms to review the overall situa-

tion during the polls.

The Chief Minister assured that the wholehearted cooperation would be extended to the Election Commission for conducting free and fair elections in peaceful environment.

These and similar other views were expressed by the Caretaker Chief Minister while chairing a review meeting on the law and order and preparations for the general elections in the province, here at the CM's secretariat on Monday.

The provincial ministers, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Administrative Chief Secretary Home, Zahid Saleem, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, and other concerned high ups were in attendance at the meeting. The Divisional commissioners and deputy

Commissioners participated in the meeting through video link.

The meeting reviewed the overall law and order situation in the province. The meeting also discussed about the arrangements and preparations made for conduct of the upcoming elections in the province.

The concerned high ups briefed the participants about the proposed strategy for resolving the issues in this regard.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the joint monitoring rooms would be set up by the deputy commissioners and Election Commission at the district level.

He said that the progress of the situation about conduct of general elections would continue to be taken in the province.

## Calls on Nawaz British HC terms Feb 8 polls crucial for Pak future

LAHORE (INP): British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriot called on Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supremo Nawaz Sharif here on Monday. The meeting which centered on matters of mutual interest was also attended by PML-N leaders Shehbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz.

During the meeting, Nawaz Sharif stated that strong relations between Pakistan and the United Kingdom were in the interest of both the countries.

He emphasized the crucial role of Pakistani residents in the UK in strengthening the friendship between the two nations.

The three-time prime minister underscored that the promotion of relations in the various areas, including trade and investment between Pakistan and Britain, was essential. High commissioner Marriot conveyed congratulations to Nawaz Sharif over the successes in his legal battles. She also briefed the PML-N leader about her meetings with various political groups in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad.

## Pakistan Saudi Arabia sign annual Hajj agreement



ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed, along with Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, signed the annual Hajj agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

According to the spokesman of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed had unveiled the Hajj policy for 2024 in November 2023.

## Six cops martyred, 27 injured in bomb blast targeting police vehicle

BAJAUR (APP): At least six police officials were martyred and 27 wounded in a bomb explosion targeting a police vehicle in Belot Farsh area of Mamund tehsil in Bajaur district here Monday.

DPO Bajaur and Rescue 1122 spokesman told reporters that the cops were going to provide security to the polio vaccination teams when a roadside

bomb exploded, killing six policemen and injuring 27 others. The martyred cops were identified as Habib ur Rahim, resident of Inayat Killay, Munasib Khan of Tarkho, Muhammad Rauf Khan of Trakho Serai, Khan Muhammad, resident of Mamond and Ali Rehman.

The deceased and injured have been shifted to Khar hospital, where an emergency was declared.

## Kabul has no intention of causing harm to Pakistan: Afghan PM

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Afghan Prime Minister Mullah Hasan Akhund on Monday reassured Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the emir of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-

statement came during a meeting with Fazl, who is leading an 11-member delegation, which touched down in Kabul on Sunday.

"Islamic Emirate will not permit any threat to be posed to any country,"

lighted the crucial role of religious scholars in resolving issues and dispelling misunderstandings between Islamabad and Kabul.

Fazl was extended an invitation by the interim



Fazl (JUI-F), that Kabul has no intention of causing harm to Pakistan or any other country. The Afghan premier's

Akhund was cited in a statement released by Afghan government spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid. He also high-

Afghan government last month, marking his first visit to Afghanistan since the Taliban assumed control in 2021.

## CJP Isa wonders what ECP should do, hear cases or hold elections!

ISLAMABAD (INP): During the hearing of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf petition seeking a level playing field in elections, the Chief Justice of Pakistan remarked what did the PTI want, did it want 100% of its nomination papers to be approved.

A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali on Monday heard the PTI petition regarding its complaint of not getting a level playing field in the election. The Supreme Court sought a written response from the PTI on the reports of the Election Commission of Pakistan and the Punjab Chief Secretary and adjourned the hearing till next Monday.

The court also directed that the ECP and the Punjab CS could submit their reply if they wanted.

During the hearing, Chief Justice Isa asked PTI's lawyer Sardar Latif Khosa if he had read the ECP report which was submitted yesterday. He asked the lawyer if there was anything wrong in the report,

he should mention it.

Lawyer Khosa said that there was no mention of the reservations of the Punjab Election Commissioner in the report, on which the Chief Justice said 'Khosa Sahib, you cannot stand here and reject the report of the Election Commission'.

Khosa said to the Chief Justice that he wanted to draw his attention to his own order, to which the Chief Justice said, 'We know our order, why are you drawing attention?'

Justice Mian Muhammad Ali Mazhar said that according to the ECP report, 1,195 PTI people submitted their papers and the nomination papers of 76% of the PTI people were approved. According to the report, the papers of most of the people of Tehreek-e-Insaf have been approved, he added.

Latif Khosa said that the nomination papers of PTI's frontline candidates were not accepted, on which Justice Mazhar said that he himself said in his answer that the tribunals gave them relief.

The Chief Justice of

Pakistan said, "Does PTI want 100% of the nomination papers to be approved? Tell us what you want, this is a court of law, it cannot be governed by oral speech."

The Chief Justice wondered if the PTI wanted elections, to which Khosa replied that 100% elections should be held. The Chief Justice said, "The Election Commission's job is to conduct elections, these are the institutions created by you. Parliament has created these institutions, respect these institutions. If the facts submitted by the institution (ECP) are false, deny them."

CJP Isa continued, "If the institution denies your allegations, then you say it is not true." To which, Khosa complained that action was being taken against the PTI people by imposing Section 144. The Chief Justice remarked: "We are not the government but the Supreme Court. We are not running anyone's campaign, Section 144 and MPO will be for everyone, not only for PTI, neither Section 144 nor MPO has been challenged before us."



**RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir exchanging views with Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain during meeting held in Bahrain.**

## PM strongly condemns terrorist attack on polio workers' security team

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the police personnel assigned to provide security to the polio workers in Bajaur.

Paying tributes to the security personnel and the polio workers, the prime minister said the terrorists would never succeed in their nefarious designs.

PM Kakar offered his heartfelt condolence to the bereaved families and prayed to Allah Almighty

for the elevation of ranks of those martyred in the terrorist attack and early recovery of the injured.

The prime minister reiterated his resolve to continue the anti-polio campaign till the complete eradication of the virus in the country.

He said the people should not listen to the propaganda against the polio vaccine as the world renowned Islamic scholars and Jami Al-Azhar, Egypt had already endorsed the anti-polio programme.

## PM greets Sheikh Hasina on re-election

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday congratulated Sheikh Hasina on her re-election as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

The prime minister, in a post on the social media platform X, said, "I congratulate Sheikh Hasina on her re-election as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh."

I wish Sheikh Hasina a successful term in office and look forward to enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh under her leadership."

## Rizwan named vice-captain of Pakistan's T20I team

LAHORE (INP): The wicketkeeper-batsman, Mohammad Rizwan, appointed the vice-captain of Pakistan's T20I team.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has appointed Muhammad Rizwan as the vice-captain of the T20I national team led by Shaheen Shah Afridi for the series against New Zealand. Meanwhile, the first T20 match between Pakistan and New Zealand will be scheduled to be played on January 12 in Auckland, New Zealand.

Earlier today, the cricket team of Pakistan reached Auckland from Sydney, Australia, for a T20 international series against New Zealand. It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan recently got whitewashed against Australia in a Test series.

Pakistan squad for New Zealand T20Is. Shaheen Shah Afridi (captain), Aamir Jamal, Abbas Afridi, Azam Khan (wk), Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah (wk), Ifthikhar

Ahmed, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan (vc/wk), Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Usama Mir and Zaman Khan.

Schedule of Pakistan vs New Zealand T20I series  
1st T20 - 12 January 2024 at Eden Park, Auckland  
2nd T20 - 14 January 2024 at Seddon Park, Hamilton  
3rd T20 - 17 January 2024 at University Oval, Dunedin  
4th T20 - 19 January 2024 at Hagley Oval, Christchurch  
5th T20 - 21 January 2024 at Hagley Oval, Christchurch

## Four-day Hajj and Umra Services Conference & Exhibition opens in Saudi Arabia

JEDDAH (APP): The four-day Hajj and Umrah Services Conference & Exhibition 2024, being hosted by the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah under the patronage of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, opened here on Monday evening.

An opening ceremony held at Jeddah's prestigious Superdome, a state of the art event place having the capacity of 35,000 seats, was attended by ministers, ambassadors, consuls from various places around the world, and over 200 entities from both private and public companies operating in the Hajj and Umrah sector.

Pakistani Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmad and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi were also present in the opening session of the Hajj and Umrah Conference.

Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah Dr Tawfiq Al-Rabiah, in his inaugural address, highlighted the importance as well the aims and objectives of the annual conference and exhibition.

Speaking about commercial aspects and the increasing costs of Hajj and Umrah, he, however, reiterated the Kingdom's commitment to ensure provision of the best facilities to Hajj and Umrah pilgrims.

Besides the signing of two agreements between the Saudi authorities for enhanced cooperation in Hajj and Umrah affairs, some sponsor companies of the conference and exhibition were also awarded prizes during the inaugural session.

Alongside various sessions, the four-day conference will also host seminars, workshops and panel discussions on diverse subjects, including the role of media in dissemination of annual Hajj rituals through effective collaboration and partnerships among media entities from around the world.

The Hajj and Umrah Services Conference and Exhibition is an annual event that unites prominent thinkers, innovators, researchers, and entrepreneurs, all striving to improve pilgrimage services. This event is a crucial platform for fostering regional and international conversations with diverse Arab and Islamic communities.

Aligned with the Kingdom's Vision 2030, it greatly emphasizes transforming the Hajj and Umrah ecosystem. Central to this event is a strong dedication to enhancing and promoting services for pilgrims, aiming to provide them with exceptional and meaningful experiences.

## Funeral prayers of three brothers died in Pir Jagi accident offered

Our Correspondent

KOT ADDU: The funeral prayers of three brothers who died in the Pir Jagi accident was offered here on Monday.

Three brothers Abu Bakr Siddique, Ahad and Abdullah riding a motorcycle were crushed by a truck in Pir Jagi yesterday and were died.

According to the details, candidate MNA Ifthikhar Ali Babar Khan Khattran, Usama Jakhar, candidate MPA Ali Asghar

Gurmani, Rafafat Gilani participated in the funeral prayer. Candidate MPs Maher Ijaz Achalana, Maher Tufail Lohanch, Maher Sanaullah Wander also participated. Candidate MPA Osama Asghar Gujjar, people from every school of thought participated in the funeral prayer.

On the occasion of the funeral prayer, every eye was in tears. Bloody scenes. People appealed to the Punjab government to provide financial support to the bereaved.



**A delegation led by Malik Farhan Kakar meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar**

## SC nullifies lifetime disqualification...

Continued from page 1  
an implied declaration of a court of civil jurisdiction while adjudicating upon some civil rights and obligations of the parties is beyond the scope of the said Article and amounts to reading into the Constitution.

"Such reading into the Constitution is also against the principle of harmonious interpretation of the provisions of the Constitution as it abridges the fundamental right of citizens to contest elections and vote for a candidate of their choice enshrined in Article 17 of the Constitution, in the absence of reasonable restrictions imposed by law.

"Until a law is enacted to make its provisions executive, Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution stands on a similar footing as Article 62(1)(d), (e) and (g), and serves as a guideline for the voters in exercising their right to vote.

"The view taken in Sami Ullah Baloch case treating the declaration made by a court of civil jurisdiction regarding breach of certain civil rights and obligations as a declaration mentioned in Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution and making such declaration to have a lifelong disqualifying effect amounts to reading into the Constitution and is therefore overruled.

"Section 232(2) added in the Elections Act, 2017, prescribes a period of five years for the disqualification in terms of Article 62(1)(f) and has also made such declaration subject to the due process of law. This provision is already in field, and there remains no need to examine its validity and scope in the present case.

"Syed Ali Imran, the Secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association ('SCBA'), stated that the

SCBA sought to withdraw appeal filed in 2022, therefore, the said appeal and petition are dismissed as withdrawn.

Justice Yahya Afridi, in his dissenting note, said, "For reasons to follow, the extent of qualification of a member of the Parliament, as envisaged under Article 62(1)(f), is neither lifelong nor permanent, and the same shall remain effective only during the period the declaration so made by a court of law remains in force. Therefore, the conclusion so drawn by this court in Sami Ullah Baloch is legally valid, hence affirmed."

Meanwhile the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), and the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) welcomed the Supreme Court's (SC) landmark judgment, ending politicians' lifetime disqualification under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution.

After much deliberation, the Supreme Court of Pakistan ended the lifetime disqualification of lawmakers and declared that no person can be barred for a lifetime from running in elections if they are disqualified under Article 62(1)(f).

Setting aside its verdict in the Samiullah Baloch case, the apex court recalled its earlier order of disbaring politicians from running for office ever, boosting hopes for political bigwigs who are eyeing to contest polls on February 8.

A seven-member larger bench — headed by CJP Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, and Justice Musarrat Hilali — announced the verdict with a 6-1 majority as Justice Yahya disagreed with

his fellow judges, backing the apex court's previous judgment.

Hailing the fresh verdict, Central Secretary Information of the Nawaz-led party Marriyum Aurangzeb termed it "a step towards restoration of constitutional sanity."

"History has vindicated Nawaz Sharif and restored his honour, while Saqib Nisar's short-lived vengeful act has been dishonourable discarded," she said in a statement.

Mariyum claimed that the provision of lifetime disqualification was an instrument created for one reason and one agenda to persecute and exclude the "longest-serving prime minister from national politics forever."

"The architects of this sinister provision in the law should be held accountable for adulterating the constitution of Pakistan, which was the highest level of offence in the Islamic republic," she added. The former federal minister said: "Let the true representatives of Pakistanis could not be eliminated from the political landscape due to the 'conspiratorial nefarious designs of a few individuals.'"

Mariyum stressed that stringent consequences need to be defined to ensure that nobody should ever dare abrogate the Constitution for political gains.

The principle of constitutional sanctity and sanity must not be restricted to the PML-N quaid, but also "stand for all patriotic political leaders of Pakistan". Only the people of Pakistan have the power through their vote to qualify or disqualify their representatives, she concluded. IPP President Abdul Aleem Khan termed the Supreme Court's verdict "a welcoming move".

## Pakistan shooter Kashmala Talat qualifies for Paris Olympics

JAKARTA: Pakistani shooter Kishmala Talat on Monday qualified for the Paris 2024 Olympics after bagging a silver medal at the Asian Shooting Championship.

Talat ranked second in the Women's 10m Air Pistol event with a remarkable score of 236.6 points at the Asian Shooting Championship in Jakarta, Indonesia. India's Esha Singh clinched gold with 243.1 points, while her teammate Rhythm Sangwan claimed bronze with 214.5 points.

Talat, 21, is now the third Pakistani shooter to qualify for the Paris Olympics, after Guljam Joseph and G.M. Bashir, and the first female.

## Services of Pak Army & FC...

Continued from page 1

He directed the divisional commissioners to keep sending progress reports about conducting the free and fair elections to the Chief Minister secretariat on regular basis so as to address the related issues establishing conducive environment.

The caretaker Chief Minister said that he would visit all the divisions to personally review the law and order situation and arrangements made for the elections.

Meanwhile, it was informed that a total of 5067 polling stations would be established all over the province.

Out of them, 2055 have been declared most sensitive, 2180 as sensitive and 832 as normal.

The IGP informed that strategy has been prepared for security of the election candidates, and polling staff in the province.

The cabinet also decided to approve the counter terrorism force (CTF) allowance for the CTD.

## Balochistan cabinet approves...

Continued from page 1

price of wheat as Rs. 4300 per moud (40 Kilogram) for the year 2023-24 in the province. Moreover, the cabinet decided to declare the healthcare staff died during the duty in health department as martyrs.

Similarly, the cabinet also approved to determine the gridding price of wheat besides the pending policy 2023 for supply of wheat

to the flour mills.

In another important initiative, the interim cabinet approved to extend deployment of Frontier Corps (FC) for six months in the province. The initiative was taken for restoration of peace in the province, as decided in the meeting.

The cabinet also decided to approve the counter terrorism force (CTF) allowance for the CTD.

Addressing the meeting, the Chief Secretary stressed that everyone has to work on war footing grounds for eradication of polio from the province and country.

He said that almost all countries of the world have been free from the polio virus just due to the repeated campaign against its eradication.

He urged the parents and other segments of the society to contribute wholeheartedly in the endeavours being made for eradication of polio.

## Seven-day anti-Polio campaign...

Continued from page 1

said that the anti-polio campaign is being initiated in the province from Monday. During the campaign, over 2.59 million children would be administered the anti-polio drops for around 11000 teams have been constituted.

He said that the necessary security has been provided to the anti-polio teams during the campaign.

Meanwhile, the anti-polio teams started the polio eradication mission in the harsh weather conditions even.

According to the EOC spokesman, the anti-polio teams including females workers are reaching in the snow-hit areas of Pishin, Ziarat and Killa Saifullah to administer the anti-polio vaccine to the children.

Meanwhile, a meeting



**QUETTA: Beautiful eye catching view of dark clouds covered sky over the mountains during cloudy weather before downpour of winter season, captured over the horizon of Quetta.**

## Elections of BODs of SEHER to be held on Jan 15

Independent Report  
QUETTA: The elections of Board of Directors (BODs) of Society for Empowering Human Resource (SEHR) will be held on January 15, 2024 at its central office.

According to the a Press release, all the members of the Board are requested to ensure their presence in the elections.

## Kabul has no...

Continued from page 1

Before embarking on Afghanistan trip, Fazl had asserted that the visit would consider the interests of both Pakistan and Afghanistan, adding that he intended to communicate Pakistan's position to the Taliban leaders. According to Fazl, the Foreign Office had provided him a briefing on Jan 3, highlighting Pakistan's stance and demands. During the meeting, the Afghan prime minister called for a cessation of what he deemed as Pakistan's "brutal" policy towards Afghan refugees, saying that "such actions do not solve problems, but contribute to mistrust".

Afghanistan's acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, also present at the meeting, highlighted the issues faced by Afghan traders and challenges in transit trade and exports caused by Pakistani officials. Muttaqi stressed that trade and economic matters should not be sacrificed for political purposes.

## Tribunal allows Hammad's father to contest election from NA-129

LAHORE (APP): An appellate tribunal on Monday allowed Mian Muhammad Azhar, the father of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Hammad Azhar, to contest election from National Assembly constituency NA-129 (Lahore).

The tribunal allowed appeal against rejection of Mian Muhammad Azhar's nomination papers after setting aside the decision of the returning officer.

The tribunal comprising Justice Tariq Nadeem heard the appeal filed by Mian Muhammad Azhar against rejection of his nomination papers by the returning officer for NA-129.

## Bahrain lauds Pakistan...

Continued from page 1

Bahrain National Guard. During the meetings, matters of mutual interest including bilateral military and security cooperation were discussed. The dignitaries lauded Pakistan Army's achievements in fight against terrorism and continued efforts for regional peace and stability.

COAS was also Chief Guest at the 27th Raising Day of Bahrain National Guard where he was warmly welcomed and given Guard of Honour and witnessed a demonstration

related to counter-terrorism training exercise.

Commander Bahrain National Guard extended his gratitude and appreciation to the Pakistan Army for providing highly professional training to the Bahrain National Guard in military and counter terrorism domains.

King of Bahrain also conferred Military Medal Order of Bahrain First Class on COAS in recognition of his significant efforts and contributions to the enhancement of bilateral ties between the two brotherly countries.



**QUETTA: Inundated road by overflowing sewerage water, creating problems for residents and commuters, showing negligence of concerned authorities, at New Sabzal Road in Quetta.**

## IHC seeks case record of Sanjarani's removal from SML

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Islamabad High Court on Monday sought the case record of the dismissal of Raziq Sanjarani as the Managing Director of Saindak Metals Limited (SML).

IHC Chief Justice Amir Farooq, who heard the plea of Raziq Sanjarani, asked whether legal procedures were adhered to in the removal process.

The government lawyer stated that Raziq Sanjarani was removed from the post with the prime minister's approval.

Directing the petitioner to do amendments in his application and make the relevant company to be a party, the court adjourned the hearing till January 17.

Raja Inam Amin Minhas counsel for Raziq Sanjarani appeared in the court.

Prosecutor Munawwar Iqbal Duggal and Asad Ladha advocate counsel for company also appeared in the court.

The CJ inquired what is role of Prime Minister (PM) in this case.

Prosecutor said Raziq Sanjarani was removed with the approval of PM.

The CJ IHC remarked PM has accorded approval under what law. Hundreds of applications come to me against the administration. If I go on accepting all applications then the respective institution will do what.

The counsel for company said it is powers of company to remove its CEO.

The CJ inquired I have

no objection over removal or non-removal of any one by company. But it should be done within the parameters of law. If company does so then it would have done so. But here point is this PM gave approval under what law. Now what is status. Has company appointed any CEO.

The counsel for company said for the time being company has appointed acting CEO.

The court while directing to make amendment in the petition of Raziq Sanjarani remarked the company be made respondent in this petition.

The court while issuing notice to respondents has summoned case record on next hearing.

Hearing of the case was adjourned till January 17.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## Mushaal urges world to provide support against stopping illegal measures in Kashmiris, Palestine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women's Empowerment Mushaal Hussain Mullick on Monday urged the international community to provide immediate assistance against illegal actions and to protect civilians in Gaza and Kashmir.

Talking to a private news channel, she said that IIOJK and Palestine have turned into prisons where thousands of people, including women, lawyers and youths, have been imprisoned and employees were being fired.

The brutal use of force and pellet guns against the Kashmiris is witnessed by

the world, she said, adding, that there is no denying the fact that without the resolution of the Kashmir issue, regional peace is not possible. No power in the world can deprive any nation of its fundamental rights so Kashmiris and Palestine will get their right to self-determination shortly, she expressed hope.

She lamented that the world powers are not taking serious notice of grave human rights violations committed by Israeli and Indian troops, adding, that many innocent civilians have been martyred by Israeli and Indian forces.

Israeli forces are not hesitant in targeting hospitals and schools, she men-

tioned. She also stressed that the Muslim Ummah should unite in favor of the Palestinian and Kashmiri people, adding that Muslim countries should boycott Israel diplomatically and economically.

It is the need of the hour that Muslim Ummah must take some concrete steps and devise some joint mechanism to pressure Israel to stop genocide in Palestine, she added.

Replying to a query, she said Pakistan is committed to its stance that it will not accept Israel and India until the Palestinian as well as Kashmiri people get an independent state as per UN resolutions.

## Medical colleges' seat enhancement only possible with PMDC's approval

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) on Monday clarified that no seat enhancement in medical and dental colleges was possible without its approval. According to a PMDC spokesperson, the Council had not agreed to 20 percent seat enhancement for MBBS and BDS programmes in public and private colleges.

Neither any application had been received from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for such seat enhancement nor the Council had given any such approval to anybody, he added.

The spokesperson said that provincial and regional authorities could enhance seats in medical and dental colleges with due approval from the PMDC which was the apex regula-

tory body of the country. He said that the Council had a set criteria, rules, regulations and standards in line with the global commitments for its recognition with the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME).

He said that recognition of MBBS or BDS programmes and enhancement of seats was done in a due procedure, which "includes formal requests by provincial governments or individual colleges through the Ministry of Health".

He said that the PMDC was a national regulatory body and according to the law "no province can work or announce any enhancement independently". Seats enhancement in public or private colleges was subject to the completion of the due process, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Secretary GB Abrar Ahmed Mirza calls on to Chief Minister GB Haji Gul Bar Khan at his office.

## FDE promote 509 teachers from grade 18 to 21

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) has given time scale promotion to 509 teachers of model and FG setup educational institutions from grade 18 to 21.

Central President of Federal Government Teachers Association Malik Amir Khan, Heads Association President Fazal Mulla, General Secretary Heads Association Mansoor Shah and Non-Teaching Association President Sardar Siddiq has thanked the Special Secretary Ministry of Education Mohiuddin Wani, Secretary Education Wasim Ajmal, SO Promotion Rashid Khan Marwat, Director Promotion on awarding Time Scale Promotion to the teachers.

They also thanked Javed Mirza and FDE officials for granting the time scale promotion and said that the teachers had long demanded that they should be given time scale promotion as it will enhance the morale of the teachers.

According to the details, the Federal Directorate of Education departmental promotion board meeting was held in which 509 teachers of FG and model setup have been promoted from grade 18 to 21.

Around 14 teachers have been promoted from grade 20 to grade 21 in which three males and four females professors of FG setup educational institutions were included.

While two male and female each professors of model colleges and two male and one female principal of Islamabad Model Schools/Colleges (FG setup) were included in the promoters.

However, 138 teachers have been promoted from grade 19 to grade 20, including 48 Associate Professors (males, females) of FG colleges, while 51 Associate Professors (males, females) and 8 DHMs (males, females) of Model Colleges have also been given promotion.

Similarly, Islamabad Model Colleges, Schools (FG setup) 31 principals (males, females) were also among the promoters.

A total 357 teachers were promoted in grades 18 to 19, including 72 associate professors of FG colleges (males, females), 110 associate professors of model colleges (males, females) and 175 Vice-Principals of Islamabad Model Colleges, Schools (males, females) were also included.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors sits around the fire along the road side to counter coldness during the extreme weather conditions of winters.

## Islamabad Capital Police Radio FM 92.4 is working efficiently

ISLAMABAD (APP): In 2023, 14,754 traffic updates, 108,000 traffic-related awareness messages, and 1,520 recreational and informational programs were disseminated to the citizens. Additionally, the awareness team is actively providing information to the public at various times at different intersections and roads to educate them about traffic laws and road safety.

Following these directions, the Secretariat police team arrested an accused namely Shahzad Hussain involved in hashish selling and recovered 1069 gram hashish from his possession, while police team arrested an accused namely Danyal Hussain involved in illegally refilling gas cylinders. The Karachi Company police team arrested an accused namely Kashif Masih and recovered 20 bottles of wine from his possession. Similarly, the Sumbal police team arrested an accused namely Rizwan Ali involved in drug peddling and recovered 1170 gram heroin from his possession. The Sabzi Mandi police team arrested an accused namely Fazal Ur Rehman and recovered 633 gram hashish from his possession.

and 1,520 recreational and informational programs were brought to the attention of the citizens.

On this occasion, the CPO Safe City/Traffic states that while Islamabad Capital Police is committed to ensuring the security of life and property of city citizens, they are also actively keeping them informed about traffic matters and providing recreational opportunities.

He further emphasized that the awareness team is continuously providing information on traffic laws and road safety to the public at various times and locations and every possible measure is being taken for the protection of life and property of the citizens. No room will be given to criminal elements to disturb public peace, and residents are urged to cooperate with the police.



Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Mr. Fawad Hasan Fawad chaired Privatisation Commission Board meeting in Islamabad.

## Equipping youth with IT is need of hour: VC AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood on Monday said that there is a dire need to equip young people with information technology to achieve speedy progress at domestic and international level. If the entire system of the university had not been digitized in time, it would not be possible to carry on educational activities during the COVID-19 period, he said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the newly constructed building of the Directorate of Information and Communication Tech-

nology (ICT). Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that no one in Pakistan has such a platform and students have got online facilities because of digitalization, adding that problems are being solved on priority basis by reason of modern technology.

He said that digitalization was the vision and mission of Dr. Zia ul Qayyum. Despite the interruption caused by COVID-19, he said, AIOU continued its educational activities, which is the credit to the former VC. Executive Director, Higher Education Commission (HEC) and former VC AIOU, Prof. Dr. Zia ul Qayyum, were also

present on the occasion as the chief guests.

Expressing gratitude to the university administration for continuing its efforts for digitalization policy, Dr. Zia said that good initiatives should be carried forward to strengthen institutions. He said that new ICT building is a modern facility, and it should be run by planning.

After digitization, he said it is imperative to pay special attention to the quality of education and course development, particularly in standardizing the texts of undergraduate, BS, post-graduate diploma programs, and associate programs.

## Islamabad kicks off 7-Day anti polio drive aiming to vaccinate 421,000 children under five

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a concerted effort to combat polio, Islamabad Capital administration on Monday launched a comprehensive seven-day anti-polio campaign, targeting the vaccination of 421,000 children under the age of five.

The district administration has meticulously organized and prepared for the initiative, ensuring that every household is covered. ICT spokesman Dr

As part of the pre-campaign strategy, Assistant Commissioners will conduct assembly sessions to brief the public and polio teams on the importance of the initiative and clear instructions regarding coverage and denial have been issued to polio workers, emphasizing the critical role they play in achieving the vaccination targets.

Highlighting the community's role, the DC

safeguard the community against the virus.

DC emphasized that with a commitment to inclusivity, the polio workers aim to reach every household over the next seven days. In case they miss any location, citizens are encouraged to promptly inform the district administration's helpline, managed by DC Islamabad. This two-way communication ensures that no child is left unvaccinated, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the campaign.

In addition to vaccinating children, the campaign emphasizes the importance of protecting the polio workers themselves. Citizens are reminded to take protective measures to ensure the safety of these frontline workers, recognizing their dedication to the health and well-being of the community.

This holistic approach, coupled with the active involvement of Assistant Commissioners and the cooperation of citizens, positions Islamabad to make significant strides in eradicating polio within its borders.



Abdullah said while talking to APP.

Assistant Commissioners will play a pivotal role in supervising the drive across their respective divisions, with a focus on community engagement.

## E&T Dept to provide one stop solution for vehicle registration at Fatima Jinnah Park today

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a move to simplify the often tedious process of vehicle registration and acquiring essential documents, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Monday initiated a convenient service in the city.

The surroundings of Fatima Jinnah Park Bolan Gate F9 are set to host the excise staff from 3 to 5 pm today, offering a hassle-free experience for residents seeking to register, transfer, or pay token tax for their vehicles. ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said.

Under the directive of Deputy Commissioner Memon, the excise staff will be stationed at the park's parking lot, streamlining the procedures related to vehicles. This initiative aligns with the commitment to make essential services more accessible to the public.

He said that adding to the convenience, the Facilitation Center Doorstep ICT Vehicle will also be available on-site. This doorstep service encompasses a variety of essential documents, making it a one-stop solution for residents.

## Cold wave to grip most parts of country: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Cold wave will grip most parts of the country including upper parts, north Balochistan, and northern parts during the next 24 hours, as per the forecast of the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

According to the synoptic situation, a trough of westerly wave was present over western parts of the country and may persist in upper parts till Tuesday morning. Mainly cold and cloudy weather is expected in most of the upper parts of the country, while very cold in northern parts and north Balochistan. Dense fog/smog is likely to persist in plain areas of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and upper Sindh.



ISLAMABAD: Deserving people are eating dinner at free food distribution point at Sector G-8 as due to the extreme inflation the quantity of such deserving people are increasing day by day in Federal Capital.

## I'abad police enhance services for driving license applicants

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police have implemented measures to improve convenience for driving license applicants, aiming to facilitate prompt issuance of licenses to eligible individuals.

A special meeting convened at the traffic headquarters in Faizabad, chaired by Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad, Muhammad Sarfraz Virk, focused on evaluating the steps taken to augment citizen convenience during the licensing process.

The primary objective is to ensure that all applicants receive comprehensive facilities and equitable treatment.

Acknowledging the exceptional performance of police officials, the meeting included the issuance of special instructions to further elevate the quality of services. Islamabad police

is dedicated to providing professional expertise and prioritizing the welfare of the public. The meeting emphasized the national recognition of the Islamabad Capital Police as a model force, underscoring the need to continue working diligently to maintain this esteemed reputation.

The CTO stressed the importance of maintaining a courteous demeanor when interacting with citizens and highlighted the significance of offering comprehensive facilities for obtaining driving licenses.

Equal treatment and instilling confidence among applicants were key focal points, with discussions centered on implementing a merit-based assessment system for driving tests.

The education team received instructions to raise awareness about traffic laws and road safety among driving learners.



ISLAMABAD: Workers of Capital Development Authority (CDA) are watering the plant on green belt along the road side in Federal Capital.

## Nine outlaws arrested; drugs and liquors recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police apprehended nine outlaws from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered heroin, hashish and liquor from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Secretariat police team arrested an accused namely Shahzad Hussain involved in hashish selling and recovered 1069 gram hashish from his possession, while police team arrested an accused namely Danyal Hussain involved in illegally refilling gas cylinders. The Karachi Company police team arrested an accused namely Kashif Masih and recovered 20 bottles of wine from his possession. Similarly, the Sumbal police team arrested an accused namely Rizwan Ali involved in drug peddling and recovered 1170 gram heroin from his possession. The Sabzi Mandi police team arrested an accused namely Fazal Ur Rehman and recovered 633 gram hashish from his possession.

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## Improving visibility

As winter sets in across Pakistan it brings with it the inevitable challenge of fog, which significantly disrupts road, rail, and air travel. To mitigate the impacts of this yearly occurrence, a comprehensive strategy is necessary. Enhancing communication between authorities and travellers is crucial. Real-time updates via hotlines, websites, social media, and news outlets can enable commuters to make informed decisions. Since fog and worse still, smog, have become permanent features of the cooler months, the government must proactively plan to combat these issues. This includes acquiring special aircraft for artificial rains whenever needed. Recently, the Punjab government sourced such aircraft from the UAE, but the measure was only temporary. A permanent solution with readily available artificial rain equipment is needed. Furthermore, Lahore and Islamabad airports are equipped with the advanced Instrument Landing Systems (ILS CAT-III(B)) — an anti-fog system enabling airplanes to land at low visibility levels. Such technology must be installed across the country's airports.

Exploring additional technological solutions, such as Ground-Based Augmentation (GBAS) and Advanced Surface Movement Guidance and Control Systems (A-SMGCS), can improve visibility on runways and taxiways, thus reducing flight delays and cancellations. On the ground, enhancing road and rail infrastructure to combat fog-related disruptions is essential. Mainstreaming the installation of reflective road markings, adequate street lighting, and fog detection systems can improve visibility on highways. Similarly, the railway sector can benefit from improved signalling systems and fog-safe devices, maintaining the safety and regularity of train services.

In addition, there should be an emphasis on creating a robust contingency plan for transportation services during foggy conditions. This involves not just rerouting and rescheduling, but also ensuring that there are enough resources, such as additional buses and trains, to manage the increased passenger load when services resume normal operations. Public awareness and safety measures also play a vital role. Campaigns focusing on safe driving practices in foggy conditions, such as reducing speed, using fog lights, etc can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Collaboration with the Met department for accurate forecasts can assist in planning, including the scheduling or rerouting of flights, trains, and buses during times of minimal fog occurrence. Furthermore, investing in research to better understand fog formation in different regions of Pakistan can lead to more targeted and effective solutions. Additionally, authorities should consider implementing variable message signs (VMS) on major highways. These electronic signs can provide real-time information about fog conditions and alternative routes, thereby enhancing safety. The use of thermal imaging cameras in fog-prone areas can also aid drivers and authorities by providing clearer images than those captured by standard cameras in low-visibility situations. In embracing these comprehensive strategies, Pakistan can effectively turn the challenges posed by fog into opportunities for growth and innovation in its transportation and public safety sectors.

# 5-Strategic Communications to derail elections...

By Qamar Bashir

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



The interim government has orchestrated a coordinated effort to obstruct or delay the impending elections through a multifaceted strategic communication strategy. This intricate approach, executed subtly, revolves around five pivotal narratives: prioritizing financial and economic stability over electoral processes, justifying the interim government's continuity citing security concerns, leveraging adverse weather conditions to advocate for postponement, associating the pursuit of justice for the 9<sup>th</sup> May incident with election timing, and crucially, emphasizing that aggrieved parties won't accept election outcomes, potentially plunging the country into chaos. This narrative underscores the rationale for postponing elections until all parties consent to accept the election results, portraying it as a crucial step towards averting potential unrest and chaos.

From a Public Relations perspective, each narrative serves as a strategic tool to shift focus away from the electoral process, weaving a complex web of reasoning to legitimize the government's intent to circumvent or postpone the elections in favor of its continuation.

Communication Strategy 1 begins by addressing the severity of the financial and economic situation in Pakistan. Emphasize the challenges, such as debt burden, inflation, and economic instability, impacting the daily lives of citizens. Stress the crucial need for stability to ensure the well-being and prosperity of the nation. Present a bleak picture of what might happen without

immediate corrective measures. Illustrate the interim government's proactive steps and policies taken to stabilize the economy. Highlight achievements and ongoing efforts to mitigate the crisis, emphasizing that they are promising but need time to yield positive results. Frame it as a sacrifice for a stable and prosperous future. Emphasizing the need for unity and co-operation, suggesting that delaying elections is a collective decision for the greater benefit of Pakistan.

Leveraging Communication Channels by utilizing television, radio, newspapers, and social media to disseminate the message widely and consistently. Arrange speeches by influential figures to reinforce the narrative of financial emergency and the necessity of stability. Using Slogan: "Ensuring Stability, Securing Tomorrow: Let Our Economy Flourish First!" Visual Imagery: Infographics, charts showing economic indicators improving, visuals depicting stability leading to prosperity.

The SC campaign-2 begins by prioritizing citizens' safety above electoral processes, emphasizing the broader regional implications of Pakistan's security situation. The postponement of elections is positioned as a measure to safeguard citizens' lives, reinforcing that public safety remains paramount. Continuous engagement through regular updates and open dialogues with stakeholders, including security forces and international partners to ensure transparency, address concerns, and gather support for this crucial strategy.

Various media platforms are used extensively—television, radio, newspapers, and social media—to disseminate a consistent message about the critical need for stability. Key influential figures are engaged to deliver speeches reinforcing the narrative. Visual

aids, including infographics showcasing pressing security challenges. It vividly depicts Pakistan's volatile security landscape, emphasizing the gravity of significant domestic, regional, and international security threats with the slogan "Terrorism and Instability." The campaign advocates for a "Security First Approach," stressing that conducting elections amid such turmoil risks citizen safety and democratic integrity. It aims to showcase the interim government's unwavering commitment to national security, highlighting ongoing efforts to combat terrorism and restore stability.

Strategic Communication-3: The Campaign Title: "Prioritizing Public Safety: Postponement Due to Severe Weather Conditions". The Key Message: "Postponing Elections for Public Safety Amid Harsh Winter Weather". Illustrating the severity of the ongoing winter weather across the country, emphasizing its adverse impact on public safety and accessibility to polling stations. Emphasize that the extreme weather conditions will deprive a significant portion of the population from exercising their fundamental right to vote. Frame the decision to postpone elections as a necessary step to prioritize the safety and well-being of citizens. Highlight the dangers posed by severe weather, such as transportation hazards, potential accidents, and health risks, making it unsafe for citizens to travel to polling stations. Emphasize the government's duty to ensure citizens' safety and well-being above all else. Position the postponement as a temporary delay, ensuring that citizens will have the opportunity to exercise their voting rights when weather conditions improve. To achieve the results, utilize television, radio,

newspapers, and social media to ensure a consistent and clear message about the weather-related challenges and the decision's necessity for public safety. Keep the public informed about weather improvements and any developments regarding rescheduling elections. Sample Slogan: "Safety First: Weathering the Storm for a Fair Election Tomorrow!". Visual Imagery: Visuals portraying harsh winter weather conditions, safety precautions, and images illustrating citizens' difficulties in reaching polling stations.

Strategic Communication-4 begins with the campaign to delay elections until the culprits of the 9<sup>th</sup> May incident are brought to justice. Campaign Title: "Justice Before Democracy: Holding Accountable the Culprits of 9<sup>th</sup> May". Key Message: "Postponing Elections for Justice: Prioritizing Accountability and National Reconciliation". Communication Strategy: Shedding light on the significance of addressing the unresolved 9<sup>th</sup> May incident, emphasizing its impact on national reconciliation and stability. Appeal to the public sentiment for accountability, stressing that bringing culprits to justice is crucial for healing and moving forward as a nation. Frame the resolution of the 9<sup>th</sup> May incident as a precondition for holding fair and transparent elections. Highlight that accountability fosters national unity and reconciliation, laying the groundwork for a stronger democratic future. Utilize various media platforms, arrange speeches by influential figures, keep the public informed about progress made in addressing the 9<sup>th</sup> May incident, showcasing steps taken towards accountability. Sample Slogan: "Justice Prevails: Ensuring Accountability for a Stronger Democracy". Visual Imagery: Visuals depicting the pursuit of justice,

accountability processes, and images illustrating national unity and reconciliation.

Communication Strategy-5 Title: "Ensuring Fairness: Postponing Elections for Inclusive Resolution". Key Message: "Postponing Elections to Address Fairness Concerns: Prioritizing National Unity and Trust in the Democratic Process". It begins with acknowledging concerns raised by political parties, particularly PTI, regarding fairness and transparency in the election process. Emphasize the necessity of creating an environment where all parties accept the election results to prevent post-election chaos. Position postponement as a means to ensure a more stable and consensus-driven electoral outcome. Leveraging Communication Channels: Television, radio, newspapers, and social media—to communicate the rationale behind postponement and the commitment to fairness. Arrange discussions and forums for direct engagement with political parties to address concerns and seek collaborative solutions. Ensuring that decisions regarding the electoral process are made in the best interest of the nation. Sample Slogan: "Fairness Unites: Postponing for an Inclusive Electoral Process". Visual Imagery: Graphics symbolizing fairness, inclusivity, and unity among political parties, aiming for a harmonious electoral process.

These five strategies, while aimed at achieving certain objectives, raise concerns about their alignment with constitutional principles. It's evident that our nation, already fragile, cannot endure another unconstitutional disruption, as any illegal actions to achieve these goals could result in dire consequences. Despite our history marked by martial laws and setbacks, there's a recurring pattern where powerful forces often achieve

their objectives by disregarding, manipulating, or violating the constitution without facing consequences.

The constitution provides for holding provincial assembly elections within 90 days of dissolution, yet despite court orders in September 2023, elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces were delayed with total impunity. The absence of fresh elections since the National Assembly's dissolution in April 2023 raises questions about adherence to reasonable timeframes implied by constitutional provisions. Legal experts have raised concerns about the interim government's decisions, suggesting they might overstep constitutional limitations. Issues surrounding the independence of the judiciary and media under the interim setup add complexity to the situation. The Supreme Court and the interim government are going to face off once again on the question of holding elections on 8<sup>th</sup> February.

The nation is keeping its fingers crossed. It's critical to emphasize the importance of upholding the rule of law and respecting the decisions made by the Supreme Court. In any democratic society, institutions must function independently within their prescribed roles. If there's a disagreement or concern about a decision, the appropriate and lawful approach is to address it through legal channels, such as filing appeals or presenting arguments in court that adhere to the legal framework and the constitution. Attempting to circumvent or undermine the decisions of the Supreme Court through illegal or unconstitutional means can have severe consequences, not just for the democratic process but also for the stability and credibility of the country's institutions.

## GST to NST challenges



Aisha Khan

Climate change is addressed at two levels. This includes conversations in the international arena and actions on the home theatre. The global climate conversation takes place every year at an annual summit, using a multilateral platform to reach negotiated agreements on contentious issues. The outcome of climate summits has an impact on every country, with varying degrees of intensity, depending on the national circumstance. The two hotly contested issues at the annual gatherings of parties revolve around finance and timelines for mitigation. The Conference of Parties (COP) has expanded to include civil society organisations, environmental activists, private sector, scientists and many more to optimise the two-week duration for pitching views and networking to forge alliances.

However, real work for each country begins once representatives return to their home base and review COP outcomes to undertake a National Stock Take (NST). This is an important exercise because it puts policymakers face to face with a reality closer to home and more poignant in impact. The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) require each country to make mitigation and adaptation commitments. These may provide a rationale at negotiations for the inability to meet commitments, especially if it is linked to external finance. But that doesn't stop climate from changing and unleashing

devastation. The COP outcome is a reality-check moment of reckoning.

This year was the first Global Stock Take (GST) after the 2015 Paris Agreement to assess progress on commitments. The outcome is a stark reminder of some harsh truths. The lethargic pace is increasing the risk factor for one half of humanity. The need for 40pc emissions reduction by 2030 and 60pc by 2035 is unlikely to materialise. The pledges in finance fall short by trillions of dollars in meeting the needs of the Global South.

The simple truth is that higher the vulnerability, greater the risk. If this is compounded by resource crunch, capacity constraints and lack of technology, the challenges are likely to get amplified.

Pakistan is a classic case of governance shortcoming, maladaptation and climate injustice. The country stands at a critical juncture of its history, pummeled by multiple crises, to decide its future trajectory. The task of providing basic needs and amenities to a population of 240 million, growing at an annual rate of 2.55pc, with an economy in dire straits and a 40pc rate of inflation needs urgent solutions that cannot wait for climate finance or COP decisions to see relief.

The one clear takeaway from climate summits is the fact that climate finance will never be enough to meet the needs of vulnerable populations in the world. Each country will also have to take responsibility to reduce risks, build capacity, invest strategically and tap multiple avenues to increase revenue flows.

Looking at its location and resources, Pakistan will have to choose between past policies and new options to evaluate risks associated with business as usual and shifting

## Misplaced nostalgia



Huma Yusuf

US President Joe Biden is not cool enough, not young enough, not pro-Palestinian enough. Young Democrats are disappointed by his approach to Gaza, while older voters remain grumpy about inflation. Political forecasters are therefore predicting a win for Donald Trump in this year's US election. So it's time to ask, what would a Trump win mean for Pakistan?

Pakistanis may have a misplaced nostalgia for the Trump era, recalling the bromance with Imran Khan and the offer to mediate between Islamabad and Delhi over Kashmir. But that reset of ties in 2019 (only a year after Trump had accused Pakistan of 'lies and deceit') was transactional, and rooted in the context of Pakistani support engaging with the Afghan Taliban to facilitate a US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

US-Pakistan relations continue to be defined by security considerations but times have changed and a second-term Trump administration (much like another Biden administration) is unlikely to prioritise ties. The US's key interests have been that nuclear-armed Pakistan is not irreversibly destabilised, that India-Pakistan tensions do not devolve into conflict, and that the region does not become a hotbed of global militancy. Nominally, Washington would also like to prevent Pakistan from falling entirely into China's sphere of influence.

In 2024, a destabilised Pakistan still poses less threat than a nuclear-armed

Russia and a Middle Eastern conflagration. The US has also learned that containment is a good option when it comes to 'troublesome' states (think Afghanistan, Iran, Syria). India's growing global clout also means that Washington will increasingly turn to New Delhi to manage regional security (and the Kashmir issue will be a non-starter with Trump, who is likely to look favourably on ending the Russia-Ukraine war by letting Moscow gain control of several Ukrainian territories). And given that the US recently assessed Al Qaeda and the Islamic State group to be at their weakest since inception, the bogeyman of militancy is a less compelling reason for sustained US engagement with Pakistan. All that remains is a battle for regional influence with China.

In that context, as Aizaz Chaudhry recently pointed out, the US has already identified India as the strategic partner to counterbalance China. Moreover, a Trump administration's power games with China will be less about global influence and more about economic dominance. With an 'America First' mentality, Trump will not cosy up with China's allies, but will instead focus on penalising Chinese companies by imposing skyrocketing tariffs on Chinese imports.

Trumpian economic pressure on China would not be good news for Pakistan. Pak-is-tani goods would be subject to the same tariffs placed on foreign imports, which is pro-lematic given that the US remains Pakistan's largest export destination by a long stretch. Further economic uncertainty for China would also mean a greater emphasis by Beijing on debt collection, and so more pressure on Pakistan in the CPEC context.

Trump is likely to cut military aid to Ukraine, resume ties with Russia, threaten to quit Nato or

heighten US-Europe tensions by demanding Nato allies increase defence expenditure. These developments would lead to global political and economic uncertainty resulting in a deprioritisation and neglect of the Global South's challenges overall.

Trump would also be likely to double down on US backing for Israel. This may set the stage for a US-Israel face off with Middle Eastern countries backed by Gulf states (compelled to shelve plans for reconciling with Israel) and tangentially supported by China. This would create some opportunities for Pakistan to invigorate ties with Gulf allies and other key Muslim states.

Beyond these considerations, another Trump term would have negative implications for Pakistan. Trump is a climate change denier, and is unlikely to take bold strides to fund the Loss and Damage Fund or drive other climate finance initiatives. Climate-vulnerable countries like Pakistan will be among the worst-hit if the next US president takes climate change off the global agenda.

Trump's toxic rhetoric on immigration, too, will disadvantage Pakistanis. He will embolden right-wing, anti-immigrant parties across the developed world, leading to further curbs on legal immigration. Given the growing number of conflict, climate and economic migrants from Pakistan, further Western hostility to immigration would be damaging, limiting future remittances that help build resilience in our economy against shocks.

In sum, a Trump presidency would help the country's powers that be in terms of turning a blind eye to authoritarian tendencies but it would spell more misery for the people, who need strong global leaders committed to tackling the climate crisis, addressing economic inequality and defending human rights. - Courtesy Dawn

## GB to host 'winter sports festival' from January 15: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Gilgit Baltistan's Minister of Planning and Development Raja Nasir Ali Khan Monday said that the snow-covered GB region to host a seven-day long 'Winter sports festival' from January 15 to 25 to draw millions of local and foreign tourists where more than fifty-two teams including 12 female athletes will participate in the event.

Talking to the PTV news channel, the minister of GB said that the event aims to showcase the region's beauty and highlight the soft image of Pakistan around the world, adding that Gilgit-Baltistan has also inaugurated the Ice Hockey Championship in the winter sports festival this year.

He said the potential of Gilgit-Baltistan will host major international events, including the Asian Games and the 2026 Olympics,



KARACHI: Governor Gilgit Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori.

showcasing Pakistan positively on the global stage.

He said these winter sports have historically remained popular across GB, like ice skating, Skiing etc. Replying to a question, he said hundreds of athletes from different ten districts would take part in the seven-day event, adding, they would be competing in skating, ice hockey, and ice curling.

The government pay attention to winter sports in GB, which will boost Pakistan's image internationally, while also benefiting the local community in numerous ways, he added.

To another question, he said to promote local culture and entrepreneurs, "the festival also includes several stalls of traditional dresses, food and handicrafts which is an added attraction for the tourists and an advantage for the locals."



PESHAWAR: A delegation led by Malik Noshad meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

## CM inspects Ring Road project, orders timely completion

Also orders to complete Manawan Cancer Hospital this month

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi conducted a site visit to the Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3 Project here on Monday.

Inspecting the 8 km long project on Maraka Multan Road, Naqvi provided necessary directives for the project's prompt completion.

Expressing optimism, he highlighted that the Ring Road Southern Loop 3's conclusion would enhance transportation facilities for the public, with the anticipated completion date set for January 31.

During the visit, the chief minister emphasized the adherence to high standards in executing the project. Addressing

concerns, he instructed the Commissioner Lahore to expedite matters with LESCO (Lahore Electric Supply Company). Frontier Works Organization (FWO) officials briefed the CM on the project's progress.

Speaking to the media after the inspection, the chief minister acknowledged weather-related challenges affecting the project's timeline. He cited dehumidification as a time-consuming process, causing work delays. Despite these hurdles, he assured continuous efforts for timely project completion, emphasizing round-the-clock monitoring by provincial ministers and designated teams. Naqvi expressed

confidence in the future government's ability to surpass current accomplishments. Touching on challenges in the CBD project, he mentioned an ongoing meeting to address concerns. Naqvi concluded by stressing the government's commitment to maintaining quality work, irrespective of criticism.

He emphasized the Election Commission's role in making security decisions. Regarding security, both the chief minister and the Governor provide feedback to the Election Commission, particularly in light of recent security issues in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Highlighting the proactive approach against

inflation, Naqvi shared ongoing daily actions against those responsible for inflation. Dismissing considerations of exam postponements, he noted the completion of Children's Hospital Multan and anticipated the conclusion of various other projects by January 31.

Provincial ministers Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, Bilal Afzal, Secretary Communication and Works, CCPO, Commissioner Lahore, DG LDA, Chairman Lahore Ring Road Authority, and FWO officials were present. Meanwhile, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has ordered to take steps for the completion of Mayo Cancer Hospital.

## Sindh Health minister inaugurates 7-day anti polio campaign

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Caretaker Health Minister, Dr. Saad Khalid Niazi, Monday, inaugurated 7-day anti-polio campaign by administering polio drops to children at Urban Health Center Landhi Karachi. Over 10.3 million children under 5 years of age will be vaccinated against poliovirus during the ongoing campaign that will be carried out in all 30 districts of Sindh from January 8 to 14.

Around 37,000 vaccination teams will perform their duties while 4,225 security personnel will be deployed for the security of the polio teams.

Dr. Saad Khalid Niazi while speaking at the occasion said that Polio virus has been detected in 13 environmental samples obtained from 28 places in Sindh while two children of UC Gujru District East Karachi were infected with poliovirus in the previous year. According to National Emergency Operation Center, the results of all the environmental samples found so far had links to Afghanistan, he said and

urged on the need for a coordinated and comprehensive strategy at the federal level to deal with the situation.

He said that Polio had been eradicated from the entire world except Afghanistan and Pakistan and we are determined to eradicate the deadly disease from the country.

Stressing the collective role of all the citizens particularly parents and teachers the minister appealed to the parents to ensure vaccination of their children against polio. School and hospital administrations should fully cooperate with polio workers because only collective effort can win the fight against the dangerous disease, he added. Dr. Niazi said that during the campaign, EPI teams will be available at vaccination points in various health centers, hospitals and other areas for providing vaccination against 12 different deadly diseases and polio drops will also be administered there so that those who missed.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Caretaker CM KPK for Housing Muhammad Ashfaq Khan bring briefed regarding Housing Department.

## Spencer Eye Hospital an asset of Karachi: Murtaza Wahab

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that Spencer Eye Hospital is an asset of Karachi and we will not allow it to be destroyed.

He said this on the occasion of a surprise visit to Spencer Eye Hospital on Monday. Municipal Commissioner Syed Afzal Zaidi and other officers were also with him. He said that the presence of all doctors and paramedical staff in the hospital should be ensured and those guilty of negligence should not be forgiven in any case.

He said that improving medical institutions run by KMC is the priority and whatever steps are necessary will be taken in this regard. Barrister Murtaza Wahab inspected the various wards, operation theaters, refraction rooms, and doctor's rooms of Spencer Eye Hospital and checked the attendance register of the staff. He enquired about the medical procedures used in the hospital and directed them to adopt modern procedures for eye treatment in the hospital and to update all the equipment and machinery to modern requirements.

The Mayor said that in the past Spencer Eye Hospital was famous all over the world including Pakistan for eye treatment and patients from far and wide used to come here for treatment. Cornea transplantation was done regularly here to restore eyesight to a large number of people, he said. He said that this hospital was the only hospital in Karachi and Pakistan where the best and most experienced eye surgeons provided services and the most complex operations were successfully performed.



HYDERABAD: Tehreek-e-Labbaik (TLP) Chief, Saad Hussain Rizvi talking to media persons, at local Hall in Hyderabad.

## South Punjab hospital upgradation in progress with rapid pace: ACS

MULTAN (APP): Additional Chief Secretary (South Punjab) Capt. (Rtd) Saqib Zafar said on Monday a comprehensive upgradation of all major hospitals across the province was going on at a rapid pace. During an inspection at Bahawal Victoria Hospital, Bahawalpur, Capt. Saqib Zafar outlined the ambitious project, detailing the construction of new floors, doors, windows, and ceilings. He said the initiative involves a complete overhaul of electrical and plumbing systems to enhance facilities. The plan is being extended to all major hospitals in South Punjab, he added.

Capt. (Rtd) Saqib Zafar said a substantial sum of 1,107 billion rupees have been allocated for upgrading Bahawalpur Victoria Hospital.

Capt. Saqib Zafar emphasized the urgency of completing the work by February 28 while maintaining a high standard

of construction. Earlier, he inspected various section of hospital, including the Outpatient Department (OPD), Emergency, different blocks, wards, operation theaters, and the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Present during the inspection were Secretary Specialized Health South Punjab Afzal Nasir Khan, Additional Secretary C&W Ghulam Yasin, Medical Superintendent Dr. Aamir Bukhari, SE Buildings Anwar Adil, and XEN Arshad Nadeem. On this occasion, Additional Chief Secretary was briefed that Rs. 242 million were released for the project, with 58 percent of the funds already utilized.

It was informed the project scope covers to upgrade the hospital's OPD, emergency block, ICU, operation theaters, surgical wards, gynae, neuro, and TB block.

The labor force has been doubled to ensure the project's timely completion.

## CM issues directive to officials to control crime, maintain law in provincial areas

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar on Monday issued directives to Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh for taking immediate measures to control crime and maintain law and order situation in the provincial areas.

He directed IGP to take action against those police officers who had

failed to maintain peace and tranquility in their respective duty areas. He said that steps should be taken to stop kidnapping and other criminal activities being reported in different parts.

He said that DIGs and SSPs should take notice of heinous activities in Sukkur and Larkana ranges.

Expressing concerns over rising criminal cases, he ordered the IGP to take

action against the officers concerned on duty who are unable to maintain law and order situation in their areas.

He also directed IGP to immediately recover the abducted persons and present a report without delay. He said that police officers should also take measures regarding security so that next elections could be held in a peaceful environment.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi inspecting the construction work under Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop-3 Project.

## CS orders for effective axle load management system

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman on Monday directed the transport department to make the axle load management system more effective in the province.

He gave this directive while presiding over a meeting at the Civil Secretariat. The meeting decided that the toll tax on all roads would be collected online to ensure transparency. The chief secretary said that axle load management was being successfully implemented on 1700 kilometers of highways in the province and permanent weigh stations had been established at nine places in the province for checking freight vehicles. He said that as per law, an action was being taken against vehicles for

overloading. The chief secretary said that roads built at a cost of billions of rupees were damaged due to non-implementation of axle load laws, adding that accidents and damage to roads could be avoided through axle load management.

He lauded Secretary Transport Dr Ahmed Javed Qazi and Chairman PITB Faisal Yusuf for their efforts in the successful implementation of axle load management system. The chief secretary said that instead of constructing new roads, priority was given to the repair and reconstruction of 133 inter-district roads and work on 104 roads of these roads would be completed soon. Transport Secretary Ahmed Javed Qazi gave a detailed briefing at the meeting.

## CM removes CEO CBD for slow work on project

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday removed the CEO Central Business District (CBD) for showing slowness in the CBD project.

The Chief Minister Punjab visited CBD and expressed his deep displeasure over the delay in the CBD project and removed the CEO CBD Imran Amin from the position.

According to sources, Secretary Housing Sajid Zafar Dal has been given additional charge of CBD.

## Cop martyred, three injured in firing in judicial complex

PESHAWAR (APP): A cop embraced martyrdom and three persons sustained injuries in an incident of firing outside the Anti-Terrorism Court, within the judicial complex.

The attacker in the disguise of a lawyer opened fire at his opponent group Malik Lal Sher, and a policeman sustained critical bullet wounds and succumbed to injuries at the hospital, confirmed the police. The police managed to apprehend the attacker and shifted him to the Anti-Terrorism Police Station while the injured were rushed to Lady Reading Hospital where the condition of the injured was stated critical while the rest were stable, said the spokesman of LRH Muhammad Asim.

## Middle-aged man killed in road mishap

KOT ADDU (APP): A middle-aged man was killed after his motorbike rammmed into a speeding tractor-trolley loaded with sugarcane, a rescuer said.

When the rescuers reached the location the deceased had already been shifted to a nearby hospital with the help of locals, it was said. A woman named Kaneez Bibi, 39, wife of Muhammad Jamal was also found injured on the spot. It was unclear whether the wounded lady was a passerby or sitting along with the victim on his motorbike.



RAWALPINDI: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf awards medal among the position holder student during Convocation of Punjab College Gujranwala.

## PFA DG inaugurates 'Eat safe food campaign'

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Director General Muhammad Asim Javid inaugurated the 'Eat Safe Food Campaign' intending to improve the food quality at dhabas and food stalls.

In the first phase, Lahore's 15 markets have been selected for this campaign and it is to be extended very soon across Punjab. Hygiene training will be given to small food points workers without charging any fee while medical screening of all food handlers and other workers will also be done.

The PFA DG expressed these views while talking to the media on the occasion of inaugurating the campaign at Shadman Market. He said that this initiative of PFA will help improve the

diet and health of the common man.

He said that initially the campaign was started from 15 different markets of the provincial metropolis including Barkat Market, Taxili Gate, G1 Market, Chauburji, Regal Chowk, Shadman Market, Food Street Old Anarkali, Food Street Shahi Qila, Kareem Block, Gawalmandi Food Street, Lakshmi Chowk, Liberty Market, Moon Market Iqbal Town, Moon Market Gulshan Ravi, Neela Gumbad Anarkali markets.

He said that the PFA had introduced a special licence category with a reasonable fee for small businesses under the campaign. He said that it was very important for every food business to obtain a licence from the competent authority.

## Zafar Siddiqui says: MQM-P to participate in general elections

HYDERABAD (APP): The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) Hyderabad chapter organizer Zafar Ahmed Siddiqui has said his party will land in the electoral battle during the upcoming general elections with optimal energy.

Addressing the party's office bearers during a meeting here on Monday Siddiqui added that MQM-P would continue to represent and

fight for the country's middle class. He maintained that since the day the party was formed, it had relentlessly struggled for the rights of the middle class and the poor people of the country.

Siddiqui said during the last 5 years of the elected government, the MQM-P remained in the opposition in the Sindh Assembly. However, he added, whatever modicum of the funds the party,

## Khakwani from Vehari joins IPP

LAHORE (APP): Owais Khan Khakwani along with his colleagues joined the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) on Monday.

He announced to join the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party after meeting with Abdul Aleem Khan here. Owais Khan Khakwani belongs to PP-236 Vehari.

President IPP Abdul Aleem Khan welcomed Owais Khakwani, by wearing the muffler of the party. Owais Khan Khakwani expressed full confidence in the leadership of Jahangir Khan Tareen and Abdul Aleem Khan.

He expressed his determination that he will work day and night for the strengthening of IPP in South Punjab.

## DC visits polio fixed points, inspected campaign

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Zahid Hussain Rind on Monday inspected the ongoing Polio Vaccination Campaign and checked records of polio teams during his visit to the different areas of Nawabshah city.

Talking to members of polio teams, DC said that polio drops must be administered to all children under the age of five years to make the campaign successful. Officials of the health department were also directed to ensure the vigilance of polio.

## AJK Court suspends press club elections

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Additional District and session Judge Muzaffarabad on Monday suspended elections of Central Press Club (CPC) conducted on Sunday in violation of the court's earlier order under petition filed by Farooq Khan Mughal, member CPC versus Raja Ifkhar Ahmad and others and summoned the respondents in person on Wednesday in contempt of court. The District and session Judge on Saturday had issued a stay order against the election on the plea of petitioner till Monday, but the respondent conducted fake elections on Sunday and arranged a swear in ceremony of the so called

elected office bearers at midnight. The petitioner contended in his main application that he was a candidate for the presidential election and outgoing president who was also in the run for the next tenure deleted his and his nominator and second's name from the voter list at the last moment in a bid to keep them away from the electoral process.

The District Judge while issuing notices to the respondents for Monday issued a stay order to maintain the status quo and the orders were served to the respondents by the court representative but they violated willfully the honorable court's order and conducted poll on Sunday.



LAHORE: Chief Traffic Officer Amara Athar interacting with media persons during Traffic awareness campaign at Liberty Chowk, in Provincial Capital.

## Govt to ensure uninterrupted power supply to Karachi: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said that the government, in collaboration with the K-Electric, would ensure an uninterrupted power supply to Karachi to meet its needs.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a K-Electric delegation headed by Chief Executive Officer Moonis Abdullah Alvi,

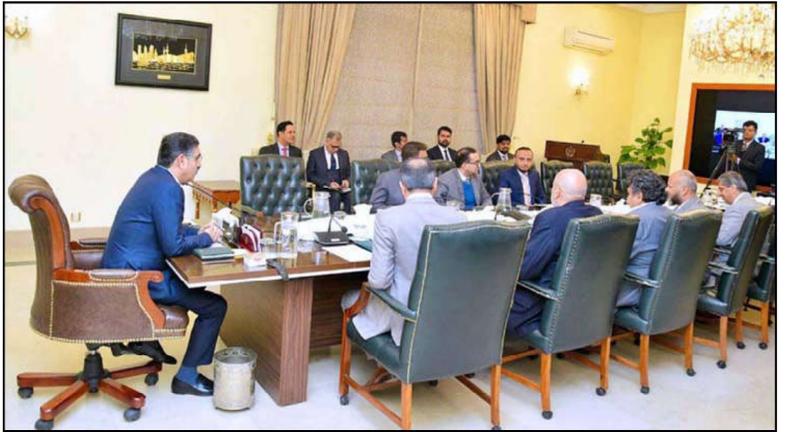
instructed the Ministry of Energy to address the issues confronting the company through mutual consultation. He said policies should be formulated considering the purchasing power of the electricity consumers as well as their welfare.

The delegation members thanked the prime minister for resolving the longstanding issues faced by the K-Electric and for the approval of

Rs 390 billion investment plan for the company, tariff for renewable energy projects of 640 megawatts, and the provision of an additional 1000 MW of electricity. They viewed that such initiatives by the government had given a positive message to the investors.

In the meeting, the prime minister was briefed about different matters of the K-Electric. The

delegation also included K-Electric Chief Finance Officer Muhammad Aamir Ghaziani and Regulatory Officer Imran Qureshi. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Energy Minister Muhammad Ali, Chairman of National Electric Power Regulatory Authority Wasim Mukhtar, Chief Executive Officer of Central Power Purchasing Agency Rehan Akhtar, and other senior officers.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meeting with a delegation of K-Electric.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hassan Fawad chairing a consultative session with Financial Advisors for divestment of PIACL.

## FPCCI invites Chinese investors for investment, JVs in local businesses

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: The Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has invited Chinese investors from different sectors of the economy for investment and Joint Ventures in local businesses. It is the right time for Chinese investors to earn lucrative returns on their investments in Pakistan and FPCCI assures to connect the Chinese investors with the right partners in Pakistan for joint ventures, this was stated by Mr. Karim Aziz

Malik Chairman of FPCCI Capital Office while meeting Chinese investors delegation, said a press release issued here.

The Chinese investors visited FPCCI Capital Office under the leadership of Mr. Zhang Yang, Director Chongjiang Federation of Investment and Commerce and Chairman of Chang Jiang Management Company. On this occasion, Ashfaq Ahmed, Vice President and Chairman of the Coordination Capital Office Malik Sohail Hussain, Tariq Sadiq, and

others were also present. Addressing the delegation, Mr. Karim Aziz Malik further said that Pakistan provides attractive incentives and liberal policies for investment in all sectors of the economy for foreign and local investors.

These incentives are available in special schemes and in traditional as well as non-traditional sectors of the economy which offer great opportunities to the business community to invest in the country and to have maximum profit on their investments, he said.

## Minister Haris highlights foreign investment boost, int'l cooperation

KARACHI (APP): Sindh's Caretaker Home Minister, Brigadier (Rtd.) Haris Nawaz, emphasized the government's commitment to facilitating foreign investors, aiming to bolster investment prospects. In a meeting with Croatian Ambassador Dr Drago Stambuk, Nawaz highlighted the advantageous outcomes for investors stemming from the government's economic reforms.

He underscored Pakistan's dedicated focus on attracting foreign investment to fortify economic stability and expressed the country's

desire to foster amicable relations with all nations. Addressing the distress faced by the people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir under the Indian government, Haris Nawaz urged the international community to alleviate their plight, emphasizing the imperative of resolving the Kashmir issue per United Nations resolutions. The meeting primarily delved into discussions concerning cooperation, bilateral trade, and various shared interests. Additionally, topics encompassed the expulsion of illegally residing foreigners.



LAHORE: People are buying used stuff from flea market along the Jail road in Provincial Capital.

## Pak-Africa Trade Dev Conference to be held from Jan 9-11 in Cairo

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference and single country exhibition will commence from January 9 to 11 in Cairo, Egypt, a press release received from Pakistan Embassy in Cairo said on Monday.

A high level business delegation led by Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries Pakistan Dr. Gohar Ijaz will showcase business products and explore the forging of commercial ties with the Middle East & North African (MENA) region during the much-awaited conference and the exhibition.

The delegation comprises government officials and leading businessmen from Pakistan. The official component of the delegation comprises Secretary for Commerce, Chief Executive of Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Secretary Board of Investment (BOI) and other senior officers from Ministry of Commerce, BoI and TDAP.

The event will kick start with an exclusive official segment of a conference on January 9, followed by an inclusive single-country exhibition on January 10 and 11.

More than 200 businessmen from Pakistan are coming to Cairo to conclude prospective business deals. These businessmen will be representing more than 20 different business sectors including textile, engineering goods.

## First standardized quality test for 75,000 IT graduates to be conducted on Jan, 15: Minister

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Information Technology, Dr Umar Saif, has said that the first standardized quality test for the 75,000 information technology graduates will be conducted on January 15.

In an interview with a private TV channel, Dr Saif highlighted significant decisions made to revamp IT education in collaboration with various entities, including HEC, the National Computing Accreditation Council, the

Examination Testing Council, the Pakistan Software Export Board, and the Pakistan Software Houses Association.

Dr. Saif said students who successfully pass the test will be offered job opportunities through the Industry Placement Program.

He added that funds will be allocated to support special industry courses in universities, aiming to prepare students for current industry trends and needs.

He explained that the National Computing Accreditation Council will consider the pass rate of students to determine a university's rating and the permissible enrollment of IT students.

Emphasizing the importance of aligning educational institutions with industry requirements, he stressed the need for facilitating industry-specific training to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical industry needs.

## Online fuel monitoring system in Railways to be functional from Jan 10

ISLAMABAD (APP): The online fuel monitoring system of the Railways is ready for installation and will be functional from January 10. It was informed during a meeting presided over by Caretaker Minister for Railways, Shahid Ashraf Tarar. The implementation of this system promises enhanced operational efficiency, real-time fuel tracking, and substantial financial savings, ushering in a new era of innovation and effectiveness in the realm of railway management as well as performance. The meeting, according to the railway spokesperson.

## Pakistan's cotton export to China crosses \$617 million in 2023

ISLAMABAD (Online): Experts in Pakistani cotton expressed optimism about the growth of the country's cotton sector and yarn exports to China and other countries, which are rising annually despite floods and other challenges.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, sources said that as per the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC), China imported more than \$617.62 million worth of cotton yarn from Pakistan in the first eleven months of 2023.

Uncombed single cotton yarn containing 85% or above, (commodity code 52051200) crossed \$ 414.70 million from

January - November of 2023. Data further showed that cotton yarn (commodity code 52051100) crossed \$195.097 million in the first eleven months of 2023, while last year in the same period it was \$106.76 million.

Uncombed cabled cotton yarn (commodity code 52053200) crossed \$5.27 million from January to November 2023.

In the first eleven months of 2023, more than 237964.907 tons of cotton yarn in the top three items were imported from Pakistan. Sajjad Mazahir, General Manager of China Operations Keywin Trading Ltd.

## AMRI organizes tractor simulation workshop to train drivers in secure way

MULTAN (APP): Agriculture Mechanization Research Institute (AMRI) on Monday organized a one-day training workshop on tractor simulation to provide maximum awareness to drivers about various operations related to tractor use in the agriculture field.

Additional Secretary Agriculture (Admin) Southern Punjab, Aasif Raza, graced the workshop as a special guest. A tractor simulator is a computer-based system designed to replicate the operation of a real tractor in a simulated environment. It utilizes technology, such as computer graphics and motion sensors to a realistic experience for users. The tractor simulators are used for

training in developed countries. The drivers learn essential skills in a controlled virtual setting.

The drivers learn steering, gear, steering, gear shifting, clutch control, and braking, providing a safe and effective way to train individuals before they operate real tractors in the field. During the event, Aasif Raza emphasized that learning the basics of tractor operation through a simulator is a secure way for drivers to gain proficiency without the risk of accidents. The tractor training simulator is a revolutionary technology that offers new and experienced drivers the opportunity to learn the skills of driving a tractor in a simulated real-farm environment.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Ananya Naree, Seapower-I and Oriental Jasmine scheduled to load/offload Rice, Wheat and Chemicals, berthed at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Grain Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Sunday. Meanwhile four more ships, MSC Jemima, MSC Antigua, Yihai and Flex Volunteer also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours to load/offload Containers, Palm Kernel and LNG respectively.

A total of seven ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them Edible oil carrier ship 'Ardmore' left the port on today morning and three more ships, lanthe, Oriental Jasmine and Sibulk Tradition are expected to sail on same day.

## SNGPL imposes fines of Rs 3.47m for illegal gas use

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has undertaken a robust campaign against gas theft, resulting in the imposition of fines totalling Rs 3.47 million and the disconnection of 347 unauthorized connections.

The spokesperson for SNGPL said that the regional team's actions included disconnecting 13 connections due to the illegal use of gas and 23 connections for the use of compressors.

In Rawalpindi and Islamabad, 98 connections

were severed due to the illegal use of gas, leading to fines amounting to Rs 0.30 million in gas theft cases.

The city of Multan witnessed 25 connections being disconnected for the illegal use of gas, with an additional 25 connections cut off for the use of compressors, resulting in fines totalling Rs 0.050 million against gas theft cases. Meanwhile, in Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 93 connections attributed to the direct and illegal use of gas, imposing fines of Rs 3.05 million.

## Rupee gains 11 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed an appreciation of 11 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs281.28 against the previous day's closing of Rs281.39. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs281 and Rs283.5 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 21 paise to close at Rs307.55 against the last day's closing of Rs307.34, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).



ISLAMABAD: A florist is sparing water on the flowers for preserving their freshness, F-6 Flower Market in Federal.

## Lahore Chamber inks MoU with Ghurki Hospital

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) and Ghurki Trust Teaching Hospital have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to ensure state-of-the-art health facilities for the LCCI staff and members.

The LCCI President Kashif Anwar and Ghurki Trust Hospital's Chairman Prof. Dr. Amer Aziz inked the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of their respective sides here Monday. Chief Operating Officer Naem Ghurki, Member Board of Trustee Asif Iqbal, Medical Director Dr. Khurram Ijaz, Deputy Medical Director Dr. Adil, Marketing Consultant Atif Khan and LCCI Executive Committee

Member Fareeha Younas were also present. According to the MoU, Ghurki Trust Hospital would facilitate LCCI staff, members and their families with 25 percent discount on Executive Room charges for private patients and 30 percent discount on General Patient for medical treatment cases. For dependent patients, only LCCI valid membership/employment card would be required for treatment. Hospital will only see the card and give discount to LCCI members/employee's family. Both the organizations would collaborate to raise awareness about the cutting-edge cyberknife technology which is used to treat cancerous.

## PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 277 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Monday, losing 277.87, a negative change of 0.43 percent, closing at 64,237.03 points against 64,514.90 points the previous trading day. A total of 484,012,978 shares valuing Rs.12.744 billion were traded during the day as compared to 949,559,318 shares valuing Rs.19.355 billion the last day.

Some 358 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 104 of them recorded gains and 223 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 31 remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were K-Electric with 168,810,077 shares at Rs.5.90 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 21,983,447 shares at Rs.1.44 per share and PIAC(A) with 17,943,000 shares at Rs.8.36 per share. Pak Suzuki Motor Company witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.50.46 per share price, closing at Rs.723.31, whereas the runner-up was Reliance Cotton Spinning Mills with a Rs.35.00 rise in its per share price to Rs.575.00. Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.150.00 per share.

## Consultative session on agriculture sector for ADP 2024-25 held

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Planning and Development (P&D) Board Chairman Ifkhar Ali Sahoo chaired a consultative session regarding the formation of ADP 2024-25 (Agriculture Sector) organized by P&D Board here Monday. The session was attended by government functionaries, academia, researchers, progressive farmers, and representatives of the corporate sector.

The theme of the session was to identify key challenges, gaps, and priority areas for framing

development projects for the ADP (Annual Development Programme) 2024-25 and to suggest ways forward to boost the agrarian economy.

In his opening remarks, P&D Board Chairman Ifkhar Ali Sahoo stated that agriculture contributes 22.7 percent to the GDP, employs 37.4 percent of the work force, and provides a livelihood to the majority of the population. He said the session was scheduled for the formulation of the next ADP, therefore.

## Managing Director STEVTA Munawar visits HCCI

HYDERABAD (APP): The Managing Director of the Sindh Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (STEVTA), Munawar Ali Mithani visited the Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) and met with chamber president Adeel Siddiqui. During the meeting, he expressed a desire to collaborate with HCCI to further enhance the functioning of technical

institutes and vocational centers. He emphasized the importance of strengthening ties with industries to create more employment opportunities for skilled graduates. According to a statement issued on Monday, HCCI president Adeel Siddiqui welcomed the MD STEVTA and acknowledged the authority's current performance while highlighting the potential for further improvement.



MUZAFFERABAD: Visitors are taking interest in different traditional stuff during exhibition to highlight the Kashmiri Civilization at Government Vocational Training Center Plate, in the Capital of AJK.

## Western allies seek rapid end to Gaza war as Israel presses on

**Monitoring Desk**  
ABU DHABI: The United States and its allies in the Group of Seven are seeking a quick way out of the military phase of the Gaza conflict, Italy said on Monday, as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his EU and German counterparts toured the region.

Blinken was holding talks on Gaza in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia on Monday before heading on to Israel, aiming to kick start concerted peace efforts that he says are needed to avoid a wider conflagration.

He began a five-day Middle East diplomatic ef-

fort in Jordan and Qatar on Sunday, his fourth visit to the region since deadly Oct. 7 attacks on Israel by Hamas militants in Gaza sparked a massive Israeli assault that shows no signs of ending.

Other Iranian-backed militant groups have weighed in, attacking Israeli forces on the border with Lebanon, U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria and commercial ships in the Red Sea. Israel has also cracked down on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

Germany's foreign minister Annalena Baerbock was in Israel on Monday and the European Union's

top diplomat Josep Borrell was in Lebanon in a sign of international concern.

"G7 countries are working with the Israeli government to find a rapid way out of the military phase," the Italian Foreign Ministry quoted minister Antonio Tajani as saying as Italy began its one-year presidency of the Group of Seven.

An Israeli strike on south Lebanon on Monday killed a senior commander in Hezbollah's elite Radwan force, three security sources told Reuters, the latest in daily clashes across Israel's northern border.



President of Republika Srpska (Serb Republic) Milorad Dodik attends Serb Republic national holiday, banned by the constitutional court, in East Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## Four killed in combined Russian air strike on Ukraine

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Russia sent dozens of missiles across Ukraine early on Monday, killing at least four civilians and hitting residential areas and commercial sites in its latest combined air attack, Ukrainian authorities said.

Two people were killed in the western Khmelnytskyi region, local officials reported, where critical infrastructure had also been struck.

In Kryvyi Rih, a 62-year-old was killed and a shopping centre and scores of private homes and apart-

ment buildings damaged after nine Russian missiles hit the south central city, said Oleksandr Vilkul, the mayor. "The mad enemy once again struck civilians," regional governor Serhiy Lysak wrote on the Telegram messaging app. "Directed missiles at people."

Russia said it hit military-industrial targets in Ukraine from sea and air on Monday. "This morning, a multiple attack was carried out with high-precision, long-range, sea and air-based weapons, including the Kinzhal hypersonic missile system.

## China's top spy agency says it exposes British espionage case

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: China said its security agencies found another incident of spying in which the British Secret Intelligence Service, also known as MI6, used a foreigner in China to collect secrets and information.

The case by China highlights the ongoing heated exchanges the countries have traded over accusations of perceived spying that threatens their respective national securities.

China's Ministry of State Security revealed on its WeChat social media account on Monday that a foreigner, only identified by

surname Huang, was in charge of an overseas consulting agency, and in 2015, MI6 established an "intelligence cooperative relationship" with the person.

After that, MI6 instructed Huang to enter China several times, and instructed him to use his public identity as a cover to collect China-related intelligence for British spying, the statement said.

MI6 also conducted professional intelligence training for Huang in Britain and other places, and provided special espionage equipment for intelligence cross-linking.

## Fascist rally in Rome sparks Italian opposition outrage

**Monitoring Desk**  
ROME: Italian opposition parties called on Monday for the dissolution of extreme-right parties after a video was released showing hundreds of men making fascist salutes during a rally in Rome.

The rally was held on Sunday in front of the former headquarters of the MSI group - a neo-fascist party that eventually morphed into the conservative Brothers of Italy, which was co-founded by Giorgia Meloni, now the prime minister.

The event marked the 46th anniversary of the killing of three neo-fascists in Via Acca Larentia, in south-east Rome. Two of the men were gunned down by suspected far-left militants while the third was killed by police after a riot broke out shortly after the shooting. No one was ever convicted over the deaths.

In the video, lines of men can be seen making stiff-armed salutes and shouting "present" three times as one of their number yelled "For all fallen comrades."



COX'S BAZAAR: A Rohingya refugee sits amid the debris of his house charred by a devastating fire at the Ukha camp.



AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah II speaks to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, as the latter arrived in the Middle East to ensure the violence in Gaza does not spread.

## Jordan presses US on Gaza ceasefire

**Monitoring Desk**  
AMMAN: Jordan's king on Sunday urged the top US diplomat to push for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and end the humanitarian crisis brought by three months of war.

King Abdullah II made the remarks to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is on a Middle East tour aiming to ensure Israel's war on Gaza does not spread.

He told Mr Blinken that Washington had a major role to play in pressuring Israel into an immediate ceasefire, and warned of the "catastrophic repercussions"

of the continuation of war in Gaza, which began on Oct 7 after a Hamas raid on Israel.

Israel's subsequent air and ground assault had killed 22,835 Palestinians by Sunday, according to Palestinian health officials, including at least 113 killed and 250 others injured over the past 24 hours.

An Israeli air strike on a car near Rafah in southern Gaza on Sunday claimed the lives of two Palestinian journalists who were out reporting, according to health officials in Gaza and the journalists' union there.

## Fire leaves 7,000 Rohingya homeless in Bangladesh camp

**Monitoring Desk**  
DHAKA: A fire swept through a Rohingya refugee camp in southeastern Bangladesh in the early hours of Sunday, destroying about 800 shelters and rendering thousands homeless, officials said.

Fire service officials and Rohingya volunteers brought the blaze under control around three hours after it hit Camp 5 in Cox's Bazar, a border district with Myanmar, shortly before 1am.

Apart from homes, several other facilities like learning centres were also gutted, Bangladesh's Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner in Cox's Bazar, Mohammed Mizanur Rahman said, adding that there were no casualties.

UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency, said nearly 7,000 have been made homeless by the blaze and around 120 facilities, including mosques and healthcare centres were damaged.



Protesters at the 'All Denmark on the Streets for Palestine Ceasefire Now!' demonstration march from Frederiksberg City Hall to Copenhagen City Hall.

## Somalia president signs law nullifying Ethiopia-Somaliland port deal

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOGADISHU: Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud signed a law nullifying an agreement by the breakaway Somaliland region to grant Ethiopia access to the Red Sea in return for recognition as an independent nation.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's stated ambition to secure access to the Red Sea is a source of tension between the Horn of Africa nation and its neighbours and has raised concerns of a fresh

conflict in the region.

Somalia, which considers Somaliland part of its territory, rejected the New Year's Day deal that would allow landlocked Ethiopia to lease 20 km (12 miles) around the port of Berbera, on the Gulf of Aden with access to the Red Sea, for 50 years for its navy and commercial purposes.

Ethiopia would in return become the first country to recognise Somaliland as an independent nation.

## Storm may not be wintry enough to end New York City's snow drought

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW YORK: New York City's historic, two-year snow drought may not come to an end this weekend, despite the arrival of a winter storm system that began passing through the most populous US city and across the East Coast on Saturday.

The city's 8.5 million residents have not seen more than 1 inch (2.54 cm) of snow fall in Manhattan's Central Park since Feb. 13, 2022, a record-long streak of 692 days.

But as of 7 pm Saturday, only 0.2 inch had been recorded in Central Park, and the National

Weather Service was forecasting only 0.8 inch of accumulation before the storm moves out to sea late on Sunday night.

Marc Chenard, an NWS meteorologist, said on Saturday evening that the city's long streak of paltry snow looked set to continue.

"It's already mixing into rain and it's going to continue to do that," he said.

Last winter, just 2.3 inches (5.84 cm) of snow fell in New York City, the least in recorded history in a city where snowfall of more than a foot (30 cm) was, at least until recently, not uncommon.

## Bangladesh's Hasina wins re-election after polls without opposition

**Monitoring Desk**  
DHAKA: Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina won re-election for a fifth term Sunday, officials said, following a boycott led by an opposition party she branded a "terrorist organisation".

Hasina's ruling Awami League "has won the election", an Election Commission spokesman told AFP in the early hours of Monday morning, after a vote that initial reports suggested had a meagre turnout of some 40 percent.

She has presided over breakneck economic growth in a country once beset by grinding poverty, but her government has been accused of rampant human rights abuses and a ruthless opposition crack-

down. Her party faced almost no effective rivals in the seats it contested, but it avoided fielding candidates in a few constituencies, in an apparent effort to avoid the legislature being branded a one-party institution.

The opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), whose ranks have been decimated by mass arrests, called a general strike and, along with dozens of others, refused to participate in a "sham election". While the final result and exact figures will be formally announced at a ceremony later on Monday, election commission officials said Hasina's party had won around three-quarters of seats, at least 220 of the total 300.

## Macron moves to name new prime minister in govt reshuffle

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron could choose a new prime minister as soon as Monday, according to his entourage, as he seeks a new look for a widely criticised government.

The position of Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne has been tenuous ever since an immigration bill pushed by Macron was voted down in parliament last month. It was finally passed with many controversial changes imposed by the centre-right opposition.

Macron, who is also facing a growing challenge from the far-right National Rally of Marine Le Pen, met with Borne Sunday night. His office said the discussion centred on flooding in northern France and a looming freeze across the country, but observers said they likely discussed a widely-predicted cabinet reshuffle. Francois Bayrou, a centrist leader whose early

endorsement of Macron was key to his initial 2017 election success, told BFM television that "a change is necessary" in the government make-up.

Under the French system, the president sets general policies, but the prime minister is responsible for day-to-day government management, meaning they often pay the price when an administration runs into turbulence.

In 20 months as prime minister, the 62-year-old Borne—France's second female head of government—has pushed through key reforms on pensions and immigration in some 30 new laws and has overcome previous doubts about her future.

But Macron has over the past week consulted with key figures including Bayrou, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, and former prime minister Edouard Philippe about reintegrating the administration.

## Al Jazeera says two Gaza journalists killed in Israeli strike

**Monitoring Desk**  
GAZA STRIP: Al Jazeera said on Sunday two of its Palestinian journalists in the Gaza Strip were killed in an Israeli strike on their car, in what the Qatar-based media network claimed was a "targeted killing".

Hamza Wael Dahdouh and Mustafa Thuria, who also worked as a video stringer for AFP and other news organisations, were killed while they were "on their way to carry out their duty" for the channel in the Gaza Strip, the network said.

A third freelance journalist travelling with them, Hazem Rajab, was seriously injured.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza also confirmed the deaths and blamed an Israeli strike.

Witnesses told AFP that two rockets were fired at the car - one hit the front of the vehicle and the other hit Hamza who was sitting next to the driver.

"We later found the body parts (of those in the car). The ambulance then came and carried those who

were in the car," a witness, who declined to give his name for security reasons, told AFP.

The Israeli army told AFP that it had "struck a terrorist who operated an aircraft that posed a threat to IDF troops", adding that it was "aware of the reports that during the strike, two other suspects who were in the same vehicle as the terrorist were also hit".

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the journalists' deaths were an "unimaginable tragedy".

"And that's also been the case for... far too many innocent Palestinian men, women and children," he said in Doha during a regional tour. AFP video footage showed a crowd of people inspecting the car's mangled remains, while pools of blood lay on the road. No other damage was visible in the area. Al Jazeera said in a statement it "strongly condemns the Israeli occupation forces' targeting of the Palestinian journalists' car", accusing Israel of "violating the principles of freedom of the press".

## Taiwan poll being closely watched in Beijing and Washington

**Monitoring Desk**  
KAOHSIUNG: Tens of thousands of people gathered in southern Taiwan for "Super Sunday" rallies by three presidential candidates making a final weekend push for votes before a crucial January 13 election.

The poll is being closely watched in Beijing and Washington, with the winner set to determine the future of the democratic island's relations with an increasingly aggressive China. China claims Taiwan as part of its territory, and President Xi Jinping has in recent years intensified rhetoric about "unification" while refusing to rule out the use of force to bring it under Beijing's control.

Frontrunner and current Vice President Lai Ching-te of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has called the election a choice "between democracy and autocracy", while his main opponent Hou Yu-ih has warned the DPP will bring Taiwan "closer to war".

Hou is the candidate for the island's Kuomintang (KMT) party, which endorses closer relations with Beijing.

Speaking to a sea of red-and-blue-clad supporters in the southern city of Kaohsiung, the former policeman—who has painted himself as a "protector" of Taiwan—called on voters not to be "deceived" by the DPP.

"They love to say Hou Yu-ih is pro-China and will sell out Taiwan... Hou Yu-ih will look after cross-strait peace," the 66-year-old New Taipei City mayor shouted. "We must not let such a party (DPP) continue to be in power." Taiwan has for the past eight years been led by President Tsai Ing-wen, a leader loathed by Beijing for her staunch defence of the island's sovereignty. As a result, China has cut off high-level communications with her government and dispatched unprecedented numbers of fighter jets and naval vessels around Taiwan—a ramp-up in military pressure that has raised global fears of a potential conflict.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a review meeting regarding Afghan Transit Trade and Anti-Smuggling operations.

## PM directs LEAs to accelerate efforts to eradicate smuggling

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday directed the relevant law enforcement agencies, including the Frontier Corps, Pakistan Customs and district administrations to expedite their efforts to completely curb smuggling.

He observed that with abhorrent practice of smuggling, few influential people were benefited and stressed that with the establishment of special economic zones and industries in the border

areas of the country, provision of alternate livelihood opportunities to the inhabitants should be ensured.

The caretaker prime minister chaired a review meeting regarding the Afghan Transit Trade and anti-smuggling operations which was attended by Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar, chief secretaries of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, inspectors general of Frontier Corps (FC), federal secretaries and other relevant senior officials, the

PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

A report over the Afghan Transit Trade and curbing of smuggling was presented in the meeting.

The meeting was also informed about the performance of Pakistan Customs, FC, district administrations and National Logistic Corporation (NLC) in the border areas. All these agencies had been working to curb smuggling at the border areas which led to saving of national exchequer from the huge damage

caused by the millions of tonnes smuggling of illegal goods.

The caretaker prime minister directed for formulation of a comprehensive mechanism for provision of employment opportunities to the local people through social safety and imparting of skill sets.

He also directed the Ministry of Trade to ensure strict monitoring of the transit trade and apprise the relevant authorities about the trends over export of goods.

## Who is responsible for execution of Bhutto among SC, prosecution and martial law: CJP Qazi Faez

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked who is responsible for execution of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto among Supreme Court (SC), prosecution and martial law administrator.

He further remarked where there is politics in case and there is no justice then the court should hear it again.

He remarked there was martial law at that time and a former Prime Minister (PM) was executed. Work hard and tell us as to why this court cannot reopen the remaining cases.

President should also send the references of the remaining cases. There is an interview of a judge in this case. Some other thing will be there in the remaining cases.

The CJP gave these remarks while presiding over 9-member larger bench of SC during the hearing of presidential reference on Bhutto judicial murder case Monday.

During the hearing of the case Ahmad Raza Kasuri came on the rostrum.

The CJP prevented Ahmad Raza Kasuri from talking saying sit down on your seat.

Let the amicus curiae complete his talk first. If you have any objection on his anything then give us in writing.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah inquired what is legal question before us. Should we review the SC decision on the basis of one interview and give opinion. Should the court hold inquiry on the basis of an interview. Interview was of one judge while other judges were also in the bench.

He further remarked should we call the people related to interview and start inquiry.

## Tribunal rejects GDA leaders Zulfiqar Mirza, Fahmida Mirza's appeals

KARACHI (INP): The Appellate Election Tribunal in Karachi on Monday rejected the appeals filed by Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) leaders from Badin Zulfiqar Mirza, also a former Sindh home minister, and his wife Fahmida Mirza, also a former National Assembly (NA) speaker, against the rejection of their nomination papers by the returning officers (ROs). Both Fahmida and Zulfiqar had filed papers for the NA and the Sindh Assembly constituencies NA-223 Badin and PS-70, PS71 and PS-72, respectively.

The tribunal, in its verdict, said that Fahmida was a loan defaulter.

He went on to say that the RO had rejected the papers of both husband and wife over the violation of the Election Act and the constitution of Pakistan.

Three days ago, on Thursday, the tribunal had issued notices to the returning officers and the Election Commission of Pakistan on the appeals filed by Fahmida and Zulfiqar against the rejection of their papers. Papers of both husband and wife had been rejected a week ago.

On the other hand, an appellate election tribunal in Lahore, comprising Justice Muhammad Tariq Nadeem, accepted the appeals filed by former Punjab governor and PTI leader Mian Azhar and his son PTI leader Hammad Azhar against the rejection of their nomination papers for NA-129, Lahore by annulling the decision of the ROs.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir exchanging views with Field Marshal Khalifa Bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander of Bahrain Defence Forces and General Shaikh Mohammad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, Commander of Bahrain National Guard during meeting held in Bahrain

## Governor sees improvement in performance of educational institutions of Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the overall performance of educational institutions has been improved in province due to our wholehearted attention and struggle. There is also improvement in quality of education in the educational institutions of the province.

The Governor said that surely there were flaws in the educational system and weaknesses in the educational institutions in the past, still certain achievements were made following the joint efforts of all responsible and concerned high ups.

In this, the active co-operation of higher educational institutions of other provinces has also contributed and played important role.

The Governor was speaking to the Chief Executive Officer of Professional Education Foundation, Javed Farooqi who called on him here at the Governor House on Monday.

He said that we fully

realize that it is very necessary to bring Balochistan equal to other provinces in education sector just because there is no concept of the development without education.

The Governor said that it is our conscious endeavour and desire to increase the number of allocated seats for students of Balochistan in the educational institutions of other provinces. This would help provide better opportunities of higher education to our maximum students, he added.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presiding over meeting of Provincial Cabinet

## Pak rejects designation as "Country of Particular Concern" by US

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Monday categorically rejected its designation as "a Country of Particular Concern" by the United States State Department, calling it "detached from ground realities."

"We are deeply dismayed that the designation is based on biased and arbitrary assessment, detached from ground realities," Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in a statement.

She said that Pakistan was a pluralistic country, with a rich tradition of interfaith harmony. In line with its Constitution, Pakistan had undertaken wide ranging measures to promote religious freedom and

protect minority rights, she added.

"We note with deep concern that India, the biggest and serial violator of religious freedom, has once again been excluded from the US State Department's designation list. This is despite clear recommendation by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) as well as public concerns raised by international human rights constituencies about India's maltreatment of religious minorities.

This conspicuous omission raises serious questions about the credibility, transparency and objectivity of the entire process," the spokesperson remarked.

## ECP determined to conduct elections within specified time: Kanwar Dilshad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former secretary Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Kanwar Dilshad said on Monday that Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi as a focal person of the federal government had rightly stated that the general public should not give any attention to rumors.

As far as elections were concerned ECP was determined to conduct elections within a specified time, he said while taking part in a Radio Pakistan programme.

He said although, a Senate resolution for the delay in elections was passed the elections seem to be conducted on February 8 as per the timeline given by the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

He said that maintaining the law and order situation in the country during the elections was the responsibility of caretaker governments in federal and provinces.

He said special arrangements will be made at the more sensitive polling stations.

## Pakistan Navy, Royal Saudi Naval Forces hold expert level Staff Talks

ISLAMABAD (INP): A six-member delegation of Pakistan Navy headed by Vice Chief of the Naval Staff Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami visited Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The visit was aimed to hold expert level Staff Talks between Pakistan Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Forces.

During the visit, Vice Chief also called on Commander of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces HE Vice Admiral Fahad Bin Abdullah Al Ghofaily.

In the meetings, matters of mutual interest and avenues to further enhance bilateral cooperation came under discussion.

Pakistan Navy and Royal Saudi Naval Forces enjoy extremely close relations and cooperate in number of operational and training matters prominently the regular conduct of major maritime exercise Naseem Al Bahr.

SAUDI ARABIA: Vice Chief of the Naval Staff Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami exchanging views with Commander of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces HE Vice Admiral Fahad Bin Abdullah Al Ghofaily during visited Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## SC fixes hearing of PTI petition on restoration of election symbol bat Jan 10

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) will hear PTI petition regarding restoration of election symbol bat on January 10.

The court summoned PTI leader Hamid Khan during the hearing of PTI petition regarding level playing field.

Upon it he came on rostrum.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa asked Hamid Khan should his petition be not fixed tomorrow.

Hamid Khan requested to fix the petition for today.

The CJP remarked

there is 9-member bench today too and a special bench as well.

Hamid Khan said our priority is today. Otherwise it be fixed for January 10.

The CJP inquired has he come against the decision or it is petition of 3/184.

Hamid Khan said we have come in SC against Peshawar High Court (PHC) decision in 3/185.

The CJP remarked if the matter has not to go to judges committee then it is fixed for January 10.

The court fixed the case for hearing on January 10.

## Shehbaz allowed to contest election from NA-242

KARACHI (Online): Former Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has been allowed to contest election from NA-242 Karachi.

Election Tribunal has restored nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif from NA-242 Karachi. The objections raised by Qadir Khan Mandokhel from PPP were rejected.

Masood Khan Mandokhel PPP candidate had challenged nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif.

The appellant said returning officer had rejected his nomination papers. The returning officer has accepted nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif in haste by ignoring the legal requirements. December 29 decision of returning officer be declared nullified.

PML-N leader Rana Mashhood has said that Shehbaz Sharif has been allowed to contest election in NA-242. We demand level playing field for all parties.

ILLEGAL FOREIGNER NOT PERMITTED TO STAY IN PAKISTAN: Secy Interior

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary of Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani on Monday said that illegal foreigners would not be allowed to stay in Pakistan. The foreigners could stay in this country with valid documents, he said while chairing a meeting held here.

The meeting was attended by representatives of NADRA, Passport Office, provincial governments and other concerned institutions.

The secretary said that return of illegally staying foreigners to their country is one of the government's priorities.

He further stated that the process of repatriation of illegal aliens would continue till the objectives were achieved.



QUETTA: Chief Executive Officer Professional Education Foundation Javed Farooqi meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

## Special Assistant to CM Gilgit Baltistan says: High level committee formed for resolving issues of media industry & protection of rights of media persons in GB

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The Special Assistant to Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Eiman Shah has stated that a high level committee has been constituted for resolving the issues of media industry and protecting rights of those associated with it including media persons for the first time in history of Gilgit Baltistan.

The committee would present its recommendations in the cabinet meeting after consultation with all stakeholders so as to prepare a comprehensive policy for resolving the issues being faced by the media persons as well as to increase their capacity besides construction of the press clubs and provision of grants for them.

The Special Assistant to Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan was presiding over a meeting held to review steps for protection of the rights of media persons and resolving the issues of media industry in Gilgit Baltistan on Monday. It may be mentioned here that it was first meeting of the committee constituted on special directives of the Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Gulbar Khan.

Those who were present in the meeting were included the Secretary Information and Food, Kamal Khan, Deputy Secretary Information, Shamsur Rehman Qureshi, President of Gilgit Baltistan Newspaper Society, Raja Shah Sultan, Presidents of the press

clubs and Union of Journalists of Gilgit Baltistan besides the representatives of digital media.

The Deputy Director Information Department, Shamsur Rehman briefed the meeting about legislation regarding media and the proposed recommendations for the welfare of media persons and increase in their capacity.

Later, the Secretary Information and Food said that a working group comprising representatives of all the stakeholders is being formed for taking steps to resolve the issues being faced by the media persons of Gilgit Baltistan.

Meanwhile, it was decided to hold next meetings of the committee in Sakardu and Diamer.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting of Provincial Task Force for Prevention of Polio.

## Cabinet Committee starts formal investigation into May 9 tragedy

ISLAMABAD (Online): The cabinet committee constituted to investigate the May 9 tragedy has decided to sought all the records and documents from the relevant sensitive and investigative institutions.

While the verified videos and photos also be obtained from defense and military installations. The confessional statements of the arrested accused will also be examined.

According to the sources, the first meeting of the cabinet committee on the investigation of May 9 tragedy was held under the chairmanship of the Caretaker Law Minister Ahmed Irfan Aslam, in which the Ministers of Information and Broadcasting and Human Rights and the Secretary of the Interior participated.

The law minister said the investigation would be completed within the stipulated timeline. The committee will also bring forth the names of the masterminds, facilitators and all the elements who executed the plan of May 9 tragedy.

QUETTA: Members of Joint Action Committee University Teachers Officer and Employees Association are holding protest demonstration against the non-payment of their dues salaries.



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## CS reviews Provincial Task Force for anti-Polio

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan on Monday reviewed the meeting on Provincial Task Force for Anti-Polio that it was our national responsibility to actively participate in the campaign and all resources to be utilized to ensure the eradication of polio.

The progress of the previous campaign and the ongoing campaign were reviewed during the meeting.

Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan said that polio is a chronic disease and to avoid it, vaccinate children saying that everyone has to work seriously to eradicate polio.

Shakeel said that there were only two countries where the virus was still

found, and also directed all Deputy Commissioners to improve the quality of the campaign and preside over the evening review meeting to achieve the target of the polio drive in the areas of Balochistan.

He urged the parents and all schools of thought that they should also play their role in eliminating polio from the country and the province.

The concerned official briefed the meeting that a special seven-day anti-polio campaign was started on January 8, Monday across Balochistan saying that during the campaign, more than 25, 96,000 children would be administered the polio vaccine, and more than 11,000 teams were participating in the polio campaign.