Simultaneously published from Quetta, Gwadar, Hub, Karachi, Islamabad

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vd: XXV No. 146, Rajab 03, 1445 AH Monday January 15, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs. 15



DERAALLAH YAR: Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing during political gathering

Fires broadside at Nawaz Sharif

Will not let three-time PM to be imposed on nation for fourth time, says Bilawal

Says arrow will hunt down the lion on Feb 8; Contest only between PPP and PML-N now after bat's exit from polls: PPP believes in politics of serving masses; Will give interest-free loans to the people of Balochistan so that they can do your business and farmers will be assisted by Kisan Cards and build a university in Naseerabad besides giving youth card to the young people of the country to support them financially.

Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Sunday that only two political parties — his own and the PML-N remained in the electoral arena, urging the nation to vote for the 'arrow' in the upcoming general election.

The comments come a day after the PTI lost the battle for its iconic 'bat' electoral symbol, forcing its candidates to contest the polls as independents.

"Only two parties are left now," Bilawal said

Agencies): PPP Chairman
Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari
Birawal Bhutto-Zardari
Birawal Bhutto-Zardari between the PPP and the PML-N," he said.

The former foreign minister said that the people had to use their vote to determine if they wanted the same politics to continue or "new thinking" to prevail.

"You have to decide if you want to give the country's fate in the hands of a person who served as prime minister thrice but failed do anything for the the public, and the future

at Al Hamra Hall.

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chairman

Awami Party (PkMAP)

Mehmood Khan Achakzai

Oahar Wadhan besides

party workers and other

2024 elections

ECP urges political

parties to ensure

5pc women

candidates on

general seats

ISLAMABAD (APP):

The Election Commis-

sion of Pakistan (ECP)

has urged the political

parties to ensure 5 per-

cent representation of

women on general seats

for General Elections

The ECP spokesper-

It is noteworthy that

Pashtoonkhaw

Sunday.

ing aim at PML-N supremo people," Bilawal said. Nawaz Sharif.

"Or do you want to

party that takes everyone onboard as the country moves forward?" he asked. He highlighted that the PPP practiced politics and contested elections "for the poor" while the PML-N

supremo was taking part in

the polls so he could be

saved from going to jail. "I'm only contesting the polls so that I save you,

DERA MURAD JAMALI while addressing a rally in country," Bilawal said, tak- of Pakistan from those

Taking another swipe at Nawaz, the PPP chief give an opportunity to a said the former premier was a coward as he vowed to defeat the PML-N in their home ground of Lahore.

"I'm also contesting from Lahore. I will strike them inside their house," he asserted, adding that the PML-N feared the public. "They fear what the public will do to them if they step out," he said.

Continued on page 2

Elections on Feb 8 in interest of country, political parties: Solangi

LAHORE (APP): Care- tion that Pakistan would be taker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Sunday that it was in the interest of all political forces and parties concerned that general elections should be held on February

Speaking at the seventh edition of Think Fest 2024, the minister said it would be good for the country if the elections were held on the scheduled day i.e., Thursday, Febru-

He reminded that it was clearly written in the preamble of the Constitu-

run by the elected representatives.

The minister said that in the run-up to the elections, everyone was complaining about the level playing field.

The Pakistan Peoples Party and the Muslim Pakistan League (N) were voicing their complaints in that regard while Maulana Fazlur Rehman also complained of a lack of level playing field in Khyber dent. Pakhtunkhwa Balochistan.

"In fact, the working class of Pakistan does not have a level playing field,' Solangi maintained.

Without a fundamental change in the system enabling the common man to contest elections, there would not be a level playing field, he remarked.

The minister stressed that every political party should give its members the right to vote in the election of its office-bear-

He said in his opinion, the yesterday's Apex Court decision was a good prece-

It would have been better if there were legal experts in the panel who could explain the legal po-

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Members of Balochistan Commission for Human Rights are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held at Manan Chowk in Quetta.

Aziz, Brigadier Razzaq

Ahmed of Frontier Corps,

DIG police Nazir Ahmed

Kurd and Deputy Commis-

sioner Loralai, Sajjad Aslam

Baloch welcomed the Chief

Referring his visit, the

He directed to ensure

provision of best security,

repair of the polling sta-

tions, provision of water,

electricity, washrooms and

construction of ramp for the

arrival in Loralai.

elections.

for elections.

CS asks concerned authorities to take tribal elders in confidence for peaceful polls

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan has asked the concerned authorities to take tribal elders into conference for ensuring peaceful elections in the prov-

He said that every possible efforts would be made to ensure free, fair and transparent elections in peaceful manner.

The Chief Secretary was presiding over the meeting held to review the arrangements made for general elections in Loralai Division on Sunday.

The Chief Secretary was briefed about the preparations made for the elections in the Division.

Those who were present in the meeting were included the Additional Chief Secretary Home, Zahid Saleem, Inspector General of police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, Secretary S&GAD, Syed Faisal Ahmed, Secretary Local Government, Noor Ahmed Pirkani, Special Secretary Home, Abdul Nasir Dotani besides other concerned se-

Third resolution tabled in Senate seeking delay in Feb 8 polls

ISLAMABAD (INP): Another resolution seeking a delay in the February 8 polls moved in the Senate on Sunday, citing the weather and the security situation in Khyber

Secretary and others upon Pakhtunkhwa. Hilalur Senator Addressing the meet-Rehman of the Independent Parliamentary Group subing, Chief Secretary said that preparations have mitted the resolution citing been finalised for the upsevere cold weather, snowcoming general elections fall, and security challenges in light of the directives of as the hindrances for the general elections. "Severe cold and snowfall in Khyber Election Commission of He said that it is our Pakhtunkhwa are depriving firm resolve to ensure free, the citizens to cast their fair and transparent elecballots while the candidates tions in the province. are also facing numerous

paigns," said the resolution.
"In the same way, due Chief Secretary said that the basic objective behind to security concerns in the his visit is to monitor the country, especially in KP, preparations for general candidates are facing threats I'm this regard, visits of terrorist attacks while campaigning," it said, addwould be made of the remaining divisions of the ing that it was also creating province so as to mobilize obstacles and limiting canthe government machinery didates' participation in

challenges to run their cam-

their campaigns. It added that the date of Feb 8 to hold the elections is not suitable. The resolution urged the ECP to delay polls to a date which was acceptable for all the relevant stakeholders.

119 & 363 candidates to contest elections from **Independent Report**

In all 442 candidates in competition run for 16 NA

seats from Balochistan

3 NA & 9 PA seats from Quetta respectively

QUETTA: In all 442 candidates would be in competition run for 16 seats of National Assembly from Balochistan province.

According to the final list of candidates issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan, 442 candidates contesting the elections on 16 NA seats from the province are included 428 male and 14 female candidates.

The highest number of candidates i.e., 46 each are contesting from NA-255

would be 38 candidates and NA-264 respectively. while from NA-264, there are 35 candidates competing the elections from the

Two each female candidates are contesting from NA-255, NA-260, NA-262 and NA-263. No female candidate Quetta-V.

has filed candidature for NA-251, NA-258, NA-259 and NA-261. This means, no female is contesting election from these four NA seats from the province.

As far the seats of provincial and National Assemblies from Quetta, a total of 119 candidates are contesting elections from all three seats of National Assembly from Quetta i.e., NA-262, NA-263 and NA-

Altogether 38 candidates are contesting the polls from NA-262 while 46 and 35 candidates are From NA-262, there competing from NA-263

Similarly, a total of 363 candidates are in competition run for all nine seats of Provincial Assembly from Ouetta.

The highest number of candidates (63) are contesting elections from PB-42,

Caretaker PM arrives in **Zurich to participate** in WEF meeting

ZURICH (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar arrived here on Sunday to participate in the 54th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos to be held from January 15 to 19.

Pakistan's Permanent Representative to Geneva Bilal Ahmed, Pakistan's Ambassador to Switzerland officials received the prime

Amir Shaukat and high level minister In the meeting, the prime minister would de-

liver a keynote address on the theme "Trade Tech's stan" event.

Trillion Dollar Promise". the Foreign Office Spokes-person wrote her official X

PM Kakar would attend three key thematic events on 'preventing an era of global conflict; restoring faith in the global system and preventing economic

On the sidelines of the event, he would also hold meetings with the government and business leaders.

During his visit, Prime Minister Kakar would lead a special "Invest in Paki-

PTI kicks off election campaign in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): A day after losing 'bat' as electoral symbol, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) launched its campaign for the upcoming polls with a rally led by central leader Sher Afzal Marwat at Karachi's Sea View beach on Sunday.

Marwat led the party's first election rally at Sea View with a significant number of participants. The rally was announced by PTI leader Raja Azhar, who mentioned that the party chose Sea View, a popular pienie spot in Karachi, to kick off its cam-

However, Azhar complained about police barricades on the roads leading to the venue. Subsequently, the traffic police clarified that the main track along Sea View beach was tempolitical rally but was soon restored

The party faced a setback on Saturday when the Supreme Court ruled in

Khan, the now-former chairman, stated that all PTI candidates would participate independently, and the party would release a list of candidates with their new election symbols

porarily blocked due to the

2024, in accordance with favour of the Election Section 206 of the Elec-Commission of Pakistan tions Act, 2017. (ECP), leading to the loss of its electoral symbol son on Sunday stated 'bat.' Following the Suthat all political parties preme Court's decision, the need to provide the Elecdeadline for the allotment tion Commission with of electoral symbols to pothe list of male and felitical parties expired. The male candidates holding ECP assigned different party tickets for general symbols to PTI candidates. seats within a period of who will now participate as five days. independent contenders in

the Feb 8 elections. political parties assigned Barrister Gohar Ali symbols for the 2024 general elections must comply with Section 206 of the Elections Act, 2017, ensuring a 5 percent representation of women candidates on general seats.

Says all nationalities living in Pakistan should get equal rights; we have to be resolute to secure our rights despite hurdles and constraints people were also present. Addressing the ceremony, the Chairman PkMAP said that PkMAP

is not against anyone, but

it has been struggling for

LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting,

Murtaza Solangi addressing a Seminar (Muzakara) organized by Think Fest

Inaugurates election office:

PkMAP not against anyone, just

waging aging struggle for rights

of Pashtoons: Mehmood Achakzai

rights of the Pashtoons in inaugurated the central electhe province and country. tion cell of NA-263 and He said that there have PB-41 in the respective been numerous hardships in election constituency on our struggle, and even the same would be in time to The inaugural cercome, but we have to be emony was attended by the firm and resolute against election candidate of the all odds for securing the party for PB-41. Abdul

The Chairman PkMAP other leaders including Dr. also said that this is the time Hamid Khan Achakzai and of elections and now the people would make level A large number of the

deviate from our objective. However, still we have to move forward to achieve our objectives, he stressed adding that we should indulge in the politics of alle-

gations. He said that this is time for us to put our stance with argument convincing

the opponents even. The Chairman PkMAP also said that all nationalities living in the country should get their due rights equally.

The candidate of PkMAP for PB-41, Abdul Qahar Wadhan and other party leaders also ad-



QUETTA: Chairman Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party Mahmood Khan Achakzai is inaugurating the election office of the candidate PB-41 and NA-263.

95 percent target of polio immunization campaign achieved in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The antipolio campaign came to an end in all districts Balochistan province on Sunday.

According to the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for poeradication Balochistan, the campaign lasted for seven days all over

the province. The EOC sources said that almost 95 percent target of the polio immunization was achieved in the province till sixth

day i.e., Saturday.
While the campaign also remained continued on Sunday, it is likely to achieve more about province.

the immunization campaign.

It may be mentioned here that the anti-polio campaign was launched on Monday last in all 36 districts of the prov-

It was targeted to vaccinate approximately 2.6 million children during the campaign.

For immunization of the children against polio, around 11,000 polio teams were formed.

Worth mentioning was that the campaign remained continued despite harsh weather conditions including during and after snowfall in different areas of the



New Zealand beat Pakistan by 21 runs to take control of T20 series

HAMILTON (Online): by New Zealand by 21 runs in the second T20 match as well. The half-centuries of Fakhr Zaman and Babar Azam went in vain.

The host team got a two-nil (2-0) lead in the five-match series. The second match of the 5-match T20 series was played in Hamilton on Sunday, where national team captain Shaheen Afridi won the toss and decided to field first.

New Zealand started the match, the first wicket of the host team fell for 59 runs, Dion Conway scored 20 runs and caught Fakhar Zaman off the ball of Amir Jamal. The host team started aggressively, Finn

tion Commission of Paki-

stan has allotted election

symbols to the candidates

of Pakistan Tehreek-e-

Insaaf (PTI) in independent

Gohar Ali Khan was allot-

ted the kettle mark while

Shaukat Yousafzai got the

Afridi will have to contest

the election on the symbol

of a bottle, Shandana Gulzar

has been given a bowl sym-

From Multan, Zain Qureshi got shoes, Dr Riaz

ISLAMABAD (Online):

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) has prepared an ap-

peal to be filed in the Su-

preme Court (SC) against

the 3-member bench of the

Supreme Court. It is likely

Hamid Khan Advocate has

stitutional and legal points

have been disputed in the

verdict issued by the Su-

preme Court in the appeal

and references to the most

important verdict have also

been given in response to

Sources have said that

Many important con-

to be filed on Monday.

prepared an appeal.

Racket mark

tongs symbol.

Chairman PTI Barrister

Party leader Shahryar

Allen hit 5 sixes and 7 fours. managed to score 194 runs ued to fall, Babar Azam He played a brilliant innings of 74 runs in just 41 balls but could not score a century and got out on Osama Mir's ball. Skipper Kane Williamson suffered leg pain while scoring runs due to which he had to leave the match after scoring 26 runs.

New Zealand's third wicket fell on a total of 147 runs, Daryl Mitchell was for 17. Mark Chapman was the victim of Abbas Afridi for 4, followed by Haris Rauf, Adam Milne (0) and Ish Sodhi. (0) and Gaylen Phillips (13) to the pavilion, while Mitchell Santner was run out by Azam Muhammad Rizwan.

LORALAI: Commissioner Loralai Division Balach Aziz presenting a memo-

rial shield to Inspector General of Police Balochistan AbdulKhaliq Sheikh

Election symbols allotted to

PTI candidates independently

LAHORE (Online): Elec- Long got a rocket, Alia date Sardar Azimullah was

Hamza Malik got dice from Lahore, Sanaullah Khan

Mastikhel from Bhakkar

got a letterbox symbol. While Aamir Dogar got

clock election symbol,

Irfanullah Khan Niazi got

Riaz Fatiana from NA-107

was awarded a chair, Ashfa Riaz Fatiana from PP-123

from NA-123 has been al-

lotted the radio symbol. NA 124 CPTI candi-

In the appeal, refer-

ences have also been given

to some important deci-

sions given by the judges

present in the judgment and

it has been said that this

decision is hindering the

fundamental rights of the

people, so it should be an-

nulled and instructions

should be issued to the

Election Commission that

PTI candidates instead of

their independent status,

their names should be ap-

proved according to the

party ticket and they

should be allowed to con-

test the election on the elec-

toral symbol of the bat.

Gharial symbol

bol and Meher Bano (K) symbol while PTI can-

Appeal against SC's

verdict is likely to

be filed today

for the loss of 8 wickets in 20 overs. Osama Mir, Aamir Jamal took one wicket each, Abbas Afridi took 2 wickets and Haris Rauf took 3 wickets.

In pursuit of the target, Saim Avub of the national team became a victim of Tim Southee by scoring only one run this time, while Mohammad Rizwan the victim of Abbas Afridi could also score only 7 runs, 2 players were dismissed for 10 runs of the national team.

Fakhar Zaman took charge of the batting lineup after the early dismissals of Saeem Ayub and

After Fakhar Zaman's The New Zealand team dismissal, wickets contin-

awarded the watch and

Zameer Ahmed the dolphin

symbol while PTI candi-

date Jameel Asghar Bhatti

from NA 125 received the

drum symbol. PTI's Salman

Akram Raja from NA 128

PTI candidate Meher the racket while PTI candi-

and Syeda Sonia Ali Raza cricket stump. It should be Shah from PP-124 were noted that last night the

awarded a cup. Khosa has Supreme Court upheld the

been allotted the alphabet decision of the Election

was allotted the symbol of

date Mian Azhar from NA-

129 will contest the elec-

tion on the symbol of the cricket stump. It should be

Commission and invalidated the verdict of the

Peshawar High Court, after which PTI has lost the

electoral symbol of the bat.

Azan Awais gears

up for his maiden

Ú19 World Cup

in South Africa

PESHAWAR (INP): The

latest installment in

Sialkot's rich legacy of ex-

citing cricket talent produc-

tion, Azan Awais was all set

to feature in his maiden U19

World Cup for Pakistan

U19 in South Africa and

he'll be the linchpin of the

team's batting unit during

As the second-leading run-scorer in ACC Men's

U19 Asia Cup 2023 with

222 runs in four games, the

highlight of Azan Awais ca-

reer, according to him, has

been the hundred against

India in that tournament

where he anchored

Pakistan's chase with ma-

turity and courage.
Interacting with PCB

Digital about his journey,

Azan reminisced about the

times when he fell in love

with the game, "I started

playing the game when I

was just eight years old.

My father took me to an

academy for training. I had

to stop playing for some

time due to my studies but

a visit to Sialkot's Jinnah

stadium reignited my

hunger to play during

school days. My father has

sacrificed a lot for my

growth as he lent time and

attention and helped me

ter-Regional T20 Tourna-

ment 2017 for Sialkot U13,

and returned in the same

tournament as the leading

run-scorer in the 2018 edi-

Azan played U13 In-

excel.

the tournament.



MUZAFFARABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick Distributing Winter Kits among the prisoners of Central Jail.

Deployment of Pak Navy ships has no connection to tussle Houthis, US

ISLAMABAD (Online): any such coalition. What-Pakistan Navy and Ministry of Defense have rejected the fabricated and baseless propaganda allegations on social media regarding the deployment of Pakistan Navy ships in the Arabian Sea

From New Zealand

Adam Milne took 4 wick-

ets, Tim Southee took 2 wickets. Ben Sears and Ash

Sodhi took two wickets

According to the sources of the Ministry of Defense, the US-allied attacks against the Houthis in Yemen have nothing to do with the deployment of Pakistan Navy ships. Linking the deployment with the American operation against the Houthis is completely baseless and based on propaganda. The United States announced the formation of Task Force 153 against the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea.

According to sources, Pakistan rejected the American invitation to join Task Force 153, Pakistan is not a part of Task Force 153 and Operation Prosperity Guardian in the Red Sea, Pakistan has no intention of joining Task Force 153 or constant presence.

ever the issue is against Palestine, Pakistan Navy has never been used against Yemen and will not be used in any case

Recently Senator Mushtaq Ahmad said on Twitter that the Pakistan Navy is not part of any alliance that is against Palestine or Hamas. I am not a party, Pakistan is located on the edge of the most important sea passages like the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz through which there is a large volume of oil tanker traffic.

The ships of Pakistan Navy are continuously patrolling to ensure the safety of Pakistan's trade routes in the Arabian Sea. The Pakistan Navy is also conducting continuous aerial surveillance of trade routes. The purpose of patrolling is only to protect Pakistan's trade routes. To ensure security, Pakistan Navy warships are always patrolling the Arabian Sea to ensure a

Maryam to launch election campaign in Okara today

LAHORE (INP): As the electioneering has failed to gain the traditional momentum with the political parties delaying campaign for the reasons not explained, Maryam Nawaz is scheduled to address a rally in Okara tomorrow (Monday) - a move that will certain boost the voters' mood

In a post shared on X, the social media platform which was previously known as Twitter, PML-N Spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb said Maryam who is the party's chief organiser and widely believed as the political scion of three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif - would share the important points of the manifesto to the crowd at Iqbal Stadium Okara.

Describing the public gathering as a part of the PML-N's election campaign, she said the people would be the winner on February 8 – the day when Pakistan will go for countrywide polling.

The victory, she added. the days of progress and development would return after her party wins the much-awaited general elec-

I didn't seek PML-N ticket. means not in the party: Shahid Khaqan Abbasi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former prime minister Shahid Kĥaqan Abbasi has said, he didn't seek the PML-N ticket, which means he is not in the party. "If a person does not seek the party's ticket after 35 years of affiliation is extraordinary and a clear message," seasoned politician said in an interview. "There was no need of a ceremony at joining and neither today, for quitting the party," he said.

"Some party friends talked with me after, I didn't apply for the PML-N ticket. I had given the names of some party workers of the constituency and said I will support them," former PM said. "These workers were not awarded tickets, now I will not support the PML-N candidate". "After the PML-N decision, I am free", he said.

"I was being pressurized in constituency to contest or field my son as an independent candidate," he said. "I will support if the workers stand for election," he said. "It is okay, the party is theirs, they decided what they think is better," he said.

Abbasi said, "How could you devoid a political party from its election symbol election is the constitu-tional right". "I don't want to be part of a farce like IPP, PML-Q and Patriot," he said. "I have to do politics and will my line of action after the election," Abbasi said. "If I found a party or not but new will definitely formed as there is space, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said.

"The new party will not be a group of some individuals, which emerges around in election times, he said. "All three parties have created a space for a new political party with their performance and attitude. The new party will be for a big cause," he said.

Former prime minister said that several people have contacted with him, " am agreed that there should be a new political party". "This will not be a party, which used to be constituted for a specific purpose.' 'Sword was made Arrow and the Cow fielded against Lion and made it to resemble like the Lion". "The Cow bagged 12,000 votes against me, when no one was knowing the candi-Replying a question date," Shahid Khaqan said.



ISLAMABAD: Photo journalists posing for a group photograph along with senior photo journalist Abdul Hamed after the annual election 2024 of RIPJA (Professional) at Pindi press club in the city.

Persistent fog disrupts train services across Pakistan LAHORE (APP): In an Mail train was running late

disruptions, causing de-

lays in several key services. According to the latest update from Pakistan Railways on Sunday, many trains were delayed, affecting travel schedules for passengers as 1-Up Khyber Mail train was running late for 4 hours, 5-Up Greenline for 01 hour, 7-Up Tezgam for 2:15 hrs. 9-Up Allama Iqbal Express for 3:30 hrs, 11-Up Hazara Express for 1:30 hrs, 13-Up Awam Express for 1:30 hrs, 15-Up Karachi Express for 2 hrs, 17-Up Millat Express for 4:30 hrs, 25-Up Bahauddin Zakariya Express for 4 hrs, 33-Up Pak Business Express for 5:30 hrs, 37-Up Fareed Express for 2 hrs, 41-Up Karakoram Express for 4:45 hrs, 45-Up Pakistan Express for 4 hrs, 47-Up Rehman Baba Express, 4:45 hrs and 145-Up

for 5:30 hrs While 2-Down Khyber

Sukkur Express was late

ongoing struggle against for 2 hrs, 6-Dn Greenline dense fog, train operations for 1:30 hrs, 8-Dn Tezgam in various parts of the for 2:30 hrs, 10-Dn Allama untry continue to face Inhal Express for 4:15 hrs 12-Dn Hazara Express for 01 hrs, 14-Dn Awam Express for 1:15 hrs, 16-Dn Karachi Express for 3:15 hrs, 18-Dn Millat Express for 3:30 hrs, 26-Dn Bahauddin Zakariya Express for 3:15 hrs, 28-Dn Shalimar Express for 2:15 hrs, 34-Dn Pak Business Express for 8:40 hrs, 38-Dn Fareed Express for 5:15 hrs, 42-Dn Karakoram Express for 6 hrs and 48-Dn Rehman Baba Express was

late for 5 hrs. Pakistan Railways authorities acknowledge the challenges and assure the public that measures are being implemented to restore normalcy. However, they emphasize that complete punctuality can only be achieved once weather conditions and visibility significantly improve. Commuters were advised to stay informed about the latest updates and plan their journeys accordingly.

9 Park or H-9 but they in-

sisted on going to the D Chowk in Red Zone.

cal or religious, is allowed

to enter the Red Zone,"

to take action when the

protesters camping outside

the National Press Club

tried to enter the Red Zone.

Later, the government's ne-

gotiation committee held

talks with them and then the

women and children ar-

rested by the police were

released first. Another 163

people were released in the

second phase and finally

the remaining 34 were also

Solangi said.

"No group, be it politi-

He said the police had

Elections on Feb 8 in interest,... that they were offered to Continued from page 1 hold their sit-in either at F-

sition, he added

Terming political instability and economic survival of the country main challenges, Solangi said the next government might be facing economic issues.

"We need improvement in the economy. With the principal amount of the overall budget used for servicing big loans and other payments, it is difficult to run the country," he said.

The minister said that the agriculture contributed about a quarter of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), but the tax collection from the sector was very low.

Moreover, he added, the population was increas-Medical facilities, ining rapidly, which was burcluding an ambulance were dening the sectors like also provided to the prohealth and education. testors, he added. He said Pakistan was

The Balochistan goveralso bearing the brunt of clinor and other members of mate change as well. the committee persuaded "We have to improve the protesters to go back

relations with our neighborpeacefully, he said. ing countries, as, otherwise, The minister said that we cannot become ecothere was a need of a negonomically strong," Solangi maintained. About the protesters

tiating committee having representation of major political parties that could from Balochistan in give a better solution to this Islamabad, he minister said problem.

win hearts by distributing

PPP candidates

toffees to children GARHI YASIN (INP): In a heartwarming display of community engagement Pakistan People's Party (PPP) candidates in Garhi Yasin, including Shahryar Meher Khan and Agha Siraj Durrani, have become the talk of the town after a video showing them distributing toffees to chil dren in constituency PS-9

went viral on social media. The candid moment, captured during their campaign activities in the NA-193 constituency, showcased the warm interaction between the political figures and the young members of the community. Agha Siraj Durrani, also the Sindh Assembly Speaker, was seen personally handing out toffees creating a positive and

amicable atmosphere. The video, which has been widely shared on various platforms, has garnered attention for its endearing nature, providing a refreshing break from the often serious tone of political campaigns. The act of distributing toffees to children serves as a unique and relatable way for the PPP candidates to connect with the local community.

The gesture not only showcases a softer side of the political figures but also emphasises the importance of community involvement and rapport-building during elec tion campaigns.

Such initiatives contribute to breaking down barriers between politicians and the public, fostering a sense of unity and

Continued from page 1 vowed to form a PPP-led

Bilawal said there was

no 'bat' in the February 8 election and the contest would be between the 'tiger' and the 'arrow', the electoral symbols for the PML-N and the PPP, respectively.

During his speech, Bilawal also promised to complete the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline to fix the issues of Balochistan if the province voted in favour of the PPP.

"I want to give a message to Islamabad. The people in the provinces are not happy with the rulers sitting in Islamabad," he said. He asserted that the people did not approve of attempts under way to make Nawaz premier for the fourth time.

He said that he was building two million houses and giving ownership rights in Sindh besides raising a question that why did this not happen in Balochistan? "I will give interest-free

loans to the people of Balochistan so that they can do your business and farmers will be assisted by Kisan Cards," he said.
The PPP chief further

said that he would build a university in Naseerabad besides giving youth card to the young people of the country to support them financially. While talking about the prevalent hunger in the country, he claimed that the hunger eradication program would be at the union council level so that no one sleeps hungry.

"The public is no one's slave. The people of Balochistan have dignity and are brave. They do not bow down in front of anyone they do not back down, and are not afraid either," he said. Bilawal

Will not let three-time PM to be... government, adding that the country needed the leadership of a party that was dedicated to serving the poor as opposed to the PML-N only served the

> He warned that the province would not see any development for the next five years if Nawaz was made premier.

"My first promise is that if you help in forming a PPP government, I will double your salary,3 Bilawal said. "I will make sure that the poor throughout the country receive 300 MW of electricity for free,' he said. He also promised to build free educational and health institutions in every district of the province.

The PPP chairman also promised to introduce welfare schemes for farmers and the country's youth. He concluded his address by urging the people to vote for the PPP in the upcoming general elections.

Later, Bilawal also addressed a rally in Sindh's Khairpur. Other party leaders, including Qaim Ali Shah, also spoke on the occasion. The PPP chief promised the people of Sindh that the leaders they elect would not forget the public after winning the elections. Bilalwal said he would personally visit Khairpur after the PPP won the election and inquire about the problems the people were facing. He pinned the responsibility for the PPP's success in the upcoming elections on the voters in Sindh. "We have a complaint against the caretaker government for halting our development works for so many months, Bilawal said as he decried how the flood affectees in Sindh were being deprived of their rights.

Rameez Raja criticizes selectors for not including **Mohammad Haris in team**

Former Chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board Ramiz Raja has criticized the seyoung wicketkeeper batsman Muhammad Haris in

In an interview, he said that Mohammad Haris's performance in the T20 World Cup 2023 was excellent, but after that he was not given opportuni-

He questioned that if Saeem Ayub is included in your plan then why the selectors have left out Mohammad Haris. Former

Chairman PCB said that Mohammad Haris' strike rate has been more than 200, no batsman will be lectors for not selecting the able to score runs with such a high strike rate because there is a risk in playing like this. He defended the young batsman. While saying that earlier a cricketer was brought to a strike rate of 180, now if it is not part of the plan, it also damages

Ramiz Raja also admitted that Harris plays innings of 20 or 30 runs but

he cannot convert it into





QUETTA: Provincial President Minority Wing of Muslim League (N), Patrik S M speaks during a press conference.

Mushaal distributes winter kits to refugees in Kashmiri Camp

Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Sunday distributed winter kits among the refugees from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) residing in Kashmiri Refugees Camp Muzaffarabad. She is accompanied by the Focal Person to SAPM Sabien Hussein Mullick and DG Legal Aid and Justice Authority Dr. Raheem Awan on a two-day visit to AJK. SAPM is leading an initiative to provide critical relief to refugees facing the challenges of harsh weather conditions in AJK, said a press release issued

here.

The winter kits include essential items such as warm clothing, blankets, thermal socks, gloves, and other necessities to help vulnerable families in camp cope with the severe winter conditions. She personally mingled and engaged in conversations with the refugees. She said that in the face of adversity, it was our collective responsibility to month. She also expressed extend a helping hand to her steadfast commitment those who needed it the to ensure the establishment conversion into contributmost. She said that the win-

the bustling political arena

of Islamabad, the electoral

battleground is set with an

intriguing mix of candidates

capital's constituencies,

each armed with their dis-

Islamabad has allotted elec-

toral symbols to the candi-

dates who are contesting the forthcoming General

Election 2024 from all three

national assembly constituencies of the federal capi-

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad

Capital Police apprehended

29 outlaws including 10

professional beggars from

different areas of the city

during the last 24 hours and

recovered drugs and weap-

ons from their possession,

a public relations officer

said. He said that, following the special directions of

Islamabad Capital City Po-

lice Officer (ICCPO) Dr.

Akbar Nasir Khan, the

Islamabad Capital Police

has intensified crackdown

against the criminal ele-

ments in order to eliminate

tions, the Aabpara police

team arrested two accused

namely Hamza Noor and

Naseer Masih and recov-

ered 535 grams heroin and

one 30 bore pistol from their possession. The

Ramna police team arrested

an accused namely Amjad Khan and recovered 22 gram

ice from his possession.

Tarnol police team arrested

three accused namely Umar

Following these direc-

the crime from the city.

The District Return-

Officer (DRO)

tinctive election emblem.

and symbols as in total 119 as an independent candidate

tal, ICT spokesman Dr while Mustafa Nawaz

Abdullah Tabasum said Khokhar marks time with

29 outlaws arrested;

drugs and weapons

recovered

lief to the brave individuals and families forced to live away from their homeland due Indian atrocities in In-(IIOJK).

Expressing unwaverand Kashmir that they would not be left alone in

Government of Pakistan commitment to alleviate the pain of their forced eviction from homes in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (ÎlOJK). She said that apart from expending maximum public funds for AJK, the Government was also diverting private funding towards the region to ensure its uplift.

Mushaal assured the refugees that the recent distribution of aid was not a one-time effort but part of an ongoing commitment. She announced a Ramadan package for the refugees aimed at providing sustained relief during the holy of proper education facili-

ISALAMBAD: President PML-NAzad Kashmir Shah Ghulam Qadir meeting with Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhary Anwar-ul-Haq.

Diverse array of electoral

symbols/candidates spice up

Capital's election landscape

ISLAMABAD (APP): In while talking to APP on the Clock symbol. Adding

contenders are vying for with the unique Parachute candidates is vying for vic-

victory across three symbol. Renowned lawyer tory while independent can-

fray with the graceful Dove

The competition heats up in NA-47, where

a total of 37 candidates are

in contention. Among them,

dates, bringing diversity to

Chaudhry Ilyas Mehrban

holds the Battery symbol,

Farooq, Raees Khan and a

lady accused namely

Zarmena and recovered

2,325 gram hashish and one

Similarly, the Noon

30 bore pistol from their

police team arrested two ac-

cused namely Muhammad

Yahya and Riaz and recov-

ered two 9mm pistols from

their possession. The

Khanna police team ar-

rested two accused namely

Rizwan Munir and Faisal

Younas and recovered two

30 bore pistols from their

possession. The Koral po-

lice team arrested an ac-

cused namely Naeem

Ahmad and recovered 320

gram hashish from his pos-

session. Further-more, the

Sihala police team arrested

an accused namely Arbaz and recovered an iron

punch from his possession.

The Humak police team ar-

rested three accused namely

Shaukat Masih, Nabeel

Javed and Bashir Masih

and recovered 49 liters of

alcohol from their posses-

25 are independent candi-

as his election symbol.

In NA-46, where 44 transgender candidate

In NA-48, a field of 38

stands out with the Pome-

granate symbol, while

PTI's Ali Bukhari adds an

interesting twist by con-

testing independently in the

tensified, the distinctive

captivating electoral jour-

ney in the heart of

Pakistan's political land-

CDA auctions

11 plots,

fetches

Rs13.5b

ISLAMABAD (APP)

The Capital Development

Authority (CDA) has auc-

tioned 11 out of 35 com-

mercial plots, getting Rs13.541 billion during the

three days of auction, which

tee followed the auction of

five plots for Rs11.141 bil-

lion by accepting the highest offers of Rs 2.4 billion

for six commercial plots.

tioned plot number 18 Blue

Area (G-9/F-9) measuring

611.11 square yards for

Rs1.316 billion, while an-

other plot of 20 kanals in

Orchard Scheme was auc-

tioned for Rs400 million.

The committee received the

highest offers of Rs164.6

million and Rs157.3 million

for two 133.33 square yard

respectively.

The auction commit-

The committee auc-

concluded last week.

As election fervor in-

same constituency.

candidates are in the race, sports the Green Chilli as

Shoaib Shaheen joins the didate Raja Khuram Nawaz

the ballot. Notably, symbols promise a visually

Mustafin Kazmi stands out their election emblem.

ISLAMABAD (APP): ter kits were aimed to pro-special Assistant to Prime vide some comfort and re-refugee camps. Mushaal expressed her belief in the liberation of Kashmir from Indian occupation, a day when refugees would be dian Illegally Occupied able to return to their homes Jammu and Kashmir and reunite with their loved

She said that the righting solidarity, she assured ful owners of IIOJK were refugees in Azad Jammu enduring suffering in refugee camps whereas India was busy distributing domiciles to non-Kashmiris to She expressed the alter the demographic landscape of IIOJK

She urged the UN for immediate action to facilitate the conduct of a plebiscite in accordance with its resolutions so that families displaced by the conflict could return to their homes. reunite with their loved ones and rebuild their lives in a peaceful and just envi-

Mushaal also undertook a visit to Central Jail Muzaffarabad, where she issued directives to the superintendent to ensure all necessary measures to facilitate the prisoners.

She underscored that prisons were correction facilities meant for reformation of convicts and their ing citizens of the State



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Pakistan Professor Dr. Mehmet Pachaji in a meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Justice (retd) Arshad Hussain Shah.

DRAP, NIH directed to take urgent steps for ensuring anti-rabies vaccines

ISLAMABAD (APP): Government hospitals and Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi on Sunday has directed the heads of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) and the National Institute of Health (NIH) to take urgent steps for ensuring fasttrack availability of the antirabies vaccines in the government hospitals of the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) and remove all bureaucratic bottlenecks in this regard.

It may be recalled that in response to a public complaint received recently in his office, he took a serious notice of the non-availsummoned the senior officials of both these organizations on January 09, 2024 to unearth the root cause of the situation. He had also directed the DRAP to conduct a thorough probe as to why the NIH was not manufacturing this essential vaccine. As a follow-up measure, the office of Wafaqi Mohtasib immediately issued a notice to both these organizations i.e. NIH and DARP and the Registrar of the Wafaqi Mohtasib

initiated a probe into the matter. It was revealed that apart from lengthy official procedures, bureaucratic ability of this essential vac-cine in the Islamabad's delays, gross negligence, mismanagement and fluc-

tuation of the dollar rate resulted in this unfortunate situation. He has directed that responsibility may be fixed for the shortage of this essential vaccine and necessary steps may be initiated for avoiding recurrence of such incidents in future.

The matter is being vigorously followed up by the Office of the Wafaqi Mohtasib and all the stakeholders have assured that they would spare no efforts in this regard. It may also be informed that 02 hearings have already been held in the Wafaqi Mohtasib's office in this regard which were attended by the representatives of the organizations concerned.

PIDE launches Discourse Magazine's latest edition

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) has launched the latest edition of its 'Discourse Magazine' this week, aiming to initiate a nationwide debate on the reform of key sectors, domains, and institutions.

Around 15 unique areas have been covered in 'Discourse: Reconfiguring Pakistan: State, Society, and Economy, including Reconceptualizing Development, Constitutional Reform, Political Contestation, Parliament and Civil

Service, Economic Policy, Foreign Aid, Energy, Trade and Industry, Land and Agriculture, Labour Relations, Education, Public Welfare, Cities and Local Governance, Climate, and Society and Culture, as stated in a PIDE news release on Sunday. The publication features contributions from a

number of prominent personalities in the academic domain, political sphere, legal fraternity, media sector, government bureaucracy, diplomatic circle, business community, development network.

Renowned actor Zaidi passed away

ISLAMABAD (APP): A renowned Pakistani actor Shaukat Zaidi, was passed away at the age of 72 in Lahore on Saturday night after a prolonged illness.

According to private news channel, Zaidi was receiving the kidney treatment from private hospital in Lahore.

Apart from his prolific acting career, he also remained associated with the field of journalism from 1970 to 1998. Even though, he went on to play a number of dramas, his talent in Hum Sub Umeed Se Hain and Wafa Ka Mausam was remarkable.



ISLAMABAD: Gypsy youngsters searching valuables from garbage.

PIMS denies reports regarding closure of its OT

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) has contradicted the news item appearing in a section of press on closure of its Operation Theatre

In a statement on Sunday, Dr Mubashar Mushtaq Daha, spokesperson to Executive Director PIMS said that such news about the federal capital's largest government hospital were baseless. According to the records, supplies are being received in PIMs emergency operations, he added.

He said that supply was being provided according to the demand of the procedure. The list displayed outside the OT is baseless and the PIMS administration has nothing to do with it. Who put the list outside the OT and under what purpose, investigations are being done, he said.

'PIMS has sent a request for release of funds to the concerned department while the OT was not closed and still working."

He said that caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan is ensuring

effective measures for the release of funds.

He said that these funds would also be released by the end of this month due to the efforts of the Minister for Health.

Islamabad Expressway. Last week, the CDA

> According to the bus terminal.

women's commuters. Moreover, it is also observed that different vans have installed CNG cylinders and extracted fares equivalent to those fixed for the usage of petrol and diesel. Zubair Talha, a NUML university student, says that he travels from the Police Foundation to H-9 on a daily basis and noted that these vans had installed CNG kits but never witnessed any relevant authority to check the safety of these kits or the fares did not produce a fare list charged by the van owners.

'They also prolong their stay at different stops and waste precious time," he says while wearing a

Sajjad Azhar, a senior proper checks on the rude journalist, writer, and resident of Media Town, regretpublic vans where extra ted that a huge population passengers were forced to was living in a dozen private societies nestled board without considering the seats allocated for around the Expressway and

policies continue unabated in IIOJK They said, shielded by Conference (APHC) has draconian laws, the Indian said that the policies of renon-Kashmiri establish-

ment, occupation forces,

and bureaucracy have taken

full control of the civil ad-

ministration and judicial in-

and Kashmir (IIOJ&K). stitutions in the territory, According to Kashmir whereby people are ar-Media Service, the APHC rested, tortured, and haleaders, including Ghulam rassed with impunity. Muhammad Khan Sopori, They denounced the Muhammad Saleem Zargar, inhumane behavior meted Advocate Arshad Iqbal, out to the Kashmiri politi-Ms. Hafza Bano, and cal prisoners detained for de-Shafiq ur Rehman, said in manding the right to self-detheir separate statements in termination, recognized by Srinagar that for more than the United Nations and supported by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Termseven decades, India's belligerent military occupation and state terrorism had ing the ongoing resistance been major causes of gross movement against the Inhuman rights violations in dian illegal occupation as the territory. They lapurely political and indigmented that non-Kashmiris enous, the APHC leaders said were being facilitated to buy land and property in IIOJK to change its demography, and its real citizens were

APHC says: Repression, might

ISLAMABAD (APP):

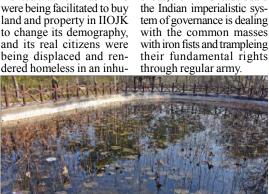
The All Parties Hurriyat

pression and military might

by Indian authorities con-

tinue unabated in Indian il-

legally occupied Jammu



ISLAMABAD: A view of pollute the water of Lotus Lake in the Federal Capital, as needs to attention for concern authority.

NCHR signs MoUs with universities to promote HR education

order to promote human rights education among university students, the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a number of higher education institutions (HEIS).

The recent MoUs were signed with Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University in Islamabad and Fatima Jinnah Women's University, Rawalpindi.

This collaboration u derscores the shared commitment of both entities to empower individuals, foster a culture of respect, culture of tolerance and equality, and justice amongst students, and prevent human rights violations through education.

This initiative is aligned with the crucial role of education and awareness in the protection and promotion of human rights.

"By engaging with universities and educational institutes, the NCHR aims to create a lasting impact, fostering a society that values and upholds the principles of human rights. We look forward to creating a more just and inclusive society through widespread human rights literacy," said chairperson NCHR Rabiya

She said, "NCHR recognizes the pivotal role of

contributing to the formulation and execution of human rights education programs." In line with this objective,the Commission has been actively engaged in forging partnerships with esteemed universities and educational institutes across the country."

'This partnership, in accordance with its mandate under Section 9(h) of its Act, is crucial to NCHR's program on human rights ducation, building knowl edge about human rights, changing attitudes and behaviors, and promoting a

peace." An NCHR team, led

by Member Balochistan Aurangzeb, recently engaged in several meetings with key stakeholders in various universities. The team recently held two meetings at the Higher Education Commission (HEC), with Chairman Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad emphasizing the renewal of an MoU to strengthen collaboration in the realm of human rights education. Notably, fruitful discussions were held with Professor Dr. Tahir Khalily, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, Islamabad, and Vice Chancellor of Fatima

Jinnah Women University.



man at Damn-e-Koh picnic point during Sunday Holiday in the Federal Capital.

Commuters eye introduction of electric buses as a breath of fresh air

behavior and conditions of

Another two plots of ISLAMABAD (APP): 133.33 square yards each in I-11/1 and D-12/1, class The introduction of metro three shopping centers. buses on different routes were auctioned for Rs114.6 has brought much relief to the commuters of the twin million and Rs160 million, cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, but still, plenty of daily travelers continue to face the issues of rude behavior and attitude of drivers and conductors of public vans on those routes that are not traversed

by the metro buses A number of commuters, including the elderly, pointed out that the majority of drivers and conductors of public transport, including vans, who are plying vehicles on the Islamabad Expressway, were particularly impolite and indecent with the passengers, besides causing undue waste of precious time

They demanded of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to look into the woes and immediately

roll out recently purchased to facilitate them. electric buses by linking these massively populated areas lying at the outer fringes of the Capital Terriincluding the

welcomed the arrival of the first batch of 30 new electric buses being introduced on additional routes to provide climate-friendly means of transportation for the citizens of Islamabad.

CDA media wing, following an agreement regarding the procurement of 160 electric buses from China, the first batch of the 30 charged them extra. new zero-emission buses arrived at the Zero Point

As announced, the second batch of electric vehicles (EVs) is expected to arrive in February or March this year, and the denizens hope that it will be utilized

In the meantime, frequent altercations took place in private vans on a daily basis due to unfair charging and self-inflated fares, particularly after the significant reduction in petroleum products, Muhammad Zareen Bacha, an employee of a private firm in Blue Area, told APP on Sunday. He particularly mentioned public vans No. 136 and 124 and said that the majority of conductors seemed to be illiterate and

whenever asked to by the travelers, as they often Similar were the views peevish look. of Ayesha Jabeen, a housewife, as she lamented the

were not linked with the Metro buses as they had to rush to Koral Chowk to catch the buses for their desired destination. 'Plying electric buses

will not only streamline mass mobility in these areas but also link the deprived populace with the Metro bus network," he suggested. He demanded that CDA immediately start electric bus service from Bahria town, liking the entire areas of Media Town, Police Foundation, PWD, Soan Garden, Pakistan Town, Jinnah Garden, Capital Enclave, and others with the metro bus routes.

A number of daily passengers harbor doubts by saying that, from the CDA's announcement, it appeared that a vast populace in these areas would not be able to get any immediate relief with the introduction



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters playing football match in a ground at sector G-10 in the Federal Capital.

Daily Soice of Masse. Independent

Monday January 15, 2024

Bat and forth

It was grave news to finish a dour day. The Supreme Court late Saturday upheld the Election Commission's Maulana Fazlur Rehman's deeply controversial decision visit to Afghanistan was an ultimate attempt to repair to take the bat from the PTI. the torn relationship with It is a judgment that already that maulana could help esseems unlikely to be looked tablish a direct communicaupon favourably in history.

Just days after it overturned a past Supreme Court ruling on lifetime disqualification under Article 62(1)(f) on the grounds that the such a channel remains a bench that previously de- Pakistan's Foreign Office cided the matter had 'read promptly distanced itself into the Constitution' to conjure up a punishment that never existed, a three-member bench of the apex court under the incumbent chief justice seemingly endorsed a very similar transgression by the ECP.

Despite there being no explicit provision in the election rulebook which gives the ECP power to deny a political party its election symbol on the basis of a contested Pakistan's recurring balance intraparty election, the ECP of payments crisis by alhad gone ahead and done most always pushing for austerity policies. Instrujust that. Now, it can rest easy knowing it has the Supreme Court's stamp of approval.

Given the implications of the punishment imposed on fortunate in our society. the PTI, that too mere weeks before a general election is the citizenry, governments due to take place, most legal observers following the proceedings in the Supreme ditions get tougher to imple-Court had agreed that for the top court to endorse the ECP decision would be tantagrowth through expansionary fiscal and monetary polimount to denying the public cies. Pakistan's import-led their constitutional right to another balance of payvote for the parties and political leaders of their choice.

What the Supreme Court discarding prudence ensures Pakistan's trajectory back to made of this line of reasoning will be clearer once the detailed order of the court is available to be perused in detail. Meanwhile, word will spread today: one of the most popular parties in the country has been knocked out of the elections by the Supreme Court based on a technical-

It will not be easy for the PTI support base to come to Quarantining during Covid terms with the move. One also wonders what the gen- is tough. Of course, I am eral impact of this decision grateful for the support will be on how 'free and fair' the upcoming elections are publicly perceived to be.

It must be said that it was remarkable to observe the attention and importance given to the minutiae of the PTI's constitution during the hearing of this case. One wonders doctor's prescription and if the country would have apply it to our ailing country. been where it has been dragged to had the Election Commission given as much why I should proceed thought and consideration to the Constitution of Pakistan, whose explicit guidelines regarding the democratic process have been violated by it with such casual disregard instance when I was not on multiple occasions in the in pain? He said the anpast year.

Lastly, one must also apportion some of the blame to the PTI's lawyers in the case, most of whom remained unable to argue the party's case effectively and succinctly before the court. At the moment, however, that seems feel and work with him beside the point. The party has bigger problems to ponder. Will it be able to survive doesn't see results in five this setback?

Maulana's bet



Muhammad **Amir Rana**

the Taliban. Pakistan hoped tion channel with the Taliban's supreme leader, Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada, who has remained secretive, like his predecessors, for enigmatic reasons. Whether maulana was successful in creating mystery. However, from his visit and his announcement about resuming talks with the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan

Maulana may have had several motives for visiting Afghanistan, both po-

litical and related to his personal security. The Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) benefited significantly from the US-led invasion of Afghanistan, securing power in coalition provincial govern-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan while promising

Taliban-style governance in those provinces. He may be expecting a similar outcome, hoping that a warm reception by the Taliban regime could further solidify his position in these two provinces. Additionally, maulana and other JUI-F leaders are under threat from the Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K) and the TTP. A satirical social media post by a prominent journalist aptly captures maulana's potential ambitions, suggesting that a direct meeting with Akhundzada might deter the TTP from attacking him and

Maulana's visit was surrounded by controversy from the outset. His followers in Pakistan portrayed it as an official Taliban invitation, but Taliban spokespersons denied this, stating that the visit was at his own request. Despite this, maulana attempted to appease the Taliban leadership by draw-

his colleagues.

ing questionable analogies between the situation in Gaza and the Taliban's ban on girls' education in Afghanistan. Informed sources claim that maulana might have carried a message from the Pakistani establishment, but the Taliban leadership remained largely inflexible in their stance regarding the TTP. They advised him that negotiations with the TTP were the only viable solution and should proceed without interference from

Pakistani security agencies.

Pakistani journalists and religious scholars who recently returned from Afghanistan reported that the Taliban leaders are paranoid about the future of their regime, and their fingers are still hovering over the trigger. They suspect potential threats from their immediate neighbours, including Pakistan. This distrust might explain their reluctance to abandon terrorist outfits with transnational reach. The TTP, once a close ally during the Taliban resistance, has become a strategic tool in their hands, now directed against Pakistan.

Perhaps the Taliban aim to maintain controlled chaos along the Durand

enough to deter the Pakistani military from blocking trade flows while still facilitating Pakistan's access to Central Asia. However, this strategy is precarious. Such tactics are familiar to Pakistan and have countermeasures at the ready should tensions escalate.

The Taliban regime

would know that conflicts rarely remain at a steady simmer. They know how quickly escalation can spiral out of control. The surprise Taliban offensive, launched while their team was still negotiating with the US, serves as a reminder of how quickly internal and external political-strategic landscapes can shift. Their initial misreading of the potential for internal resistance and the US's response to their actions kept them at the doors of Kabul for a few days. Their entry into the capital without a fight was also a surprise for their fighters.

While some Taliban leaders accuse Pakistan of allegedly supporting IS-K, their reasoning can be attributed to a similar paranoid outlook. They conveniently overlook the fact that IS-K is just as ideologically driven Line, keeping it volatile tively instigating violence

within Pakistan's borders. With such a distrustful mindset, the Taliban are unlikely to offer Pakistan genuine assistance and will ultimately remain suspicious of every initiative it undertakes.

Pakistan is using all conventional channels to approach the Taliban and still believes that track two diplomacy through religious clergy can work a miracle. The belief is that if a direct communication channel with Mullah Hibatullah had been created, the state institutions would have convinced him to abandon the TTP and their vision of strategic connectivity with the region. However, Mullah Hibatullah and his close aides are very cautious and see Pakistan's institutions through the similar lenses of common Afghans. Pakistani madressahs and clergy have come under the influence of the same perception.

Using religious scholars for diplomacy would not be helpful. Pakistani scholars may have a different take on some religious and political issues, but they believe in the Taliban narrative more than in the Pakistan state narrative. Though the Deobandi as their own ranks and is ac-madressah and political leadership have not sworn for- them. -- Courtesy Dawn

mal allegiance to the Taliban head, in their sermons and writings, they refer to Mullah Hibatullah as 'Ameerul Momineen' (Leader of the faithful), and they do not waste any chance to defend Taliban policies.

Any unsuccessful diplomatic venture through religious channels proves counterproductive as it creates a negative impression of the state and its institutions among the people inspired by the Taliban.

Maulana's visit will likely face a similar fate and potentially increase Taliban influence within Pakistan. He might exploit the visit during his electoral campaigns, but his real test would begin if he succeeded in securing a government in Balochistan. Even a coalition government led by maulana's representative would multiply challenges for Pakistan, including border security, visa-free movement at Chaman, the repatriation of Afghan refugees, trade, and the Taliban's support for the

The Taliban would likely expect a similar response from maulana, which is precisely what Pakistan has been demanding from

Embracing a new dawn

Dr Khaqan Hassan Najeeb

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the lender of the last resort, in every enmentally, programmes with the IMF have focused on macro stability measures including fiscal adjustment, monetary tightening, devaluation, and price hikes. The impact of these adjustments has been harsh on the less

Historically, after inflicting intolerable pain on abandon the symptomatic treatment halfway into the life of a programme as conment. Political expediency entices governments to then stimulus-fueled growth model causes vet ments crisis – as the essential deeper reforms elude the policymakers. This flair for the doorsteps of the IMF

every few years.

Unfortunately, the economy remains in a perpetual state of muddling through, with fragile macrofundamentals and external support to keep the boat from sinking. Pakistan has somehow surrendered to this undesirable equilibrium. It is presently availing its 23rd IMF facility in the shape of a Stand-by Arrangement (SBA). And looking towards a new one.

Relying on bailouts, debt monies, and external advice has left a deeper scar. The country's thinking and governance capability have severely eroded over time. The ideological dictums of development practitioners of building good institutions and getting the policy right have largely ignored the role of building human agency in Pakistan. The more discouraged think of the country becoming a kakistocracv.

The same period has witnessed the tides of time turn for many a nation in Asia – a story of success almost entirely crafted through self-prescription and innovation by some exceptional policy leaders. Pakistan's transition to economic freedom and sovereignty, and weaning itself off the IMF drip is also intimeted to an uncomfortable

mately linked to crafting its serious strategy of reform. Pakistan's destiny for better or worse will be determined by its ability to engage a set of smart policymakers – minds that can conduct a macroeconomic diagnosis and envisage, write, and execute a credible homegrown overhaul plan. This is now a nec-

essary condition. The country has to believe that good economic theory applies to Pakistan as much as it does anywhere else. In economic policy terms, at the minimum. channeling investment in productive sectors, managing high consumption levels, some kind of market orientation, international trade. and some macroeconomic stability, are prerequisites for long-term prosperity. Pakistan has missed out on most of the above.

We remember the nerve-racking first half of FY23 – overshadowed by an intermittent relationship with the IMF. Pakistan last programme which was eventually abandoned The delay hurt dearly. Foreign reserves held with the State Bank of Pakistan plum-

low of \$2.9 billion on June 20, 2023, consequently, the rupee lost 22 per cent in value in FY23, and inflation rose to 29 per cent as ordinary folks paid through their

The dilly-dallying option about entering a new programme with the IMF is no more. The external vulnerabilities require keeping the IMF umbrella intact for a few more years. Professional policymakers should be spending endless hours designing a smooth transition from the current ninemonth SBA to a longer-term Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the IMF. The current SBA ends in April

This is essential to avoid a bumpy ride in the first half of 2024. One has observed that countries which use their national plan as the basis for designing a Memorandum of Economic and Financial Performance do better with the Fund That's how Pakistan should approach the next EFF. The struggled to secure the 9th design of the EFF and many review with the IMF in the towards structurally altering the economic landscape are

> aid However.

for substantive change. Economies only transform with accompanying longerterm remedies. Tragically, at nearly 7.5 per cent of GDP in FY23, Pakistan's high federal fiscal deficit is a serious drag on the economy. It is a difficult area and remains unaddressed for too long.

Crucially, fiscal prudence can help free up resources for the private sector and raise productive investment. Here again, the IMF must be convinced that remodeling public and tax expenditures, and sharing subsidies with provinces, rather than raising taxes on those already paying, is the route to meaningful fiscal adjustment. Trapped in a cycle of debt, the county's case for reprofiling public and IPP debts, and undertaking debt or development and environmental swaps is strong. Smart debt management can free up financing space and avoid the as-

The good news is that. underprivileged. A well-orprogrammes alone are never the determining factor for the determining factor for the determining factor for the determining factor for groups' interests and shift the News

phyxiating effects of auster-

prosperity hence not a push the economy to competitiveness. It will restrict state largesse, concessional financing, and exemptions.

They are quite right in their observation. We know that deeper social issues of quality education, gender mainstreaming, and population management need utmost care. No longer bound by the intricate web of policy patchwork, work in these areas would become possible.

It is time for Pakistan to break the shackles of economic dependency. With every new dawn, we have to blossom some hope in the minds of many talented young people who are thinking of emigrating. Leaderships have to reimagine Pakistan's agenda of unimpeded economic growth. They have to convince the 240 million Pakistanis that the spirit of the nation can shine brighter within the next election cycle. Pakistan's destiny in the coming years will be defined by the ability and courage of the people we put in with the right reform inter- important positions. As ventions taking hold, life will Iqbal says: "nahin hai nabecome less painful for the umeed 'Igbal' apni kisht-eviran se/zara nam ho to ve ganized economic overhaul mitti bahut zarkhez hai

Healing Pakistan



in another country without your tools of comfort system I did have, like (but not limited to) my sister's dog, who kept me company when no one else could and accompanied me on walks. My time outdoors allows me to reflect on things like wellness and healing — issues that have weighed heavily these past few months. I wondered if I could take heed of a

It stems from a conwith his prescription. No pill is without side effects and in my experience, medicine invariably impacts a part of the body it wasn't intended for, usually the gut. Is it worth it, I asked, in this specific swer didn't lie solely in the medicine.

I had presented him to give away and I decided with symptoms, he ran tests and examinations after which he diagnosed and prescribed treatment. Another doctor could offer another prescription based on the same tests, he explained. Ultimately, would have to take the medicine and see how I until I felt better. It wasn't a one-size T-shirt that fits all, he said. Often a patient days and either abandons wrongs' and will probably treatment or seeks another

opinion. Sometimes it is a when Imran Khan returns quick fix like a pill for a headache but often the road to wellness takes time and requires patience and faith. You see where I'm going with this. Many leaders speak about heal-

ing a nation but what does

it actually entail?

I don't imagine I'll see a greater leader than Nelson Mandela in my lifetime. His endorsement of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the work it did in investigating human rights abuses committed during the apartheid regime between 1960 and 1994 tends to overshadow his commitment to public health. He lost a son to AIDS and talked publicly about the need to normalise the disease like TB, cancer etc, removing shame from it. Mandela's advocacy on AIDS helped save millions of lives and transformed health in Africa.

Mandela is equally known for forgiveness of his opponents and his prisoners. In a 1998 conversation with former US president Bill Clinton he said: "You know, [the oppressors] already took everything. They took the best years of my life; I didn't get to see my children grow up. They destroyed my marriage. They abused me physically and mentally. They could take everything except my mind and heart. Those things I would have

not to give them away." Here in Pakistan, our leaders have faced much injustice at the hands of the establishment but have they chosen forgiveness? The Charter of Democracy was an attempt but it stands fissured today. Leaders vow to heal the nation but then get caught up in a vortex of anger driven by revenge. I believe we're witnessing it now under the guise of 'making amends for past see a new level of anger if/

Pakistan is an ailing patient who has received all sorts of treatments but it's also kept in some comatose state or life support. Those attempting to cure it are not transparent about their plans because, let's admit, they are not qualified to treat it. They remind me of some doctors I have encountered: in it for the money, not the

Pakistan is like me and the growing number of people being diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder where the body mistakenly attacks itself. I recognise I have agency in choice and the right doctor to guide me to my wellness but unconvinced about the folks in line to treat Pakis-tan next.

Writers on these pages offer sound prescriptions on how to treat the fractured economy and other matters of governance. I'm daring to offer the new government a tiny prescription for the media, which is deeply polarised and mistrusted. I suggest the next information minister come clean and show just how much money the state has spent on nurturing relationships with journalists and media owners — from press junkets to funding "journalists" to promote their policies rooted in declaring XYZ as unpatriotic. The next government

can lead by example and tell us what they spent when they were in power last with a vow never to do it again. This will help (re)gain the public's trust and begin Pakistan's journey to healing from the toxic illnesses that lies and deceptive propaganda have caused. Pakistanis deserve to know who has fed them these stories so they can make informed decisions about who they choose to trust. -- Courtesy Dawn

Pak-Iran relations



Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Iran is a vast country spanning an area more than twice that of Pakistan with a population nearly one third of ours. Rich in natural resources, Iran possesses the second largest gas reserves, fourth largest crude oil reserves and significant nonfuel mineral resources. The people of Iran, called Persia until 1935, are deeply proud of their history, cul-

ture and language. Historically, Iran is an ancient land, with recorded history dating back to 550 BCE, when Cyrus founded the first Persian empire, the Achaemenid, the fourth king of which, Darius, expanded the borders of the empire to include territories from Anatolia to the River Indus. The Sassanid empire ruled Persia for nearly nine centuries from 224 BCE to 651 CE. Towards the end of this empire, Muslim Arabs and Persians came face to face in the Battle of Qadisiya, in 636 CE, germinating a lasting rivalry. Since 1979, Iran is an Islamic Republic. At no point in this historical journey of over 2,500 years, the nationalistic fervour of the Iranian

people ever diminished. In history, language, art and culture, there has been considerable congruity between the Persian mainland and the territories of Pakistan. The Persian language spread to India in the 16^{th} century when the Mughals adopted it as the court language. Allama Iqbal is well known in Iran as Iqbal-i-Lahoori. Much of the poetry of Ghalib and Igbal, as indeed the national

anthem of Pakistan, are in

Iran was the first country to recognise Pakistan, on Aug 14, 1947. Iran is also the country that hosted the first embassy of Pakistan abroad. Over the decades, Pakistan and Iran have maintained cordial relations. Notably, barring a few irritants, there is no major dispute between the two coun-

Despite this enormous goodwill, the tangible bilateral cooperation is far below potential. Some argue that the US sanctions imposed on Iran had undermined prospects for bilateral cooperation, while others blame the absence of political will on either side. On balance, the positives of the relationship far outweigh the negatives, and can thus help the relationship flourish to its full bloom. In this regard, three issues energy, border, and trade - are of critical importance.

neighbour, Iran should have been a natural choice for sourcing our energy needs. The Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline agreement (IP) was signed in 2012, but fell victim to US and UN sanctions. The successful conclusion of the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) in 2015 raised hopes but unilateral withdrawal of the US from the deal in 2018 kept Iran under US sanctions. In 2022, the Financial Action Task Force also blacklisted Iran. These factors have stalled Pakistan's efforts to implement the IP project.

Iran has often hinted at imposing penalties on Pakistan for not implementing the IP agreement. For its part, Pakistan has tried to invoke force majeure, mainly because of US sanctions which is a factor beyond Pakistan's control. Going forward, both countries will be advised to work towards finding a way to legally circumvent US sanctions given that gas is not a sanctioned commodity.

Another priority area

is to better manage the border, which Pakistan calls one of 'Peace, friendship and love'. While this is certainly a border between two friends, some militant groups routinely indulge in cross-border terrorism. One such group was Jundullah, a Sunni militant organisation whose leader was executed in Iran in 2010. Since then, the organisation's members have operated under different names, including Jaish al-Adl. The BLA is also active in the area, possibly with foreign support. Kulbhushan Jadhav of India, who committed espion-age and sabotage, was also apprehended in Balochistan. Since all this misunderstan-dings, it is important for Iran and Pakistan to enhance coordi-

nation on cross-border is-

The two countries, despite being neighbours, have also not been able to boost bilateral trade. Ostensibly, the reason is the absence of payment mechanisms or regular banking channels due to US sanctions. While there is insignificant formal trade, informal trade has flourished. Two steps taken recently are likely to boost formal trade: a check on smuggling and the opening of a border market at Pishin-Mand crossing point. Border markets and barter trade should be encouraged to sidestep economic sanctions on Iran. The recent rap-

prochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia brokered by China and the growing Iran-China economic relations can greatly help us boost our own economic and commercial ties with Iran. In this regard, the potential of Gwadar and Chabahar ports being complementary must also be utilised fully. It would be worthwhile if China and Pakistan consider the possibility of extending CPEC to Iran. -- Courtesy Dawn

Naqvi okays grant of Rs90m for Punjab press clubs

Arfa Karim a torch-bearer for new generation: CM Punjab

Independent Report LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday said he was proud that he belonged to the fraternity of

Addressing a function held to distribute cheques among press clubs of the province, the chief minister announced a grant of Rs90 million for the

said that journalism was the name of responsibility'. "A lot of responsibility rests on our

shoulders," he said, and Federal Minister for added that he attached great Information Murtaza importance to the provision of facilities to journalists.
He urged them to

concentrate on digital media since the future belonged to this form of journalism. "Those who don't change themselves according to changing times lag behind others," the CM

There were many things, he went on to say,

Information Murtaza Solangi said, "We are grateful to the chief minister for taking steps for the welfare journalists," he added.

Punjab Minister for Information Amir Mir and others were also present on the occasion.

In his message on the death anniversary of Microsoft Certified IT Professional Arfa Karim in which Pakistan was Randhawa, the chief behind other countries. minister said 'daughter of Speaking on the the nation' still lived in asion, Caretaker people's hearts.



KHAIRPUR: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing to public gathering during Election Campaign.

'PML-N to steer country out of crisis'

the Pakistan Muslim League-N, Rana Munawar Ghous, said on Sunday that only his party was capable of steering the coun-try out of economic and other crises and towards progress

Addressing meetings at Chak No 120 SB ,119 SB,125 SB and Sillanwli in connection with his election cam-paign for the upcoming general election 2024, he said the PML-N would bring progress and prosperity to the country through the power of votes under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz

He said that general present.

SARGODHA (APP): elections would bring District general secretary and candi-date for PP-78 of elected representatives elected representatives would be able to play their

role in a better way.
PML-N Sillanwali
Tehsil President Rana Nadeem Ahmad said that the party had always made public service its motto because people know who did the politics of progress and who had only made false claims and looted the

Party activists. including Abdul Rasheed Gujjar, PML-N Tehsil

Sillanwali youth coordinator Rana Kal-eem , PML-N Sillanwli tehsil social team incharge Rana Tehseen and other local representatives were also

Nawaz bringing new vision: Malik

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Musadik Malik said on Sunday that those who had violated law must be held accountable.

Talking to media here he said that PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif was bringing a new vision among people on the basis of his

He said that people would give their decision on February 8, adding that

various public welfare projects in Punjab. "A development comparison between Sindh and Punjab will make the situation crystal clear," he said and added that interference in democracy was not good at

what Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said about Nawaz Sharif's tenure was not correct. "Abbasi was not criticizing the PML-N but the PML-N had launched himself," he maintained.

Call for caution amidst harsh winter conditions

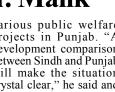
Professor Dr. Ashraf Jamal, Head of the Pulmonology Department at Allama Iqbal Medical College/Jinnah Hospital, emphasized the need for heightened care among the elderly and young children in the current foggy and cold weather. Talking to APP on Sunday, Dr. Jamal warned of increased air pollution resulting from the combination of fog and smog during severe cold spells. He highlighted a surge in chest infections, fever, and pneumonia cases, particularly among children and the elderly. He underscored vulnerability of these groups to adverse weather

effects and urged special precautions, including the use of warm clothing and consumption of hot drinks.

advised to wear helmets and face masks to shield themselves from the cold winds and pollution associated with the fog.

The pulmonologist discouraged outdoor activities such as jogging in open grounds, parks, exercise, and walks during severe cold and fog. He explained that heightened respiratory problems could arise from increased breathing during exercise, combined with the elevated pollution levels in the fog.

Additionally, Dr. Jamal addressed the correlation between cold weather and the rise of heart diseases, high blood pressure, and other ailments. He explained that decreased intake of water and drinks in cold weather could lead to blood.



He further said that

Free travel facilities to students

AHORE Caretaker Ibrahim Hassan Murad on Sunday announced a threemonth extension of free travel facilities for students, following special instructions from the Punjab Chief Minister.

extended

In a statement issued here, he said that students up to grade 12 could travel free in the Orange Line Metro Train.

The minister added that in the recent holidays, process interrupted for some time, while thirty thousand students were benefiting from this facility on a daily basis and till now millions students have benefited from this facility. He said would also provide the free travel facility to students. While fulfilling its education-friendly vision, the Punjab government is also ensuring the provision of free of interest motorcycles on EVs technology for students so that more youths could continue their education

journey easily. Two died and 18 injured in Kohistan road mishap

KOHISTAN (APP): At least two women died and 18 others were injured when a pak-up vehicle fell into a deep gorge at Village Qilla of district Kolai Palis.

According to the Rescue 1122 sources, the pickup, which was carrying more than 20 family members who were going to attend a marriage ceremony, fell into a gorge, resulting in two women dying on the spot and 18 others, including women, children, and men,

sustaining injuries. District Emergency Officer Lower Kohistan mobilized a medical team along with all available ambulances to the accident site and promptly administered initial medical

aid to the injured. Initially, the injured were shifted to the district hospital in Pattan, and after first aid, seriously injured passengers were transferred to Ayub Medical Colleges in Abbottabad.



LAHORE: Visitors viewing paintings during Painting and Calligraphy Exhibition in collaboration with Formanite School System and Walled City



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali addressing Hindko convention organized by Hindko Tahafuz Foundation.

Global collaboration vital to reap benefits from emerging **Artificial Intelligence: VC**

Artificial Intelligence Information Technology Conference was concluded at Women's University here Sunday with a call for increased global collaboration to address the challenges posed by the rapid development of

Information Technology.
Highlighting the positive impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on human consciousness and task efficiency, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Kulsoom Paracha stated that it would help manage difficult task with ease and effectiveness. She also acknowledged the need for international cooperation, growing development of

cybercrimes. Dr. Paracha stressed

introduces new security

especially

MULTAN (APP): The potential of AI in accelerating development underdeveloped countries but also warned of job displacement like it was observed during industrial revolutions. Anticipating significant job shifts due to AI, she raised concerns about potential competition for resources and the misuse of AI. As per experts view, nearly 300 million people will

lose their jobs, she alarmed. Through intelligence, machines will replace men. Some other speakers advocated for the establishment of new laws and robust ethical frameworks to regulate and limit AI. Artificial particularly in Intelligence is a modern cybersecurity, as the concept. We will have to move forward along with Artificial Intelligence the world, she added. The AI will revolutionize the world. Pakistan will have to contribute its share in this revolution, Kalsoom



KARACHI: Students holds placards during protest in favor of their demands outside press club in Provincial Capital.

IG distributes plot documents among that the Speedo bus service would also provide the free framilies of police martyrs

Orders safe city project completion on urgent basis

FAISALABAD (APP): duties to control crime and Inspector General (IG) Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar distributed documents of plots among the families of police

During his visit to Faisalabad, the IG presided over a ceremony and said that the services of police martyrs would be remembered forever as their sacrifices brought laurels to the department.

He said that it was the first and foremost duty of the police to provide safety and security to the lives and properties of the masses and in this connection, loyal police officials sacrificed their lives while performing

provide a safe and secured atmosphere. The department remember sacrifices of its

employees and take welfare steps of their families also, he added. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dr Muhammad Abid, City Police Officer (CPO)

Captain (Retired) Muhammad Ali Zia and other police officers were also present on the occasion. Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar has ordered for completing

the safe city project on



MULTAN: A protest arranged by the Save Gaza campaign with the solidarity of the people of Gaza at Multan press Club.

2200 CCTV cameras being installed to maintain law and order: Dr Jamal

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare and Population Welfare Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir on Sunday said that 2,200 Closed Circle Television (CCTV) cameras were being installed at 306 points in the city to improve the law and order situation in the

During a visit to the City Police Office to review the ongoing work of the Safe City Project, he informed that 300 labourers were working day and night on the Safe City project to complete the task.

He said that under the Safe City project, 2200

PU awards ten

PhD degrees LAHORE (APP): Punjab University has awarded ten PhD degrees to scholars in various disciplines.

According to the varsity spokesman here Sunday, these scholars included Muhammad Aslam khan son of Shad Muhammad in the subject of Islamic Studies, Muhammad Javed Iqbal son of Muhammad Rashid Ghias in the subject of Zoology, Qamar Un Nisa daughter of Muhammad Sajid Iqbal in the subject of Philosophy, Tahira Yasmin daughter of Ahmad Din in the subject of Chemistry, Gohar Iqbal son of Ch. Muhammad Nazeer in the subject of Persian, Majid Hussain son of Abdul Razzaq in the subject of Punjabi, Samra Kousar daughter of Amanullah in the subject.

cameras would be installed 83 percent of work on the at 306 locations while Rs old HFH block had been 230 million had been provided for construction of the CPO office. Dr. Jamal Nasir said that in a short time, work had been started on mega projects in all sectors, including the Rawalpindi Ring Road project, which was stalled for a long time.

He said that the revamping of Holy Family Hospital (HFH) was a historic project that would be remembered by the people of Rawalpindi for decades which would significantly improve released to upgrade healthcare facilities. The Rawalpindi's parks, he minister said that around added

basement was finished. He added that most parts of the HFH would be opened to the public by January Dr Jamal informed

that the Planning and Development Board had approved Rs 1500 million for the revamping and renovation of the Hospital while 600 labourers were working in different shifts to complete the work within the stipulated time. Funds have also been

PFA imposes Rs660,000 cumulative fine on 5 eateries over violations

Independent Report LAHORE: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) under the supervision of its Director Muhammad Asim Javaid conducted inspections of renowned restaurants and bakeries on MM Alam Road here on Sunday.

PFA DG Muhammad Asim Javaid said the authority penalized five eateries with Rs660,000 cumulative fines for violating the Punjab Pure Food Regulations. He said that fine was imposed due to using substandard cooking oil and prohibited ingredients while preparing the different food dishes. PFA watchdogs also witnessed an abundance of

insects and worst condition of hygiene in kitchen areas, he added.

He further said that food business operators were also failed to present the medicals of workers and other necessary record to the raiding teams on the spot. The director general said that the provincial food regulatory body has been working against substandard food points and violators under the zero-tolerance policy. He has warned FBOs to sell the healthy and standard food products otherwise, the food businesses would be rooted out as per PFA Act. Moreover, he said that

PFA is committed to

providing hygiene.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presenting special grants cheques to President and General Secretaries of 44 Press Clubs.

Boy burnt alive

FAISALABAD (APP): A boy was burnt alive in the area of Khurarianwala police station.

A Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday that 10-year-old Roshi, son of Zahoor of Chak No.216-RB, Bara Muhammadwala Jaranwala Road, was asleep in a room when his family put a burning oven under his bed to beat the cold. However, the bed caught fire accidentally and the boy died from severe burn injuries.

The body was handed

DBA Sargodha new office-bearers elected SARGODHA (APP):

Syed Mohsin Raza Shah Sherazi was elected President while Chaudhary Farrukh Javed Cheema of Justice Group General Secretary of the District Bar Association (DBA) Sargodha in the annual election 2024-25. According to election

results, issued by the election board here on Sunday, Syed Mohsin Raza Shah Sherazi was with 1185 votes while over to the family for burial after formalities, he added. Jalip of Sherazi Group after formalities, he added. Jalip of Sherazi Group elected as Joint Secretary unopposed.

Similarly, Faiz Ahmad Bakher was elected as Vice President with 1038 votes whereas his rivals Asmat Zahra Awan and Ghulam Fatima Gujjar could get 808 and 71 votes respectively.

M e a n w h i l e , Chaudhary Farrukh Javed Cheema was elected as General Secretary of Sargodha District Bar with 1033 votes while his rival elected as DBA President Bilal Rasool Mahota could his rival Asra Naseer Muhammad Awais was

Social media to play instrumental role in Election 2024

PESHAWAR (APP): In democratic setups, free and transparent elections provide a strong base for democracy and ensure that the government chosen through polls is of the people, by the people, and

for the people. Showcasing the signs of a healthy democracy in a country, a free, fair, and transparent election provides legitimacy to an elected government to take decisions in the national interest and the welfare of people for the next five

"Election gives the authority in the hands of the public and provides them the freedom to elect the government of their choice, which will work for growth and development besides resolution of the country's

problems," said Professor Dr. A.H. Hilali, former Chairman, Political Science Department, University of Peshawar, while talking to In the 2013 and 2018

general elections, he said, social media played an impactful role in deciding the fate of political parties. "The PTI's social media strategies and social mobilizers compared to other political parties had helped in establishing government for a second consecutive term in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," he said. According to a report from Digital Pakistan 2023, the number of internet users in Pakistan swelled to a record 87.35 million in January last year, showing a 4.4 million increase between 2022 and 2023.

The number of social media

users also increased to a PML-N, PPP, PTI, ANP, record 71.70 million in JUIF, MQM, IPP, and 2023, including 37.30 million users of Facebook, 71.70 million users of YouTube, 12.95 million on Instagram, and 16.51 million on TikTok.

Similarly, about 11.95 million people are using Facebook Messenger. 9.30 million Linkedin, 25.70 million snapchat, and 4.65 million users of X (Twitter) in the wake of an increase in mobile connections to 191.8 million in January 2023 in

Professor Hilali said the process of filing and scrutinizing nomination papers for the 2024 general elections was completed, and social media's role would be crucial in the 2024 election. He said all political parties, including

PTIP, have shown their presence on every major social media platform for political gains.

He said all political parties and leaders have opened official pages with blue-ticks on Facebook and Facebook groups for communication with party members as well as with their fans and voters. Besides other social media platforms, he said all political leaders, including Nawaz Sharif, Bilawal Bhuto, Khalid Maqbool Saddiqui, Pervez Khattak, and Jahangir Tareen, opened official X (former Twitter) handles with blue ticks for authentication, along with official pages on Instagram by the young political leaders.

"For me, manifestos

important, and every person can see the programs of these parties by visiting their social media websites and pages with a single mobile click,' said Ehtisham Qaiser, a lecturer of Urdu literature, while talking to the news agency.Dr. Hilali said the success of political parties in the 2024 general election would largely depend on the political behavior and psychological-economic factors, past service records and manifestos of political parties, rather than the launching of personal attacks, blame characters games, assassination of political

leadership, and dragging

state institutions into politics in public meetings or issuing statements on social media platforms.

PBF hails army chief's efforts for country's economic progress

(PBF) has expressed satisfaction with the military diplomacy and economic initiatives undertaken by the Chief of shift in various sectors. In a media statement issued here Wednesday, PBF President Khawaja Mahboob ur Rehman said that a wave of through the country as

optimism is sweeping caretaker government's economic policies, coupled with relief to investors, he said. the strategic decisions of the Army Chief, have in petrol prices has improvements in key economic indicators. He said significant reduction in the value of the dollar against Pak rupee, that has

further stabilization.
The PBF President

new IMF and Asian arrive, with hopes of the dollar reaching Rs 250." The impact of these The impact of these measures is evident in the further stated that the Pakistan Stock Exchange, where a positive trend has now emerging, bringing Additionally, the reduction government's

economic policies.

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Business Forum prompted expectations of Chief. "There is a positive further stabilization." trend in the Pakistan Stock trend in the Pakistan Stock Exchange, and petrol prices added, "The caretaker have decreased. These government has taken the things are good for our best measures for the country. Furthermore, the economy; the price of the decrease in essential Army Staff (COAS) as the dollar has fallen, and we commodity prices, such as nation witnessed a positive anticipate even more daily-use items, has not positive changes when the gone unnoticed which need to be monitored properly Development Bank funds by deputy commissioners so that the masses may benefit.

measures taken by the Army Chief were for the betterment of the country and hoped for more improvements in future. The unwavering resolve resulted in tangible garnered praise from the by Pakistan's security public, further raising a forces to combat illegal positive sentiment towards activities and secure the nation's interests, ultimately The PBF President working towards a more

First batch of

Pakistani dried

chili arrives

in China

BEIJING (Online): The

first batch of Pakistan's

high-quality dried chilies,

weighing 182 tonnes, has

finally made its way to the

Neijiang city of Sichuan

Province, China, China

Economic Net (CEN)

shipment marks a new

chapter in the trade

relations between the two

nations and is expected to

pave the way for increased

economic cooperation, said

Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan's

ceremony for the arrival

and warehousing of the

dried chili under the China-

Corridor Agricultural

Cooperation Project,

Ambassador Khalil Hashmi

said that Pakistan, known

for its flavorful and

aromatic spices, has long

been recognized as a major

MEPCO

disconnects

power supply to

1862 tube

wells over

non payment

MULTAÑ (ÅPP): The

Multan Electric Power

Company (MEPCO) on

Sunday disconnected

electricity connections of

1862 agriculture tube well

consumers over non payment of over Rs 1.36

billion pending dues across

the region. The MEPCO's

drive against defaulter tube

well consumers was

underway under the

directions of the Prime

connections of defaulter

farmers and removed

transformers also during the

ongoing drive. While 491

agriculture consumers have

Minister.Teams

disconnected

exporter of dried chilies.

Economic

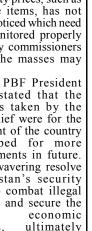
ambassador to China.

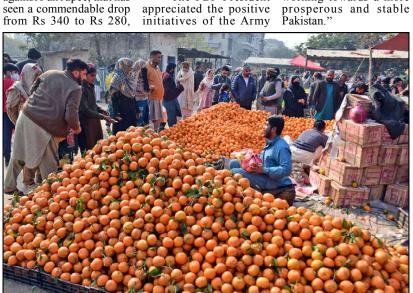
Pakistan

Addressing

This significant

reported on Sunday.





ISLAMABAD: People are busy is buying Kinnow in Sunday weekly bazaar at sector G-10 in the Federal Capital.

SNGPL disconnects 1853 connections over using compressors in Multan

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines use of compressors was (SNGPL) disconnected connections over using compressors so far during very dangerous for human the ongoing drive across the lives. He urged the citizens

Engineer Operations supply as the consumers SNGPL Hussain Zafar while talking to APP here Hussain Zafar said on Sunday said that the drive against illegal compressors was underway in order to disconnected ensure provision of gas connections so far. supply to consumers equally. He said that various teams were visiting different areas in Multan region to discourage the use of compressors. He said that the gas meters were disconnected over the use of compressors and connection restored again after one week by taking affidavit from the consumer concerned and seizing compressor.

He informed that the not only destroyed the infrastructure of the SNGPL rather, it was also to avoid using compressors Chief for illegally getting gas

that they had launched the drive concerned from November 2022 and

To a question about RLNG, he informed that the whole industry has been shifted on RLNG while it was also being given to some private housing colonies like Butch villas, green valley and others.Replying to another question, he said that the LPG cylinders were being provided to the consumers at their doorstep on prices fixed by OGRA.

RDA, PITB sign agreement for **E-filing system**

RAWALPINDI (APP): Director (IT) RDA, Rawalpindi Development Dawood Khalid and others Authority (RDA) and participated in the meeting. Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) on the direction of the Punjab government have paperless files of the signed an agreement for E-Filing and Office proposals so that the

Automation System.
According to RDA
spokesman on Sunday, a
meeting was held here on Sunday in RDA office for E-Filing and Office Automation System.

Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta, Director General (DG) RDA, Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa, representative of PITB, Dr The spokesman said

that the purpose of this agreement was to maintain notes, approvals and records could be easily accessible. Sometimes important documents of the offices are damaged during any untoward incident like flood or fire. omation System. For example, RDA Commissioner documents were lost in 2004 due to the flood, he told. The spokesman informed representative of PITB briefed the participants



HYDERABAD: Labourers are busy unloading corn cobs from the delivery truck.

ISLAMABAD: Customers selecting and purchasing old clothes displayed by the Weekly Bazaar vendors to attract the customers.

China-Pakistan cargo route launched to facilitate air transport

ISLAMABAD (Online): A transport capacity from explore the Pakistani new air cargo route was Ezhou to Lahore every market. launched linking Ezhou Huahu Airport in central China's Hubei Province with Lahore, said SF Airlines, China's largest air cargo carrier in fleet size.

Ezhou-Lahore cargo route is the first international air cargo route launched by SF Airlines in this year departing from Ezhou Huahu Airport, China's first cargo-focused airport, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

electronic products, electronic equipment, etc. The opening of this international cargo route is an important measure for

Huahu Airport to further increase routes to South It will provide an efficient and stable air logistics channel for economic and trade

Ezhou-Lahore route exchanges between China is planned to operate three and Pakistan, and provide times a week, providing over 300 tons of air for Chinese brands to

Previously. Transported goods mainly include textiles, 3C direct cargo routes from Ezhou to South Asia, Ezhou-Delhi Ezhou=Chennai

The opening of the new Pakistani route will further strengthen Ezhou's South Asian air transport

network.

SF Airlines, the aviation branch of China's leading courier enterprise SF Express, to date has launched a total of 11 international cargo routes from Ezhou to global destinations.

China's weekly

Machinery import goes up by 6.36% in five months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of the overall witnessed an increase of 6.36 per cent during the first five months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) compared to the corresponding period of the last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The total imports of the machinery group during July-November (2023-24) stood at \$ 2,935.576 million against the imports of \$2,760.055 million during the same period of the last year.

The import of surged by 60.76 per cent from \$19.784 million to machinery including data processing equipment 57.11 per cent from \$129.909 to \$204.095 million; construction and mining machinery by 3.87

per cent from \$33.260 million to \$34.546 million; electricity machinery and apparatus 17.10 per cent from \$778.902 million to \$912.073 million; telecom related equipment 74.36 per cent from \$455.625 to \$794.445 million; mobile phone 112.20 per cent from \$290.550 to \$616.541 million and other apparatus 7.77 per cent from \$165.075 million to \$177.904 million. However, during the period under review, the import of power-generating machinery declined by 26.24 per cent from \$

sector 243.135 million to \$ machinery and equipment 179.337 million; textile machinery by 73 per cent from \$212.786 to \$56.803 \$31,804 million; office million; and other equipment by 18 per cent from \$886.654 million to \$722.473 million. Meanwhile, on a year-onyear basis, the machinery group imports increased.

export container shipping index up SHANGHAI (Xinhua/ APP): China's export container shipping index rose in the week ending Jan. 12, according to the Shanghai Shipping Exchange (SSE). The SSE added that

> Index (CCFI) recorded an increase of 21.7 percent from the previous week to reach 1,140.31. The sub-indices for all 12 shipping routes registered week-on-week rises, with that for the

the average China Containerized Freight

percent. The CCFI tracks spot and contractual freight rates at Chinese container ports for 12 shipping routes globally, based on data from 22 international

carriers. The index was set a 1,000 on Jan. 1, 1998.



political party Pakistan Muslim League (N) at a printer in the city, ahead of the upcoming general elections.

'PFC playing active role in furniture industry's progress '

with

(PFC) has played a pivotal role in expanding the global presence of Pakistani furniture by actively participating in 13 significant international expos and showcased the diversity and craftsmanship of Pakistani

products during last year.
PFC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mian Kashif Ashfaq stated this manufacturers, designers and exhibitors led by Chaudhary Muhammad Araib Arain here on

Sunday

Mian Kashif said this strategic participation provided a platform for the to council forge connections with counterparts and foreign fostering buvers. opportunities for market exploration and trade

collaboration. He said the PFC's commitment to global outreach extended beyond

LAHORE (APP): The expos, with visits to nine Pakistan Furniture Council countries worldwide. countries worldwide. These visits were instrumental establishing relationships

international

stakeholders, creating avenues for the export of Pakistani furniture, he added. He said by introducing Pakistani products to a broader market, the council aimed to enhance the country's position while talking to a international furniture delegation of furniture market. The CEO said the international furniture comprehensive approach of participating in expos and undertaking international visits underscored the PFC's dedication to promoting Pakistan's furniture industry on a global scale.

These efforts not only showcased the quality and craftsmanship of Pakistani furniture but also contributed to the council's mission of fostering economic growth through increased exports and market diversification, he concluded.

China's e-commerce logistics index up in 2023

BEIJING (Xinhua/APP) China's e-commerce logistics index went up 4.2 points year on year in 2023 as the operation of the sector registered steady expansion, industry data showed. The index averaged

110.1 points last year, according to the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing. In December 2023

the index stood at 112.4 points, edging down 0.7 points from the previous month, the data revealed. The federation

attributed this decline to the shrinking of demand, as sales promotions of major e-commerce platforms had concentrated heavily on the big annual shopping festival in November.

It also noted that ecommerce logistics demand still remained at a high level in December, with the categories of winter clothing and ice-and-snow tourism equipment proving sources major momentum.

Exporters urged to capture Kyrgyz pharmaceutical market

yrgyzstan Trade House Kashif Younis Sunday urged Pakistani exporters to capture Kyrgyzstan's US \$ 650 million pharmaceutical market. Talking to a delegation

of exporters led by Ms Sana Ábdullah here at KTH on Sunday, he said that by strategically entering this market, Pakistan can not only boost its economic prospects but also contribute to the healthcare needs of Kyrgyzstan's seven million population. He adding that by capitalizing on its pharmaceutical prowess, fostering collaborations, Pakistan can successfully capture a substantial portion of Kyrgyzstan' pharmaceutical market, contributing to the well-

being of both nations.

established pharmaceutical industry with a proven track record of producing high-quality medicines. Leveraging this expertise help

Kyrgyzstan's increasing demand for affordable and solutions, he observed. Building strong relationships will not only enhance the distribution network but also foster pharmaceutical products.

Meher Kashif Younis said Health Minister Kyrgyzstan Alymkadyr Beishenaliev participated in the firstever two days global health summit in Islamabad a couple of days ago also invited pharmaceuticals

manufacturers to visit his country for providing affordable and quality medicines in state owned Meher said Pakistan pharmacies in government



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy cutting wood into pieces for selling purpose at their workplace.

SCCI voices Concern over increasing environmental pollution using alternate sources

PESHAWAR President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Fuad Ishaq has expressed grave concern federal environmental pollution in wake of using alternative sources of fuel by people owing to low gas pressure issue. He urged the caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice ® Syed Arshad members of the business

Chief Secretary and district

(APP): Peshawar Sania Safi in her office, Fuad Ishaq apprised him that the SCCI has taken up issue gas with rave concern federal government, increasing relevant ministry and high ups in an efficient way because unjust was being carried out with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

During the meeting, presidents of city bazaar, traders' leaders and Europe service achieving the biggest increase of 40.1 Haji Ghulam Ali, provincial in a large number, said a press release issued here administration to make Sunday. The SCCI chief contact on emergent said the people in Peshawar grounds with centre and along with Khyber resolve these issues once Pakhtunkhwa have been for all. In a meeting with compelled to use the Additional Deputy traditional way as an Commissioner (ADC) alternative source of fuel.

First Cross-Border Oil Project launched in Pak, China collaboration

international bulk oil trade project, a collaboration between the Pakistan-China Center, Pakistan, (CEN) reported. and East Sea Group, China, was launched in the China-SCO Local Economic and

initial batch cooperation between countries.

BEIJING (Online): First SCODA and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member countries. China Economic Net

Fang Yulong, CEO of East Sea Group, expressed confidence in expanding Cooperation into SCO member Demonstration Area (SCODA), Qingdao, Shangdong, China. countries' markets, attributing it to the support and assistance received Under the project, the from SCODA. Leveraging of its geographical advantages MALAYSIA BLEND and openness, SCODA has crude oil, totaling 300,000 actively promoted energy tons, underscores a cooperation with SCO deepening of investment member countries and BRI

Apple farmers in occupied Kashmir face uncertainty

ISLAMABAD (APP): harvested a good crop. Last year, during this season, the apple and other farms, sprawling over thousands of hectares, were carpeted under a thick layer of snow, particularly in the upper reaches of south Kashmir, signaling a bountiful harvest. According

Kashmir Media Service report on Sunday, although erratic weather condition, which was experienced from March to horticulture crops, the apple farmers by and large

However, this year situation seems diametrically different with a long-drawn-out dry spell becoming a cause of concern for thousands of apple farmers across

occupied Jammu and

While a good snowfall often holds the promise of quality harvest, its continued absence during the ongoing winter has begun leaving thousands of June, impacted various farmers, particularly the distraught



QUETTA: Warm clothes are being selling at a roadside stall as the demand of warm clothes increased in city during the winter season, in Quetta.

Russia strikes Ukraine with 40 missiles, drones

Monitoring Desk KYIV: Ukraine suffered a large Russian missile attack, while its air defences were able to down a far lower proportion of them than

According to Ukraine's air force, Russia launched 37 missiles and three drones. Eight missiles were downed, it said in a statement on social media. The air force's spokesperson said earlier this week that Ukraine was now suffering from a deficit of air defence missiles. It was not immediately clear whether this or any other factor was the reason for the low hit rate.

Most of the types of missile used overnight region of Chernihiv were extremely fast-moving ballistic types, the air force said. These are far harder to shoot down.

"It should be noted

the listed (weapons) which were not included in the number of the downed, did not reach active countermeasures by electronic warfare," the statement said. There were no details on the targets of the strike.

down Russian missiles in at least five regions across Ukraine, according to local officials from those

ern city of Dnipro was struck, the local governor said, also without providing detail as to what was hit. Police in the northern posted a picture of a large crater made by a downed

damaged, one buil-ding was practically detheir targets as a result of stroyed," the police wrote. No people were hurt but a dog was killed, police said.

France's new foreign minister Stephane Sejourne Air defences shot on Saturday renewed his country's support to Ukraine, choosing Kyiv for his first official visit abroad as the war with Russia nears second anniversary.

Sejourne arrived as Jkraine saw another wave of overnight strikes from fied its aerial attacks recently. The visit took place as allies struggle to secure funding, with some worrying that Kyiv could be forgotten amid new con-"As a result of being flicts, including between

Arab partnership

on Palestine

awaits Israeli

commitment: US

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: Arab na-

with the US on both short-

term and long-term solutions

for Palestinians in Gaza, but

this partnership is contingent

upon Israel's willingness to participate, says the US State

Mitchell, the department's

spokesperson Matthew

Miller reviewed Secretary

of State Antony Blinken's

seven-day visit to the Middle East, highlighted the

willingness of Arab nations

to work with the US on

Palestinian issues. How-

ever, he emphasised that

this cooperation depends

on Israel's commitment to

the process. "We've traveled to

nine countries and met with

leaders in each of those, se-

curing agreements with all

of these Arab partners, as

well as with Turkiye," Miller stated. "They were

ready to coordinate with the

United States and take real

steps to improve the lives

of the Palestinian people in Gaza and to rebuild Gaza.

US climate envoy

John Kerry to

leave Biden

administration

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Former

US senator and secretary of

state John Kerry will leave his post as President Joe

Biden's special climate en-

voy after three years but

will help Biden's re-election

Kerry, 80, comes a month

after he played an instru-

mental in helping broker an

international agreement announced in Dubai for na-

tions around the world to

transition away from fossi

on Saturday about his deci-

sion after speaking with

Biden on Wednesday, one

of the sources familiar with

the situation told Reuters.

He informed his staff

The decision by

campaign.

In an interview with

Andrea

Department.

MSNBC's



Taiwan voters elected Lai Ching-te to be their next president despite warnings from China that he would take the island closer to war.

6 Turkish soldiers killed in an attack on a base in northern Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region

Monitoring Desk ISTANBUL: Six Turkish

soldiers were killed Friday in an attack on a military base in northern Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region, the Turkish Defense Ministry said. Authorities blamed Kurdish militants.

Five died in the assault and another soldier succumbed to his wounds later. Another seven soldiers were wounded, two of them of the slain soldiers

seriously, when the attackers attempted to infiltrate tions are ready to collaborate the base, the ministry said

on social media. It said 12 militants had been "neutralized" and that operations were continuing in the area. The wounded troops were hospitalized for treatment

Minister Foreign Hakan Fidan later expressed condolences for the families

Blizzard cancels flights, disrupts presidential campaign

Monitoring Desk CHICAGO: Tens of millions of Americans were in the pathway of dangerous and damaging weather conditions as snowstorms moved across the Northwest and Midwest, flooding threatened the East Coast and potential tornadoes were on tap in the

Airlines delayed more than 7,600 flights across the U.S. on Friday, including planes grounded at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport due to winds and blinding snow.

In Iowa, Republican presidential candidates canceled events three days out from the state's

state-by-state contests in which parties pick their nominees ahead of November's general elec-

Blizzards arrived in much of the upper Midwest on Friday morning with heavy snows and fierce winds of up to 60 miles per hour (96 kph) that were expected to continue into Saturday, the National Weather Service (NWS)

More than 133,000 homes and businesses lost power in Michigan, according to data from PowerOutage.US. The lights went out for another 150,000-plus customers in Wisconsin, West Virginia, caucuses, the first of the Ohio and Pennsylvania.

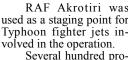
Activists protest at British base in Cyprus used in Yemen strikes

Monitoring Desk AKROTIRI: Pro-Palestinian activists protested at the gates of RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus on Sunday, angry that the British base was used as a launch pad for strikes against the Houthi militia in Yemen.

U.S. and British warplanes, ships and submarines launched dozens of air strikes against Houthi forces in Yemen overnight Thursday to Friday in retaliation for attacks on Red Sea shipping that the Iranbacked group says is a response to the war in Gaza.

testers chanted "Out with the Bases of Death" at the entrance to RAF Akrotiri, one of two bases Britain retains in Cyprus, a former

The iron gates to the heavily-guarded compound, which sits on a peninsula on Cyprus's southernmost tip, were locked with dozens of police



Several hundred pro-



A bus stops at a place protected with sandbags in Belgorod, the main city in Russia's south-western region which has come under shelling by Ukraine over the past week.

A plume of smoke ascends following Israeli bombardment over the

North Korea fires missile, minister to visit Russia as tensions rise

Monitoring Desk SEOUL: North Korea fired an apparent intermediate-

range missile off its east coast on Sunday, South Korea said, as tensions run high after Pyongyang's recent launches of an intercontinental ballistic missile and its first military spy satellite. "North Korea fires

unidentified ballistic missile towards East Sea," Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan. The Joint Chiefs of Staff

said had it detected the launch but gave no further details.

Japan's coast guard said that an "object, potentially ballistic missile, launched from North Korea," citing information from the country's defence ministry, and warning vessels to take care. North Korea's last

missile test was of a Hwasong-18 solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile, which it fired into the East Sea on December 18. The apparent test comes days after North Korea conducted a series of rare live-fire drills near the maritime border with the South, prompting

Taiwan tells China to 'face reality' after election

Monitoring Desk TAIPEI CITY: Taiwan told

China on Sunday to "face reality" and respect its election result, after voters defied Beijing's warnings and chose pro-sovereignty candidate Lai Ching-te as president.
Voters spi

Voters spurned Beijing's repeated calls not to vote for Lai, delivering a comfortable victory for a man China's ruling Communist Party sees as a dangerous separatist.

Beijing, which claims Taiwan as its territory and has never renounced force to bring it under its control. responded to Lai's victory by saying it would not change the "inevitable trend of China's reunification".

against Yemen's Houthi fighters.

Monitoring Desk

COPENHAGEN: Queen

Margrethe II, Denmark's

longest reigning monarch,

was set to pass the throne

to her first-born son

Frederik on Sunday and

crowds began gathering in

front of parliament from

early morning to witness

the nation of nearly 6 mil-

lion on New Year's Eve

when she announced her

decision to abdicate after 52

years as queen, becoming the first Danish monarch in

Margrethe stunned

events.

Denmark awaits

new king, as Queen

Margrethe to bow out

nearly 900 years to volun-

tarily relinquish the throne.

nation, but the succession

will take place in parliament

at around 1300 GMT, the

moment Margrethe, 83,

signs the declaration of her

Denmark converged on the

capital in a sign of the huge

popularity the monarchy is

started crying when the queen said on New Year's

Éve she would abdicate."

People from all over

"I was in shock and

There will be no coro-

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), had vowed to defend the island from China's "intimidation" and on Sunday Taipei's foreign ministry told Beijing to accept the result.

'The Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls on the Beijing authorities to respect the election results, face reality and give up suppressing Taiwan in order for positive cross-strait interactions to return to the right track," it said in a statement.

An unofficial US delegation sent by President Joe Biden's administration will arrive in Taipei on Sunday, a move sure to draw condemnation from Beijing.

Five migrants die trying to cross the Channel **Monitoring Desk**

PARIS: Five migrants try ing to cross the Channel to Britain died in French waters in the early hours of Sunday, French local authorities said.

The small boat overturned as it attempted to launch from a beach in Wimereux, south of Calais, an official told Reuters, adding that one person in critical condition had been taken to hospital in Boulogne, northern France.

Dozens were pulled from the cold water but the overnight rescue effort was complicated as the waters were too shallow for the French navy's boats that came to help.

Volcano erupts in southwest **Iceland**

Monitoring Desk

cano in southwest Iceland erupted on Sunday, the country's meteorological office said, making it the fifth eruption on the Reykjanes peninsula since 2021.

A coast guard helicopter has been sent to assess the situation and the exact location, the Civil Protection agency

The eruption began north of the fishing town of Grindavik but it was still not clear exactly where the lava was emerging from or in which direction it was flowing, said broadcaster RUV.

All UN peace-

keepers to

leave Congo

by end of 2024

Monitoring Desk

KINSHASA: About 2,000

U.N. troops will leave res-

tive eastern areas of the

Democratic Republic of

Congo by the end of April

in the first phase of the

peacekeeping mission's

planned withdrawal from

the country, the head of

Council approved the end

of the mission in December

following a request by

Congolese President Felix

Tshisekedi in September to

fast-track the withdrawal of

strong force, known as

MONUSCO, took over from an earlier U.N. opera

Poland to

change process

The currently 13,500-

the peacekeepers.

The U.N. Security

mission said on Saturday.



BAGHDAD: Supporters of pro-Iran factions wave various flags at Tahrir square during a protest on Saturday against the US and British air strikes

Miller said in a taped interview with CTV Question Period that the Liberal government is considering a cap on international students in the first and second

"That volume is disconcerting," Miller is quoted by CTV as saying, referring to the number of international students in Canada. "It's really a sys-

Maldives tells India to withdraw troops by March as row deepens

Monitoring Desk

MALE: The Maldivian president on Sunday told India to withdraw its nearly 100 troops by March 15, a day after returning from China where he signed a raft

New Delhi considers the Indian Ocean archipelago to be within its sphere of influence but the country has shifted to China's orbit, the Maldives's largest external

The March deadline was set during talks with Indian officials in the Maldives on Sunday, a top aide to President Mohamed Muizzu said, honouring the leader's long-standing election pledge.

"The president put

forth this request at the meeting of the high-level committee between the two nations... the proposal is currently under consider-ation," Muizzu's Public Policy Secretary Abdulla Nazim Ibrahim told report-

India has a deployment of about 89 personnel, including medical staff, to operate three aircraft to patrol the archipelago's vast maritime territory. Muizzu came to

power in September after pledging to evict Indian

On Saturday, after arriving in the capital Male, the president said that while the Maldives may be small, the country will not be bullied.

UNSC members uphold right of Palestinians to stay in Gaza

Monitoring Desk NITED NATIONS: In a JN Security Council meeting on Friday evening, representatives unanimously called for allowing Palestinians to remain in Gaza and West

emphasising the impor-

tance of respecting interna-

tional law and preventing forced displacement. The meeting addressed the worsening situation in the Middle East, particularly focusing on the escalating conflict in Gaza and rising tensions around

the Red Sea. As the war in Gaza approached the 100-day mark, key figures and representatives voiced serious concerns about the situation in the Palestinian enclave and rejected any move to displace Palestinians from tĥeir lands.

With over 1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza internally displaced, the situation in the Palestinian terriand Palestinians.

tory "is heart-breaking and untenable," said US Ambassador to the UN Linda

Thomas-Greenfield. "The US position has been clear and consistent – Palestinian civilians in Gaza must be able to return home as soon as conditions allow," she said, noting that her country has also made it clear that "civilians must not be pressed to leave Gaza under any circum-

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield drew attention to an "unprecedented rise" in violence in the West Bank. "The US strongly opposes the advancement of settlements in the West Bank, and we strongly oppose the violence that has come to characterise them," she said. "At their core, settlements undermine the geographic viability of a two-state solution, exacerbate tensions and further harm trust between Israelis

Canada, facing housing shortage, to consider cap on international students

Monitoring Desk tem that has gotten out of

considering a cap on the number of international students allowed to live in Canada, Immigration Minister Marc Miller said according to a CTV report, as the government faces criticism for a housing affordability crisis.

Canada depends on immigration to drive its economy and support an aging population and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been ramping up annual immigration. The housing crisis has been blamed on an increase in migrants and international students fueling demand for homes just as inflation has slowed con-

quarters this year.

He did not say how

much of a reduction in international students the government is considering. Miller's spokesperson could not be immediately reached.

Official data show there were more than 800,000 foreign students with active visas in 2022, up from 275,000 in 2012. Canada is a popular destination for international students since it is relatively easy to obtain a work per-The interview with

Miller is scheduled to air on Sunday.

The Liberal government floated the idea of capping the number of foreign student visas in August, but Housing Minister Sean Fraser said then that the government had not vet made a decision of whether to pursue that option.

Miller said he planned to discuss the problem with provincial counterparts.

Trudeau's Liberals have seen their popularity plummet after more than eight years in office.

Hundreds of firefighters battle Western Australia wildfire

Monitoring Desk

SYDNEY: Hundreds of firefighters on Sunday battled an out-of-control bushfire near Western Australia's capital Perth, prompting authorities to urge residents in the fire's path to flee.

More than 25 bushfires were burning on Sunday in the vast state, with residents in the rural shires of Gingin and nearby Chittering, about 60 kms (37 miles) north of Perth, at risk from the fast-moving blaze, according to fire authorities

A high-risk bushfire season is underway in Australia due to an El Nino weather event, associated with events such as cyclones, droughts, heatwaves and

wildfires. A state Department of Fire and Emergency Services spokesperson said 240 firefighters were battling the blaze, which was at emergency level, the highest threat rating.

"If the way is clear, leave now for a safer place," the agency said on its website. The blaze which has burnt through 417 hectares (1,030 acres) of bushland, broke out on Saturday.

nation's The weather forecaster on Sunday issued a warning for "extreme fire danger in some parts of Western Australia state amid a heatwave alert in place since Saturday.

In Perth, a maximum temperature of 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit) was forecast, more than three degrees above the city's average January maximum, according to data from the weather fore-

Australia's last two fire seasons have been quiet compared with the devastating 2019-2020 "Black Summer" of bushfires that razed an area the size of Turkey and killed 33 people.

speaking on condition of anonymity. The administration has made no decisions from Earthly bones about who may be selected to replace Kerry **Monitoring Desk** LIMA: A pair of 'alien mummies' that mysteriously turned up at the airport in Peru's capital last October have entirely Earthly origins, according to a scientific analysis revealed on Friday. The two small specimens were described as hu-

Scientists assert 'alien mummies' in Peru are really dolls made

manoid dolls by experts at a press conference in Lima, and likely fashioned from both human and animal parts. A separate three-fingered hand believed to be from Peru's Nazca region was also analysed, with experts ruling out any con-

nection to alien life. "They're not extraterrestrials. They're dolls made

from animal bones from this planet joined together with modern synthetic glue," said Flavio Estrada, an archeologist with Peru's Institute for Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences. "It's totally a made-up story," Estrada added. The two figurines turned up in the Lima airport offices of courier DHL in a cardboard box, and were made to look like mummified bodies dressed in traditional Andean attire. Some media outlets subsequently speculated about possible alien origin. Last September, two tiny mummified bodies with elongated heads and hands with three fingers were featured at a Mexican congressional hearing.

for judges' nominations **Monitoring Desk** WARSAW: Polish Justice Minister Adam Bodnar outlined a bill that aims to correct the way judges are appointed as a first step in rolling back the previnationalist government's judicial refreezing EU funds.

forms with a view to un-The former Law and Justice (PiS) party government had for years been stuck in a row with Brussels over its court reforms and the rule of law, resulting in billions of European Union's funds for Poland

being frozen.

Thousands of pro-Palestinians march on Washington to demand ceasefire in Gaza

marched in Washington, D.C., on Saturday to demand an end to Israel's deadly military campaign in Gaza, marking almost 100 days since the start of the Israel-Palestinians war that is killing 250 Palestinians

The march, one of the biggest in this capital city, was led by a coalition of pro-Palestinian groups who are calling for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza, an end to US funding for the Israeli military, and for Israel to be held accountable for war crimes and violations

At a rally on Freedom

ries of victims in Gaza, and marchers walked several blocks before arriving in front of the White House. Protesters carried signs listing the names of Palestinians killed and accusing President Joe Biden of participating in a 'genocide'.

Israel's siege of Gaza has killed more than 23,800 Palestinians, according to Gaza's health ministry, since it declared war on October 7. One of the organizing groups in Washington, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), said that they had sent a letter to the White House calling on the president to secure a "complete and verifiable ceasefire," the release of all hostages in

ernment. The letter also called for Israeli officials to be "held accountable for the Gaza genocide" and the initiation of credible negotiations for a just and enduring peace by ending the Is-

ers in Israel, and the termi-

support for the Israeli gov-

raeli occupation of Palestine. The rally in Washington is the second in the US capital since the current Israeli offensive began on October 7. The Gaza Health Ministry has estimated that at least 23,708 Palestinians have been killed, mostly women and children, and 60,000 wounded in the Israeli action, the vast majority civilians.

brought to the International Court of Justice, charging that Israel's far-right government was "intent on destroying the Palestinians in Gaza" and creating conditions "calculated to bring about their physical de-

Among those addressing the crowd in Washington, by video link, was Al Jazeera journalist Wael al-Dahdouh, whose wife, daughter, two sons, and a grandchild were killed by Israeli airstrikes. Also speaking were long-shot S presidential candidates Cornel West and Jill Stein, as well as the daughter of Malcom



Chief Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf award certificate to a student of Bahria University Karachi Campus during 19th Convocation ceremony.

Solangi terms press clubs as main pillars of press freedom

124 candidates to contest on

18 reserved seats in NA &

PA from Balochistan

taker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Sunday that press clubs were the main pillars of press freedom.

Addressing the cheque distribution ceremony among the representatives of press clubs across the Punjab here, he said that journalists were an important part of the society.

Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi and and Provincial Information Minister Aamir Mir also addressed the check distribution ceremony of

The information min-

Independent Report

QUETTA: As many as 124 candidates would be con-

testing elections on 18 re-

served seats of women and

minorities in 18 seats of

National and Provincial As-

semblies from Balochistan.

issued by the Election

Commission of Pakistan

about the candidates on re-

served seats in the national

and provincial assemblies,

As per the initial list

Minister Punjab for approval of Rs 9.45 million grant for press clubs in the province. He said that Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi always took care of public needs and he was always engaged in public

"On behalf of the Ministry of Information and the Government of Pakistan, we thank the Chief Minister of Punjab for taking measures for the welfare of journalists", he

a total of 64 candidates are

in competition run for 11

seats of women reserved

in the Balochistan Assem-

didates are contesting elec-

tion on four seats reserved

for women in the National

Assembly while 32 candi-

dates have come before for

the reserved seats for mi-

norities in Balochistan As-

Similarly, in all 28 can-

Earlier the caretaker federal minister, chief minister Punjab and information minister Punjab distributed among the journalists.

University Karachi campus were awarded to students highlighted the significance from various departments. encompassing Management Studies, Business Studies.

Chief of the Naval Staff attends

the 19th convocation of Bahria

Independent Report KARACHI: 19th Convocation of Bahria University Karachi and the Institute of Professional Psychology was held at Karachi. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf and Rector Bahria University, Vice Admiral (Retd) Asif Khaliq graced the twin sessions of the convocation ceremony as chief guests respectively and awarded Medals and Merit Certificates to the students achieving outstanding performance in

A total of 1632 degrees, including 11 PhDs,

SC to hear petitions filed on several election issues this week

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) will hear the petitions filed regarding several election issues this week.

A 3-member bench headed by Chief Justice (CJ) Qazi Faizaisa will hear

In these cases, objections under corrupt practices and other references will be heard in Karachi provincial circle PS 17 Karach Mir Asim against RO Sohail Ahmed Durrani against Mir Yunus Aziz, objections under corrupt practices and other references, Badr Munir against Razan Nasrullah election eligibility case, Arshad Hussain against Naveed Aslam Provincial Assembly of Punjab, Nadia Aziz Chaudhry Muhammad Hamid Hamid

Including other election matters will be heard.

ANP terms SC verdict a victory

of democracy PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial President Áwami National Party (ANP) Aimal Wali Khan on Sunday hailed the recent Supreme Court ruling and termed as a victory for democracy. In a statement issued here, Aimal Wali Khan said that over the past two days, both sides presented compelling evidence, shedding light on the transparency of the case. Aimal Wali Khan pointed out that a specific political party was failed to provide a substantial defense, shifting the narrative from critiquing principles to questioning ethical standards. Express ing concern over the validation of 800,000 votes within an hour, Khan raised alarms about potential fou

Humanities & Social Sciences, Computer Sciences, Earth & Environmental Sciences, Electrical Engineering, Software Engineering, Computer Engineering,

sional Psychology.

During the first session, Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf awarded 22 Gold Medals and 18 Silver Medals to students who excelled in their respective degree programs. In his address he

Media Studies and Profes-

of meeting challenges and reframing them as opportunities. Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized that teamwork and communications are the pivotal elements for success.

During the second session, Rector Bahria University, Vice Admiral (Retd) Asif Khaliq awarded 24 Gold Medals and 19 Silver Medals to students for their outstanding achievements in their respective domains. In his speech, he emphasized that responsibility is the price of great-



LORALAI: FC Brig. Razzaq Ahmed presenting souvenir to Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel

CEC Raja instructs KP IGP to provide security to JUI-F rallies

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Raja Sultan has instructed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Inspector-General of Police (IGP) to provide security to Jamiat-e-Ulema

rallies amid threat reports. The development comes as interior ministry had warned that there were serious threats to the lives of JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Awami National Party (ANP) provincial president Aimal Wali

Islam Fazl (JUI-F) election

In a letter to the chief secretaries and inspector inces and circulated by the ANP, the interior ministry had said it had received reports from reliable sources

general of police of all prov-

revealing serious threats to the lives of the Maulana and Aimal. "It is requested that extreme caution and vigilance is exercised and necessary security arrangements are made at Maulana Fazl and Aimal's residences and during movement and public gatherings to avert any untoward incident," it said in a letter. Meanwhile, JUI-F leader Maulana Hafiz Waqas submitted an application in election commission, seeking security for party workers and rallies ahead of general elections.



KARACHI: PTI leader Shah Afzal Marwat is leading the really in connection with upcoming

Local hail Sibi-Harnai railway line restoration

QUETTA (INP): A railway section between Balochistan's Sibi and Harnai districts, which was restored after 17 years in October last year, was hailed by locals as a major

The Sabi-Harnai railway track was closed in August 2006 due to terrorist activities. While the local people were facing social, economic and other problems due to the train shutdown, there were also difficulties in religious festivals, cultural gatherings and other communications.

Harnai had to travel through 6 districts to reach Sabi which was costly and time

consuming.

The closure of the train track stopped the delivery of coal by train from Harnai to other cities of Pakistan and Sibi and other areas lost fresh agricultural

Balochistan (North) established peace here by carrying out operations against terrorists in Sibi, Sangan, Harnai and adjoining areas. Attempts to rehabili-

tate the Sabi-Harnai railway track have been made from time to time, but construction gained real momentum Pakistan Army and FC

Balochistan (North) took over the security duties of Railway Engineers and NLC staff and thus this train maintenance work was completed within a short period of time. The people of Sabi

and Harnai hailed the train restoration as a positive step for the region's prosperity, economic development and comfortable travel facilities

Sardar Ibrahim Khan of Sabi said, "Prior to 2006 when the track was active, trading was very common

Plaza, speakers shared sto-Gaza and political prison-

KARACHI: Leader of Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman addressing during demonstration against Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, to show solidarity with Palestinian people, in Provincial Capital.

Naeem regrets Muslim leaders' failure to stop Israel's onslaught in Gaza

KARACHI (INP): Jamaatelli in politics and preparing for polls but the JI has not for-Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman on Sunday said the Muslim leaders have failed to protect the innocent Palestinians at the hands of indiscriminate attacks of

He added the cowardly rulers of the Muslim world gave Israel the courage to bomb children, women and houses in He made these re-

Gaza March and highlighted that the Muslim world can show sympathy to the rael, they are all mixed up. Gaza's brothers and sisters by protesting against the that the major political leadcrimes committed by Israel.

chief said, "We salute the including USA and Israel patience of Hamas as we who have killed the hapless

gotten Gaza even during

the elections. He highlighted that that twenty-five thousand Palestinians have been martyred, including children and women while applauding the actions of Hamas whom he mentioned has destroyed the Israel's defence technology.

He said everyone in Pakistan is engaged in politics, who are working for marks while addressing the the pleasure of America, Nawaz Sharif, Zardari and others are not opposing Is-

Further, he claimed ers have been avoiding to The JI Karachi region take the names of culprits

see that everyone is engaged people of Gaza. SC to hear level playing field plea against ECP today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) to hear petition filed by Tehreek-e-Insaf against Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding not giving a level playing

A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice tion symbols to the candidates of Pakistan Tehreek-

Notices have been is-

sued to parties.
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) will also submit its detailed answer to the court on Monday. For this, Gohar Khan Advocate will submit the answer.

Some sources said that after ECP has allotted elece-Insaf to contest the election as an independent



OUETTA: Workers of Pakistan Mulim League (N) hold a rally pay tribute to martyrs of the Pak Army.

Gauhar's house raided, 4 officials plus **SHO** Margalla suspended ISLAMABAD (Online)

In connection with the police raid at the house of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Barrister Gauhar, on the order of IG Islamabad officers including SHC Margalla have been suspended while SP City has been appointed as the inquiry officer.

A detailed report has been ordered to be submitted within 3 days.

According to the spokesperson of Islamabad Police, 5 officers including SHO Margalla have been suspended by the order of Islamabad on the issue of police raid at the house of PTI barrister Gohar. Salamabad Police has completed preliminary investi-

It should be remembered that on January 13 local police arrived at F-7/2 in search of an proclaimed offender on the information

Musadiq alleges Abbasi of misinterpreting

PML-N supremo LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Musadik Malik has alleged Shahid Khaqan Abbasi of misinterpreting party supremo Muhammad Nawaz

Sharif. Speaking in Alhmra Hall Lahore on Sunday, he said that the conversation of Khaqan Abbasi regarding Nawaz's tenure was out of context.

Musadik Malik said that Abbasi's criticism was not against PML-N but against himself as he spent most of his time in the said party. The later should be held accountable for his misdeeds, he

QUETTA: Candidate for PB-42 Aslam Rind speaks during a press conference. Zulekha expresses concern over deteriorating law and

Independent Report QUETTA: Zulekha Aziz

Mandokhail, provincial leader of Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaf (PTI) and candidate PB-37 Mastung, while expressing concern over the situation in Mastung, has said that caretaker government had miserably failed to safeguard the lives and

pressed by her while enquiring after the health of Maharaj Satesh Kumar who had been injured in a vehicle snatching bid in Dasht area of Mastung. Expressing grave concern over the de-

teriorating law and order situation in district Mastung, she said that the incumbent caretaker government had failed to protect the lives and properties of people. She said that

order situation in Mastung

properties of people.

These views were ex-

a well planned conspiracy deteriorating law and order had been hatched to deteriorate law and order situation in Balochistan, adding

that people of Mastung were not secure in their homes which was a question mark on the performance of caretaker government and district administration Mastung. She called on the authorities to take steps for securing national highways of the province.

Revisiting dams construction quality in Balochistan

Balochistan is a province dominated by arid climate having 85% dependency on Agriculture and livestock where the precipitation ratio as compared to rest of the country is very low making water a precious commodity for its population. Therefore, to meet the needs of its population, respective governments resorted to construction of weirs, canals, channels and dams with the small and big dams tally touching around

This is surely the largest number of dams in all the four provinces to meet the needs of Balochistan people who are mainly dependent on agriculture and

livestock businesses. impacts and torrential rains in the province had raised many questions about the quality of construction of these dams as dozens of dams suffered damages due to heavy down pour.

flaws or absence of globally recognized development protocols that these dams could not sustain the changing weather patterns. They think the effec-

tiveness of dams -the sole source of hope for residents of Balochistan's parched land - could not pay off fully due to reasons like improper management, quality of construction and lack of research institute on rainfall and disaster risk reduction procedures. 'Garuk Dam con-

structed in Kharan district is one such example where better planning could save billions of rupees," stated an Engineer of the Irrigation department. He revealed that as

But recent climatic per PC-1 of the cost of this under construction dam was estimated at Rs 12 billion but it reached Rs 27 billion. "The height of dam in revised PC-I is decreased from 55m (180 ft) to 52m (171 ft) but the live storage Experts believe there capacity is increased from

had been some technical 24,896 AF to 27,073 AF." Moreover, he said the discharge capacity is also increased from 60 Cusecs to 73.1 Cusecs increasing the cost of spillway from Rs.1150.620 million to Rs. 5797.764 million.

According to reports, 38 dams alone in Qila Abdullah district were damaged besides over a dozen n Quetta, eleven in Khuzdar, nine in Hub, Dera Bugti and Bela seven in Kachhi, five each in Chagai Nushki, Harnai, Zhob and Musa Khel, twelve in Duki, Surab, Kharan Washuk Mastung, Kech, Kalat, urab and Kohlu districts.

"We need to strictly implement globally recognized standards in construction of dams in Balochistan," observed Dr. Deen Muhammad Kakar, a geological expert. "Geophysical, geological and feasibility surveys are three layer prerequisites we need to practice in construction of a quality dam." "If we do not fully sometimes the contracts of

care for land's lithology and efficacy of the planned dam, we would waste our money," he said and mentioned to failure of 25 dams constructed in Chaman district that he claimed were constructed in the seismic zone. "This situation demands proper designs, use of standard materials, maintain quality control through regular health checks to serve the real purpose of providing water to people,' he added.

The experts also believe that reputation and competence of contractors must also be fully taken care of while awarding the contract because the contracts awarded to incompetent builders cost in billions to national kitty. 'When we award con-

tract to less qualified consultants, how could we be sure about quality of design and construction," stated Dr Deen Muhammad. This is a common apa-

thy in our system that

certain projects are awarded either under political influence or on basis of personal relations. Therefore, this tendency must be shunned to save billions of rupees fleeced from our kitty. Although the challenge is enormous yet the concerned government departments are confident to cope with this situation through multiple steps initiated recently. 'The government in

collaboration with the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Air Aviation and Planning and Development department is working on construction of Automatic Weather Stations," said Abdul Razaq Khilji, Director General Water Resources Planning, Development and Monitoring Directorate of Irrigation Department. "This project would help us compile the data of rainfall and construct dams keeping in view the ex-

pected rainfall.' He agreed that construction standards must be

updated to international standards and stated, "a three-pronged approach including geological specialists could guarantee the dams' utmost success.'

'Dams built without careful planning and necessary protocols prove to be potential target of harsh weather like we witnessed in 2022," Khilji said. "Unfortunately, we were unable to preserve thousands of cubic feet water after record-breaking rains in As the Irrigation De-

partment is mandated to

meet water needs of people besides monitoring and improving the depleting water table in 18 river basins across Balochistan, it is confident to come up to masses aspirations. "The present govern-

ment is thriving hard to achieve those goals and there will be a considerable impact on the livelihood of people living in this prov-" commented Secretary Irrigation Hafiz Majid.

after 17 years Pakistan Army and FC

step towards prosperity.

The local people of

produce from Harnai