



Speakers of national conference call for free access to safe water for all

ISLAMABAD (INP): The speakers of national water conference including policymakers, researchers, farmers, and various stakeholders have unanimously called for the free availability of clean and safe water for everyone, coupled with sustainable usage for agricultural practices.

The Sindh Water Policy, largely shaped by input from tail-end and women farmers, is mostly based on recommendation to the government by the Indus Consortium. The organization worked closely with farmer communities at three canals in Sindh and Punjab: Akram Wah in Sindh, and Dajal Canal and Rangpur Canals in Punjab.



ISLAMABAD: The First Anti-Rape Crises Cell is established by the Ministry of Law and Justice and Ministry of Health with the support from the UK Government, UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and Legal Aid Society.



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf exchanging views with High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan Admiral (Retd) Ravindra C Wijegunaratne at Naval Headquarters Islamabad

Tough contest expected on all 5 NA constituencies of Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): A tough contest is expected in all five National Assembly and 12 provincial assembly constituencies of the district of Peshawar, the provincial capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the general elections of 2024.

In NA-29 Peshawar-II, the contest is amongst a former PTI-affiliated MNA Arbab Aamir Ayub, who is in the field on the electoral symbol of Bowl against Amjad Aziz of PPP, Saqibullah Khan Chamkani of ANP, Sobia Shahid PML-N, Akhundzada Irfanullah Shah of JUI-F while JI has fielded a former judge Malik Ghulam Mohyuddin.

an independent candidate Arbab Sher Ali, who is contesting on the election symbol of Traffic Light. Arbab Sheri Ali the close relative of Arbab Alamgir Khan.

ECP reveals minority seat candidates for 2024 polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission has unveiled the preliminary list of candidates contending for seats reserved for minorities in the National Assembly.

According to the schedule issued by the Election Commission, appeals for the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers by returning officers can be submitted until January 16, and the Appellate Tribunal will hear them until January 19.

Salman Chaudhry assumes charge as IG NH&MP

ISLAMABAD: Salman Chaudhry PSP a Grade-21 Police officer of Polier Service of Pakistan, assumed charge as Inspector General, National Highways & Motorway Police.

He is the 22nd Inspector General of National Highways & Motorway Police. Before his posting as IG, NHMP, he was working as Additional Inspector General Police in Baluchistan.

He is considered as the most professional police officer. He lauded that National Highways and Motorway Police is a well reputed force and we have to work with more enthusiasm to enhance credibility level of this department at national & international level.

We will not boycott election come what may: Awan

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI leader and senior lawyer Babar Awan has made it clear we will not boycott election come what may.

“PTI will not boycott election at any cost. But has been snatched from us and pitch has been uprooted, he said this while talking to media men in Islamabad High Court (IHC) Monday.



Salman Chaudhry assumed the charge of 22nd Inspector General of National Highways and Motorway Police



QUETTA: Awami National Party (ANP) Candidate for PB-38, Malik Naeem Khan Bazai exchanging views with Nasrullah Zehrey, PKMAP Candidate for PB-45 during meeting held in Quetta.

Nawab Shahwani withdraws...

Continued from page 1 constituency of the provincial assembly, also present on the occasion, announced to withdraw in favour of Nawab Muhammad Khan Shahwani.



QUETTA: Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) President, Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti addresses to media persons during press conference, at Bugti House

AC directs NAB to file inquiry report within week

ISLAMABAD (Online): During the hearing of Toshakhana luxury vehicles and gifts case against former premiers Nawaz Sharif, Yousuf Raza Gillani and former president Asif Ali Zardari, Accountability Court (AC) Islamabad has directed NAB to file report in respect of Nawaz Sharif within a week.

NAB's inquiry report in respect of Nawaz Sharif could not be presented in AC on Monday as well. The court directed NAB to submit inquiry report in respect of Nawaz Sharif within a week.

Character involved in excesses...

Continued from page 1 Sharif and his party despite the tough period they had gone through. Despite fog and intense cold weather a large number of people attended the rally.

Nawaz was removed from the office again and again, but brought back each time by these umpires, Maryam said while pointing to the crowd and asked the people to give a heavy mandate to the three-time prime minister for an effective government and swift decision making.

CPEC emerges as a key driver of all-round dev. in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) emerges as a key driver of transformative and all-round developments in Pakistan, with several groundbreaking initiatives poised to redefine fresh face of progress and growth in the year 2024.

boasts a runway accommodating large aircraft and a modern terminal building. With an estimated cost of \$246 million, its completion will not only mark a new era for air travel in Pakistan but also solidifies the enduring partnership between China and Pakistan.

connectivity in Khuzdar. The Hoshab-Awaran Road Section (M-8) project, stretching over 146 km, will contribute to the development of infrastructure in Awaran, fostering economic growth.

equipment aligns with sustainable energy goals, while the overseas student scholarship program signals continued dedication to human capital development. In the healthcare sector, the expected progress in providing medical equipment and materials, along with the ongoing Gwadar hospital project, underscores the focus on healthcare improvements.

Initiatives like Brightness Journey in Pakistan, coupled with projects addressing drinking water equipment and Gwadar Desalination Plant, are poised to meet crucial needs of the population. Lastly, Gwadar Vocational and Technical Project aims to equip local workforce with essential skills for the evolving job market.

# Country needs smart solutions to combat current challenges: Education Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi Monday emphasized on adopting smart solutions for addressing the current challenges being faced by the country, matching the pace of the developed countries.

He was speaking at the launching ceremony of "Global Education Monitoring Report 2023" arranged by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in collaboration with UNESCO, EdTech Hub, and ITA.

Madad Ali said that the current challenges being faced by the country require smart solutions and it is high time that Pakistan matches the pace of the developed countries of the world.

Chairing the event, the minister said that it is heartening to see that Pakistan has recently given high importance to the use of technology in imparting education. "Evaluating technology's role in imparting education is need of the hour", he added.

He said that the role of technology in reducing the number of out-of-school children in the country is of great significance, which he termed as his top priority.

He said that quality of education is another challenge that has been given the highest priority under his

He said that he has placed special emphasis in ensuring that the schools in the federal area have the basic necessities available to provide a safe, secure and enabling environment to students.

Madad Ali said that the Ministry of Education was adept in making sure that technology's benefits can be passed on to the masses in the COVID 19 era.

He highlighted the development and launch of teleschool and educational radio channels in the COVID era by the education ministry.

Madad Ali highlighted the findings of the report which pointed out that technology can also leave behind under privileged students.

He said that his ministry will ensure that the use of technology is adapted in such a way that no child is left behind irrespective of his/her background.

He said that his ministry will ensure that our learning outcomes and educational programmes will be aligned with technology in such a way that the negative aspects of technology are completely curbed.

Madad Ali said that he hoped that the fundamental right to education of all children of Pakistan would be guaranteed through the smart use of technology.



Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussain Mullick addressing the second consultative meeting of Kashmir Advisory Committee in Islamabad.



Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in collaboration with UNESCO, EdTech Hub, and ITA hosted the national launch of the 2023 Global Education.

## Anti-rape crisis cell established at PIMS

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Law and Justice on Monday inaugurated the model Anti-Rape Crisis Cell (ARCC) at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS).

The cell was established in collaboration with UK Aid, United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) and Legal Aid Society (LAS).

The event was attended by British High Commissioner to Pakistan Ms. Jane Marriot, along with UNFPA Country Director Dr. Luay Shabaneh, Federal Law Secretary Raja Naeem Akbar, Federal Health Secretary Iftikhar Ali Shallwani, Chairperson of the Special Committee on Anti-Rape (Trial and Investigation) Act, 2021 Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, PIMS Executive Director Prof. Dr. Rana Imran Sikandar, several senior government officials and members of the civil society.

The launch of a model facility such as this signifies the government's commitment to improve access to justice for survivors of sexual violence under the Anti-Rape (Trial and Investigation) Act 2021 through a coordinated and targeted response mechanism.

## CDA decides to build model village in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to build a new model village in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

This model village will be built on 3621 kanal of land which will be completed within two years. The 4500 residential plots of 10-marla will be developed in this model village. A commercial center and three class 3 shopping centres will be built in this village. A Jamia mosque will be constructed and a health centre will also be established in this model village.

CDA official said all the plots of this model village will be allotted to those affected people whose land was acquired by CDA for Park Enclave.

The plots will be given to the affected people of Mauza Kurri and Rihara in this model village.

This project has been facing dillydally for nine years. Now Islamabad High Court (IHC) ordered CDA to initiate this project and complete it within two years.

Ms Ayesha Raza Farooq said, "In essence, the establishment of the Anti-Rape Crisis Cells is not just a legal initiative, it is a comprehensive and unwavering commitment to creating a society free from the shackles of sexual violence where survivors are supported, and justice prevails."

Prof. Dr. Rana Imran Sikandar committed that the Hospital will provide specialized training sessions for all relevant healthcare officials, such as doctors and nurses on trauma-informed care and the specific needs of sexual violence survivors.

Ifikhar Ali Shallwani stated that the social evils of sexual violence exist in any country around the globe and urged to handle this issue.

## Police arrest suspects in assassination case of cleric

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant development, Islamabad police said on Monday that they have apprehended two suspects believed to be involved in the assassination of a cleric Maulana Masood ur Rehman Usmani.

According to a police spokesman, the initial reports suggested that the arrested individuals have alleged affiliations with a banned organization, a private news channel reported.

Religious leader Maulana Masood ur Rehman Usmani was shot earlier this month here in Islamabad when unknown assailants opened fire on his vehicle.

## Famous urdu poet, Sufi scholar Wasif remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Famous Urdu poet, teacher, writer and Sufi scholar Wasif Ali Wasif was remembered on the occasion of his birthday on Monday.

He was born on January 15, 1929, in Khushab and is famous for his unique literary style. Probably no contemporary Urdu writer is more cited in quotations than him. Master of aphorism, he has almost a miraculous ability to capture a rainbow of meaning in a few drops of well-chosen words.

Many of his aphorisms have become proverbs in recent years.

His book "Kiran Kiran Suraj" containing these aphorisms remained a best seller for many years.

under ill intent with nefarious designs. False allegation of nikan during iddat was leveled on the basis of false and fabricated documents.

The petition further said according to former husband he divorced me (Bushra Bibi) on November 14, 2017. Khawar Manika had pronounced triple talaq on April 15, 2017. She shifted to her mother's home in August 2017. She stayed in her mother's home till her marriage with PTI founder on January 01, 2018.

## Ulema to highlight energy efficiency, conservation in Friday prayer sermons

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ulema from various schools of thought will highlight the importance of energy efficiency and conservation from a religious perspective in their Friday prayer sermons across the country.

This commitment was formalized through a declaration signed by Ulema who participated in a one-day seminar organized by the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) on energy conservation from a religious standpoint.

The declaration affirms the Ulema's agreement to raise awareness about energy conservation through their sermons, expressing their dedication to a national-level energy conservation drive.

They presented their views in light of the Quran and Sunnah, emphasizing the significance of energy conservation and its social, moral, and religious implications. Sardar Mohazzam, the Managing Director of

## Bushra challenges Nikah during iddat case in IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Bushra Bibi, wife of PTI founder Imran Khan has challenged Nikah during iddat case in Islamabad High Court (IHC).

The lawyers of the petitioner will try to get fix the case for hearing in IHC today.

It has been said in the petition that the petition filed against Bushra Bibi and her husband PTI founder is based on malafide intent. Former husband Khawar Manika got registered complaint



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gul Bar Khan along with the provincial ministers are offering condolences and praying to the family members of the well-known religious scholar Allama Sheikh Mohsin Najafi (Late).

## BISP registration process continues smoothly

ISLAMABAD (APP): The registration process in the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) Survey of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is successfully continued across the country through the registration centers established by the Tehsil offices of the programme.

This was stated by the Director General, National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER), BISP, Naveed Akbar in a video message released through a social media platform. The DG stated that the citizens, belonging to the low-income groups, can register with the Benazir Income Support Programme through visiting the registration centers opened from Monday till Saturday.

They are required to bring Computerized National Identity Cards, B-Forms of children for registration purpose.

The citizens are required to bring electricity or gas bills, if have connections, so that we can enter these bills in the database to give any subsidy, if announced by the government in the future, he said.

The DG NSER has urged the citizens to provide their accurate data at the time of registration while those who will provide false information will never be allowed to become part of this programme.

The citizens having any complaint about the programme can contact the toll-free number 0800-26477 and official social media accounts of BISP. "We are ready to resolve the complaints of the citizens in a shortest possible time"

The DG said, "We encourage not only the poor segments to participate in the survey but also middle class, lower and upper middle class for compilation of their data".

"The compilation of their data will help the government provide them any subsidy or facility in the time of any emergency situation in future on the basis of their socio-economic data", he added.



ISLAMABAD: A gypsy family holding dry woods moving towards their destination from Sector G-7 to use it for domestic use due to load shedding of gas in Federal Capital.

## US President Advisor on Arts Shahid calls on Minister for Culture

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani-American businessman Shahid Ahmed Khan, Advisor to the President of the United States on Arts on Monday called on Interim Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah here at Culture Division. During the meeting, the Minister highlighted the important role of cultural exchanges in strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United States.

He said that through such exchanges people of both countries could better understand each other's perspectives and cultures.

Pakistani-American businessman Shahid Ahmed Khan, Advisor to the President of the United States said that he had frequently travelled to Pakistan and was interested in working on the rich cultural heritage of the region.

During the meeting, the Minister also offered Fateha on the sad demise of Shahid Ahmed Khan mother.

Later, the Advisor to the President of the United States on Arts Shahid Ahmed Khan along with Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah visited Islamabad Museum located at Sir Syed Memorial Building.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Aviation, Air Marshal (ret) Farhat Hussain Khan meets with Ambassador of Iraq in Pakistan, H.E. Hamid Abbas Lafta to discuss issues of mutual interest at Embassy of Iraq in Islamabad.

## ICCPO holds meeting with foreign diplomats, regional security officers

**Independent Report**

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan chaired a meeting with foreign diplomats and regional security officers of embassies at Diplomatic Enclave, a public relations officer said.

He said that, CPO Security Division, SSP Security Division and officials from other law enforcement



ranged every year. Emphasizing the utmost priority of ensuring the security of foreign missions, embassies, and offices, ICCPO highlighted the continuous enhancement of security measures at the diplomatic enclave through modern technology.

ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan said that, as part of these efforts the protective barrier of the diplomatic enclave is reconstructed, while modern cameras departments were also present during the occasion.

During the meeting, the ICCPO wished a Happy New Year to the meeting participants and briefed the foreign diplomats and embassies regional security officers about the steps taken by Islamabad Capital Police to ensure foolproof security arrangements around the diplomatic enclave.

This meeting was arranged with advanced technology are being installed along the internal and external roads, perimeter walls, and surrounding routes.

Effective measures are being taken for the surveillance and monitoring of vehicles, motorcyclists, and pedestrians, with increased emphasis on mobile and foot patrols within the diplomatic enclave, he added.

## NASTP park aims to transform country into Knowledge economy, create jobs: DG

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP) Air Vice Marshal (RETD) Asad Ikram said on Monday that the 'Digital Science Park' was established in Karachi to transform the country into a knowledge-based economy and provide employment opportunities for the youth.

Talking to PTV news channel, he said that it was part of a strategic initiative designed to benefit the country in numerous ways, adding, that these parks will serve as a launchpad for the country's leading researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

He added that NASTP is a project of national and strategic significance that would yield manifold benefits for the country, adding, that it would spur technological progress and foster self-reliance by offering a platform to the youth.

He said that under this project we will set a model for the whole nation, adding, that the 'Digital Science Park' would conceived as a world-class facility that will promote multidisciplinary innovations.

The government will give special emphasis to science and technology education to enable the youth to reach their potential, he further mentioned.

"Equipping the youth with the latest technologies will help create immense opportunities for them," he added.

Replying to a question, he said that NASTP will include agriculture technology, automobile technology, education technology, and energy technology and will create a further scope of jobs.



ISLAMABAD: Barrister Abdulwahid Qureshi become President of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Lawyers wing.

## GE2024: PID strives to foster electoral understanding among masses

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Press Information Department (PID) is committed to foster electoral understanding among the masses through awareness campaigns ahead of the general elections in 2024.

The PID, in this regard, has already launched a series of seminars to ensure active civic engagement and participation in the electoral process and elections slated for February 8.

According to the PID, the stakeholders being invited to the seminars included representatives from mainstream political parties, the Election Commission of Pakistan, media, academia, civil society and the general public.

It said these seminars would serve as a platform to educate citizens on the importance of voting, the electoral system, and the role of elected representatives. "By fostering public awareness, the seminars seek to empower individuals to make informed decisions, ultimately contributing to a more robust and accountable democratic system," the PID added.

On January 11, the PID organized its first seminar titled "Pakistan elections 2024: The Economic Reforms Agenda of Political Parties" here at a local hotel in Islamabad which had across-the-board representation from the stakeholders. According to the PID, the spotlight was on the economic reform agendas presented by political parties of Pakistan gearing up for the 2024 elections.

"The electorate is keenly interested in the economic visions put forth by diverse political entities and this exploration aims to provide a concise overview of the economic landscapes envisioned by the key players in Pakistan's political arena." For general public knowledge, it is informed that the PID had planned three more seminars here in the Capital city on different topics.



## LHC wraps up petition seeking disbandment of Punjab care taker set up

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has wrapped up petitions seeking abolition of care taker set up in Punjab and constitution of new care taker set up declaring them in-fructuous in the light of reply from federation counsel.

The petitions filed by Sheikh Rashid and Zaman Virdig came up for hearing before single bench of LHC led by Justice Shahid Karim.

Federal government, election commission and governor Punjab have been made respondents in the petitions.

The petitioner took the plea the sitting government has completed its tenure after Supreme Court (SC) order for holding election on May 14 in Punjab. No care taker set up can stay after 90 days. The incumbent care taker government is working illegally and unconstitutionally in Punjab.

The care taker government of Punjab be abolished forthwith and order be issued for establishment of new interim set up in Punjab.

The counsel for federal government argued the said matter is pending hearing in Supreme Court (SC) too. SC has given order to hold election. Election schedule has been issued. The elections are going to be held on February 8.



**KARACHI: Lady Health Workers and vaccinators of Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Karachi press club.**

## Home Deptt seeks details of focal persons other staff for election duty from DEOs

PESHAWAR (APP): The Home Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has sought the details of focal persons and other staff including watchmen for election duty from the District Education Officers of all districts.

A letter issued here said that the focal persons should be nominated by all the district education officers and their data should be sent at the earliest, adding that all the watchmen should be assigned duties wherever the polling stations have been established.

In pursuance of the letter of the Home Department, the education department has instructed all the district education officers to formally nominate focal persons in their respective districts in connection with the general election 2024 and send their names along with related details. It further directed the DEOs to assign responsibilities to the watchmen of the schools where polling stations have been set up and regularly share the details with the Education Department so that the data could be shared with the Election Commission.

## PHC extends pre-arrest bail of three PTI leaders

PESHAWAR (APP): A judge of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim on Monday extended the pre-arrest bail of three PTI leaders Aftab Alam, Dawood Shah and Shafiqullah till January 29.

The lawyer of the petitioners said that Aftab Alam was a candidate from PK 90, Dawood Shah from PK 91 and Shafiqullah from PK 92 for upcoming elections, adding that six cases have been registered against them for holding a convention in Kohat on December 10.

Meanwhile, PTI candidate Shehryar Afridi approached the High Court against the allotment of a random election symbol to him by the returning officer.

In his petition, he said that the Election Commission had allotted a random symbol of "bottle" without his consultation, adding that despite repeated contacts the Returning Officer did not give any response.

## Dera police seize illegal fuel worth over Rs 2.247 million

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The drive against business and smuggling of illegal fuel continued successfully across the district as Dera police seized illicit fuel worth Rs 2.247 million during different operations.

According to a police spokesman, the police have launched a crackdown against the sale and smuggling of illegal fuel across the district following the directives of District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani. He said a team of Mughalkot police station led by SDPO Darazinda Circle Sherullah Khan along with SHO Fawad Khan Sherani, during the checking of different vehicles, recovered 6000 litres of Iranian Diesel.

Similarly, a team of Daraban Police Station led by SDPO Daraban Circle Malik Aneesul Hasan along with SHO Abdul Ghaffar Khan recovered 2000 litres of Iranian Diesel from a vehicle bearing registration number (LTD-3197).



**LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi offering Dua after inaugurating E-Services/Mobile App at Lahore Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education.**

## Naqvi inaugurates 37 police stations, 5 projects in Gujranwala

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, accompanied by the cabinet, embarked on an extensive 6-hour visit to Gujranwala, inaugurating 37 police stations, 5 projects, and inspecting the Lahore Sialkot Motorway Link Road.

The link road to Gujranwala is slated for traffic opening by January 31, accompanied by the construction of a flyover at 'Chan Da Qila' to connect the Expressway with GT Road, said a handout issued here on Monday.

The CM commended the progress on Gujranwala's roads, announcing the formation of a committee to finalize the design of the 'Chan Da Qila' Flyover. Updates on ongoing work at Gujranwala University and hospital upgrades.

## CM inaugurates 'Arfa Teacher Chatbot' in honor of Arfa Karim

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a heartfelt tribute to Arfa Karim, the great daughter of the nation, during his visit to the Arfa Software Technology Park on Ferozpur Road here on Monday.

The CM inaugurated the "Arfa Teacher Chatbot" in honor of the visionary Arfa Karim and, as a symbol of remembrance, lit candles at the technology park. He also visited the Arfa Karim Technology Incubator, commending the Arfa Karim Foundation's endeavors in advancing IT initiatives.

Mohsin Naqvi expressed appreciation for the Arfa Karim Foundation team introduced to him, stating that there could be no better homage to Arfa Karim. He emphasized the role of digitalization and IT in aligning educational visions with contemporary requirements. The newly launched "Arfa Teacher Chatbot" is positioned as a tool to enhance Pakistan's positive global image and contribute to skill development.



**KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing a press conference at Governor House. Zafar Abbas of JDC is also present on the occasion.**

## Passenger bus overturns due to fog, 2 people die, 26 injured in Gujranwala

GURANWALA (Online): A passenger bus has been overturned due to heavy fog in Gujranwala as a result of which 2 passengers were killed and 26 were seriously injured.

There were 50 passengers in the bus.

According to details, the bus full of passengers was going from Kohat to Lahore when it uncontrollably overturned due to heavy fog in Gujranwala while taking a turn.

2 passengers died on the scene while 26 are seriously injured as a result of the incident.

After the incident, the rescue teams reached the scene. The dead bodies and injured have been shifted to nearby hospital in which many of them are said to be in critical condition.

## Excitement at peak as Gilgit-Baltistan's annual Winter Feast kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): The enchanting landscapes of Gilgit-Baltistan are set to witness an unprecedented celebration of winter sports as the annual seven-day Winter Feast commenced on Monday.

This year's festivities mark a historic milestone with the inclusion of the National Ice Hockey Championship, promising a week of exhilarating competitions and cultural events, according to event organizers.

For the first time in the festival's history, they said that the National Ice Hockey Championship takes center stage, drawing teams from various regions, including both male and female competitors. The icy battlegrounds are ready to host an intense showdown of skill, speed, and teamwork as the players vie for victory.

Beyond the thrill of ice hockey, the festival boasts a lineup of diverse competitions, including Ice Skating and traditional local games such as Basra, Pindok, and Baalbut. Participants from across Gilgit-Baltistan are gearing up to showcase their prowess in these unique and culturally significant contests.

One of the highlights of this year's event is the active participation of female teams in various competitions, breaking barriers and showcasing the talent and determination of women in winter sports. The inclusive nature of the festival reflects a commitment to promoting gender equality in the realm of athletics.



**KARACHI: A view of the newly born cubs of African Lioness at Zoo in Provincial Capital.**

## Resolving the issues of the masses is top priority: DIG Hazara

KOHIKISTAN (APP): Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police Hazara division Mohammad Ijaz Khan Monday lauded the people of Kohistan for their cooperation with the police, recognizing their efforts as commendable for the betterment of the region.

He expressed these views while addressing a Khuli Kutchery at Koz Paro police station Kolai Palis and meeting with a delegation of the elders.

The DIG also assured the immediate resolution of issues within his jurisdiction and committed to conveying valuable suggestions and concerns to higher authorities.

The delegation expressed gratitude to DIG Hazara for his presence and brought attention to pertinent issues related to policing and law enforcement in the region.

DIG Mohammad Ijaz Khan while addressing the community during the Khuli Kutchery expressed appreciation for the involvement of religious scholars, dignitaries, and people in police meetings. He underscored that the top priority for the Hazara Police is to promptly address the concerns of the people and facilitate free and speedy access to justice.

DIG Hazara urged the community to collaborate in identifying drug dealers, and other offenders.

## LPC, Private Nursing Colleges sign MoU

LAHORE (APP): The MoU signing ceremony between Private Nursing Colleges Federation and Lahore Press Club (LPC) was held on Monday in a local hotel.

In the ceremony, Patron-in-Chief of Private Nursing Colleges Federation Mehmood Sadiq, President Nadeem Pal, Dr. Sania Khera, Lahore Press Club President Arshad Ansari, Secretary Zahid Abid, Senior Vice President Shiraz Hasnat, Vice President Amjad Usmani and all members of the governing body participated.

Arshad Ansari, while thanking the officials of the Private Nursing Colleges Federation, said that it is a very welcome thing for the children of journalists that they will be able to get nursing education at a low cost. He said that the profession of nursing deserves high respect and it is a field in which there are job opportunities even today.

Dr. Sania Khera said that serving humanity is the mission of her federation and under this mission she is here today. He said that he and his team will also organize a medical camp in Lahore Press Club every month.

On this occasion, a luncheon was also organized in honor of the newly elected body of Lahore Press Club. Shields were also presented to the newly elected officials.

## PITB, Al-Khidmat Foundation sign MoU

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Information Technology Board's e-filing and office automation system received a huge success at government level. Now the private sector also requested its services. The PITB and Al-Khidmat foundation signed an MOU here on Monday.

Following the successful implementation of e-foas at public sector under the direction of chairman PITB Faisal Yusuf and supervision of DG Government Digital Services Wing Muhammad Waseem Bhatti, private sector had also taken up the services. The MoU was signed between the Government Digital Services Wing of the PITB and Al-Khidmat Foundation. Director General Government Digital Services Wing Muhammad Waseem.

## 'Women-driven EV 'Pink scooties' to take over streets of Punjab soon, Minister

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Provincial Transport Minister Ibrahim Hasan Murad said on Monday that the Punjab government has initiated a plan to introduce 'Pink EV Pink Scooties' to make women safer, which will provide livelihood to women for economic and domestic needs.

Talking to the PTV news channel, he said that the government of Punjab has initiated a program scheme to empower Pakistani females by introducing 'Pink Scooties', adding that the government through a lucky draw will give over 2000 to 3000 scooties in the first phase of this scheme.

He explained that this scheme has various positive impacts on women and girls, adding, that women with Pink EV scooters will not wait at the bus stops for long hours for buses, vans and other transport they can travel from one place to another with a safe and friendly atmosphere. This ambitious initiative reflects the government's commitment to sustainable transportation solutions and environmental conservation, he added.

Talking about EV motorbikes and Rickshaws, he said that this initiative aims to provide a sustainable and eco-friendly mode of transportation while promoting the use of electric vehicles.

He said the Punjab government has begun the registration of electric vehicles through the Punjab Bank of Pakistan.



**KARACHI: View of the site after train accident got off from railway track no casualties is reported due to slow speed, three bogies of Shalimar Express derailed from the tracks near Bin Qasim Railway in Karachi.**

## Two killed, five injured in various incidents

FAISALABAD (APP): Two persons were killed while five others were injured in separate incidents near here on Monday.

According to Rescue-1122, a security guard was on duty in a private housing colony when he accidentally touched the heater, suffered fatal shock and died on-the-spot. In the meantime, his clothes caught fire from the heater and the body was burnt. The victim was identified as Muhammad Shahbaz s/o Allah Rakha.

The dead body was handed over to Khurrianwala police station.

An addict, about 50, was found unconscious near Digluspora.

## Commissioner reviews progress on new e-registry centers

LAHORE (APP): Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa has revealed plans to set up state-of-the-art e-registry centers in Raiwind and Shalimar.

The officers have been assigned responsibilities for the successful establishment and operation of the new e-registry centers in the provincial capital.

In a meeting held on Monday at his office, the commissioner examined progress of establishing e-registry centers in Lahore. Stressing the collaborative role of these centers to urban communities, Randhawa underlined his commitment to providing relief in accordance with contemporary needs. The proven success of Punjab's first e-registry model center has already delivered significant relief to citizens.

Randhawa affirmed that the upcoming registration centers would mirror the efficiency of the initial model, embracing a corporate sector approach. He emphasized a rigorous evaluation of project progress on a daily, 24-hour basis.

The commissioner said that these e-registry centers would adhere to deadlines.

## Federal Ombudsman regional office to hold 'Khuli Kutchery'

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Following the directives of Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, a Khuli Kutchery will be held in Tehsil Municipal Office (TMA) Ghazi on Tuesday. Advisor Abdul Ghaffoor Baig from the Federal Ombudsman Regional Office Abbottabad will preside over the Kutchery to listen to complaints.

Federal Ombudsman Secretary Regional Office Abbottabad Advisor Abdul Ghaffoor Baig, along with Deputy Advisor Khalid Saeed will inaugurate the Khuli Kutchery in TMA office Ghazi on Tuesday at 12 am.

The Khuli Kutchery will address complaints related to departments in Lora. Abdul Ghaffoor Baig has informed the people of Tehsil Ghazi and its adjacent areas that they can present their complaints at this Khuli Kutchery.

If anyone has any complaint related to WAPDA, NADRA, Post Office, National Highways Authority.



**LAHORE: Patron-in-Chief of Private Nursing Colleges Federation Mahmood Sadiq Dhotar and President of Lahore Press Club Arshad Ansari are signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the ceremony regarding the admission of children of journalists on scholarship in private Nursing Colleges.**

## ADB's food security forum scheduled in April to tackle escalating food crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Asia and the Pacific Food Security Forum 2024 is set to take center stage from April 8 to 12, 2024, in Manila, Philippines to discuss actions for easing a worsening food crisis in the region.

This pivotal event, announced by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), aims to facilitate discussions on immediate actions to alleviate the worsening food crisis and strategize for long-term food security against the adverse impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss.

The forum would serve as an opportunity to evaluate the interim performance of ADB's commitment to allocate a minimum of \$14 billion of its own resources to support food security between 2022 and 2025.

Additionally, it will outline ADB's forward program on food security, forging partnerships with a diverse array of stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region.

According to the ADB announcement, the Asia and the Pacific Food Security Forum 2024 will act as a platform for both public and private sector partners to showcase their thought leadership and innovative initiatives.

Participants will delve into discussions focused on constructing more sustainable and resilient food systems, essential for navigating the challenges of climate, food, and nature in the region.

The significance of the forum extends beyond showcasing initiatives; it is poised to foster engagement with policymakers, government officials, development practitioners, food system and climate change experts, as well as ADB staff.

These interactions aim to build robust partnerships in the realms of policies, project implementation, and research, ultimately accelerating the transformation of food systems in Asia and the Pacific.



LAHORE: Warm clothes are being selling at a roadside stalls as the demand of warm clothes and shoes increased in city during the winter season, near Railway Station in Lahore.

## New cargo route important driver for Pakistan-China trade: Ambassador Hashmi

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi said that the new cargo route between Pakistan and China is an important driver for trade between the countries and a significant step forward in bilateral connectivity spectrum.

"A welcome development and an important driver for trade between Pakistan and China. A significant step forward in bilateral connectivity spectrum," he said in a statement.

Ambassador Hashmi said, four airlines with several weekly commercial flights were already operating between the both countries.

The new air cargo route was launched last week linking Ezhou Huahu Airport in central China's Hubei Province with Lahore.

The 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.

The Ezhou-Lahore route is planned to operate three times a week, providing over 300 tons of air transport capacity from Ezhou to Lahore every week. The transported goods mainly include textiles, 3C electronic products, electronic equipment, etc.

The opening of this international cargo route will provide an efficient and stable air logistics channel for economic and trade exchanges between China and Pakistan, and provide more logistics convenience for Chinese brands to explore the Pakistani market.

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.

## Action ordered against FBR taxmen on complaints of fish exporters

ISLAMABAD (INP): On complaints of fish exporters, the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) has directed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to initiate action against the officers involved in 'choking' an export-oriented sector and jeopardising the inflow of foreign exchange. The Ombudsman initiated Own Motion (OM) investigation on allegations levelled by Pakistan Fisheries Exporters Association - of issuance of multiple notices to fish exporters and demanding bribe to settle those notices, causing harassment and hurting inflow of foreign exchange. According to an order issued by the FTO, the

issuance of illegal notices of income tax/sales tax, unexplainable withdrawals in certain cases and imposition of heavy taxes in some identical cases by Commissioner Zonal, RTO-I Karachi and his team from the exporters of fish, earning foreign exchange for the country causing fear, mental agony and harassment tantamount to maladministration. The Ombudsman, in its order, stated that the export of fish products mostly to China, Thailand and Middle East countries, is fetching foreign exchange worth \$450 million. "Since the exporters earn foreign exchange to reduce trade deficit, the government has facilitated the exporters by deducting only one percent.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor selling dry fruits at his roadside setup in Federal Capital.



NEIJANG: Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Mr. Khalil Hashmi addressing a ceremony arranged by the city government of Neijiang city, celebrating the arrival of the first batch of 182 tons of Pakistani dry chilies.

## Huge opportunities of investment available in AJK: Barrister Sultan

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry said on Monday that huge opportunities of investment stood available in different sectors.

Talking to various public representative delegations at Jammu Kashmir house in the federal metropolis, the President invited the intending entrepreneurs from across the country besides the UK-based Pakistani Diaspora community to take benefit of the available huge potential for investment in trade and industrial sectors in AJK especially in the

twin industrial districts of Mirpur and Bhimber in particular.

Referring to the region's favourable climate and investment-friendly environment, the president said that the Private sector can invest in various sectors of Azad Kashmir. He said that besides it is natural resources Azad Kashmir has huge human resources.

"About 1.5 million people from Azad Kashmir are working in Europe, Middle East and North America", he said that there was no law and order problem in Azad Jammu Kashmir while the literacy rate was higher than the provinces of Pakistan.

He said that the proposed Muzaffarabad, Mansehra and Mirpur motorway and Dry port in the lake view city would further increase the scope of investment in the region.

Referring to the key investment areas in Azad Kashmir, the president said that some of the key sectors for investment in Azad Kashmir included hydel power generation, tourism, minerals, IT and small-scale industries.

Encouraging investors to invest their capital in Azad Jammu & Kashmir the AJK president assured them that they will be provided with all support and facilities at the government level.

## Cars' sale drops 55% during Jul-Dec

ISLAMABAD (APP): The sale of cars during the first six months of the current financial year 2023-24 has dropped by 55.50 per cent as compared to the same months of last year, a recent data released by Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA) said.

According to the data, as many as 30,662 cars were sold during the months under review as opposed to 68,912 units in the same months of last year.

The breakup figures

showed that 3,938 units of Honda Civic and City were sold during July-December 2023-24 as compared to the sale of 8,906 units during July-December 2022-23.

Toyota Corolla and Yaris car sales also declined by 56.24 per cent as it went down to 5,279 units from 12,065 units in the previous year.

Suzuki Swift's sales also decreased by 68.75 per cent as its sales went down to 2,230 units from 7,136 units last year. Sale of Suzuki Cultus declined to 1,908 units.

## Gold rates increase by Rs.450

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.450 and was sold at Rs.217,900 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs.217,450 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.386 to Rs.186,814 from Rs.186,428 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.171,246 from Rs.170,893 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.



SARGODHA: Labourers busy in plucking oranges from trees to be transported to different fruit markets.

## Wheat sowing targets achieved by 102.34%, crop cultivated over 22.73 mln

ISLAMABAD (APP): The wheat crop has been sown across more than 22.73 million acres of land in various crop-growing regions during the Rab season 2023-24 to meet staple food requirements and maintain strategic reserves throughout the year.

The crop sowing targets for the current season (2023-24) were fixed at 22.22 million acres as the cultivation targets till

the end of the second week of the current month were achieved by 102.67 percent, said Food Security Commissioner Intiaz Ali Gopang. He said that the crop sowing has gained momentum across the wheat-producing areas in the country as Punjab Province has completed wheat sowing over 103.09 percent of areas as against the set targets.

The Punjab, which is the largest wheat-

producing province in the country, has completed crop sowing over 16.48 million acres compared to the fixed targets of 15.99 million acres during the current season.

Meanwhile, Sindh Province has achieved 106.66 percent of its targets as wheat cultivation in different divisions of the province was completed over 3.16 million acres as against the set targets of 2.97 million acres.

## China, Pakistan to forge strong software cooperation

BEIJING (APP): The 21st China International Software Corporation Conference was successfully held in Chengdu, China. The Cooperation Negotiation on Standardization and Internationalization, a sub forum of the conference, highlighted the significance of the growing software partnership between China and Pakistan.

During the event, Muhammad Zohaib Khan, Chairman of the Pakistan Software Association, provided an insightful overview of Pakistan's software industry, highlighting the country's significant advancements in cybersecurity, AI, gaming, and animation. He also emphasized the attractive incentives available through the Special Technology Zone Authority (STZA).

"Pakistani companies possess expertise in niche areas such as Fintech, Healthcare, E-commerce, and other solutions that are

in high demand globally. Collaboration between China and Pakistan can extend beyond services to include joint ventures and co-development initiatives." Mr. Khan stated. He further highlighted the impact of Pakistani IT companies in African markets, particularly in sectors like FinTech and Gulf Tech. "Chinese companies seeking access to these markets can explore collaboration opportunities with their Pakistani counterparts, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

In turn, Pakistani companies can seek partnerships with Chinese counterparts to gain access to advanced technologies and research and development resources."

During the conference, the Pakistan Software Association released introductions and contact information of 38 Pakistani software companies.



LAHORE: A vendor is unloading the woods from handcart to use as fuel at traditional mud oven at Misri Shah area of the Provincial Capital.

## Financial, digital literacy significant to empower women: President FPCCI

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Atif Ikram Sheikh on Monday said that financial and digital literacy is significant for women's economic empowerment.

A delegation of the Islamabad Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI) led by Ms. Samina Fazil Founder President of IWCCI visited the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry FPCCI to meet President FPCCI Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh and all United Business Group

(UBG) penal for felicitation on their victory in the recent elections of FPCCI, said a press release issued here.

While speaking on the occasion, President FPCCI Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh said that women empowerment is at the top of our agenda without which the dream of national development cannot be achieved.

President FPCCI said that IWCCI is one of the most effective women's chambers in the country which is playing a laudable role in empowering women through entrepreneurship and that the FPCCI.

## New BoD of Lahore Parking Company formed

LAHORE (APP): Under the directives of the Punjab chief minister, a new board for a parking company has been formed to initiate effective measures.

Administrator Metropolitan Corporation Lahore Rafia Haider issued a notification for the establishment of the Lahore Parking Company's new board, comprising seven members.

The board of directors has been nominated for a three-year term, including the deputy commissioner Lahore and secretary District Regional

Transport Authority Lahore.

The newly-appointed board will include the chief executive officer of Lahore Parking Company, chief traffic officer, and chief officer of the Metropolitan Corporation Lahore. The additional secretary LG&CD and additional secretary Finance Department will also serve as members. The first meeting of the BoD will recommend a chairman. Administrator MCL Rafia Haider said the selected directors would present.



HYDERABAD: A vendor displaying quilts to attract the customers at his shop during winter season.

## Pak needs extensive information outflow, data governance to revolutionize agrifood system: Experts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The experts at a webinar on the potential of agricultural food systems and lessening climate impacts have underscored the need to enhance the extensive flow of information to the stakeholders including media and manage the data governance for the advanced studies lying on the shelves to revolutionize the agrifood systems.

This was the gist of the Monday series webinar of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) titled "Potential of Agrifood Systems and Mitigating

Climate Impacts" held here that was participated virtually by many online participants including members of academia, media and professionals.

Opening the discussion, the Executive Director, SDPI Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri said food is a necessity and climate change is a reality that threatened its access and availability to the masses due to environmental degradation.

He said the year 2023 was declared the hottest year in our history and La Nina and El Nino impacts were creating havoc in the countries bearing the burden of its effects.

However, it is important to understand their impacts on the agriculture and food sectors.

Dr Suleri mentioned that in adverse weather scenarios services and manufacturing sectors can halt their services but the food and agriculture sectors will face irreversible impacts of crops and species loss due to shift in weather patterns.

He said, at the COP-28 moot, the FAO's baby step of producing a report on food system sustainability underlined the target of 32 percent CO2 removal from the crop sector through different strategies which

was a starting step but rather a positive one in the right direction.

He mentioned that the SDPI is conducting the dialogue as part of its series of efforts after its hackathon held before its flagship SDC conference in 2023 on food and agriculture with the support of the Canadian mission in Pakistan.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Representative in Pakistan, Florence Rolle said that climate change is real and could not be denied anymore, either the world recorded the first or second hottest year in its history. She added that Pakistan

would have to adapt to climate change and extend effective incentives to its farmers in water conservation and crop productivity through alternative crops ensuring crop diversification.

She proposed that the country's due to rising temperature variability could focus on early crop sowing that can help generate more produce with the available water and resources provided the growing shift in pattern. She added that there was much scientific evidence on early crop sowing, however, the issue is that more production in the cotton crop.

# Yemen Houthi rebels fire missile at US warship in Red Sea in first attack after American-led strikes

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: Yemen's Houthi rebels fired an anti-ship cruise missile toward an American destroyer in the Red Sea but a U.S. fighter jet shot it down in the latest attack roiling global shipping amid Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, officials said.

The attack on Sunday marks the first U.S.-acknowledged fire by the Houthis since America and allied nations began strikes Friday on the rebels following weeks of assaults on shipping in the Red Sea.

The Houthis have targeted that crucial corridor linking Asian and Mideast energy and cargo shipments to the Suez Canal onward to Europe over the Israel-Hamas war, attacks that threaten to widen that conflict into a regional conflagration.

The Houthis, a Shiite rebel group allied with Iran that seized Yemen's capital in 2014, did not immediately acknowledge the attack.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the U.S. would retaliate for the latest attack, though President Joe Biden has said he "will not hesitate to direct further measures to protect our people and the free flow of international commerce as necessary."

The Houthi fire on Sunday went in the direction of the USS Laboon, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer operating in the southern reaches of the Red Sea, the U.S. military's Central Command said in a statement.

The missile came from near Hodeida, a Red Sea port city long held by the Houthis, the U.S. said.

"An anti-ship cruise missile was fired from Iranian-backed Houthi militant areas of Yemen toward USS Laboon," Central Command said. "There were no injuries or damage reported."



Guatemalan Congress representatives take the oath on the day where Guatemala's President-elect Bernardo Arevalo is expected to be sworn into office, in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

## Gaza death toll tops 24,000 as Israel strikes targets in north and south

**Monitoring Desk**  
GAZA: Israeli strikes hit Gaza City and soldiers battled militants in southern Gaza on Monday after the U.S., its top ally, said it was time to scale back operations. Palestinian authorities said the death toll in the enclave passed 24,000.

South Africa has accused Israel of genocide in the war against Hamas, an allegation Israel has rejected. Although the full case is likely to take years to resolve, the United Nations' top court could rule within weeks on South Africa's request for an order of an immediate suspension of Israel's offensive. It's unclear if Israel would comply with any court order.

The Oct. 7 Hamas attack from Gaza into southern Israel that triggered the war killed around 1,200 people and saw some 250 others taken hostage by militants.

## Arab partnership on Palestine awaits Israeli commitment: US

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Arab nations are ready to collaborate 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 Department.

In an interview with MSNBC's Andrea 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. However, he emphasized 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, securing agreements with all of these Arab partners, as well as with Türkiye," 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."

## Philippines to develop islands in South China Sea: military chief

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: The Philippines will develop islands in the South China Sea that it considers part of its territory to make them more habitable for troops, Manila's military chief Romeo Brawner told reporters on Monday.

The plans come amid heightened tensions between the Philippines and China, both of whom claim territory in the South China Sea and have traded accusations of aggressive behaviour in the strategic waterway.

Apart from the Second Thomas Shoal, locally known as Ayungin, the Philippines occupies eight other features in the South China Sea, and considers them part of its exclusive economic zone.

"We'd like to improve all the nine, especially the islands we are occupying," Brawner said after attending a command conference led by Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. at the military headquarters.

The features include Thitu island, the biggest and most strategically important in the South China Sea. Known locally as Pag-asa, Thitu lies about 300 miles (480 km) west of the Philippine province of Palawan. The military wants to bring a desalination machine for troops living aboard a warship that the Philippines deliberately grounded on Second Thomas Shoal in 1999 to assert its sovereignty claim.

## Poland's president and government at odds over dismissal of state prosecutor

**Monitoring Desk**  
WARSAW: Poland's justice minister acted illegally in dismissing state prosecutor Dariusz Baski, a top presidential aide said on Monday, opening a new front in the conflict between the head of state and the new government.

Justice Minister Adam Bodnar has been tasked with unpicking policies of the previous nationalist Law and Justice (PiS) government which critics say increased political influence over the judicial system.

Rolling back the PiS reforms is crucial if Poland is to unlock billions of euros in European Union funding that have been frozen over rule-of-law concerns.

However, it brings the new pro-European government into conflict with President Andrzej Duda, a PiS ally, creating further tension at the beginning of what has already been a turbulent first few weeks of "cohabitation", in which the president and government are from opposing political camps.



CALAIS: Migrants who survived a shipwreck leave a reception centre in the city.



Swiss Federal Minister Guy Parmelin and Wang Shouwen, Chinese Vice Minister of the Ministry of Commerce shake hands after signing a joint statement of the free trade agreement, next to Swiss President Viola Amherd and Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, Li Qiang during an official visit in Kehrsatz near Bern, Switzerland.

## Pacific nation Nauru cuts ties to Taiwan, switches to China

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: The South Pacific nation of Nauru announced on Monday it was severing diplomatic ties with Taiwan and would instead recognise China.

The announcement came days after Taiwan elected the independence-leaning Lai Ching-te as its next president.

In a media release, the Nauru government said it would no longer recognise Taiwan "as a separate country" but "rather as an inalienable part of China's territory".

China claims democratic, self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if needed.

Nauru said it would "sever diplomatic relations" with Taiwan immediately, and "no longer develop any official exchanges or official exchanges with Taiwan".

## 22 miners killed in Tanzania landslide

**Monitoring Desk**  
DAR SALAAM: Twenty-two people have lost their lives following a landslide at a mine in northern Tanzania, officials said on Sunday.

The accident occurred in Simuyu region's Bariadi district, more than 500 kilometres north of the capital, Dodoma, burying the miners under heavy debris. "As we close the rescue operations, the death toll remains 22, all men," Faustine Mtutu, acting commander for the region's fire and rescue force, told reporters on Sunday.

## War on Gazans rages amid calls for ceasefire

**Monitoring Desk**  
GAZA STRIP: Israeli tanks and aircraft hit areas in central and southern Gaza on Sunday, the 100th day of the ongoing aggression that has claimed a surging civilian death toll and ravaged the besieged Palestinian territory. The conflict has created a dire humanitarian crisis for the 2.4 million people in Hamas-ruled Gaza, the United Nations and aid groups warn, and reduced much of the coastal strip to rubble. According to the health ministry in Gaza, at least 23,968 people have been killed, the majority of them women and children.

On the other hand, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in a press conference with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry called for a ceasefire in Gaza and the restoration of Palestinian statehood.

"It is necessary to insist on the establishment of an independent, fully sovereign state of Palestine on the 1967 borders, with east Jerusalem as its capital."

A joint statement from the two ministers urged an immediate end "to all acts of violence, killing and targeting of civilians and civilian establishments".

Wang called for "an international summit for peace to find a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian cause by ending the (Israeli) occupation and establishing an independent, contiguous Palestinian state." However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose government has faced growing international pressure over civilian casualties in Gaza.

## Putin and India's Modi discuss Ukraine, wish each other well in elections - Kremlin

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin held a phone call on Monday with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, discussing Ukraine and wishing each other well in upcoming elections, the Kremlin said.

The two leaders "expressed interest in further intensifying mutually beneficial bilateral ties" and touched upon "the situation in Ukraine", according to a statement posted on the Kremlin's website.

They also wished each other success in upcoming parliamentary elections in India.



Britain's Secretary of State for Defence Grant Shapps gives a speech at Lancaster House, in London, Britain.

## President Tshisekedi's ruling party leads in Congo legislative election

**Monitoring Desk**  
KINSHASA: Democratic Republic of Congo President Felix Tshisekedi's UDPS party won 66 seats in the December parliamentary election, placing it ahead of 44 other parties that won one or more seats in the 500-member house, provisional results showed on Sunday.

The increased number of UDPS seats, up from 35 in the 2018 election, along with gains by allied parties, could enable Tshisekedi to maintain his ruling big tent Sacred Union coalition, giving him the majority needed to name a new government.

The coalition controlled over 390 seats in the outgoing legislature.

Provisional results announced by Congo's national election commission early on Sunday showed that parties led by some of Tshisekedi's allies including Senate President Modeste Bahati Lukwebo, Defence Minister Jean Pierre Bemba and Economy Minister Vital Kamerhe won 35, 17, and 32 seats respectively.

## Jailed Iranian Nobel winner hit with new sentence: family

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: An Iranian court has sentenced 2023 Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi to an additional sentence of over one year in prison on charges of spreading propaganda while behind bars, her family said on Monday.

The Revolutionary Court sentenced Mohammadi to 15 months in prison after a trial that she boycotted, her family added in their statement.

She was also ordered to spend two years in exile outside Tehran, given a two-year travel ban, and a two-year ban on using a smartphone, restrictions that would come into force

## Dense fog disrupts flights, trains in Indian capital

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Dense fog and cold enveloping large swathes of the northern part of India disrupted flights and train service in the country's capital New Delhi for a second day on Monday.

At least 463 flights leaving Delhi were delayed and 87 flights were cancelled on Monday, according to aviation website Flightradar24. More than 500 flights were delayed in Delhi on Sunday.

The aviation regulator said in an email to airlines that they are required to share accurate, real-time information about flight delays to passengers with immediate effect.

"Airlines may cancel, sufficiently in advance, such flights that are anticipated to be delayed or consequently delayed on account of (weather) conditions beyond a period of 3 hours with a view to obviate congestion at the airport", the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said in the email, made public on Monday.

At least 18 trains to Delhi from different parts of the country were running late because of dense fog, news agency ANI, in which Reuters has a minority stake, said on X, citing a railway document.

The city's Indira

## 83 countries hold Ukraine talks

**Monitoring Desk**  
DAVOS: More than 80 countries held talks on Sunday seeking common ground on Ukraine's peace formula, as the Swiss co-hosts admitted that including Russia in negotiations remains some way off.

National security advisers from 83 countries held a fourth round of discussions based on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's 10-point proposals for a lasting and just peace in Ukraine. The talks were co-chaired by Ukrainian presidential aide Andriy Yermak, who heads Zelensky's office, and Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis.

"The purpose is to prepare so that we are ready and ripe to launch a process with Russia — when the time comes," Cassis told a press conference.

He said the talks had to find a way to include Russia at some point, but thus far, neither Kyiv nor Moscow was ready to take such a step. The meeting was being held in the luxury ski resort of Davos in eastern Switzerland, on the eve of the five-day World Economic Forum. Zelensky is due to travel to Switzerland on Monday and will visit the annual summit of the globe's business and political elite.

Yermak said the talks were open, constructive and detailed on the key principles in reaching a "comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine". While there were differences on how to achieve peace, "we are very joined in the main principles if independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty and the norm of international law and the statutes of United Nations".

## QatarEnergy pauses LNG shipments through Red Sea, seeking security advice

**Monitoring Desk**  
DOHA: QatarEnergy, one of the world's largest exporters of liquefied natural gas, has stopped sending tankers via the Red Sea although production continues, a source with knowledge of the matter told Reuters on Monday.

At least four tankers used to carry Qatari LNG were held up over the weekend after US and British forces carried out air and sea strikes on Yemen in response to Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea, part of a route that accounts for about 15% of the world's shipping traffic.

The Al Ghariya, Al Huwaila and Al Nuaman had loaded LNG at Ras Laffan in Qatar and were supposed to head to the Suez Canal but stopped off the coast of Oman on Jan. 14, according to LSEG shiptracking data. The Al Rekayyat, which was heading back to Qatar, stopped along its route on Jan. 13 in the Red Sea.

"It is a pause to get security advice, if passing (through the) Red Sea remains unsafe we will go via the Cape," said a source with direct knowledge of the matter, referring to the considerably longer route round the Cape of Good Hope at Africa's southern tip.

The Qatari government's International Media Office and QatarEnergy did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Shipowners and managers of the four vessels including Teekay Shipping Glasgow, Pronav Ship Management, Nakilat Shipping Qatar Ltd and Shell's shipping and chartering arm STASCO also did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Qatar, the world's second largest exporter of LNG, shipped more than 75 million metric tons of the fuel in 2023.

## Mexico sent 25,000 troops to Acapulco after Hurricane Otis. But it hasn't stopped the violence

**Monitoring Desk**  
MEXICO CITY: The Mexican government sent 25,000 troops to Acapulco after the resort was hit by Hurricane Otis on Oct. 25, but apparently that hasn't stopped the violence this week.

The main Acapulco business chamber reported that gang threats and attacks have caused about 90% of the city's passenger vans to stop running, affecting the resort's main form of transport. The chamber said the violence was forcing businesses to close early on Thursday and Friday.

"Organized groups of people who have no conscience or commitment to Acapulco have committed criminal acts in broad daylight, threatening civilians with direct armed attacks, and this caused 90% of public transportation to shut down," wrote Alejandro Martinez Sidney, president of the National Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Services in Acapulco.

"If this situation continues, we will be forced to close businesses," he wrote in a statement Thursday.

The problem continued into Friday, with few vans or buses seen in the streets.

Martinez Sidney was apparently referring to attacks on the privately-owned and operate passenger vans in recent days. Local media reported that at least three vans had been burned, a practice that gangs often use to enforce extortion demands for daily protection payments from van drivers.

The Category 5 hurricane killed 52 people and left 32 missing, and severely damaged almost all of the resort's hotels.

The government has pledged to build about three dozen barracks for the quasi-military National Guard in Acapulco. But even with throngs of troops now on the streets, the drug gang violence that has beset Acapulco for almost two decades appears to have continued.

Acapulco's economy depends almost completely on tourism, and there are comparatively few visitors in the city, in part because only about 4,500 hotel rooms have been repaired.

## Five die trying to cross Channel to UK in freezing cold

**Monitoring Desk**  
CALAIS: Five migrants died and a sixth was in critical condition on Sunday after trying to reach Britain from northern France in freezing temperatures, the French maritime authority said.

More than 30 people were rescued, the maritime prefecture said in a statement. The fatalities were the first reported migrant deaths on the Channel in 2024. Authorities said four migrants died overnight, while a fifth body was found later on the beach.

The group was attempting to reach a vessel off the resort town of Wimereux when their small boat got into difficulty around two am, the maritime prefecture said.

The crew of a French tow vessel, the Abeille Normandie, went to the rescue and spotted "unconscious and lifeless people" in the water, an official said, estimating the water temperature at nine degrees Celsius. Along the

Wimereux embankment a journalist saw items of clothing and shoes abandoned by the migrants. The survivors were taken to a shelter in Calais.

According to the maritime prefecture more than 30 were rescued, but one person, had said around 70 migrants were brought in at around three am, including "entire families with children, some of them very young".

"Some of the survivors did not stay and told us they wanted to go to the Dunkirk train station to reach an accommodation centre in Armentieres," the source added. Authorities launched an investigation into "aggravated manslaughter" and other crimes, the Boulogne-sur-Mer public prosecutor's office said.

Autopsies would determine the cause of death, which may be due to "drowning" or "thermal shock", prosecutors said. Jean-Claude Lenoir, head of the Salam association.

# AJK President rejects India's protest over British envoy's visit to Mirpur-AJK

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry on Monday rejected India's protest against the recent visit to Mirpur by British High Commissioner Jane Marriott, termed the Indian government's contention on the matter as highly ridiculous.

According to AJK officials, Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry said that the Indian government who hosted G20 summit events in occu-

gally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJ&K) as an internationally recognized disputed territory, the AJK President said that Kashmir has never been a part of India. He said that India should refrain from its expansionist designs and realize the ground reality that it could no longer hold Kashmiris hostage by the dint of force.

He said that the political and human rights situation in IOJ&K has further worsened since August 5, 2019.

Barrister Sultan said that the international community should take notice of the fast-deteriorating political and human rights situation in the region.

"The international community should take notice of the crimes committed against Kashmiris by the Indian occupation forces", Sultan urged adding that it was high time that the influential world governments should play their role to help stop bloodshed and violence in IOJ&K.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Interior, Aftab Akbar Durrani in a meeting with the 2nd Permanent Secretary of British Home Office Simon Ridley.



OKARA: Chief Organizer PML-N Maryam Nawaz addressing a public gathering

## Senator Dilawar writes letter to Senate chairman for polls delay

ISLAMABAD (Online): Independent Senator Dilawar Khan, who submitted the resolution for the postponement of election in the senate, has written a letter to Chairman Senate.

It has been said in the letter written by Senator Dilawar Khan that Senate had passed the resolution to postpone the election on January 5.

This is a matter of concern that Election Commission has not yet taken any steps to postpone the February 8 elections.

It has been said in the letter that attention should have been paid to the concerns identified in the reso-

## ECP assigns electoral symbols to 150 political parties for elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) allotted electoral symbols to around 150 political parties competing for seats in the upcoming general elections for both the National and provincial assemblies.

According to the list uploaded on ECP's website, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) received the 'tiger' symbol, Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPP) the 'arrow,' Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) the 'sword,' Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Nazriati (PTI-N) the 'batsman,' Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) the 'eagle,' Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) the 'kite,' Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) the 'book,' Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JI) the 'scale,' Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians (PTI-P) the 'turban,' Balochistan National Party (BNP) the 'axe,' Awami National Party,

## VC UoT inaugurates 3-day training workshop

QUETTA (APP): Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jan Muhammad, on Monday, inaugurated a three-day training workshop focused on "Secretarial Skills and Professional Development" at the University of Turbat (UoT).

The primary purpose of the workshop was to enhance administrative excellence at all administrative units of the University of Turbat. The staff from various administrative sections of the University took part in the workshop.

Speaking on the occasion, the VC said that students, faculty, and administrative staff are the main pillars of the university. He underscored the pivotal

role played by the administrative staff in the progress of the institution. He urged the participants to be actively involved in each session of the workshop to produce productive outcomes.

The Vice-Chancellor expressed gratitude to Manzoor Hussain, the workshop's resource person and Director of HRM at BUITEMS, Quetta, for dedicating valuable time from his busy schedule to share expertise with the University of Turbat's administrative staff. Dr. Riaz Ahmed, Director Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) at the UoT outlined the objectives of the training workshop.

## Pakistan, Kyrgyz agree to strengthen health ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): A bilateral meeting was held between the caretaker Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan and the Health Minister of Kyrgyz Republic Alymkadyr Beishenaliev on the sidelines of the Global Health Security Summit. Dr. Nadeem Jan welcomed the Kyrgyz dignitary and expressed gratitude on behalf of the Government of Pakistan for the participation of the Kyrgyz delegation in the Global forum hosted by Pakistan. The Kyrgyz Minister appreciated the initiative of Pakistan's Health Minister in organizing the first-ever Global Health Security Summit.

He appreciated the befitting arrangements made by Pakistan.



QUETTA: Balochistan Grand Alliance (BGA) Chief and NA-263 Candidate, Haji Lashkari Raisani talking to media persons.

## Hunger strike to be started if demands not met by govt

All Parties, Traders & Laghri Ittehad dharna continues

Independent Report QUETTA: The All Parties, Traders and Laghri Ittehad has threatened to start hunger strike in the protest dharna being staged in Chaman, if demands of the alliance were not met.

The speakers belonging to different segments including the political activists, traders and others demanded of the government to withdraw the one document regime and passport for movement on the Pak-Afghan border in Chaman on Monday.

It may be mentioned here that the protest dharna is continued for last 91 days in Chaman.

The dharna is being staged against the enforcement of passport at the border. They said that a number of people and tribals have been facing

problems due to the protest.

The speakers said that 91 days have been completed of the dharna.

They said that hundreds of people participate in the protest despite tough conditions and harsh weather but no steps have been taken to address the issues.

They said that a number of people and tribals have been facing problems due to the protest.

They demanded to end the passport and visa system at the Chaman border and allow the people to move across the border on identity cards and Tazkara as was being done before.

They said that the economic massacre of the Pashtoons is not acceptable at any cost.

## Courts not to compromise in dispensing justice to masses: AJK CJ

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Chief Justice (CJ) Justice Raja Saeed Akram Khan on Monday said that the superior courts will never compromise on their dignity in dispensing justice to the masses.

Addressing the 11th Judicial Conference under the auspices of the High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir here on Monday as chief guest, he pointed out that administrative injustice was the biggest reason behind increasing litigations in the courts that have to intervene to provide remedy to the sufferers and also stressed the lawyers participating in the conference to ensure implementations of

the courts' orders rather defying in the interest of clients. The conference was presided over by Chief Justice High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Justice Raja Sadaqat Hussain Khan and was participated by Judges of the higher judiciary, subordinate courts, Minister Law and Parliamentary Affairs Mian Abdul Ahmed, Sardar Hamid Raza Khan, President High Court Bar Association and Secretary Law Idriss Abbasi presented their keynote thesis on the subject at the conference pointing out the hindrances in the dispensation of justice including bad governance, non-cooperation of the lawyers and non-awareness of the litigants.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar offering fataha on sad demise of Abdul Ghafoor Kalmati, father of former MPA Hamal Kalmati.

## Nawaz holds consultative meeting with economic experts

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Monday held an important consultative meeting with economic experts.

The PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif was also present in the meeting. During the meeting reforms and proposals aimed at solving country's economic problems were discussed.

The meeting finalized economic project for country's economic revival and to end inflation.

Points related to increase growth rate, tax reforms, to overcome power crisis and reduce prices of electricity and gas were finalized.

## Siddiq Khan elected as Chairperson BoDs SEHER

Ms. Shabnum Naz elected as Senior Vice Chairperson, Dr. Anjum Pervez as Junior Vice Chairperson and Dr. Irfanullah Tareen as Secretary General

Independent Report QUETTA: The elections of Board of Directors (BoDs) of Society for Empowering Human Resource (SEHER) were held here on Monday.

According to a press release issued here by the Media and Publication Officer of SEHER on Monday, Siddiq Khan and Dr. Irfanullah Khan Tareen were elected as the Chairperson and Secretary General of BoDs of SEHER.

Other office bearers elected are included: Shabnum Naz as senior Vice Chairperson, Dr. Anjum Pervez as Junior Vice

## Decision taken to cancel Nandipur, Guddu power plants privatization

ISLAMABAD (online): Decision has been taken to annul privatization of Nandipur and Guddu power plants.

According to Privatization Commission sources proposal has been given to give power plants share to PSO to lower the circular debt of gas sector.

Sources said circular debt of gas sector will be curtailed by Rs 100 billion if shares of power plants are given to PSO.

Rs 100 billion are payable from Nandipur and Guddu power plants to sui gas companies. The controlling stakes of Rs 100 billion of the both of the power plants will be given to PSO.



QUETTA: Secretary Minority Affairs Muhammad Dawood Bazai meeting with Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogeazi

## No harassment from Bureau, NAB chairman assures officers

KARACHI (APP): National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Lieutenant General (ret'd) Nazir Ahmed Monday assured the government officers that the Bureau would not harass them and they should play their key role in the development of the country. Addressing the civil bureaucrats in Sindh secretariat he said that he was bringing reforms in NAB and no officer would be subjected to a media trial during the process of complaint verification and inquiry. He said that complaints written under fictitious names or anonymous would not be accepted in NAB.

Nazir said that he knew the bureaucrats were working under immense pressure adding that due to the ongoing cases in NAB, the development and construction projects get delayed, which should not happen and the projects should be completed on time.

He asked the civil bureaucrats to hold open katcheries and try to solve the problems of the people by listening to them in person.

The chairman NAB announced facilitation desk would be established at the Chief Secretary Sindh Office wherein concerns and complaints of Sindh government officers would be discussed and all efforts would be made to resolve such matters on fast-track basis. He further said that to ensure open door policy and accessibility for all monthly open hearing (Khuli Katcheri) were being conducted at NAB Offices.

In a meeting, Chief Secretary Sindh Dr. Muhammad Fakre Alam introduced the officers to Chairman NAB. The Chief Secretary Sindh said that there were reports of corruption in the pension fund in Sindh, in which action was being taken against the officers involved.

## 2.3mln mosquito nets being distributed in Balochistan's 14 districts to prevent malaria

QUETTA (INP): BRSP here.

They said that malaria is transmitted from one person to another person by the bite of a mosquito. The common symptoms of malaria are fever, chills include body aches, nausea and vomiting.

Without prompt and effective treatment, malaria patients can suffer severe complications and even die, malaria affects everyone, but children under five and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable, they said.

They maintained in Pakistan, 1.8 million people out of 5,829,4390 people were affected by malaria in country including Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh in 2022.

They said that 0.7 million positive cases of malaria were reported in Balochistan last year, While one million positive cases have been reported this year.

They said that 14 districts of Balochistan includ-

ing Bolan (Kachhi), Dera Bugti, Duki, Gwadar, Jafarabad, Jhal Magsi, Kech (Turbat), Kharan, Loralai, Musakhel, Naseerabad and Zhob while 2.3 million of medicine was distributed in Balochistan.

The Directorate of Malaria Control, Indus Hospital and Health Network and Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation are partners in this campaign, they underlined.

They said that during the campaign to distribute mosquito nets, Murph volunteers have gone door to door and registered and provided coupons to them, now they would be given medicated mosquito nets at designated distribution points.

They said that Balochistan Health Department and Malaria Control Program are also taking steps to provide awareness to the public about health and malaria prevention so that awareness could be created in people to protect them from malaria.



QUETTA: Activists of Anjuman-e-Tajirun Balochistan and All Balochistan Hotel and Restaurant holding a protest against extra charges in sui gas bills in out SSGC office