

# Independent

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## Caretaker PM underlines need for effective criminal justice system

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that under the constitution, only parliament was mandated to legislate and stressed further reforms in the criminal justice system.

Expressing his views on a private TV (Aik) news morning show, he opined that the conviction rate under the contemporary criminal justice system was very low, reflecting deficiencies and efforts to be made to plug the loopholes through effective legislation.

To a question about terrorist groups in Balochistan province, the prime minister said that non-state actors had no right to unleash violence and the State had the responsibility to counter such terrorist acts.

About 90,000 people in the country had lost their lives in waves of terrorism, he said, adding whether it was not the onus of political parties and the parliamentarians to improve upon the criminal justice system to expedite the conviction rate!

The prime minister maintained that he was speaking about the whole justice system, especially its lower tiers.

"Whose responsibility was to improve it? Carrying out legislative business under the constitution is the onus of parliament," he reiterated.

Elaborating his viewpoint, he said that Baloch, Pashtuns and different settlers had been living in Balochistan for decades.

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

## Federal cabinet gives nod to restructuring, digitisation of FBR

Customs, Inland Revenue DGs to be given full administrative, financial and operational powers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Cabinet, in a meeting, on Tuesday approved restructuring and digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on the recommendations of the Revenue Division.

The approval was accorded in a meeting chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

The meeting was apprised of the recommendations of an inter-ministerial committee that held its meeting on 23rd January under the caretaker finance minister.

During its previous meeting, effective amendments were made in the summary after a comprehensive debate which was submitted in the cabinet's

meeting today, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Under these reforms, a Federal Tax Policy Board would be constituted in the Revenue Division that would be tasked to formulate tax policy, fixation of revenue targets and work for coordination among the stakeholders.

The federal minister for finance would head the Federal Policy Board.

Under the new scheme, Customs and Inland Revenue departments would be separated and work under specific director generals in the relevant cadres who would also enjoy complete authority over the admin-

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DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addresses to his supporters during public gathering meeting as a part of Election Campaign in connection of the General Election 2024

## Imran statement in cipher case One of my ADCs stole cipher at behest of Gen (Retd) Bajwa

RAWALPINDI (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan has said one of his Aides de Camp (ADC) stole the cipher at behest of former army chief Gen (Retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa.

He said this in his statement recorded under 342 during the hearing of cipher case in Adiala jail Tuesday.

While recording his statement Imran Khan said "cipher was in Prime Minister (PM) House. The responsibility of security rests with military secretary, principal secretary and secretary protocol who sees the security of PM house."

He further said during my tenure of three and half years this is the only document which went missing

from PM house. After cipher went missing I asked military secretary to hold inquiry. That was the only occasion when I got offended with military secretary.

He stated one of his ADCs stole cipher at the behest of Gen (Retd) Bajwa.

Military secretary told after inquiry that no evidence has been found with reference to cipher.

He said elected PM was removed through conspiracy. Gen (Retd) Bajwa and US Secretary of state Donald Lu were involved in the conspiracy.

Conspiracy was hatched in 2021 to pull

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presiding over a level meeting regarding law and order situation

## PTI founder put national security on the line, alleges Nawaz Sharif

HAROONABAD (INP) - Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supreme Nawaz Sharif said on Tuesday the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder did not shy from going against the interest of the country while seeing his government in peril.

The PML-N leader made this remark while addressing an election rally in Haroonabad. He said he came here for the first time in 1992, adding that the people of this area had always supported his vision.

Lauding people who gathered at the rally, he said the records of all the previous rallies had been broken. He said the massive crowd showed a sense of elation among people.

While counting his past achievements, he said when he was the PM, basic commodities like sugar and flour were available at affordable rates to people.

## Harnai-Sibi Passenger suspended too: Jaffar Express, Bolan Mail cancelled from Quetta

QUETTA: The trains heading for Peshawar and Karachi were cancelled from Quetta while the Passenger running between Harnai and Sibi was also suspended due to the tense situation in Mach area of Bolan on Tuesday.

According to the Pakistan Railways high ups, the Jaffar Express which was scheduled to leave for Peshawar cant from Quetta railway station at 09:00 AM on Tuesday was cancelled and so the Bolan Mail, which was to proceed for Karachi from Quetta at 10:00 AM the same day.

Similarly, the Passenger, which was scheduled to leave Sibi Railway station for Harnai on Tuesday morning, didn't allow to proceed for the destination.

The PR high ups the train service has been suspended due to the situation emerged in Mach since late night Monday.

## Domki chairs high level meeting on law and order: Investigations of terrorism activities from all aspects necessary, emphasizes CM

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has emphasized upon making investigations into the terrorism activities from all aspects.

The caretaker Chief Minister said that fear of keeping the people away from election process can't be ignored seeing the terrorism incidents near the elections.

The caretaker Chief Minister was addressing a high level meeting on law and order at the CM Secretariat on Tuesday.

Mr. Domki participated and chaired the meet-

ing through video link from Islamabad. It may be mentioned here that the Chief Minister was in the federal capital due to participation in CCI meeting.

Those who were present in the meeting were included the caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Zubair Jamali, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Home, Zahid Saleem, Inspector General of police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and other concerned high ups.

The IGP briefed the meeting about the incident occurred in Mach in detail. Speaking on the occa-

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior and Commerce, Dr. Gohar Ejaz meeting with Saudi Ambassador H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Al Malki.

## 5 terrorists neutralized ensuring safety of citizens: Jan Achakzai commends swift action taken by Army, FC in thwarting terrorist attack

Says elections to proceed as planned regardless of terrorists actions

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has commended the swift action taken by the Pak Army and Frontier Corps (FC) in thwarting a terrorist attack in Mach area of Balochistan.

In a tweet on his social media account X on Tuesday, the caretaker Provincial Minister said that five terrorists have been neutralized ensuring the safety of

our citizens. He said that the courage and dedication displayed by our armed forces in protecting lives of the people is truly commendable.

Earlier, in another tweet, Jan Achakzai said that in Mach, the security forces have successfully thwarted three coordinated attacks carried out by the terrorists affiliated with the Aslam Acho group.

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## No one to be allowed to sabotage peace: Caretaker Minister Home directs to reformulate security plan for elections in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Captain (Retd) Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali has directed the concerned high ups to reformulate the security plan for general elections in the province especially in wake of the terrorism incidents occurred in Mach area of Bolan.

Also accompanied with him were the Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Home,

Zahid Saleem and Director General of Levies, Naseebullah Kakar.

The Minister Home was briefed about the overall security situation in the province especially in wake of the Mach incident.

There was a detailed discussion on the security plan and decided to refresh the same owing to the Mach situation.

The Chief Secretary on

the occasion appreciated the security forces for timely responding to the terrorism incidents in Mach.

He said that timely countering the terrorist attack by the security forces in Mach is really commendable.

He urged the voters to use their right of franchise fearlessly on February 8.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Captain (retd) Mir Muhammad Zubair Khan Jamali being briefed about overall situation of the province. Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan and Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh are also present

## Imran, Qureshi sentenced to 10 years in jail in cipher case

PTI top brass vehemently rejects verdict; urges supporters to stay calm

RAWALPINDI (INP): A special court established under the Official Secrets Act on Tuesday handed both former prime minister Imran Khan and ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi 10 years in jail in the cipher case.

The cipher case pertains to a diplomatic document that the Federal Investigation Agency's charge sheet alleges was never returned by Imran. The PTI has long held that the document contained a threat from the United States to oust Imran as prime minister.

The short verbal verdict was announced soon after recording the state-

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View of site after blast occurred at a rally of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) at Sibi

## Four dead, six injured in Sibi bomb explosion

Independent Report QUETTA: Four people were killed and six others injured-three of them seriously-when a powerful explosion occurred on the main Jinnah road in Sibi city on Tuesday.

According to the reports reaching here, the explosive device went off with a big bang, which was planted on the Jinnah road.

The reports suggested that the device exploded when rally of a political party just passed through there.

As a result, four persons died while six others were injured, the reports said.

Soon after the explo-

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DALBANDIN: President of Balochistan National Party Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal addressing a public meeting

## BNP announces 32-point election manifesto: Education, health, agriculture, law and order, livelihood opportunities part of Party's election manifesto

Senior VP BNP unveils party's manifesto for elections; rejects unjustified distribution of resources, demands due share for Balochistan in national division pool; amendment to be made in anti-corruption laws; struggle for recovery of missing persons to be part of manifesto too

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan National Party (BNP) has unveiled the 32-point manifesto of the party for General Elections 2024 here on Tuesday.

The senior Vice President of BNP, Sajid Tareen Advocate shared the party's Election manifesto at a press conference here at the Quetta Press Club on Tuesday noon.

The senior leaders of BNP including central Secretary Information, Agha Hasan Baloch and others were also present on the occasion.

Sajid Tareen said that the BNP's manifesto has been prepared in view of the problems and hardships

faced by the people of Balochistan.

He said that the party has rejected the unjustified distribution of resources and demands due share for the province in national divisible pool of resources.

He said that the manifesto includes provision of health, and education and livelihood opportunities besides paying attention on the agriculture, law and order.

Similarly, the special laws about Gwadar and facilities for fishermen are also part of the party's manifesto announced for the upcoming general elections, Sajid Tareen mentioned adding that every child would be provided

Continued on page 2



## Meeting reviews Post Flood Recovery activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed on Tuesday formally inaugurated the 4RF dashboard, oversight meeting to review Post-Flood Recovery activities.

The third meeting of the Policy and Strategy Committee/Oversight Board for Post-Flood Resilient, Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework (4RF) was chaired by the federal minister, said a press release issued here.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Economic Affairs Division (EAD), the Chief Secretary of Gilgit Baltistan, the Country Director of the World Bank, the Country Director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Country Director of the European Union Islamabad,

the Deputy Resident Director of UNDP and representatives from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

Speaking at the occasion, the minister said that this dashboard was a milestone achieved in order to ensure transparency and efficiency in executing the flood related projects. The dashboard will provide real time information on the physical and financial progress of the projects. Besides, it will be accessed by the provincial government, development partners and concerned line ministries, he added.

The minister appreciated the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for their support in establishing this dashboard.

Furthermore, the minister underscored the government's unwavering commitment to support and

facilitating flood-affected people throughout the implementation and completion of the vital projects.

During this productive meeting, the donor agencies appreciated the Planning Ministry for its diligent oversight and monitoring of 4RF projects and their execution. They expressed their dedication to continuing support for these projects in the future. Earlier, Tassaduq Hussain Khan, Senior Joint Secretary at Planning Ministry gave a detailed briefing over the implementation status of 4RF. It is noted that in 2022, Pakistan faced unprecedented devastation due to torrential rains and flooding in most parts of the country, affecting 33 million people and resulting in economic losses worth \$30 billion.



ISLAMABAD: Stakeholders gathered for a crucial consultation on the proposed Child Domestic Labour Draft Bill.

### Jan Achakzai commends swift...

*Continued from page 1*

"Fortunately, no damage was inflicted on any installation, and there were no casualties among our security forces.

He further stated that "the terrorists have now been retreated, and our security forces are currently in pursuit."

"We remain hopeful that all threats will be eliminated before dawn, by the grace of God."

Moreover, in another tweet, Jan Achakzai mentioned that "after the clearance operation in Mach, dead body of a terrorist has been recovered. However, they are many more, so far reports, five terrorists were neutralized."

Meanwhile the caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Muhammad Achakzai has categorically stated that the

elections would proceed as planned regardless of the terrorists activities.

This was stated by the caretaker Provincial Minister for Information in a tweet on his social media account "X" on Tuesday.

He referred the bomb explosion took place in Sibi and said that the rally in Sibi, which was targeted by terrorists, will not discourage the Government of Balochistan from conducting the elections.

The caretaker Minister maintained that it is evident that these terrorists aim to disrupt the election process and it's results.

However, the resilient people of Balochistan, by the grace of Allah, will ensure that at least 50 percent population actively participate in the voting process on February 8, 2024, Jan Achakzai added.

### Caretaker PM underlines...

*Continued from page 1*

There was no political uniform group while one minority armed group was carrying out violent activities, he said, adding that the US State Department, the UK, EU, and all other democratic countries had declared these groups as terrorists, he added.

The prime minister said that he did not differentiate between banned TTP and Ahrar and BLA and BLF, as these terrorist outfits had been using violence as a tool to create terror and kill innocent people.

In their terrorist attacks, about 1038 people had been martyred since 2018 in the province, he said, and cited incidents of Coastal Highway and an attack on Turbat police station in which innocent people had been killed and burnt alive.

On the other hand, he said the political protests and approach were acknowledged by the world, intelligentsia, and media. The world has declared ISIS a terrorist organization.

To a query, Prime Minister Kakar said that the Middle East was a complex challenge. Pakistan had conveyed to different world fora and the international community that the continuation of the situation in Gaza was unacceptable, he added.

They had stressed upon

opening of humanitarian assistance corridors with immediate ceasefire. Along with the Muslim countries, Pakistan had reaffirmed a joint stance, he said.

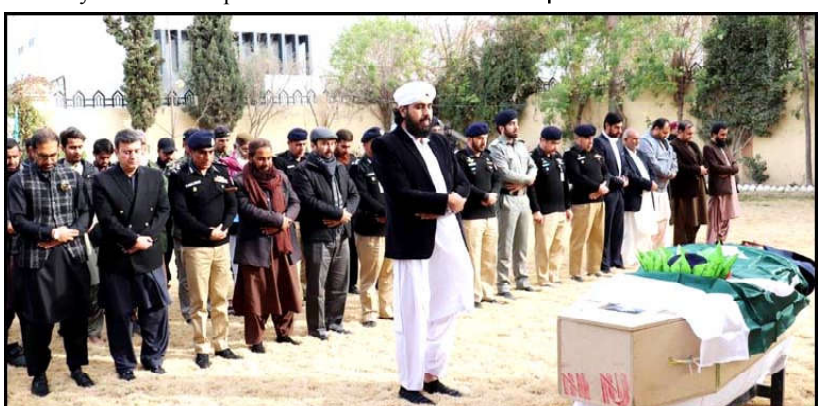
The prime minister said that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Arab League and the entire world was speaking about the two-state solution with an independent Palestine based upon pre-June 1967 borders, with Al Quds al Shareef as its capital, adding that it was the unanimous stance of the Muslim world.

He regretted that certain elements were criticizing him unjustly for referring to that solution and reiterated that Pakistan had not budged from its principled stance on Palestine.

He maintained that his remarks about Quaid e Azam's views over Palestine were distorted in the past.

Responding to questions about his childhood and youth, the prime minister said that from a young age, he had been fascinated with politics and the political leaders.

He informed that he was greatly influenced by Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah's oratory and eloquence who was the most inspiring figure for him. Similarly, former British premier Winston Churchill's wits and linguistic skills also influenced him.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Captain (retd) Mir Muhammad Zubair Khan Jamali, Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan, Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and ACS Home Zahid Saleem attending funeral prayer of Shaheed SHO Sajid Solangi

### ECP seeks report from CS, IG regarding Sibi blast

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday sought a report from the Chief Secretary and Inspector General (IG) of Balochistan regarding the Sibi blast.

The ECP spokesperson, in a statement, said that the Election Commission of Pakistan has taken notice of the blast that occurred during a political rally in the district of Sibi.

According to media reports, at least four people were killed, and five others were wounded in a bomb blast at a political rally in Balochistan's Sibi.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed chairs the 3rd meeting of the Policy & Strategy Committee/Oversight Board for Post-Flood Resilient, Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework (4RF) at the Planning Ministry.

### Politics of revenge, hatred to be put to end: Bilawal

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday vowed to put an end to politics of revenge.

He said 18 or 17 federal departments which were to be devolved after the 18th amendments were currently costing Rs 300 billion to the national exchequer and would divert schemes for the masses' uplift.

Similarly, he said that the government of their opponents provided a subsidy worth Rs 1500 billion on an annual basis to the richest class of the country and this amount could also be utilized for the betterment of the poor.

He urged the people to vote for his party to remove their sense of deprivation and change the destiny of KP including Dera Ismail Khan.

He also called upon his workers to educate people about the importance of vote which determined the country's future.

Thus, he suggested the people use the power of vote wisely.

He said the real contest was between only the two parties PPP and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N).

He said the people had already witnessed that other parties badly failed to deliver and hoped that the PPP would emerge as the winning party based on its performance.

He also condemned the inappropriate language in politics.

### Ahmad Hassan's heroics seal victory for Pakistan over Ireland in U19 World Cup

**Sports Desk**

POTCHEFSTROOM, South Africa: Pakistan got off to a successful start in their U19 World Cup Super Six campaign, securing a three-wicket victory against Ireland in Potchefstroom, South Africa on Tuesday.

Opting to bowl first, Pakistan's disciplined bowlers applied early pressure on Ireland, restricting them to a modest total of 180 runs.

Despite a tense chase where Ireland's bowlers posed a threat, Pakistan managed to reach the target in 43.4 overs, led by Saad Baig and his teammates.

Pakistan's bowlers set the tone by limiting Ireland to a slow run rate of one in the initial five overs.

Shahzaib Khan, Pakistan's top run scorer in the tournament, fell to Wilson while attempting a cut shot. Another setback followed as Shamil Hossain mistimed a pull shot, leading to his dismissal by Ollie Riley. Awan Awaiz and Saad Baig then took charge, cautiously rebuilding the innings. However, Awaiz fell victim to Dwyer's delivery and was adjudged leg before wicket.

The promotion of Ubaid Shah in the batting order proved unsuccessful, but Ahmad Hassan and Haroon Arshad formed a solid partnership, steering Pakistan close to victory.

Ahmad Hassan played a pivotal role, remaining unbeaten on 57 off 72 balls and guiding Pakistan to victory in the 44th over.

### Govt all set to drop electricity bombshell on power consumers

ISLAMABAD (Online): Government is all set to drop electricity bombshell on the people as all the preparations have been made to shift additional financial burden of Rs81.50 billion to electricity consumers.

Quarterly adjustment application for October 2023 has been filed in NEPRA.

The power distribution companies filed petition in NEPRA seeking hike in

According to sources the quarterly adjustment will be applicable to consumers of K-Electric too as per government guidelines.

Request has been made for charging Rs 75.14 billion under head of capacity charges. It has been said in the application that Rs 10.82 billion have to be recovered under the head of losses. NEPRA will hear the application on February 14.

### Imran, Qureshi sentenced to...

*Continued from page 1*

Earlier on Monday, a lengthy hearing of the cipher case was held by the special court in Adiala jail during which cross-examination of 11 witnesses was completed. Also on Monday, a lengthy hearing of the cipher case was held by the special court established under the Official Secrets Act in Adiala jail during which cross-examination of 11 witnesses was completed.

During the hearing conducted by Abul Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain, the special court judge, a total of 25 witnesses were presented before the court.

The prominent names among those cross-examined by the two sets of lawyers include former foreign secretary Sohail Mehmood, former principal secretary to the PM Azam Khan, former Interior Secretary Yusuf Naseem Khokhar, junior secretary Aftab Akbar Durrani and former ambassador to the United States Asad Majeed.

Earlier in the day, the cipher case proceedings were again disrupted as the two accused got angry and started shouting. As the situation worsened, the special court judge opted for a temporary break after which the hearing started again.

Qureshi objected to the state-appointed defence counsel during cross-examination, expressing difficulty attending court in the current situation. PTI lawyer Salman Safdar noted that the Islamabad High Court had deemed the trial invalid, yet the case persisted in this court for the third time.

Meanwhile in the aftermath, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership vehemently rejected on Tuesday the verdict handed down by a special court under the Official Secrets Act, which sentenced former premier Imran Khan and ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi to 10 years in jail in the cipher case.

In response to the special court's decision, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, a central leader of Tehreek-e-Insaf, addressed the media, urging party supporters to exhibit restraint and avoid expressing anger.

He stated that PTI would challenge the cipher case trial in court, expressing hope that the punishment meted out to PTI founder Imran Khan would be annulled.

PTI stalwart Omer Ayub Khan took to social media platform X (formerly Twitter), declaring his rejection of the verdict, citing political motives behind the decision.

### EC stops PM from introducing major reforms in FBR

ISLAMABAD (online): Election Commission (EC) has taken notice on the matter of restructuring of FBR and stopped caretaker Prime Minister (PM) from introducing major reforms thereon.

Secretary EC has written a letter to principal secretary of PM wherein concern was voiced over the matter of restructuring of FBR. Caretaker PM was stopped from introducing reforms.

### One of my ADCs stole...

*Continued from page 1*

motion comes then he has to cast vote against the then chief minister KP Mehmood Khan.

Imran Khan said during this several meetings were held between Bajwa and him. I asked Bajwa if government is pulled down then the economy will be collapsed.

"I said to Bajwa the next government will not be able to control political instability. I asked for Bajwa several times ISI is active against my government. I will go to general public if my government is pulled down under conspiracy.

Bajwa again lied he wants me to continue government. Shaukat Tareen too tried to convince Bajwa that political instability will give rise to economic devastation.

Imran Khan further said he told in public meeting in parade ground on March 27 that Pakistan is facing threats. But I was very cautious in my words. I did not make mention of name of any country. What copy was waved in public meeting it was paraphrase copy of cipher.

Imran said he told Bajwa if government is pulled down then he will tell all the plan to people.

Gen Nadim Anjum came to me and he said "don't talk about cipher outside. Cipher was meant only for Bajwa and no one had capability to pull down government. Bajwa was only power who pulled down my government.

### Investigations of terrorism...

*Continued from page 1*

sepy, any officer or tribal elder.

He said that we are proud of every jawan of security force deputed for protection of life and property of the people.

The Chief Minister directed to start work on the effective strategy for imparting professional training to the levies and police jawans on modern lines to combat terrorism.

He also directed to take the elements involved in the Sibi bomb blast to task after thoroughly probing into it. In addition to this, the security arrangements should also be improved further in the extraordinary circumstances of elections, adding Chief Minister directed.

He also paid homage to the martyrs of FC, police and other security forces who embraced martyrdom while performing their duties. He said that sacrifices of the martyrs for restoration of peace can't be forgotten.

### Federal cabinet gives...

*Continued from page 1*

istrative, financial and operational matters.

Both the officials would ensure digitization of their relevant departments and implementation of globally recognized practices for transparency and addressing complaints.

These departments would have separate oversight boards with the federal secretaries of ministries from finance, revenue, trade, chairman NADRA and relevant experts as its members whereas, minister for finance would head them.

The prime minister directed that clash of interests should be avoided during the appointment of experts from the private sector.

He also asked that under the cabinet committee's recommendations for reforms, a draft should be presented for necessary legislation and approval in the upcoming session of the newly elected parliament.

On the occasion, the prime minister and the cabinet members appreciated the untiring efforts of the ministers concerned, chairman FBR and other relevant authorities for the preparation of these reforms.

The meeting also endorsed decisions taken on January 26 by its cabinet committee on legal affairs but deferred amendments recommended by the ministry of water resources with regard to IRSA Act 1992 and directed to resubmit it in the next meeting of cabinet after a thorough debate.

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**TENDER NOTICE**

TSE-232401374303 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, it is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. THE AGRICULTURE COLLEGE BALELI invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2018 on Percentage Rates. Tender Fee Rs.2000/-

S.No	Class of Object	Bid Security
1	Construction of Green House	2%

1. Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 3 Assignment of similar nature of work. Turn over of at least 8,500,000 PKR Amount in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Technical Specifications & Drawing / Design. Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed 2,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 16 February, 2024 during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 16 February, 2024 till 11:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00 PM Address: Balochistan Agriculture College, Chaman Road Baleli, Quetta Phone no: 0819241302 Fax no: 0819241302 Email: viceprincipal@bac.edu.pk

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Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi met with a delegation from Punjab Chamber of Education led by its President Mr. Haji Ashfaq Ahmed Warraich in Islamabad.

## PCE's role in bridging gap between public and private education sector acknowledged

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi Tuesday acknowledged the efforts of Pakistan Chamber of Education (PCE) for playing a key role in bridging the gap between the government and the private education sector.

In a meeting with the PCE delegation led by its President, Haji Ashfaq Ahmed Warraich, the federal minister said that PCE had played a key role in bringing down the number of Out of School Children. He acknowledged the

positive feedback from the PCE and said that these suggestions will be forwarded to the provinces in the next IPEMC.

Madad Ali Sindhi was briefed about the problem of unscheduled holidays in the provinces which has led to reduction of the academic days of the schools.

He was told that the academic calendar year needed to be revised in such a way that the effects of climate change were addressed.

The minister was briefed that due to climate change the weather of dif-

ferent areas was affected differently.

For example, the smog hit areas are near the Lahore and Gujranwala districts. Hence, due to fog and smog in these areas, the entire province should not be shut down.

Similarly, Madad Ali was told that it was unfair that different provinces had different academic days annually.

It was suggested that this needed to be in a uniform manner.

PEC also stressed the need for teacher training and offered their services to the government.

PEC said that through public private partnership, the number of Out of School Children can be reduced and PEC can contribute to this cause.

Madad Ali said that these suggestions were positive and the provinces should focus on materialising these.

The minister said that it was important that policies should be made in such a way that all private institutions should be catered for.

He said there should not be a single policy for high end and low end private institutions.

## Mushaal says: Tech-savvy workforce essential for country's standing in rapidly evolving global economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick has said that the active involvement of youth in innovation, investment and the overall economy was crucial for driving progress of the country.

She was addressing Future-Fest 2024, an innovation Expo in Lahore. The SAPM was accompanied by Focal Person to SAPM Sabien Hussein Mullick and Advisor to SAPM on Communication Waqas Banorie, said a press release issued

here on Tuesday.

At the Expo, a mix of entrepreneurs and exhibitors displayed a wide variety of innovative ideas spanning different industries and services.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick was apprised about Future-Fest achievements of \$200 million direct investment which resulted in 30, 000 direct jobs and the organization of innovation road show. She said that Future-Fest had achieved commendable milestones. She noted that Future-Fest's efforts to secure over \$200 million in direct investment would be

a boost in developing cutting-edge technologies, startups and projects across various industries in the country. She appreciated the innovation road show organized by Future-Fest which brought together entrepreneurs, cutting-edge startups, industry leaders, and technology enthusiasts from 40 cities and 80 universities.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick was also apprised about His Royal Highness, Prince Fahad bin Mansour's extraordinary contribution to the technological landscape of Pakistan.

## Consul General vows continued efforts for welfare of Pak in UAE

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Consul General in Dubai, UAE, Hussain Muhammad on Tuesday vowed to continue all-out efforts for the welfare of the Pakistani community living in the United Arab Emirates. "It is the core objective of the mission to extend all possible facilitation and assistance towards achieving the welfare of Pakistani community," he said during his visit to Pakistan Association Dubai (PAD), according to a press release received here from Dubai

Consulate General of Pakistan.

The consul general visited the PAD on the invitation of Pakistan Journalists Forum (PJF).

Speaking on the occasion, Hussain emphasized that every Pakistani living in UAE was the ambassador of Pakistan and needed to work jointly towards shared goals of national wellbeing.

"It is the responsibility of each one of us to portray positive image of our motherland through our conduct.



ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister for Religious Harmony & Islamic Countries and Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi addressing a press conference accompanied by Ulema and Mashaikh.

## Ashrafi urges people to exercise their right to vote with sincerity

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Harmony Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi has urged the people to exercise their right to vote with sincerity on the 8th of next month.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad Tuesday, he said women also have right to cast their vote. He said government has established separate polling stations for them.

but also a testimony, asserting, "If the testimony is known, it is a crime not to give it." He extended this principle to include women's voting rights, and emphasizing that women could not be deprived of their right to vote.

He highlighted the ongoing preparations being observed across the country for the next polls.

About recent discussions on social media regarding the Shariah status of voting, Ashrafi who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC), underscored that voting was not only a civic duty

He said Pakistan Ulema Council had already issued a 'Fatwa' (religious decree) affirming the legality of voting, with specific arrangements in place for women to exercise their voting rights. He clarified that Pakistan had a separate polling stations and polling staff will facilitate women voters, ensuring their participation in the democratic process.

As the election day approaches on February 8, he urged all citizens to actively engage in the elec-

toral process. He also emphasized the importance of assessing candidates based on their abilities, love, and loyalty to the country while casting votes. He reiterated that voting was a fundamental duty of every citizen, emphasizing the significance of democracy and urging all eligible voters to fulfill their civic responsibility on the election day.

Ashrafi mentioned that in a significant diplomatic development, Iran's foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian had held talks with Pakistan's political and military leadership. He said the talks concluded with a commitment to continue dialogue and cooperation on regional matters besides reaffirming commitment to promoting peace and stability in the region.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister GB Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting with caretaker Interior Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz at his office.

## NCRC drafts legislative bill against child labor

ISLAMABAD (Online): The National Child Rights Commission (NCRC) has drafted a comprehensive piece of legislation aimed at preventing child domestic labor.

The consultation on the proposed 'Child Domestic Labour Draft Bill' was held in a local hotel of the federal capital. Esteemed stakeholders, including representatives from UNICEF, ILO, Ministry of Human Rights and various other organizations, gathered to contribute their expertise and insights, said a press release issued by the law ministry. The event was graced by the presence of Ms. Ayesha Raza, the Chairperson of the National Child Rights Commission (NCRC).

The issue is exacerbated by child labor in various sectors such as brick kilns, carpet factories, and

the ominous nexus of narcotic terrorism. Children engaged in domestic labor are subjected to health risks, rights violations, disrupted education, and exposure to violence and brutality. Recognizing the gravity of this issue, the NCRC has taken an admirable initiative by drafting a comprehensive piece of legislation aimed at preventing and regulating child domestic labor. The proposed bill takes a bold stance by criminalizing child domestic labor, marking it as a non-bailable offense. Furthermore, it seeks to establish a uniform child rights legislation applicable across the entire country of Pakistan.

One of the key provisions emphasizes the urgent need to set a uniform age for children, aligning with the spirit of the Child Rights Convention, i.e., 18 years.

## Ahmad Ishaque assumes as DG FIA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahmad Ishaque Jehangir, PSP, PPM, a seasoned and highly esteemed officer hailing from the Police Service of Pakistan (PSP), officially assumed the charge as the Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

According to the press release issued here Tuesday, Ahmad Ishaque Jehangir brings a wealth of experience and a distinguished career in law enforcement to his new role, having previously served as the Additional DG in FIA's Cybercrime Wing.

With an illustrious career marked by exemplary service in various capacities across all four provinces of Pakistan, he is widely recognized for his professionalism, honesty, and commitment to upholding the law.

Upon assuming office at the FIA Headquarters in Islamabad, he paid homage to the sacrifices made by the agency's martyrs at the Martyrs' Memorial. Subsequently, he engaged with the ADGs and Directors, expressing his firm determination to enhance the institution's capabilities and better service delivery.

## Students can apply for Romanian Government Scholarship 2024-25: HEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Students can apply for the Romanian Government Scholarship 2024-25 for professional degrees in various disciplines by submitting their documents online till the mid of March. According to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Tuesday, Romanian government offers scholarships to foreign citizens in different fields, except medicine, dentistry and pharmacy. Each candidate will create an account on the StudinRomania platform fill in the requested data and

upload the required documents till March 16, 2024.

The result of the scholarship will be announced by email around July 15, 2024 to every candidate who applied for the scholarship.

It is the responsibility of the students applying for any professional degree (Medical, Engineering, Nursing, Architecture, Law, Veterinary Medicine, etc.) to first get confirmed its accreditation from the respective Councils i.e. Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC),



ISLAMABAD: Traffic police official issuing challan to rickshaw loader driver due to overloading which is a violation of the traffic rule at Lathrar Road, Khana Pull.

## CDA services to go online to facilitate citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) launched its new website to facilitate the general public, says a press release issued here on Tuesday.

In this regard, a ceremony was held at the authority's headquarters which was attended by the CDA chairman, members of its Board, representatives of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries and officers of concerned formations.

On this occasion, the chairman said that the use of technology in the authority would improve service delivery.

He said that the launch of new and updated website was an important step towards digitalisation.

He further said that Land and Estate records are also being digitalised.

CDA was introducing secure paper for issuing allotment and transfer letters to reduce the risk of forgery and tampering of records, he said.

The chairman further added that the initiative would help reduce complaints of corruption,

fraudulent transactions and eradication of complaints like alteration in records.

A tree management system has also been introduced as part of the technology based initiatives being taken in the authority. This system will be based on state-of-the-art Digital Trees Inventory software.

Similarly, for the first time all tree and plants data will also be digitized with the help of field force and satellite imagery.

Under which barren land can be identified along with trees and plants data so that the land of Islamabad can be kept free from illegal constructions and encroachment and plantation can be done there as per need.

The launch of the new website will further boost the confidence of overseas Pakistani's as a new online property verification system has also been introduced to facilitate citizens in property transactions from the comfort of their own homes and they will be able to verify the property through the CDA website.

## Citizens to get civic facilities at Fatima Jinnah Park: ICT Spokesman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Tuesday initiated the provision of convenient basic services to simplify the tedious process of vehicle registration and acquiring essential documents. The citizens hailing from nearby areas of Fatima Jinnah Park Bolan Gate F-9 can get civic facilities through a dedicated van from 03:00 to 05:00 pm today, offering a hassle-free experience for residents seeking to register, transfer, or pay token tax for their vehicles, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said.

On the directive of DC, the excise staff will be stationed at the park's parking lot, streamlining the procedures related to vehicles. This initiative aligned with the commitment to make essential services more accessible to the public. He said that adding to the convenience, the 'Facilitation Center Doorstep ICT Vehicle' will also be available on-site.

The court also sought report regarding an incident of attack on Journalist Absar Alam and adjourned the case till first week of March.

A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice, Qazi Faez Isa and comprising



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Islamabad Wild Life Management Board (IWMB) Riina Saeed Khan talking with media persons after visit at Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre, in the Federal Capital.

## Senate body on Aviation convenes

ISLAMABAD: The Sub-Committee on Senate Standing Committee on Aviation, chaired by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, convened today at Parliament to discuss the pension issue of Civil Aviation Authority employees, retired between fiscal years 2014 to 2023.

The sub-committee was informed that CAA pensioners are categorized into three groups: those retired before 30th June 2014, those retired between 1st July 2014 to 30th June 2022, and those retired after 30th June 2022.

Officials noted that pensioners retired before 2014 have no grievances. Additionally, pensioners retired between 2014 and 2022 have been receiving all allowances increased by the Federal Government except for the 2021 and 2022 al-

lowances. However, pensioners retired after 2022 have not received five allowances as announced by the Federal Government.

Officials mentioned a clear disparity in pension emoluments for several pensioners.

Officials acknowledged anomalies in few CAA regulations, stating that the issue would not be resolved without amending the regulations and obtaining subsequent approval from the Board, but at the same time, they highlighted the issue of excessive payment to a group of pensioners that ought to be recovered.

The Petitioners demanded that interim relief may be granted until relevant rules are amended, and pensioners matter be presented before next CAA board meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Czech Republic Ladislav Steinhel is take keen interest in a painting during painting exhibition of Irfan Cheema, title "Life and some other beautiful things" at Tanzara Art Gallery in the Federal Capital.

## IWMB helped rehabilitate 381 animals since Aug 2021

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre of the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) has since its inception in August 2021 successfully rehabilitated 381 animals of different species suffering from maltreatment. This was shared by IWMB Chairperson Rina Saeed Khan with mediapersons during their visit of the Centre, organized by the Board and Second Chance Wildlife on Tuesday. Rina Saeed Khan said the rescued and rehabilitated animals included mammals, birds and reptiles.

"The IWMB only deals with wild animals (indigenous & exotic) which

are treated in a non-humane way, orphaned and injured in order to implement the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) High Court's (IHC) judgment in W.P. 1155/2019 which specifically states, "No animal is treated in a manner that subjects it to unnecessary pain and suffering". She said that the IWMB operated under the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination. In 2020, she said, when the Islamabad Zoo was permanently shut down on the IHC's orders the IWMB gradually converted its site into the only wildlife rescue centre, first of its kind in Pakistan, providing assistance to all species of wild animals in distress.



Senator Engr. Rukhsana Zuberi, Convener Sub-Committee of the Senate Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House Islamabad.



# Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Wednesday January 31, 2024

## Mending fences

From exchanging missile strikes two weeks ago to trading compliments, Pakistan and Iran have managed to handle a potentially explosive crisis in a mature fashion.

On Jan 16, Iran had bizarrely launched strikes on Panjgur hitting, what it said, were terrorists affiliated with the Jaish al-Adl outfit. Pakistan said two children died in the incident. Two days later, Pakistan replied to the violation of its sovereignty by striking targets in the Iranian town of Saravan neutralising, as per the state, several Baloch separatists.

But the acrimony seemed a thing of the past as caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani met his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Islamabad on Monday, indicating that the crisis was now behind both states. It is also hoped that as relations improve, the brutal murder of nine Pakistani workers in Saravan on Saturday is fully probed.

Mr Amir-Abdollahian said both countries were "one nation" while observing that "third countries" were aiding militants in the common border area. Meanwhile, Mr Jilani said that a "high-level mechanism" was being established to oversee bilateral cooperation, while adding that liaison officers would be stationed in Turbat and Zahedan.

Indeed, this display of cooperation is a welcome change from the acrimonious exchanges that had threatened to scuttle bilateral ties. Both sides chose to handle the crisis with wisdom, as opposed to jingoistic nationalism. This should serve as a template to manage all future bilateral ties.

While the exchange of pleasantries makes for good optics, both Islamabad and Tehran need to get down to business and address the single biggest irritant that stands in the way of better ties: border security. Both sides have pledged to work for collective security, and these promises should be followed by action to secure their common border.

Whether it is religiously motivated militants working against Iran that allegedly find refuge in Pakistan, or Baloch separatists plotting against Pakistan on Iranian soil, both sides need to address the threats these non-state actors pose through mutual cooperation; under no circumstances should unilateral action be taken, as Iran did a few weeks ago.

The crisis was defused this time, but there is no guarantee that similar rational behaviour will prevail in the future. With regard to the killing of Pakistani workers, those involved in this heinous crime need to be identified and brought to justice, while Tehran should ensure security for all Pakistanis living in or visiting Iran.

A few weeks from now a new administration will take over in Islamabad, and it will be up to the new rulers to build on the points agreed to during the foreign ministers' meeting. Both sides should also be wary of inimical foreign actors working to destabilise the border areas in the hopes of souring the Pakistan-Iran relationship.

### Arifa Noor

A decade ago, in the course of election day in 2013, I, along with colleagues visited a polling station in Rawalpindi. Established in a government school, the venue was filled with people, papers and the hum of conversations.

At one point, a colleague, who kept a close eye on politics in the city, had a quiet exchange with a man there; and later said that the man was a PPP worker who was now coordinating with the teams of PTI people. "Many of them are helping PTI in this election," he said, because their own party's candidates were in too weak a position to make a difference.

This was the year Imran Khan's party was able to make inroads into Rawalpindi, a PML-N stronghold, by winning seats in the district.

Over the next five years, many of the PPP's leaders, supporters and workers followed the same route. As their own

party seemed to take no interest in Punjab, those associated with it flew the coop and landed in the nest of the PTI. One of the reasons for this was obviously the old tradition of dharras in Punjab; as those in the PPP were the ones who belonged to dharras opposing the PML-N-associated dharras, they had no choice but to join the PTI.

A second reason was that PPP supporters could not stomach the idea of voting for the PML-N and hence chose the PTI. This has also been used to explain the leanings of Sanam Javed, the incarcerated PTI supporter who is implicated in May 9 cases. Her father was a PPP supporter and this, it is argued, had made the family so averse to the PML-N, that her decision to support the PTI was inevitable.

Perhaps this is the same reasoning which Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is using as he appeals to PTI voters to join hands with him and defeat the PML-N. In speech after speech, he points out that the

coming election is a race between only two parties, the PPP and PML-N. And how the voters shouldn't waste their vote or allow the PML-N to win.

While he takes occasional digs at the PTI, he saves his harshest criticism for PML-N and Nawaz Sharif. For instance, he never forgets to remind the people that someone is going to be imposed on the populace as the prime minister for the fourth time. However, he is careful not to raise the spectre of someone else from the same family becoming the prime minister for the second time.

On the surface, it seems as if the PPP chairman is reverting to the old PPP tradition of being a serious claimant in Punjab by challenging the PML-N. But there are two factors which have to be taken into account.

One, the new PPP narrative suits everyone. After all, both the PPP and PML-N want to return to a time when the two parties faced each other in Punjab, without a third player to share the stage

with. This return to the past has been discussed by the parties more than once. For this election, it seems possible, not just because of the situation on the ground but also because of the decision by the Supreme Court; since then, most commentators and media outlets also seem to consider all PTI candidates as independent candidates.

However, the people, or rather the voters, don't necessarily follow the same logic.

First, this assumption that PPP voters will never opt for the PML-N is not entirely correct. The transition that took place in Punjab after 1990 means that more than a few PPP voters did switch to the PML-N. In fact, by 2008, the parties were both close enough that Nawaz Sharif was able to speak of Benazir Bhutto's assassination and of avenging it while campaigning.

Second, the close working relationship between the PPP and PML-N until about six months ago means the voters will take time to accept the war

of words between the two parties. While this Punch and Judy show is what consumes television screens, the voters have yet to buy it.

This is why other than BBZ's own race in Lahore, few think the PPP can offer any serious contest in any constituency in central Punjab. South Punjab is a different ballgame where electables have joined the PPP and can make a difference. Take, for instance, Multan, where the PPP is one of two top contenders on more than one seat.

Indeed, for the people to believe in the PPP's new avatar as a serious challenger to the PML-N, the PPP will have to stay the course. A short election campaign is not going to cut it.

Unfortunately, there are far too many rumours or conjectures about how there will be yet another PDM-like coalition government after the election, which if it happens, will once again weaken the PPP's credentials as a party that can be the counter-

weight to the PML-N in Punjab.

For if BBZ once again allows his party to become a part of the PML-N-led cabinet, his party will be back. And it will be harder still to be the face of the opposition to PML-N in Punjab as long as the PTI exists as a party (outside of the legal realm) and faces the brunt of the state's wrath.

In other words, the resurrection of the PPP of the 1980s and the 1990s requires the party and its young leader to spend some time in the opposition, which it seems is needed to win over the people. It is not enough to be young and to claim to symbolise change on the basis of age. In a country where perceptions have hardened about parties which have governed and continue to govern, words in themselves may not prove enough. And for Punjab, he will have to prove his opposition to the PML-N is not limited to election speeches. -- Courtesy Dawn

## The second chance

## Ram won't help but Nitish might

### Jawed Naqvi

In the end, the bluster of Ram temple could not lift Narendra Modi's spirits and he had to turn to Nitish Kumar for help. The chief minister of Bihar is a crucial former ally-turned-opposition satrap. He returned last week to the BJP's corner hoping to stabilise Modi's boat of unabated ambition. In the process, he ditched the opposition alliance.

Modi's inability to pouch divine blessings for communal polarisation wasn't unexpected. The dog whistle was still needed. Defiling churches and vandalising crosses sent out the signal. There was a need to ransack a Mughal-era mosque in Agra protectively, and to raise slogans targeting other relics of India's Muslim past.

The communal powder needed to be kept dry. The peace call from the new temple's pulpit seeking to usher the Hindu utopia of Ram Rajya had not enthused the opposition, comprising a bulk of 63 per cent voters who

didn't bat for the BJP in 2019. Even the grand Shankaracharyas failed to bless the event, with at least one of them calling it a political show.

The event did seem overplayed, and destined to be no more than media hamming. Reports abound of lucrative land deals ringing the city, which now has an airport of its own. Religious polarisation around Ayodhya, moreover, has been milked dry and might not be the potent brew again. Other avenues must be explored.

There's an Indian saying that a closed fist is worth a hundred thousand gold mohurs or something as valuable. Opened, it loses the mystique, "it becomes worthless dirt". It's what may have happened at the temple to a revered pomp-shunning deity. Well-heeled men and women showed up in Ayodhya no doubt. But that by itself could hardly claim to define the electoral logic of a complex country in need of jobs, food security and, if possible, scientific education in backward states where the BJP is strongest.

Indians see Lord Ram as a shield against adversities, as a healer, not as a jewel-bedecked deity he was inaugurated as. After the mystery was buried in the rubble of the Babri Masjid, a mystery woven around falsified history, blind faith and misquoted judicial verdicts, there was at least the illusion of divinity working for the BJP. In the opulent temple built on the rubble, the illusion disappeared. Everyone saw the prime minister looking busy keeping the cameras studiously focused on himself.

Seen with more concern for facts, Mr Modi's two previous triumphs, in 2014 and 2019, resulted from earthy elements far removed from the religious fervour he hoped to produce in Ayodhya last week. In pre-independence communalism, the two sides used slaughtered cow and pig heads to lure rival responses.

In post-independence mobilisations, the cost-effective and more high-yield method is rumour-mongering. Rumours of Muslims attacking a train coach

packed with Hindus was mined to catapult Mr Modi to the crucial local post in Gujarat, which became the launching pad for his higher orbit. Rumours of a Hindu girl's molestation, though it proved to be a contrived falsehood, burnt down Muzaffarnagar to polarise Jat Hindus in 2014. The Jats have since rowed back.

In 2019, claims of an aerial sortie using 'cloud cover' to bomb an alleged cross-border terror hub to avenge the killing of 40 paramilitary men in Pulwama whipped up a nationalist froth to skim votes from. On all previous occasions, a divided opposition stood pulverised. That looks different for the 2024 contest. The INDIA allies are savvy in guarding their turf. It's an asset but also a challenge.

It so happens that India's political cookie is baked from caste and regional interests. Kumar's departure could be a setback for the anti-Modi grouping, but it has its own contradictions. In the 2014 elections, Nitish Kumar wasn't a Modi ally

when the BJP won 22 of Bihar's 40 seats, and Kumar got just two.

In 2019, allying with Kumar's party the BJP's toll dwindled to 17 seats, and Kumar got 16. His gain is not necessarily to the BJP's advantage. The equation may thrive on perversion, more likely, by affecting the optics adversely for INDIA. Else, Bihar is not done and dusted yet.

On the contrary, the BJP with Shiva Sena won 42 seats of Maharashtra's 48 last time. That alliance collapsed. The Congress-Shiv Sena-NCP grouping against Modi could damage the BJP more than he can afford. In Punjab, the BJP-Akali alliance won six of 13 in 2014 and four in 2019. The snapped Akali Dal alliance has been further buried by the killings of Sikhs abroad. From Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP uncannily won three of the six seats last time. Clearly, the BJP would have to excel itself on most fronts against a prepared opposition.

This is where the Congress needs to do damage control and make

Mamata Banerjee feel more secure as a bulwark in West Bengal. In fact, it's the only state where the opposition needs to work hard to cement its alliance. Facts on the ground could guide the way forward.

In 2014, the BJP won two seats of the state's 42. Banerjee won 34. But in 2019, the BJP's tally jumped to 18 seats, and Banerjee was down to 22 with 43 per cent votes and BJP coming menacingly at 40pc. Congress got two seats from 5.61pc votes and the CPI-M with 6.28pc couldn't get a single MP. Banerjee has offered the two seats to the Congress.

What should the allies do? Currently, it's their unrealistic demand for a greater number of seats that threatens the alliance. The Congress and CPI-M both assert they must save the constitution. Would they do the right thing then, or play party politics and let the country and the constitution be damned, potentially forever, no different from Nitish Kumar? -- Courtesy Dawn

## 'Climate aid'

### Umar Farooq

Post-COP28, it is imperative to examine Pakistan's unique stance in the climate change dialogue. Pakistan now faces a new kind of challenge — one that is environmental in nature but deeply rooted in its sociopolitical fabric.

Pakistan, despite its minimal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions, is at the forefront of climate change impacts. The country's vulnerability to environmental disasters is not solely due to global climatic changes; it is also profoundly exacerbated by local factors. Rapid urbanisation, characterised by subpar housing societies and an obsession with cars and expansive urban highways, along with rampant deforestation and excessive reliance on fossil fuels, have collectively precipitated a series of environmental crises.

These developments, while possibly benefiting the bureaucracy and enabling politicians to exploit taxpayer funds, have led the country towards a situation that is nearly irreparable. These local issues, often eclipsed by the broader narrative of global climate politics, are the actual catalysts for Pakistan's escalating environmental degradation.

At the heart of these challenges lies Pakistan's persistent dependence on inefficient and hazardous fossil fuels. Additionally, environmental protection regulators, run by an ad hoc bureaucracy that is adept at nothing except staging price control photo ops against street vendors, have failed to establish procedures to control emissions effectively.

The problem with

Pakistan's approach to environmental issues is a deeply ingrained dependency mindset. Traditionally, the country has sought external aid to address its problems. While bureaucracy and NGOs continue to receive aid, these funds often merely suffice to support the lifestyles of a few profiteers, offering negligible benefits to the community or the environment. However, in a world increasingly focused on environmental integrity and sustainable development, this dependent approach poses a significant threat to Pakistan's future.

Triggered by the greenwashing controversy, there is focus on a more stringent approach that prioritises substantial emission reductions before considering the trading of carbon credits. This global trend towards 'green conditionalities' poses a new challenge for countries like Pakistan. With the carbon credit market more competitive and stringent, without regulations we are out of the park.

Another emerging dimension in the global environmental paradigm is the focus on natural capital credits. European and UK policymakers are currently developing new codes that place greater emphasis on ecosystem services, such as tokens and credits derived from river catchment areas and the blue economy. For countries like Pakistan, this presents an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity lies in harnessing its rich biodiversity and aquatic resources for ecological restoration and economic benefit. The challenge, however, is in developing the necessary frameworks and capabilities to participate effectively in these emerging markets.

The implications of this global shift are profound for nations like Pakistan. Despite promises of famous 'climate aid' cheered by a few toadies, the reality is that funds often fail to materialise. Furthermore, controversies surrounding 'junk' carbon credits have led to a significant focus shift towards high-integrity environmental codes. The future is likely to see a discouragement of secondary market trading of these credits. Even if Pakistan embarks on extensive re-forestation for carbon sequestration, the absence of a robust mechanism to validate and trade these credits renders them virtually valueless in the global market.

This scenario mirrors the plight of Pakistan's textile industry, which suffered when the world moved towards more water-efficient textile production methods, rendering Pakistan's traditional, water-intensive methods obsolete.

For Pakistan, a country where human rights issues and displacement concerns are significant and where the human rights index ranks low, the global shift towards environmental justice presents a profound challenge. Future climate aid and environmental investments are likely to come with stringent green conditionalities that demand not just local initiatives but also adherence to the principles of environmental justice.

As Pakistan stands at this environmental crossroads, the message is clear: the time for meaningful action is now. The country must break free from the shackles of dependency and chart a new course towards environmental sustainability. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Prioritising youth

### Arooj Waheed Dar

For the last decade or so, development economists have been sounding the alarm about Pakistan's youth demographic, saying that if not leveraged as an opportunity, it could turn into a ticking time bomb. Ominously, the ticking time bomb appears set to explode, pumped with ammunition in the form of propaganda and action against, arguably, the only politician in recent times that the youth have resonated with.

Banning the PTI founder's mention on the media, confiscating the party's electoral sign, imprisoning its leadership, and obstructing its election campaign are measures that have turned a major party into a victim in the eyes of a large part of the electorate. Those responsible for these actions perhaps forget the power of sympathy votes. Had the PTI been allowed to complete its term, its poor economic performance would have been enough to keep it from returning to power. But that was not an option for its powerful detractors.

There are concerns that in this situation the party's youth following will have few qualms about resorting to violence, propaganda, or other extreme measures if encouraged in this direction by the politicians they support. This is the rotten fruit that years of not investing in the youth has borne. Unfortunately, the youth demographic has yet to realise the impact of the controversial economic policies implemented by the PTI when it was in power.

To counter the negativity propagated by the PTI government, a well-thought-out strategy is

needed. This is not the 20th century where censorship, media crackdowns, arrests, and other intimidatory tactics are going to silence people. Stifling and suffocating the voice of the youth is only going to make them more rebellious. In fact, it is for this very reason that they have come to see the PTI as a symbol of resistance against injustices and the absence of equal opportunities over the years.

With elections coming up, there is a serious need for policymaking circles to reconsider the direction they want to take the country in, especially with regard to the youth. Addressing the youth at conferences to emphasise the importance of democratic governments simply doesn't cut it. What is needed is a strategic policy to address the issues of growing intolerance in society by focusing on the three E's: education, employment, and entrepreneurship.

Poor educational outcomes and dearth of employment opportunities have adversely impacted the employability of the youth, becoming the root cause of intolerance in society. With youth unemployment on the rise, there is a need to develop vocational training programmes that establish direct connections with employment opportunities within key industries, and abroad in countries that require trained workers. The content of these courses should meet international standards, and must be offered both in person and online to ensure inclusivity.

Schemes that incentivise students to study harder, such as merit-based scholarships, tuition reimbursement programmes, and technology and gadget in-

centives should be expanded. In this regard, the laptop scheme was a good initiative which needs to be reintroduced. Educational travel grants should be provided to students who do well in academics. These grants can be offered with a view to facilitating participation in workshops, short courses, and conferences, and thus encouraging an environment that promotes research and innovation.

To help create employment opportunities, a series of reforms that facilitate financial inclusion need to be undertaken to cultivate a conducive atmosphere for the growth of a start-up culture. Viable and innovative business proposals from young minds at the grassroots level should have equal and unrestricted access to capital, enabling them to launch their own entrepreneurial ventures. Programmes and digital applications can be launched to link budding entrepreneurs with potential investors and mentors for guidance and financial assistance.

Most importantly, equitable digitalisation must be ensured so that youth across Pakistan can have access to online education, employment, and e-commerce opportunities. This is a crucial concern that demands the collective effort of the politicians in the country, regardless of the issues that create divisions among them. They must agree on the core concept of the three Es in order to chalk a way forward for the youth of Pakistan. They must realise that channelising the youth's energy in the right direction is both a moral obligation, and a socioeconomic imperative. -- Courtesy Dawn



## CM initiates divisional meetings to ensure secure, fair elections

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Initiating a series of divisional meetings, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi chaired a crucial session at the Commissioner's Office in DG Khan, focusing on ensuring fair and free elections within a peaceful environment.

The meeting extensively reviewed the arrangements for the upcoming general elections and the security plan, with the Provincial Election Commission participating via video link, said a handout issued here on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Naqvi, emphasizing the need for foolproof security arrangements across Punjab, affirmed the citizens' right to vote in a tranquil environment. He called for meticulous planning to ensure the secure delivery of election

materials, directing Inspector General of Police Dr. Usman Anwar to promptly finalize comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Underlining the adherence to the Election Commission's code of conduct, Naqvi stated that all political parties and independent candidates have the right to conduct election campaigns. The chief minister stressed the importance of maintaining a conducive atmosphere for political activities.

Chief Secretary, Commissioner of Dera Ghazi Khan, RPO, Deputy Commissioner, DPO, secretaries concerned, and senior officials attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday inaugurated 133 bedded DG Khan Institute of

Cardiology besides multi-million road projects to facilitate the people of the area.

After inaugurating health facilities, he inspected 'Accident & Emergency' and other wards.

All wards and departments of state-of-the-art hospitals are fully functional for medical facilities.

During a briefing, the caretaker CM was told that Angiography, CT scan and other facilities are being conducted at the hospital. Later, speaking to journalists, Mohsin Naqvi stated that it was the responsibility of doctors, nurses, paramedics and staff of the cardiology department to maintain the standard of the hospital.

He informed that poor people of the area would benefit from the facilities being extended there.



KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi visiting the Center or training at Society for Children Need of Special Attention (SCINOSA).

## Elements involved in anti-state activities to be punished; members of GB Cabinet

GILGIT (APP): The Gilgit Baltistan Government has said the old price of subsidized wheat has been restored after detailed negotiations with all the stakeholders.

Addressing a joint press conference along with cabinet members here

Tuesday, GB Interior Minister Shams Lone said that some elements were trying to take law into their hand which was not in the interest of the people. There is a need to avoid such elements, he added.

"The people of Gilgit-

Baltistan are the true Pakistanis and few elements are working on external agenda", he said. We have evidences in this regard and state will punish those elements who are involved in anti-state activities will be dealt with iron hands, he added.

## Governor KP meets with winning team of Lacrosse Championship

PESHAWAR (APP): The winning team of women lacrosse championship and officer bearers of Pakistan Lacrosse Federation called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here on Tuesday.

The team and office bearer of the Federation expressed gratitude to the Governor for his invitation and support to teams during the championship. They also presented a shield to governor as a token of appreciation.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor highlighted the potential of KP youngsters in sports and congratulated the KP team for his extraordinary

performance in the championship.

I am proud of these girls who continued studies and proved their mettle in playing field, the Governor said and added that these girls would be provided support and financial assistance.

He said that the caretaker government and concerned authorities would be contacted to facilitate these girls who are gifted with talent and persistence to pursue their passion.

Haji Ghulam Ali said these girls are capable to bring fame for the country if provided help and proper platforms to present their talent.



KARACHI: Indonesian Consul General Dr. June Kuncoro Hadinigrat calls on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House.

## KPCTA arranges "Grand Peace Fair" to promote positive image of province

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) in collaboration with Department of International Relations Peshawar University and International Relations Students Association (IRSA) organized a two-day "Grand Peace Fair" on Tuesday to orient youth of the province about peace, harmony and project positive image of the province and merged areas.

Caretaker Minister for Newly Merged Districts (NMDs), Amir Abdullah Tashfeen attended the event as Chief Guest. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem, President (IRSA) Ahmad

Ali Khan and Incharge (IRSA) Dr. Khurshaid were also present on the occasion.

On the first day, a panel discussion on peace was arranged that was moderated by Dr. Saima Raza. The panel comprised Caretaker Minister for Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) Professor Dr. Hussain Shaheed, Senior Journalist Saleem Safi, Senior Journalist Mushtaq Yousofzai, Dr. Amir Raza, and Senior Journalist Shams Mohammad. The participants discussed the situation in the merged districts and elsewhere in the country.

The panel discussion emphasized that the establishment of peace.



GILGIT: Provincial Ministers Gilgit-Baltistan addressing a press conference regarding wheat subsidy.

## EU delegation held meeting with Sindh Home Minister to discuss poll arrangements

KARACHI (APP): A four-member delegation of the European Union called on Sindh Caretaker Minister for Home and Prison Brig. @ Haris Nawaz here on Tuesday and discussed in detail the arrangements for the February 08 elections.

Home Secretary Sindh Iqbal Memon was also present on the occasion.

The meeting also discussed the measures with special reference to law & order and administrative arrangements to ensure free, fair and transparent polls.

The Home Minister briefed the delegation about the security measures and said that full cooperation was being extended to the Election Commission of Pakistan in

transparently conducting the elections.

He reiterated the government's resolve to fulfil its duty of ensuring timely, free, fair and transparent elections, stressing that the caretaker setup would remain fully impartial.

He added that it was the constitutional responsibility of the caretaker government to provide full security to the voters and contesting candidates and the government had been taking measures to this end in a proper manner.

The EU delegation hoped with a positive note that the caretaker government, ECP will be able to hold free and fair elections by the constitution of Pakistan.

## Justice (ret) Hassan Feroze appointed as Chairman of SEPT

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Criminal Prosecution Department on Tuesday notified the appointment of Justice (Retired) Hassan Feroze as Chairman of the Sindh Environmental Protection Tribunal, Karachi for a period of three (03) years.

The decision was made in pursuant of sub section (2) of Section 25 of the Sindh Environmental Protection Act, 2014 and with the consultation of the Chief Justice of High Court of Sindh, according to a handout here.

This notification shall be effective on completion of Justice (Retired) Nisar Muhammad Shaikh tenure on 06-06-2024.

## PEC reviews election arrangements at DC office

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab Ijaz Anwar Chauhan paid a visit to the DC Office on Tuesday to evaluate preparations for the upcoming general election.

He specifically reviewed the election monitoring cell, ballot collection, and the record rooms.

The visiting delegation included Regional Election Commissioner Majid Dogar, District Election Commissioner Abdul Wadood.

Deputy Commissioner and District Returning Officer Rafia Haider provided a detailed briefing on election arrangements. Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance, Omar Maqbool, apprised the Provincial

Election Commissioner of the control room operations.

DC Rafia Haider highlighted that Lahore has 14 National Assembly and 30 Provincial Assembly constituencies, with a total of 4,403 polling stations serving the city's 44 constituencies. She noted that among them, 3,540 polling stations in Lahore are deemed sensitive, while 813 are classified as highly sensitive.

The Provincial Election Commissioner commended the DC Lahore for the comprehensive arrangements. He acknowledged the Lahore administration's development of a security plan and a comprehensive camera installation plan for peace and security.

## Canal Road to be closed to traffic on Feb 4-6: WASA

FAISALABAD (APP): Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) Managing Director (MD) Amir Aziz said that the Canal Road would remain closed for traffic from February 4 to 6 due to canal crossing of water supply pipelines.

During a meeting here on Tuesday, he said that WASA was executing the mega water supply project with the financial assistance of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to facilitate the residents of Faisalabad with potable drinking water in ample quantity.

In this connection, WASA would lay water supply pipelines in the city which would also cross the Rakh Branch Canal near FESCO Headquarters. Hence, the WASA had decided to close the Canal Road for vehicular traffic, he added.

## Minister inaugurates first modern scientific lab to preserve archives, artifacts

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Minister for Culture, Archives and Antiquities Sindh Dr. Syed Junaid Ali Shah here on Tuesday inaugurated a state-of-the-art Scientific Laboratory aimed at preserving archives and artifacts. The Laboratory was named "Exploration and Excavation Branch Scientific Laboratory and Data Center," established in Karachi to facilitate research on archives and artifacts and ensure their preservation in modern ways.

Situated near the historic site of Romi graveyard, the Laboratory was designed to become a hub for preserving cultural heritage. The inauguration ceremony was attended by dignitaries including Khalid Chachar, Secretary of Culture and Antiquities Sindh; Abdul Aleem Lashari, former Secretary of Culture; Mansoor

Ahmed Kanasro, Director General of Antiquities; Ijaz Sheikh, Director General of Libraries Sindh; Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari; Resident Director Roshan Ali Kanasro, Deputy Director Atif Hussain Vighio and others.

The minister emphasized that the preservation of archives and artifacts was a national responsibility. This state-of-the-art scientific laboratory marks the first of its kind at the national level in Sindh, aiming to ensure the preservation of treasures beyond those displayed in museums, like those found after the excavation of Mohenjodaro, now housed in the Treasure House Museum, he said and added that our antiquities were a part of our national identity and it was our responsibility to preserve them for future generations.

## PHC extends interim bail of PTI candidates

PESHAWAR (APP): A single-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday extended the interim bail of eight candidates of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI), including the former provincial law minister, Imtiaz Shahid Qureshi till February 12, 2024.

During the hearing conducted by Justice Sahibzada Asadullah, the defendants' lawyer Sikandar Hayat Shah told the court that former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Law Minister, Imtiaz Shahid Qureshi, Aftab Alam Advocate, Daud Shah, Naseem Afridi, Abdur Rehman, Shafi Jan, Khurram Zeeshan Advocate and Salman Shinwari were nominated in eight different cases.

He further told the court that cases were registered against these PTI candidates in different police stations of Kohat district.



BADIN: Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, the daughter of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto addressing to Party workers rally at DC Chowk during Election Campaign.

## PFA says: Expired, unhygienic frozen meat worth Rs1.8 mln discarded

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: An enforcement team of the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) under the supervision of its Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid raided the Naveed Kabab Unit (frozen meat point) in Gulshan Ravi and stopped its production beside lodging an FIR against it.

The authority discarded 12,000kg of substandard stinky meat; 1,800kg of minced meat; 600kg of kababs; 600kg of koftas; 200kg of tainted chilli and spices during the raid.

In a press statements, the PFA DG said that the authority had taken action against the food business operator (FBO) for preparing kababs and koftas with expired and unhygienic meat as well as adulterated spices. He said that the authority also witnessed expired meat in dirty freezers and the worst condition of hygiene in the production area.

Apart from that, he said that it failed to present a food licence to the raiding team. Muhammad Asim Javaid further said the authority also lodged.

## Two teens killed, two injured in road accident

FAISALABAD (APP): Two teenager motorcyclists were killed, while two others sustained injuries in a road accident in the area of Satiana police station. Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Tuesday that a speeding motorcycle collided with a rickshaw near Chak No.36-GB Bridge on Satiana-Jaranwala Road. As a result, the motorcyclists Abdur Rehman (15) and Muhammad Ahmad (15) fell on the road and a tractor trolley ran over them. They died on the spot. While two other boys including Aqib Munir (18) and Muhammad Tayyab (15) residents of Chak No.35.

## LHC seeks reply from DC for not allowing JI to hold public meeting

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought reply from Deputy Commissioner (DC) Faisalabad for not allowing JI to hold public meeting.

Petition filed by JI leader Mehboob ul Zaman came up for hearing before single bench of LHC led by Justice Ali Baqar Najafi here Tuesday.

The petitioner took the plea that JI wrote letter to DC Faisalabad on January 23 in connection with public meeting. When we submitted application we ensured that no other party has sought permission for public meeting on February 2.

The petitioner said DC Faisalabad referred the matter to CPO office. We

met DC Faisalabad on January 24 and he did not talk about public meeting of any other political party. It was said in the petition that now permission has been given to PML-N for public meeting on February 2.

The application from PML-N for public meeting is shown to have been given on January 20. No diary number is recorded on PML-N application. The application has been shown from retrospective date. The petitioner requested the court to allow JI to hold public meeting in Dhoobi Ghat.

The court while seeking reply from DC Faisalabad on the matter adjourned the hearing till today (Wednesday).



MOHENJO DARO: Deputy Consul General of the US Consulate General Karachi, Jimmy Mauldin is visiting and expressed keen interest in the historical ruins of the World Heritage Monuments of Mohenjo Daro.

## Faisalabad - Old faces in a new political paradigm

FAISALABAD (APP): Deeply entrenched in caste system, the industrial hub of Pakistan is once again witnessing the old faces contesting 2024 elections embracing more or less the same slogans of economic revival, jobs and ameliorating the lot of people.

Although social media has revolutionized the society in the awareness regime, yet the old doctrine of caste and incentives based politics still persists in most parts of the country and Faisalabad is not an exception.

Known as Manchester of Pakistan -

Faisalabad district is generally dominated by Jutt, Rajpoot, Gujjar, Arain, Ansari, Baloch bradaris with some other clans settled here even prior to the Independence of Pakistan.

Besides having their strong caste base, these candidates also own the tickets of key national political parties like Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Pakistan Peoples' Party with some candidates contesting as independents and claiming to be supported by PTI whose symbol of 'Bat' was suspended by the ECP due to faulty intra party

elections.

Daily life interactions, participation in funerals and weddings, disputes resolution at courts and police stations as well as local development work once again surfaces as mainstay in keeping the vote bank intact.

Future promises and hopes like always are also in the heart of election campaign with PML-N ensuring to putting the country on strong economic footing and PPP promising employments, salaries increase, BISP expansion and grassroots development.

Electioneering gained

momentum in Faisalabad - the third biggest metropolis of the country with a recent public meeting by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. But, political pundits foresee a major impetus in the campaign after PML-N supreme Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's public gathering on February 02.

With the February 08 elections zeroing in, the candidates from main political parties and the independents are diligently wooing voters by arranging public meetings and serving voters at election camps (Deras) with food, tea and even providing them

logistics for public use.

Housing over eight million populace, 5,297,899 Faisalabad voters including 2,841,085 male and 2,456,814 female - would be voting to elect 10 MNAs and 21 MPAs out of 277 and 574 candidates contesting elections respectively for National and Provincial Assembly seats.

Political figures like Rana Sanaulah Khan, Abid Sher Ali, Haji Akram Ansari, Rana Farooq Saeed Khan, Hafiz Mumtaz Ahmad, Hamayun Akhtar Khan, Ali Afzal Sahi, Mina Irfan Mannan, Shahbaz Babar, Arif Gill.



HYDERABAD: Activist of Jamat-e-Islami holds a sit in protest against over billing, Detection and pro long load shedding, outside HESCO Headquarter.



## PM for concerted efforts to explore oil & gas reserves

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday, while pointing to the abundant natural resources in the country, underlined the need for concerted efforts to explore onshore and offshore oil and gas reserves.

He was addressing the Petroleum Conference 2024 as the chief guest. Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir was the guest of honour.

The prime minister affirmed the government's readiness to contribute in infrastructure development, logistics, and security to bolster exploration and production efforts.

He further stated that the conference reflected a collective commitment to fully utilise the immense mineral potential so as to ensure energy self-sufficiency and transform Pakistan into a regional exporter of energy.

He appreciated the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and the Federal Ministry of Energy for fostering an investor-friendly environment by streamlining regulations and procedures.

Country Manager, Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company Ali Taha Al-Temimi appreciated unrelenting efforts of the Government of Pakistan in bringing the stakeholders together for formulating policy recommendations and boosting investment in the petroleum sector.

Provincial chief ministers, minister for energy, secretary petroleum, government representatives, policy makers, foreign and domestic investors from the energy and petroleum (E&P) sector and international delegates also attended the conference.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses the participants of Petroleum Conference.

## PTA making collaborative measures for ease of doing business

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Chairman Major General Hafeez ur Rehman on Tuesday said that the PTA was taking many collaborative efforts to promote ease of doing business and attract foreign investment. Talking to a delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) led by its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari which called on him, Hafeez said that such collaborations would help address industry challenges and facilitate more favourable business environment.

He said that Pakistan's telecommunications and digital technology sectors were undergoing transformative changes, driven by the development of comprehensive regulatory frameworks.

"The PTA is working to provide customers with affordable and high quality services and ensure reasonable returns to investors," he said, adding that the mobile phone sector had achieved a remarkable growth of 29% during the last five years due to which mobile services were available to 90% of the country's population while the broadband subscribers had soared to over 130 million.

He assured that the PTA would continue to focus on improving coverage, access and quality of services to promote ease of doing business and attract more investment.

Speaking on the occasion, ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that in the competitive business environment, availability of affordable telecommunication services and digital technology was very important for businesses and urged the PTA to focus on it to promote ease of doing business.

He said that suspension of mobile broadband services badly affected the digital transactions of businesses, and caused them significant losses, and urged the PTA to address the issue.



Federal Minister, MNFS&R, Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik along with Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Park Kijun, Chairman PARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali and Director, KOPIA Pakistan Center, Dr. Cho Gyoung-Rae during a media briefing and Park - KOPIA Certified Seed Potato celebration at NIGAB, NARC Islamabad (Dte of PR&P PARC).

## Adoption of aeroponic technology to ensure virus free seed potato production: Dr. Kausar

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for the National Food Security and Research Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik Tuesday said that adoption of Aeroponic technology will not only boost potato production but also ensure the availability of virus-free seeds.

The technology will contribute significantly to the agricultural sector's improvement, he said while addressing a ceremony held at National Agriculture Research Center in which he also highlighted the achievements of Korean-funded Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP), that focusing on seed potato production by using aeroponic technology.

The caretaker minister lauded the remarkable growth in potato cultivation and production during past two decades. Only 2 percent of potato seed requirement is being fulfilled locally and the country relied on importing 98% of its seed demand, he said adding that with the implementation of this cutting-edge technology, Pakistan is poised to achieve self-sufficiency in potato seed production.

Dr Kausar reiterated the government's commitment to prioritizing the agricultural sector, expressing gratitude to the Korean government for its invaluable support in driving agricultural development initiatives in Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Park Ki Jun underscored the collaborative strides between Pakistan and Korea, notably emphasizing the swift progress of the joint potato seed production project.

He unveiled plans for numerous forthcoming projects and initiatives and reaffirmed his dedication to bolstering bilateral cooperation by extending training opportunities in agriculture to Pakistani professionals, aimed at enriching their expertise and capabilities.

Chairman PARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, emphasized the significance of establishing first production facility in Pakistan utilizing aeroponic technology and appraised that the aeroponic technology can yield 50 to 60 potato seeds per plant compared to just five from conventional methods.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor is selling carpets alongside a road in the Federal Capital.

## SCCI, PHDEC to collaborate for uplift of horticulture sector in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and Pakistan Horticulture Development and Export Company (PHDEC) on Tuesday agreed to collaborate for development of the horticulture sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to details, an important meeting between SCCI president Fuad Ishaq and Manager of Pakistan Horticulture Development and Export Company (PHDEC) Raheel Abbas held at the Chamber house, in which agreement reached for joint work for development of horticulture sector, enhancing capacity building of stakeholders, launching coaching programs and joint ventures to efficient tap potentials in horticulture sector.

The meeting thoroughly discussed framing of a holistic plan for development and promotion of horticulture sector, technical information along with initiating joint initiatives.

Fuad Ishaq said that there are ample opportunities available to promote the horticulture sector in KP. He, however, stressed that proactive steps needed to be taken for development of this important sector. He assured that SCCI and PHDEC would jointly work for the development of the horticulture sector in future. Fuad Ishaq, who served as chairman of PHDEC from 2015 to 2022, vowed every possible measures would be taken for promotion of the horticulture sector in KP.

Earlier, PHDEC Manager Raheel Abbas apprised the SCCI chief that the company is going to hold a webinar on Feb 1 (Thursday) next, in which SCCI along with all relevant stakeholders will be participating.

## FPCCI, ICCI delegation meet Interior minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): The delegation of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), and Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), on Tuesday met with Caretaker Minister of Interior and Commerce Dr. Gohar Ejaz.

The delegation congratulated Dr. Gohar Ejaz, on assuming the charge as Home Minister.

The appointment of Dr. Gohar Ejaz as minister of interior and commerce is an honour for the entire business community, the delegation expressed the views during the meeting.

Caretaker Interior Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz said that increase in exports is inevitable for the economic development of this country and for this, the business community in the federal capital has the capacity to promote exports to achieve the objectives. He said that there are ample opportunities for exports of information technology, gems and flowers from the federal capital and the business community, he added should play the role in the construction and development of Pakistan.

## Energy Ministry to organize national level career expo

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), in collaboration with prominent Oil, Gas, and Mineral companies will organize a two-day national-level career expo on Wednesday.

Themed "Fueling Futures," the Career Expo 2024 aimed to foster awareness and bridge the gap between students and companies in the Oil, Gas, and Mineral sectors.

The expo will provide a platform for meaningful interactions and access to career development resources.

Senior management and Human Resource representatives from leading companies will be present, offering attending undergraduates and graduates a unique opportunity to explore exciting career prospects in the energy and mineral sector.

The expo aimed to host over 5,000 students from diverse disciplines of Engineering and Business Management, representing leading universities from across Pakistan.

High school students aspiring to gain insights into current trends and pursue careers in these fields are also welcome, contributing to the nurturing and encouragement of the next generation of professionals in the energy and mining industry.

This national-level Career Expo extends a warm welcome to all registered participants, offering an unparalleled opportunity to connect with industry leaders, strengthen industry-academia linkages, and foster meaningful communication between the energy think tank and the workforce of the future. Pakistan Petroleum Limited, one of the leading national Exploration and Production companies, is sponsoring the event.

## Rupee gains 10 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday gained 10 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs279.54 against the previous day's closing of Rs279.64.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs279.8 and Rs281.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 29 paise to close at Rs302.68 against the last day's closing of Rs302.97, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.89, whereas a decrease of 54 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs354.85 compared to the last closing of Rs355.39.

## Fertilizer industry urges nationwide dealers to ensure Urea sales at announced MRPs

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: In a groundbreaking move, leading fertilizer manufacturing companies in Pakistan, including Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC), Fauji

fertilizer dealers in a constructive dialogue and formulate immediate strategies aimed at reducing nationwide urea prices to benefit the farmers.

Attended by major fertilizer dealers from urea and other fertilizers at manufacturer-recommended prices.

Representatives from the fertilizer industry, including Mr. Ather Javed, Group General Manager Marketing, Fauji Fertilizer



Fertilizer Bin-Qasim Limited (FFBL), Engro Fertilizers Limited, Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited, and Agritech Limited, jointly hosted a convention with nationwide dealers on January 29, 2024, at Faletis Hotel, Lahore. The primary objective of this convention was to engage across the country, the convention facilitated a strategic discourse on vital topics such as fertilizer demand and supply situation, urea imports by the Government of Pakistan to fill the demand-supply gap, and the development of effective strategies to ensure the availability of

## Six development schemes approved

LAHORE (APP): The 45th meeting of Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) chaired by Planning and Development Board's (P&D Board) Punjab, Chairman Iftikhar Ali Sahoo here Tuesday, approved six developmental schemes of the SHC&ME (Specialized Health Care and Medical Education) and FW&F (Forest, Wildlife and Fisheries) sector with an estimated cost of Rs 8895.681 million. The approved schemes are as follows: Program for Strategic Transformation/Revamping of Tertiary Care Hospitals in Punjab (Bahawalpur Victoria Hospital, (Revised) at the cost of the Rs 2005.698 million; Program for

Revamping OPD Blocks in Tertiary Care Hospitals in Punjab (Nawaz Sharif Hospital Yakkhi Gate, Lahore) at the cost of the Rs 632.742 million; Program for Revamping OPD Blocks in Tertiary Care Hospitals in Punjab (Lady Aitchison Hospital, Lahore) (Revised) at the cost of the Rs 510.668 million; Program for Revamping OPD Blocks in Tertiary Care Hospitals in Punjab (Allama Iqbal Teaching Hospital, DG Khan) (Revised) at the cost of the Rs 1274.796 million; Revamping of Lahore Zoo (Revised) at the cost of the Rs 1873.837 million; and Implementation of Master Plan of Safari Zoo Lahore (Revised) at the cost of the Rs 2597.940 million.

## Shipping Activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Port activities reported at Port Qasim where five ships namely, MSC Mumbai-VIII, Maersk Atlanta, MSC Yukta-X, Encore and Tromso scheduled to load/offload Containers, Rice and Palm oil, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal and Liquid Terminal respectively during last 24 hours.

Meanwhile a bulk cargo carrier 'Sea Bird' to load 41,900 tonnes of Rice also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during the same period.

A total of eleven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships.

## SBP organizes art competition for new banknote designs

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has been organizing an Art Competition to have innovative and thematic design ideas for the new series banknotes. "The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has initiated the process for issuance of a new banknote series. To have innovative and thematic design ideas for the new series banknotes, an Art Competition is being organized," said a SBP press statement issued on Tuesday.

According to the statement, the local artists, designers and art students/designers are eligible to participate in the Art Competition.

It said, the participants may develop the designs on the themes, including but not limited to, social and cultural identities, demographic diversity, climate change and environment protection, economic development, natural landscapes, architectural heritage and national symbols.

The artists are expected to come up with novel designs and ideas, the statement said adding the designs should be submitted to Director, Finance Department, State Bank of Pakistan, I.I. Chundrigar Road, Karachi, by 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

The Art Competition will be conducted under the following terms and conditions:

a) The Participants can share design of all the seven (07) existing denominations (Rs. 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, 1000 and 5000) or fewer denominations based on their choice.

b) Design for each banknote shall be presented in hard copy on white paper along with a writeup of not more than hundred words in English or Urdu, explaining the design and its theme.



SARGODHA: Vendors displaying orange to attract the customers in front of market.

## Benazir Kafaalat stipends amount increased up to Rs 10,500

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has increased the amount of the quarterly stipends of Benazir Kafaalat programme up to Rs 10,500 for this year, in order to provide financial relief to the beneficiaries.

"The first quarterly payment of this year will be Rs 10,500 which will be issued during the current month (February). For any information and query, the beneficiaries can contact the BISP offices and toll free number 0800264777", Secretary BISP, Amir Ali Ahmad said.

The quarterly Benazir Education Stipends will be issued from the month of March including Rs 2500 (Primary), Rs. 3500 (Secondary) and Rs 4500 (higher secondary) for the girl students.

While for the boy students, Rs. 2000 (Primary), Rs. 3000 (Secondary) and Rs. 4000 (Higher Secondary) will be issued during the period.

The special bonus of Rs 3000 will be given to the girls at the completion of primary education.

Under the Benazir Nashonuma scheme, the quarterly stipend of Rs 2500 will be issued to per Pregnant and Lactating Mother (PLW) and boy child while Rs 3,000 will be given to the girl child.

However, in the flood affected areas, Rs 3500 will be issued to PLW and boy child each while Rs 4,000 will be given to the girl child.

The Nashonuma programme aims to address stunting among PLW and their children of less than two years of age through the provision of these stipends.



SARGODHA: President Sargodha Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Shameem Aftab in a group photograph with other members during General Body Meeting.

## FPCCI, RUDA to hold 'Investment Re-imagined' session on February 1

LAHORE (APP): The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Office Lahore and Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA) are going to organize a session on "Investment Re-imagined" here at FPCCI Regional Office February 01, 2024 (Thursday).

Regional Chairman and Vice President FPCCI Zaki Aijaz, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) RUDA Imran Amin, Vice President FPCCI Qurrat-ul-Ain, and COO (Chief Operating Officer) RUDA Mansoor Janjua will address the session. Executive Committee members of FPCCI, representatives of trade bodies, land developers, and other stakeholders will attend it. This event provides an excellent platform to showcase unique and lucrative investment propositions, particularly in the healthcare, education, and social service sectors. This occasion is significant for innovative thinkers to exchange their viewpoints on how public and private.



## US doesn't want wider war with Iran, says White House

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The United States does not want a wider war with Iran or the region, the White House said on Monday, adding that the administration believes a single drone was responsible for targeting US service members in Jordan over the weekend.

National security spokesman John Kirby also told MSNBC in an interview that talks to release prisoners in Gaza have been constructive and that then US sees a framework for another deal.

Gazans said the renewed violence made a mockery of a ruling by the World Court calling on Israel to do more to help civilians. Health officials say 26,637 Palestinians have been killed in the conflict with thousands more bodies likely under the rubble

of destroyed buildings across the coastal territory.

On the other hand, Israel relaunched an assault overnight on Gaza's main northern city, weeks after retreat, residents said, while Washington considered its response to the first deadly strike on its forces in the Middle East since the Gaza war began.

Three US servicemen were killed and at least 34 wounded in a drone attack in Jordan near the Syrian border for which US Central Command immediately blamed Iran. US President Joe Biden said the attacks were carried out by Iran-backed groups operating in Syria and Iraq.

While Iran has denied any involvement, Biden ordered "retaliatory" attacks on Iranian-backed groups.

At the same time, the US president stopped short

of hitting Iran directly for fear of igniting a broader war amid violence that has already hampered global trade through attacks on ships in the Red Sea. "Have no doubt, we will hold all those responsible to account at a time and in a manner of our choosing," Biden said.

Inside Gaza, residents said Israeli air strikes on neighbourhoods across Gaza City killed and wounded many people. While tanks shelled the eastern areas of the city, naval boats fired shells and gun rounds at the beachfront areas in the west, they said.

Among those killed were two Palestinian journalists, Essam El-lulu and Hussein Attalah, along with several members of their families, health officials and the journalist union said.



US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby speaks during the daily briefing in the Brady Briefing Room of the White House in Washington, DC.

## Ukraine hails constructive talks with Hungary

**Monitoring Desk**  
UZHGOROD: Ukraine's foreign minister on Monday thanked Hungary for "constructive" talks, ahead of a European summit where Kyiv hopes Hungary's Viktor Orban will lift a veto on a multi-billion-euro EU aid package.

Relations between the two neighbours have been strained over the past few years and were further aggravated when Prime Minister Orban in December vetoed 50 billion euros (\$54 billion) in EU aid for Kyiv.

In an effort to mend ties and "find solutions" to their differences, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy suggested a direct meeting with Orban.

Monday's talks between Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto and Ukraine's top diplomat Dmytro Kuleba around the city of Uzhhorod in western Ukraine were intended to lay the groundwork.

Szjarto has not visited Ukraine since Russia

launched its offensive against Kyiv in February 2022, although he has been to Moscow on several occasions.

"I want to emphasise the main point of this conversation: frankness, sincerity, and constructiveness," Kuleba said following his six-hour meeting with Szjarto. Szjarto also said the two countries had taken "encouraging steps" but warned they still "have a long way to go".

"We have a lot of work to do, but we on the Hungarian side are ready to do this work," Szjarto told the joint press conference. Monday's foreign minister talks come just days before European Union leaders are due to convene for an extraordinary summit on Thursday to make progress on their stalled aid package for Kyiv.

Szjarto said the EU financial aid to Ukraine was "not a bilateral question," and discussions on it would have to take place in Brussels.

## Ukraine says two killed in overnight Russian attacks

KYIV (INP): Ukraine said Tuesday that two people had been killed and at least five more wounded in the latest overnight Russian attacks across the country targeting military and energy infrastructure.

Moscow's army, meanwhile, said its air defences downed 21 Ukrainian drones over Russian territory and the annexed Crimean peninsula, as Kyiv steps up cross border aerial attacks.

Kyiv said Russian forces had launched two missiles and 35 attack drones across Ukraine and that 20 of the unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) had bypassed air defence systems.

"The enemy directed some of the attack UAVs along front line territories, trying to hit fuel and energy infrastructure, and civilian and military facilities near the front line and the state border with the Russia," the air force said in a statement.

Officials in Kyiv have urged Western allies to bolster its air defence capabilities and said gaining control of the country's air space is a priority for this year.

## Nikki Haley suggests she'll stay in Republican race after South Carolina

WASHINGTON: Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley on Sunday accused party leaders of not being honest brokers in her campaign against Donald Trump and said she did not have to win the nominating contest in South Carolina to stay in the race.

Haley, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, told NBC's Meet the Press that the former president would become even more "unhinged" as the campaign for the Republican presidential nomination progressed.

Haley is trying to gain momentum against Trump after coming in third place behind him in the Iowa caucuses and second place in New Hampshire.

Both are now seeking victory in South Carolina, where Haley once served as governor. Trump is far head of Haley in the polls,

but Haley said she did not necessarily need to win her home state to keep going. The Republican primary takes place on Feb. 24.

"I need to show that I'm building momentum. I need to show that I'm stronger in South Carolina than New Hampshire," she said. "Does that have to be a win? I don't think that necessarily has to be a win. But it certainly has to be better than what I did in New Hampshire and it certainly has to be close."

Republican heavyweights have thrown their support behind Trump, who has long been the frontrunner for the nomination, but the RNC stepped back from a proposal to declare him the presumptive nominee.

A proposal to declare him as such was withdrawn last week after Trump sourd on the idea.

## Finland elects president amid tensions with Russia

**Monitoring Desk**  
HELSINKI: Finns headed to the polls to pick a new president on Sunday to lead the country in its new role within Nato after it broke with decades of non-alignment to join the Western defence alliance in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Nordic country's admission to Nato last year drew threats of "counter measures" from its much larger neighbour. In December, Finland closed its entire border with Russia to passenger traffic in response to a surge in migrants trying to cross. Moscow denied Finnish charges it was sending the migrants there. All nine candidates are promising a tough stance towards Russia if elected president.



Hungarian foreign minister Peter Szijjarto, Zelensky's chief of staff Andriy Yermak and Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba paying tribute at Monument for Died Ukrainian Soldiers in Uzhhorod, home to a large ethnic Hungarian community in Ukraine.



Hong Kong's Secretary for Justice Paul Lam, Chief Executive John Lee and Secretary for Security Chris Tang Ping-keung attend a press conference regarding the legislation of Article 23 national security laws, in Hong Kong.

## North Korea fires cruise missiles into sea

SEOUL (INP): North Korea fired multiple unidentified cruise missiles on Tuesday into the sea off its west coast, South Korea's military said, the third time Pyongyang has tested cruise missiles in less than a week.

The missiles were launched at around 7 a.m. (2200 GMT on Monday). Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. South Korean and US intelligence authorities were closely monitoring the situation and analysing the details of the launch, it said.

The launch comes amid

a rise in tension on the Korean peninsula and follows a barrage of cruise missiles fired by Pyongyang off its east coast on Sunday. Sunday's launch was a test of the new submarine-launched cruise missiles (SLCM) dubbed "Pulhwasal-3-31" and leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test, North Korean state media KCNA reported on Monday.

Last week's missiles were also Pulhwasal-3-31, KCNA said, adding that they were the "strategic", which typically refers to nuclear-capable weapons.

## Israeli troops to 'go into action' soon at Lebanon border, says Israeli minister

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: Israeli troops will "very soon go into action" near the country's northern border with Lebanon, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said on Monday, as tensions surge amid the crisis in Gaza.

Gallant told troops near the border with the besieged Gaza Strip that others were being deployed to Israel's north.

"They will very soon go into action [...] so the forces in the north are reinforced," Gallant said, according to video released by his office.

He added that reservists would be gradually released "to prepare and come ready" for future operations.

Since the Israeli invasion against Gaza on Oct 7, the Lebanese-Israeli border has seen near-daily exchanges of fire between the Israeli army and Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, a Hamas ally.

Hezbollah on Monday claimed responsibility for 10 attacks on Israeli army positions near the border, using Iranian-made Falaq-1 rockets. Israel has not reported any strikes on military sites in the north.



Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad meets with new ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Syria, Hassan al-Shehi, in Damascus, Syria.

## Door-to-door vaccination starts to fight Zimbabwe cholera outbreak. Over 450 are already dead

HARARE (INP): Zimbabwe on Monday launched a cholera vaccination campaign to immunise over 2 million people against the waterborne disease, amid an outbreak that has killed hundreds since early last year.

Cholera had killed 452 people and infected a total of 20,446 in the southern African country as of Jan 24, since the outbreak started in February 2023, according to health ministry statistics. About half of the cases have involved children.

Zimbabwe will receive a total of 2.3 million vaccine doses from UNICEF and the World Health Organisation to be deployed to 29 of the hardest-hit districts. More than 892,000 doses have already been dispatched, the health ministry said. The cholera vaccine roll-out campaign was launched in Kuwadzana, a township about 15 km (9 miles) from central Harare.

Health workers administered the first vaccines to schoolchildren amid calls for residents to participate.

## Hindutva leaders eye Mumbai shrine as polls draw near

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: As a new temple in Ayodhya to Lord Ram may not have successfully invoked 'divine' support for India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third bid in polls due in May, the search for new sources of inspiration is on.

One such search has led to a Sufi shrine near Mumbai, which Hindu-tva allies have laid claim on to polarise voters, reports said on Monday.

A dispute, dormant for centuries with only sporadic stirrings, is being dusted and readied to fire in the run-up to the state assembly and Lok Sabha elections in

Maharashtra, reports say.

The first sign that Malang-gad — located on a 789-ft hill in Ambermath in the Mumbai metropolitan region in Thane district — will be the centerpiece of the election season has come from Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde himself.

Speaking at the annual Malang-gad Harinam Mahotsav in Thane, Mr Shinde, who broke away from the late Bal Thackeray's Shiv Sena to lead a BJP-backed coalition, said he is "committed to liberate Malang-gad", adding he would not rest till he had fulfilled the promise.

## Saudi project clears 733 Houthi mines in Yemen in a week

RIYADH (Internews): Project Masam, a Saudi initiative to clear land mines in Yemen, in the last week of January dismantled 733 mines planted by the Iran-backed Houthi militia.

Overseen by the Saudi aid agency KSrelief, the project's special teams destroyed 602 pieces of unexploded ordnance, 126 anti-tank mines, three improvised explosive devices, and two anti-personnel mines.

## Saudi Arabia to launch 'Dream of the Desert' train

RIYADH (INP): Saudi Arabia has unveiled the plan to launch the 'Dream of the Desert' train service.

A first-of-its-kind in the Middle East and North Africa region. The 40-cabin luxury train will add extra quality services and options to the kingdom's means of transportation, as per SPA. Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) partnered with the Italian Arsenale Group, a specialist in administering luxurious train trips, to launch the 'Dream of the Desert' service.

The 40 luxury-cabin 'Dream of the Desert' train will be open for bookings at the end of 2024.

## Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh to discuss Gaza ceasefire proposal in Cairo

GAZA (Online): The Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh says the group has received a ceasefire proposal put forward after talks in Paris and that he will visit Cairo to discuss it.

Haniyeh said the group's aim remained to end Israel's military offensive in Gaza and secure a full pull-out of Israeli forces from the territory.

Israel would struggle to accept such terms, but Qatar, the US and Egypt are hoping to see if the two sides can be persuaded to accept a ceasefire lasting at least a month, during which thousands of Palestinian prisoners would be released in return for the release of a large group of hostages.

The proposal, described as a framework, was hammered out between

Egypt, Qatar, the US and Israel on Sunday in talks in Paris. The location of the talks meant that Hamas negotiators could not be present.

The Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, may be willing to accept a drawdown in troops in Gaza during a ceasefire or humanitarian pause, but is unlikely to accept any permanent ceasefire that leaves Hamas military forces intact and capable of mounting a further threat to Israel. Previously, he has said he is prepared to accept a lengthy ceasefire, but on the condition there is no requirement to end hostilities.

Haniyeh said: "Our response to the proposal will be on the basis that the priority is stopping the aggression against Gaza and withdrawing the occupation forces from the Strip".

## New Hong Kong national security law to add five crimes

**Monitoring Desk**  
HONG KONG: Hong Kong will create its own national security law "as soon as possible", city leader John Lee said on Tuesday, adding insurrection and other crimes not covered by existing legislation imposed by Beijing four years ago.

Massive pro-democracy protests rocked the finance hub in 2019, bringing hundreds of thousands of people to the streets to call for greater freedoms.

In response, Beijing imposed a national security law to punish four major crimes — secession, subversion, terrorism, and collusion with foreign forces — with sentences ranging up to life in prison.

Officials on Tuesday said Hong Kong's security law — mandated by Article 23 of the city's mini-constitution — will cover five offences: treason, insurrection, espionage, destructive activities endangering national security, and external

interference.

"While we society as a whole looks calm and very safe, we still have to watch out for potential sabotage and undercurrents that try to create troubles, particularly some of the independent Hong Kong ideas that are still embedded in some people's minds," Lee told a press conference.

"The threats to national security are real, we have experienced them and suffered from them badly [...] we don't want to go through that painful experience again," he said, adding that "some foreign agents may still be active in Hong Kong".

"I must stress that the Basic Law Article 23 legislation must be done [...] as soon as possible," Lee said, noting the city had waited 26 years to make it a reality.

Lee said the consultation process for the law — which runs until the end of February.

## Australia the 'security partner of choice' in South Pacific: PM Albanese

SYDNEY (INP): Australia is the "security partner of choice" for neighbouring Papua New Guinea (PNG), Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Tuesday, after the biggest Pacific Island nation said China was seeking a policing and security deal.

Major trade partner China approached PNG in September with an offer to assist its police force with training, equipment and surveillance technology, PNG Foreign Minister Justin Tkachenko told Reuters on Monday. Talks were at an early stage, and PNG would not jeopardise its security ties with Australia and the United States, he added.

PNG struck a \$200 million security agreement with Australia in December to boost police training, after forcing a defence agreement with the United States in May, although both deals are yet to be implemented.

"We are the security

partner of choice for Papua New Guinea, as we are for most of the countries in the Pacific," Albanese told reporters on Tuesday, in response to questions.

China's ambassador to Australia said this month Beijing has a strategy to help Pacific Island nations with policing, not defence, and its growing presence in the region should not alarm Australia.

In a statement on Tuesday, Tkachenko said China's offer of policing and internal security assistance was "being carefully assessed, as we do not want to duplicate or compromise agreements already in place with our traditional security partners, Australia and the United States of America".

PNG has previously said it saw China as an economic partner, and Australia and the United States as security partners. "We have a long standing and genuine relationship with China, where we can agree to disagree."

## Tech layoffs for AI, but Wall Street ready for stellar earnings

**Monitoring Desk**  
SAN FRANCISCO: Tech layoffs have piled up since the start of the year, but analysts say that it could be a new normal for Silicon Valley in a big pivot to artificial intelligence.

The cuts are not on the same scale as late 2022 and early 2023 when tech companies got rid of hundreds of thousands — a blowback from the hiring frenzy during the pandemic when companies ramped up employee counts as everyday life turned online.

That cull, dubbed the "year of efficiency" by Facebook-owner Meta, succeeded, with most big tech stocks now riding high as they enter a quarterly earnings week expected to be stellar.

"The majority of the massive layoffs are in the rearview mirror," Wedbush analysts Dan Ives said. "But now you're seeing more repositioning in big tech, where they're spending and doubling down on AI while cutting back on non strategic ini-

tiatives," he said.

For analysts, all eyes will be on AI when Microsoft, Meta, Google and Amazon release their results in the next few days.

In all, last year the tech industry lost 260,000 jobs according to layoffs.fyi, a California-based website that tracks the sector. So far this year, which is only four weeks old, layoffs are at 24,584, the site showed, from 93 companies.

Again the Silicon Valley giants are part of the list, with the notable exception of Apple which has largely stayed clear of the post-pandemic wave.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai warned employees on January 18 that layoffs are in store at the search engine giant as it focused on new priorities, including artificial intelligence.

"We have ambitious goals and will be investing in our big priorities this year," Pichai told his staff. "The reality is that to create the capacity for this investment, we have to make tough choices."

## CEO of Royal Commission for AI/ULA arrested for corruption: Nazaha

RIYADH (Internews): The CEO of the Royal Commission for AI/ULA Amr bin Saleh Abdulrahman Al-Madani has been arrested for his involvement in corruption, an official source at the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) stated on Sunday. The crimes include abuse of authority and money laundering. The authority said Al-Madani illegally obtained contracts for the benefit of the National Talents Company.



# Mass awareness, life skills, vital for integration of special children into society: President

KARACHI (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday underscored the significance of mass awareness about special requirements of persons with different abilities and equipping them with education and living skills for their meaningful integration into society.

He was speaking during the visit of the Society for Children in Need of Special Assistance (SCINOSA) Day Home - an institute for individuals with Down syndrome and other mental challenges - along with the First Lady Samina Arif Alvi.

The president emphasized that children with different abilities, were part of the society and equipping them with living skills could enable them to lead a meaningful life and perform daily chores at their own.

He also stressed the need for creating special employment opportunities for differently-abled persons in accordance with their capabilities and teaching them the specific skills, required for those jobs.

"Approach towards children with different abilities has been changing across the globe with the emphasis on their enrolling in routine schools and we in Pakistan as well need to step forward and work together for breaking the taboos and social stigma, attached to mental and physical challenges," he noted.

Federal and Sindh governments have made laudable progress in that regard by reserving special quota for differently-abled persons in public sector jobs while the banking sector was also inducting special persons, Dr. Alvi said adding that Governor SBP and heads of different banks had also assured of additional steps in that regard in a recent meeting on inclusion and empowerment of special persons and women.



KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi and the First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi in a group photo with organizers and staff at Society for Children in Need Of Special Attention (SCINOSA).



QUETTA: Country Manager Reko Diq Mining Company Ltd Ali Ahsan Rind and Tariq Mian of The Hunar Foundation signing a MoU. Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan is also present.

## Reko Diq Mining Company signs MoU with THF

QUETTA (APP): Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC), a subsidiary of Barrick Gold Corporation on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with The Hunar Foundation (THF) in Quetta signaling the start of RDMC's first CSR initiative in vocational training and capacity building for local youth in Chagai, its district of operation.

RDMC operates in Pakistan under a Joint Venture agreement with the provincial Government of Balochistan and the federal Government of Pakistan.

According to press release issued here, The Hunar Foundation is a non-profit organization established in 2008 to empower and enable the marginalized youth of Pakistan with vocational and technical skills.

THF's objective is to act as a facilitator in the field of education for catalytic action to increase the number of talented young persons engaged in productive work, consequently alleviating poverty and making them contributing members of society.

This partnership between RDMC and THF intends to pave the way for a vocational training and capacity-building project that will facilitate income generation and enterprise amongst local youth.

It is a social investment project that promises sustainable development and seeks to build a harmonious partnership amongst

the communities in and around the project area.

The Hunar Foundation provides semi-educated and skilled young adults with quality vocational training that meets the expectations of the market, leading to employment or small business creation - and eventually economic freedom and empowerment.

The Nokkundi Community Development Committee (CDC) members support this initiative. RDMC feels building capacity of local talent for improved income-generation amongst unemployed youth is a powerful lever for the achievement of the company's sustainability strategy and long-term vision.

## ECP issues notices to political parties, candidates over violations election code

QUETTA (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan's Balochistan Chapter issued notices on Tuesday to various political parties and candidates for violating the code of conduct in the Chaman district. The notices were in response to the unauthorized placement of billboards, hoardings, and panaflex, as confirmed by the spokesperson of the Provincial Election Commissioner in Balochistan.

On the directives of District Monitoring Officer Zohaibullah, election monitoring teams and the district administration took swift action to address the violations. They removed illegal election materials on a large scale in Chaman City. It is

## Funeral prayer of police martyred in Mach incident offered

QUETTA (APP): The funeral prayer of police personnel who was martyred by terrorists in Mach was offered at the Police Lines on Tuesday.

Balochistan Caretaker Home Minister Mir Zubair Jamali, Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan, IG Police Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, ACS Zahid Saleem, and senior officials and large number of police personnel attended the funeral prayer of martyred.

The Home Minister and police officials placed floral wreaths on the coffin of the martyr and prayed for the elevation of the martyr's ranks while the police personnel saluted the martyred. Mir Zubair Jamali said that it was condemnable to target the police personnel who were responsible for the security of the people, saying that Balochistan Police have made endless sacrifices for the protection of life and property of the people and the people of the province were proud of these sacrifices of the police.

## CM slams terrorism in Mach & adjacent areas; directs to restore peace

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has condemned the acts of terrorism in Mach and its adjacent areas.

According to an official hand out issued here on Tuesday, the caretaker Chief Minister directed the Provincial Home Department to mobilize all available resources for restoration of peace.

He said that all security institutions are busy in protection of lives of the people and restoration of peace through coordinated efforts.

He said that the security are carrying out operation in careful manner to save the local population from the loss.

The caretaker Chief Minister commended the swift action taken by the security forces saying that they foiled the major acts of terrorism through swift and careful response.

He said that the local administration, FC and police are actively busy in the operation being carried out for clearance of the area.

## NCSW calls for national consensus to end child marriages, says Nilofar

QUETTA: The National Commission on Status of Women (NCSW) called for creating national consensus to end child marriages in the country.

In her introductory remarks, the Chairperson NCSW said that this is 7th meeting of the child marriage advocacy campaign.

The legislation is being considered for prevention of the child marriages during the consultation.

She mentioned that the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 is also enforced in 2024.

She regretfully pointed out that it is essential to determine the age for casting votes, but the marriages are performed without asking about age of the children. As a result, the girls are deprived of their basic rights.

Under the given circumstances, Balochistan directly needs national bill for prevention of the child marriages. This was stated by the Chairperson of NCSW, Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar while addressing the provincial consultation organized at a local hotel on Tuesday.

The NCSW arranged the consultation in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders including UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women in which the Chairperson of Balochistan Commission on Status of Women, Ms. Fauzia Shaheen, senior officials of the Provincial Departments of Social Welfare, Health

## Asif condemns blast in Sibi

QUETTA: The explosion in the rally of PTI in Sibi is very sad and condemnable. The explosion in the peaceful rally of Jhampur is tantamount to expelling Jhampur from politics. Muhammad Asif Tareen, senior leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, condemned the explosion in the Sibi rally led by Saddam Khan Tareen, the candidate of NA-253 of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, and said that the blast in a peaceful, democratic and political rally is sad and shocking. The government should form a judicial commission to investigate it on an emergency basis so that the involved elements are punished severely. who were struggling with a peaceful political movement, today who will account for the blood of these innocent martyrs and how long will we continue to carry such bodies, the grief of the families of these martyrs is equally shared, history is a witness that such the blood and sacrifice of martyrs is the life of any nation.



QUETTA: PML-N Provincial General Secretary, Jamal Shah Kakar addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

## Pak-US sign agreement to protect Pakistan's cultural heritage

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan and the United States signed an agreement here on Tuesday with an aim to protect the cultural heritage of Pakistan.

The agreement was signed by Pakistan Secretary of National Heritage and Culture Humaira Ahmed and Ambassador of US to Pakistan Donald Blome, said a press release issued by US embassy.

According to details, the agreement establishes import restrictions on certain types of archaeological and ethnological materials originating from Pakistan and entering the United States.

The agreement facilitates the return of these cultural objects to the people of Pakistan. The cultural property agreement demonstrates the strong US and Pakistani commitment to protect the theft and trafficking of cultural objects and our shared goal of protecting Pakistan's rich and diverse cultural heritage.

United States' global commitment to cultural heritage protection and preservation. The United States has been unwavering in its commitment to protect and preserve cultural heritage around the world and to restrict trafficking in cultural property, which may be used to fund terrorist and criminal networks.

As a result, both the containers were destroyed causing financial loss of millions of rupees.

Meanwhile, the traders community of province have expressed deep concern over the loss of millions of rupees caused due to the subversive act.

They demanded of the high ups to take stern action against the anti-social elements and terrorists. It may be mentioned here that both the containers were on their way to Quetta from Karachi via Sukkur.

## No compromise made on security, stability of country: Rahim

QUETTA (APP)- Leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), nominated candidate for constituency PB- 40, Maulana Rahimuddin Advocate said that no compromise would be made on the security and stability of the beloved country.

He expressed these views while addressing at public gatherings organized in connection with the election campaign in respective areas including Killi Chiltan Raisani, Hazar Ganji, Killi Khizan, Killi Muslimabad, Akhtar Abad, Hazar Town, Kharot Abad, Pashtun Bagh and Khizi Chowk.

Addressing at the events, he said that under a well-thought-out plan, the situation in Balochistan was being worsened saying that enemy powers were using different tactics against our beloved Pakistan, the security agencies would be taken measures to protect the life and property of the masses.

## Traders demand stern action against terrorists: Two containers load of batteries set ablaze by armed assailants in Mach

QUETTA: Two containers load of batteries were put on fire by unknown armed assailants on the main national highway in Mach area on late Monday night.

The reports suggested that the containers set ablaze belonged to traders belonging to Chaman namely Akram Khan Achakzai and Ali Achakzai.

According to the reports, the unknown armed assailants resorted to an indiscriminate fire with sophisticated weapons targeting the containers and then

## Minister visits to Civil Hospital to inquire after health of injured

QUETTA- (APP)- Balochistan Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Ameer Muhammad Jogaizai on Tuesday visited Trauma Center of Quetta Civil Hospital to inquire after the health of injured victims of Mach Kolpur incident.

MD Trauma Center Dr. Arbab Kamran Kasi, MS Civil Hospital Dr. Ishaq Panizi, RMO Dr. Amna, In-charge Pharmacist Dr. Syed Hazrat Agha and other assistants were present on this occasion.

He also directed concerned doctors to take all possible steps to provide best treatment facilities to the injured patients in the hospital.

Dr. Ameer Muhammad Jogaizai appreciated the performance of MD Trauma Center and medical staff for provision of medical aid to the injured of Mach Kolpur incident.



KAHUTA: PPPP President, Asif Ali Zardari addresses during public gathering meeting as a part of election campaign in connection of General Election 2024 coming ahead, in Kahuta.

## Sardar Ahmed says JUI to take steps for stability of country, Balochistan after winging of elections

QUETTA: (APP)-Quetta Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) Leader nominated candidate for constituency PB-46 Sardar Ahmed Khan Shahwani and others said that the JUI party would come to power after winning of election and take revolutionary steps for stability and integrity of the country and Balochistan.

The JUI's candidate Sardar Ahmed Khan Shahwani, Maulana Muhammad Hashim Khishki Maulana Haji Wazir Muhammad, Barichullah Dost Advocate, Malik Abdul Salam Shahwani, Abdul Wahab Kakar, Maulana Mufti Naseebullah Agha, Maulana Hafiz Sardar Muhammad Hafiz Bilal Khan, and other leaders expressed these views while addressing the gatherings organized in connection with the election campaign at Abad area.



QUETTA: District Monitoring Officer Quetta, Subhan Dashti addressing a press conference at Commissioner Office.

## Only PPP to get country out of many crises, says Hasnain Hashmi

QUETTA- (APP)-Pakistan People's Party (PPP)'s nominated candidate from constituency PB-43 Syed Hasnain Hashmi on Tuesday said that Pakistan was currently suffering from many problems and only PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari could get the country out of these problems.

He said that now it was our duty to secure the hands of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for national integrity, restoration of international prestige, solutions to public problems and reconstruction of society through votes.

He shared these views while addressing the corner meetings held at Killi Ismail, Lehri Gate, Giant Road and Jogaizai Street here.

Shahjahan Gujjar, Akhtar Baloch, Aziz Longo, Harith Muhammad Hosni, Qazi Qahir, Jafar George, Ilyas Bhatti, Akram Gul and others also spoke at the events of election.

Syed Hasnain Hashmi said that the only solution to the public, political and social problems of Pakistan is hidden in the life of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, his principles and the party manifesto he was created.

He urged the people that they should seal the election symbol of Pakistan People's Party's nominees "Arrow" on February 8 and make the PPP's candidates successful in country.