

Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

Vol. XIV No. 17 Reg. mails-B/ ID-445 Monday January 22, 2024, Rajab 10, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

Bilawal tells PTI workers to support PPP in polls, vows to eliminate politics of revenge

Says I have experienced the oppression of the PML-N and I would never wish for any political party worker to endure such hardship

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Sunday urged Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters to rally behind his party in the upcoming general elections, pledging to put an end to the politics of revenge and division.

Bilawal targeted the former coalition partner with strong criticism, questioning how long the people of Punjab would endure the alternating rule of PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif and Wasim Akram plus (PTI's Usman Buzdar) in Lahore.

Appealing to the youth aligned with PTI, Bilawal urged them to cast their votes in the upcoming elections. He empathised with the struggles faced by PPP supporters under the rule of the PML-N and urged the nation to steer clear of the divisive politics of the 1990s.

Those who used to chant slogans of vote kizzat do (give respect to vote) are nowhere to be found," he said, referring to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif.



A view of group photo as joint military training between Pakistan Army and Royal Saudi Land Forces started at Okara garrison



LAHORE: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addresses to his supporters during public gathering meeting regarding Election Campaign in connection of the General Election 2024 coming ahead, in Lahore.

ECP categorizes over 17,500 polling stations as highly sensitive

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has categorized over 17,500 polling stations as highly sensitive, 32,508 as sensitive, and 42,500 as normal out of a total of 92,500 polling stations nationwide.

all set to be monitored by CCTV cameras. A total of 2,038 polling stations in Balochistan and 4,344 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been categorized as highly sensitive.

Pakistan Army, Royal Saudi Land Forces commences in Okara Garrison

RAWALPINDI (APP): The joint military training of the Pakistan Army and Royal Saudi Land Forces organized by the Multan Corps commenced in Okara Garrison.

Maryam launches election campaign; PTI candidate backs her

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Chief Organizer and candidate from constituency NA 119 Maryam Nawaz on Sunday formally started her election campaign in the constituency.

Pakistan, China agree to enhance cooperation in diverse fields

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and China on Sunday agreed to enhance focus on high-quality advancements in industry, agriculture, information technology, science and technology to ensure tangible socio-economic benefits for the people through the evolution of CPEC.

The two sides reviewed with satisfaction the progress made since the third meeting of the Joint Working Group held virtually on 21 July 2022. The meeting underscored CPEC's pioneering role in strengthening international and regional connectivity while appreciating the open and inclusive nature of this flagship project.

Recalling the deliberations of the Second and the Third Pakistan-China Think Tanks Forum in September 2022 and July 2023, the two sides expressed joint support for media and think tanks cooperation. They also agreed on sharing of best practices and generating an intellectual knowledge pool of CPEC and BRI development through enhanced international communication and cooperation.

Third parties to explore mutually beneficial avenues of cooperation. The two sides rejected the disinformation campaigns and distorted reporting on CPEC and stressed the need to counter fallacious narratives and misinformation.



SIALKOT: Former Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif is addressing to the participants of Workers Convention at PML-N House at Paris Road.

Timely election, the only way out: Shehbaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif asserted on Sunday that the nation was ready to enter the election, emphasizing the need for nationwide polls despite challenges.

He emphasized that quick economic progress was not only beneficial for the people but overall progress of the nation. Shehbaz expressed confidence in PML-N securing sufficient seats to form the government at the center.

Iran, Pakistan flights resume amid easing tensions

KARACHI (INP): In a sign of improving relations between Iran and Pakistan, commercial flights between the two countries have resumed after a brief hiatus.

Education Ministry reveals 2.62 mn children deprived of schooling in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): A recent report from the Federal Ministry of Education has disclosed a startling revelation that a staggering 2.62 million children in Pakistan are deprived of attending school.

New Delhi has no proof of 2019 Balakot strike success, admits ex-Indian envoy

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former Indian high commissioner to Pakistan Ajay Bisaria admitted that India only has narratives but no concrete proof of the success of the 2019 Balakot strikes.

Protest in Muzaffarabad against incidents of massacres in IIOJK

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): A protest demonstration was organized by the International Forum for Justice and Human Rights in Muzaffarabad against the various incidents of massacres, including Gaw Kadal, Handwara, Kupwara and Sopore in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Additional FS reaffirms Pak commitment to NAM's efforts towards peace, equality

ISLAMABAD: Additional Foreign Secretary United Nations, Ambassador Syed Haider Shah on Sunday outlined Pakistan's firm commitment to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and its founding principles.

Pneumonia claims lives of 8 children in Punjab in 24 hours

LAHORE (INP): As many as eight children died of pneumonia and related cases in different areas of Punjab in a single day amid intense cold weather.

Shehbaz Sharif highlighted the imperative need for rapid economic development in the country, adding that PML-N as a party dedicated to address-

Elections 2024: Nawaz Sharif to launch campaign in KP today

MANSEHRA (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif will address a public gathering in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Mansehra district on January 22.

Education Ministry reveals 2.62 mn children deprived of schooling in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): A recent report from the Federal Ministry of Education has disclosed a startling revelation that a staggering 2.62 million children in Pakistan are deprived of attending school.

Education Ministry reveals 2.62 mn children deprived of schooling in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): A recent report from the Federal Ministry of Education has disclosed a startling revelation that a staggering 2.62 million children in Pakistan are deprived of attending school.

Education Ministry reveals 2.62 mn children deprived of schooling in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): A recent report from the Federal Ministry of Education has disclosed a startling revelation that a staggering 2.62 million children in Pakistan are deprived of attending school.

Education Ministry reveals 2.62 mn children deprived of schooling in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): A recent report from the Federal Ministry of Education has disclosed a startling revelation that a staggering 2.62 million children in Pakistan are deprived of attending school.

Education Ministry reveals 2.62 mn children deprived of schooling in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): A recent report from the Federal Ministry of Education has disclosed a startling revelation that a staggering 2.62 million children in Pakistan are deprived of attending school.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

ing the pressing challenges facing the country.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Olive branch?

Dare one hope? Imran Khan's recent overture to "hold dialogue" surfaces as a beacon of potential reconciliation in a political landscape that has increasingly become fraught with venomous rhetoric and hardened stances. However, the ambiguity shrouding the intended recipients of this dialogue raises questions.

Historically, Mr Khan, as the leader of PTI, has taken an unyielding stance against engaging with other political factions — to the extent that he once said he could talk to the militant group TTP, but not "thieves". Such history prompts us to ask: with whom does he now wish to converse, and what has brought about this sudden shift?

Mr Khan's refusal to engage with other political entities despite their willingness to talk has been a hallmark of his political career. His rhetoric not only widened the chasm between the PTI and other parties but also contributed to a fragmented political environment. Such divisiveness is not something Pakistan can afford. Therefore, this newfound desire to initiate dialogue, albeit vague, must be cautiously welcomed, yet scrutinised for its authenticity and direction.

For the dialogue to serve the nation's interest, it must be rooted in the spirit of democracy, involving the country's political stakeholders. History has shown that stability and progress come from collaborative efforts among political entities, not from unilateral decisions or alignments with non-political establishments. It is imperative for the incarcerated PTI chief to clarify that his call for dialogue is not a veiled attempt to negotiate with the establishment, but a genuine effort to bridge gaps with other political parties.

Labelling political opponents — who are simply that, and not enemies to be vanquished — as unworthy of dialogue has done little in the past to foster the environment crucial for democratic discourse. For the nation to move forward, it is essential that political leaders shed animosity and engage in constructive dialogue, prioritising national interest over personal or party agendas.

The onus is now on Mr Khan to elucidate his intentions. It is an opportunity for him to demonstrate statesmanship by extending an olive branch to his adversaries, paving the way to addressing together Pakistan's myriad challenges. The success of an offer for dialogue hinges on its inclusiveness and transparency. For the sake of the nation's democratic health, this dialogue — if it ever occurs — must not be an echo chamber but a platform for genuine engagement among all political stakeholders. Meanwhile, Mr Khan's rivals, including the PPP and PML-N, must respond positively to any sincere overture on his part, rather than bind themselves to elements outside the political realm. Numerous examples establish that it is through dialogue, not discord, that nations forge paths to unity and strength. This nation is waiting for a new chapter of political maturity and inclusiveness to dawn.

Beyond headlines

Muna Khan

You can't get all your news from headlines. I was reminded of this last month in the US, when reading stories about Harvard president Claudine Gay's resignation following allegations of plagiarism. In reality, her resignation was the result of a well-coordinated campaign which had to do more with race and misogyny than upholding academic principles. But you wouldn't think so reading the headlines.

This campaign to oust the first Black president at Harvard was led by conservative activist Christopher Rufo, who is against DEI (diversity equity inclusion initiatives) and Bill Ackman, Harvard alum and hedge fund billionaire. They were then joined by donors and Republican Elise Stefanik, who headed a Congressional committee looking into accusations of antisemitism on elite campuses. Essentially, they were enraged by Gay's "failure" to condemn antisemitism; ie, pro-Palestinian student demonstrations on Harvard.

"Does calling for the genocide of Jews violate Harvard's rules of bullying and harassment?" asked Stefanik, who herself is a Harvard alum and was removed from an advisory board after she said the 2020 election was stolen from Donald Trump.

"The rules around bullying and harassment are quite specific," replied Gay, "and if the context in which that language is used amounts to bullying and harassment, then we take — we take action against it."

The backlash to Gay's response was swift and calls for her to be removed were amplified. (Incidentally all three universities called to the hearing were headed by women, and only the MIT president

still has her job.)

However, there was little mention of how, in those hearings, Stefanik was framing protest to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land as genocide. At one point, Stefanik described the "call for infitadas as a call to commit genocide against the Jewish people". Even a basic internet search will show that infitadas have not called for eliminating Jewish people. But it was clear no one in the press wanted to make this distinction, perhaps fearing it would be seen as antisemitic. Unfortunately, the most innocuous or seemingly obvious thinking can be framed as antisemitic in the US.

Gay didn't stand a chance.

When the hearings weren't able to produce the desired results, her detractors amplified the accusations of plagiarism. An investigation by Harvard into those claims found "few incidents of inadequate citations" but no wrongdoing. In reality, the right-wing (read rich men) cannot tolerate a Black woman in charge of an institute whose history is rooted in protecting white interests.

Gay resigned on Jan 2, but the trifecta of Ackman, Rufo and Stefanik — as MSNBC's Ali Velshi called them — has vowed to pursue probes into "deep institutional rot" at Harvard. I read this as protecting elite interests, one of which they say is freedom of speech on campuses. But whose speech do they want to protect?

US colleges have never been bastions of free speech because Palestinians, and other marginalised voices, have struggled to tell their stories. However, this is changing as DEI initiatives have allowed new perspectives, and younger generations no longer accept mainstream

media narratives, especially about genocide. The establishment continues to bully them into silence, but I don't know how much longer for.

Advocates of free speech are often the ones who suppress the most marginalised voices. These are usually the same people against DEI initiatives which, they claim, is the only reason Gay got the job. Men like Ackman, with access to formidable resources, are now trying to equate DEI initiatives as racist and/or antisemitic. On the other side are Palestinians and their supporters with far fewer resources but with truth on their side.

The media's focus on Gay's "plagiarism" should remind us how easy it is to distract from coverage on Palestine. I'm not here to say that Gay's story isn't important, but surely there's space in newspapers about Israel's war that is now starving Palestinians. It is also a reminder of how elitist the media is — more keen to talk about palace intrigues at Harvard than starvation in Gaza because that's what its audience wants. This serves politicians like Stefanik well because they don't have to answer questions about their Israel policies. The media aids them in this.

The interest in Gay's future or Harvard's policies will wane when journalists, editors and media owners realise they can't just serve elite interests. The tide is turning, albeit slowly, and the resistance to this change is immense.

The Israel lobby has upped the ante on keeping its narrative alive, but a new audience is emerging that isn't buying their Kool Aid anymore. This number will grow and won't rely on the media for information. They're already on TikTok; how long before everyone else is too? — Courtesy Dawn

Security decisions

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Nearly every country facing the kind of security challenges that Pakistan confronts maintains a national security council (NSC) as a principal decision-making body that brings together the civil and military leadership onto one platform. However, in Pakistan, this idea has not been fully embraced.

Gen Ayub Khan constituted a national advisory council to give the impression of collective decision-making by the civil and military leadership. In 1969, Gen Yahya Khan established an NSC for advice. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto constituted a cabinet committee on national security in 1976. Gen Zia also created an NSC in 1985 but abolished it the same year. In 1997, the interim government of Malik Meraj Khalid established a council for defence and national security but the idea was abandoned by the elected dispensation, which preferred the forum of a defence committee of the cabinet.

In October 1998, Gen Jehangir Karamat floated the idea of an NSC for institutionalised decision-making on national security. However, the suggestion was resisted by the Sharif government on grounds that it would give constitutional legitimacy to the army's role in political governance. Gen Musharraf revived the idea in 2004 and set up an NSC as a statutory body, which worked till 2008. In 2013, prime minister Nawaz Sharif softened up to the idea but reconstituted it as a national security committee (not council), subservient to the cabinet.

Evidently, the idea of having an NSC could never take root in Pakistan. The story is no different when it comes to the office of national se-

curity adviser. Pakistan had NSAs in 1969, 2004 to 2008, and then 2013 to 2022. Since April 2022, there has been no NSA.

Clearly, there is no consensus in Pakistan about the powers and role of an NSC. Civilian rulers perceive it as a forum to give the military a greater say in political governance, which, they believe, undermines the mandate of elected governments.

A counter argument is given that since an NSC is chaired by the prime minister and includes several leading cabinet members, involving the military leadership in decision-making on critical issues of national security could strengthen, rather than weaken, the hands of the civilian government. Further, given our ground realities, a high-level civil-military forum for collective decision-making could address misunderstandings before these morph into military interventions.

Given the enormous geostrategic changes underway globally and regionally, and instability on our borders with Iran, Afghanistan and India, Pakistan needs an NSC to address security challenges. It is worth noting that national security is now defined more comprehensively as a tripod of traditional security, economic security and human security. Given the interconnected and wider spectrum of threats to national security — external, internal and non-traditional — a whole-of-the-nation approach is needed.

It would also be relevant to look at how the rest of the world is managing decision-making on issues of national security. In the US, the NSC was created in 1947 as the president's principal forum for considering national security and foreign policy matters. It is chaired by the

president and its regular attendees include the vice president, secretaries of defence, state, treasury and homeland, chairman joint chiefs of staff and director of national intelligence. It has become the president's principal arm for coordinating between domestic and foreign policies and across federal agencies. Time has shown that this forum has enabled the president to make informed policy decisions.

In our own neighbourhood, India's prime minister Vajpayee established an NSC in November 1998, six months after the South Asia nuclear tests, and one month after Gen Karamat had proposed the idea in Pakistan. Since then, India's NSC has functioned regularly on all matters relating to the external and internal security of India, with key union ministers and military leaders in attendance. Five NSAs (three with diplomacy and two with intelligence background) have served the country. The NSC has a three-tiered structure, comprising a strategic policy group, an advisory board, and a joint intelligence committee. Pakistan can learn from these and several other examples where national security interests have been better served by institutionalised decision-making. Given that we have border security issues with our neighbours to the east and west, and with the forces of terrorism raising their head again, the next elected government needs to consider setting up a fully empowered NSC, chaired by the prime minister, and also appoint an NSA, so that serious challenges to Pakistan's national security can be addressed collectively and more effectively. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Revenue shortfall to be met with more taxes

Monitoring Desk
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has committed with the International Monetary Fund to further increase gas prices before February 15th—third raise in one year—and also stands ready to impose additional Rs18 billion per month taxes including Rs5 per kilogram levy on sugar. The additional taxes, having an annual impact of Rs216 billion, would be imposed only if the government's income from the Federal Board of Revenue and other sources falls short of the agreed targets, according to a report that the IMF released on Saturday. Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamsud Akhtar has given the commitments to the IMF.

The report also disclosed that the caretaker government had missed the

primary budget surplus target of the first quarter of the fiscal year. The IMF board had to give a waiver on this key performance criterion to make Pakistan eligible for the \$706 million loan tranche.

Pakistan would issue a notification of the December 2023 semi-annual gas tariff adjustment determination by February 15, 2024, according to the staff level report.

This is the third gas price increase that would be enforced in the past one year.

In November last year, the caretaker government had increased the gas prices by 1,100%, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The energy ministry claims that the average increase was 172%.

Despite implementing two

increases, circular debt in the gas sector has jumped to over Rs3 trillion as of Nov-end—an addition of Rs938 billion in just five months (Jul-Nov) 2023.

The interim government has committed that the Feb price increase would include maintaining the current progressive slab structure for domestic consumers as well as not disturbing the protection cover enjoyed by the most vulnerable household consumers.

However, the caretaker government has apparently misguided the IMF that the most vulnerable gas consumers were protected from the November 2023 increase. The PBS weekly report showed that the country's poorest segment earning Rs17,000 per month also faced the 1,108% increase in prices.

PFC plans for global presence of Pakistani furniture

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) has strategically chalked out an ambitious yearly plan to ensure global presence of Pakistani furniture.

Chairing the council's Board of Directors (BoD) meeting here Sunday, the PFC Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq disclosed the annual plan in which throughout the calendar year, the council aims to showcase its diverse range of furniture products in key international expos. This proactive approach would not only help explore new markets but also captivate the attention of foreign buyers, he added.

In order to strengthen the global footprint, the PFC envisions collaborative efforts by fostering partnerships with international counterparts. The plan emphasizes the significance of joint ventures within the furniture industry.



BERLIN: Caretaker Minister for National Food Security and Research Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik in a meeting with Managing Director, IFW Expo and Management of DLG International Stefan Kresse, on sidelines of Global Forum for Food and Agriculture held in Berlin, Germany.

Spokesman says: Amendment in Biosafety rules aimed to align with International standards

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of National Food Security and Research on Sunday said that the proposed amendments in Pakistan's National Biosafety Rules (2005) aimed to align with international standards and enhance regulation.

In a press statement, the spokesman of the ministry said that proposed amendments in regulations also aimed at adopting a dual approval approach for planting and

processing respectively as enshrined in 'Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety' concerning GMO imports and focusing on cultivation and food, feed and processing (FFPs).

The other objectives of ongoing processes are to ensure the safe and beneficial integration of GMOs into the country's agricultural landscape, besides fostering collaboration between stakeholders and authorities.

He said that scientific evidence supports the safety of GMOs, with reputable organizations endorsing their consumption, and rigorous testing before approving GMO crops ensures minimal harm to biodiversity and environmental sustainability.

He said Pakistan stands at a pivotal juncture regarding GMO integration into its agricultural landscape.

IT, solar sectors can significantly boost the economy

ISLAMABAD (INP): Iftikhar Khan, the advisor to the president of FPCCI, stated on Sunday that the IT and solar sectors are both promising and ought to be encouraged.

He said that these industries can boost the struggling economy by pushing IT exports to \$25 billion and lowering the cost of oil imports.

Khan advocated for a preferred resolution of the issues facing the IT and solar industries, as well as a reduction in the tax burden on these two significant sectors to enable them to operate at full potential.

Because of the intimate connection between the internet and national development, he said, taxes on the internet and telecom sector should be lowered as well.

LESCO finds three power pilferers at Wagha

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) Wagha Sub-Division's SDO along with his team checked main transmission lines and power meters during a search operation late last night and found three customers stealing electricity in Hamad Garden area. The company's spokesman told media here Sunday that two accused were stealing electricity by hooking wires on LESCO's main supply lines.

Aleem Khan vows to introduce reforms in agriculture sector

KHANEVAL (APP): President Isteqam-e-Pakistan (IPP) Abdul Aleem Khan said on Sunday that IPP would introduce reforms in the agriculture sector and also offer cheap petrol and 300 electricity units to each poor family after coming to power.

He was addressing party workers, ex-chairmen and vice chairman of union councils at Kacha Koh. He also vowed to provide free of cost electricity to farmers having less than 12.5 acres of land. Similarly, barren land will be made fertile, he added. He alleged that

previous governments could not deliver however IPP would surely offer maximum relief to the masses.

Aleem Khan also promised to provide shelter to waif and strays. IPP will also introduce wash-rooms, and filtration plants and upgrade schools as well as the grades of teachers. About contesting elections from PP 209, he remarked that Ayaz Khan Niazi was his neighbour in Lahore and it was an honour to contest from the constituency. Aleem Khan also promised to ensure record development in the region.



SARGODHA: Farmer busy making traditional sweet item Gurr near Khushab Road.

Malik Iftikhar urges people to buy 'Made in Pakistan' products

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry's former president Iftikhar Ali Malik has urged the people to buy "Made in Pakistan" products to promote the local market that will curtail the import bill and keep the foreign reserves in good shape.

Talking to a traders delegation led by Muslim Khan Buner here Sunday, he added that economically, prioritizing locally made products bolsters the country's industries, generates employment opportunities and increases economic growth. "When people choose Pakistani goods over imported ones,

it strengthens the domestic market contributing to a more robust and self-reliant economy. It also leads to a positive cycle of increased investment, innovation and competitiveness," he argued.

Iftikhar Ali Malik suggested enhanced collaboration between public and private sector to make this initiative successful. He added that government must formulate policies which support local industries, while businessmen must ensure the quality and competitiveness of their products, that align with the ethos of "Made in Pakistan."



HYDERABAD: Pakistan Kaim Khani Welfare Trust (PKKWTF) Chairman, General (Retd) Muhammad Yousaf Khan addresses during annual ceremony held at Sindh Museum in Hyderabad.

NAVTC empowering youth through skill development programs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC) is running extensive programs by taking memorabilia initiatives to uplift technical training and skill development in the country.

Technical Training and Skill Education has occupied a very important place in the modern-day economy, according to a news release on Sunday. The Prime Minister's Youth skilled program is a key pillar to empower them with the necessary tools and innovative skills, which will grow globally. NAVTC invites media friends to join hands with it and have a good look at the programs and initiatives to enhance the technical sector in the country.

CM announces 15pc quota for news room journalists in residential plots

Says first time in history of Punjab, 3,300 residential plots granted to the reporters, photographers, cameramen and journalists of the News Room through a transparent balloting mechanism.

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has announced granting residential plots to reporters, photographers and cameramen and 15 per cent quota for journalists working in the news rooms. Addressing a ceremony organised for journalists at the CM Office on Sunday, he said that for the first time in the history of Punjab, 3,300 residential plots had been

granted to the reporters, photographers, cameramen and journalists of the News Room through a transparent balloting mechanism. Reporters will be granted 7-marla residential plots, while cameramen and photographers will be granted 3-marla residential plots through a transparent balloting mechanism. The advertisement for eligibility for acquiring the plot will be advertised on Monday, January 22. Ravi

Urban Development Authority (RUDA) will inform the journalists community about the mode for acquiring the plots. Mohsin Naqvi stated that approximately, one year of the incumbent government has passed. "Whichever city I visit, the only demand being made by the journalists community is to do something substantial for their welfare. Today, we have fulfilled our promise being made with our journalist brothers."



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi addressing the ceremony organized in connection with allotment of Residential Plots to Professional Journalist of Punjab.

IG Punjab reviewed the ongoing works of DIG Security office

Independent Report
LAHORE: Inspector General Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar paid a surprise visit to the under construction office of the DIG Security Division and issued instructions while reviewing the ongoing works of finishing and fixtures.

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that after the completion of the civil work, the decoration should be completed as soon as possible according to high standards and no compromise should be made on the quality standard. IG Punjab Dr

Usman Anwar said that police offices and Police stations have been upgraded with the latest resources with the support of Punjab Government and new office of DIG Security Division will be inaugurated soon.

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar further said that police infrastructure development has improved public service delivery to citizens. DIG Security Kamran Adil, DIG Telecommunication Imran Ahmar, SSP Security Division Khalid Mehmood, AIG Operations, SPS, senior officers were present on the spot.

Flight inquiry helpline 'out of order' at Lahore airport

INP: Passengers are facing difficulties in conforming to their flights as flight inquiry lines at Lahore airport are 'out of order'.

According to sources, contact with the flight inquiry section is not being established at the Lahore airport, causing difficulties for the passengers.

We are unable to confirm flights as the schedule is badly affected due to dense fog, the passengers said. The dense fog across the country has badly affected the flight operations. On January 16, four Islamabad-bound flights were diverted to Karachi.

Talha Mehmood says: Developmental network to be established in Chitral district if elected MNA

PESHAWAR (APP): Due to the negligence of the rulers and elected representatives, the people of Chitral are still forced to live a stone-age life and the roads here are not fit for human beings, people are deprived of their basic rights.

"If I get a chance, I will change the map of Chitral," these views were expressed by Senator Mohammad Talha Mehmood, who is a candidate for the National Assembly seat from NA 1 Chitral in the forthcoming general election to be scheduled on Feb 8, 2024.

Contesting the elections from Chitral on the ticket of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Muhammad Talha Mehmood said during his

visit to different areas of Tehsil Torkho. He addressed public gatherings there. The people of Veerkop, Shahgram and other areas gave him a warm welcome. The JUI workers welcomed him outside the city and took him in a convoy to the public meeting place.



KARACHI: View of site after a fire broken out incident at a factory as the fire brigade officials are busy in extinguishing fire and rescue operation, at New Karachi Industrial area of Karachi.



GILGIT: Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan Abrar Ahmad Mirza chairing a meeting of Secretaries, Divisional Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners at CS Secretariat.

Rwp Ring Road project to be completed by July 31: Commissioner

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chhatta has said that Rawalpindi Ring Road project would be completed by July 31. He informed that the work had been started at the bridges of river Swan and Sial. Thalian Interchange is also being remodeled while the modeling of traffic network of Ring Road and Motorway is also in progress, he said.

He said that Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) would give a plan for plantation on both sides of the Ring Road.

Over 18 percent physical work of the Ring Road project had been completed, Liaquat Ali Chhatta informed.

He said that the Ring Road project would be completed by July 31 and the project would be inaugurated on August 14.

There will be no compromise on the quality of the construction work, he added.

Firdous says her politics has always been anti-PML-N

SIALKOT (INP): Categorically stating that the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) candidates did not need other political parties' support for getting elected to assemblies, the party spokesperson Firdous Ashiq Awan on Sunday said that the seat adjustment agreement the IPP had reached with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was on paper. In an interview with a private TV Channel

in Sialkot, she said not only her politics had been anti-PML-N right from the very beginning, but voters of her constituency too were opposed to the party.

"I was opposed to any kind of seat adjustment with the PML-N right from the word go," she said. "What happens in the world does have an impact on any country's domestic politics," Firdous said, adding, "For us, Pakistan comes first."

Persistent use of e-cigarettes badly affects human health

PESHAWAR (APP): The persistent use of e-cigarettes in Pakistani society has exposed the younger generation to serious respiratory, oral and brain issues that may prove fatal in later stages of life.

Besides an increasing possibility of drug addiction and long-term damage to brain and IQ development as well as the respiratory system, constant use of e-cigarettes along with other tobacco products can do even more damage to the human body than conventional cigarette smoking.

are equally harmful that of conventional cigarettes and their regular use can prove fatal due to threats of lung, oral and mouth cancers," said Dr Malik Riaz Khan, Principal Medical Officer, Government Hospital Pabbi, Nowshera while talking to a state run news agency.

Citing reports, he said that about 6.2 per cent of the population used vaping/e-cigarettes while 15.9 million (12.4pc) used smokeless tobacco. "The young adults, especially college and university students, when consumed these products do not realize the long term

harmful impacts of e-cigarettes and at a later stage expose themselves to serious lung related diseases, nicotine addiction, depression and anxiety," he said.

In recent years, electronic cigarettes or vapes have gained popularity among youngsters and students as a fashionable alternative to traditional tobacco smoking. Supporters claimed that e-cigarettes are less harmful than conventional cigarettes but the true intensity of the habit is still unknown to the public.

naswar, then e-cigarette as a fashion and now conventional cigarette due to unemployment and today I could not go a day without a vape," said Sajid Khan, an e-cigarette smoker of Pabbi.

"These drugs have snatched my happiness and prestige," Sajid Khan said, adding my family had left me abandoned after smoking and I felt angry at myself when children started laughing at me due to my ugly attire.

Dr Riaz said every segment of society, nongovernmental organizations and social bodies are on the same page

to control the alarming use of e-cigarettes, stressing the need for collective efforts to save youngsters from the harmful habit.

Blue Veins and the Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco Control Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also urged the provincial government and concerned authorities to remain vigilant of the manipulative ways of the tobacco industry emphasizing the need for concerted efforts to combat these nefarious strategies.

"Governments and civil society organizations must remain active.

International News

President Sisi says Egypt will not allow any threat to Somalia or its security

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Egypt's president said on Sunday it will not allow any threat to Somalia, after Ethiopia said it would consider recognising an independence claim by Somaliland in a deal that would give it access to a sea port.

The remarks by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi were the strongest yet made on the issue by Egypt, which already has frosty relations with Ethiopia, and were a sign that Cairo may get involved in a dispute that has raised fresh tensions in the volatile Horn of Africa.

independence from Somalia in 1991 but has not won recognition from any country. The port lease deal, which was agreed earlier this month but not yet finalised, would be a boon to landlocked Ethiopia and has enraged Somalia.

"Egypt will not allow anyone to threaten Somalia or affect its security," Sisi said, speaking at a news conference with visiting Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

"Do not try Egypt, or try to threaten its brothers especially if they ask it to intervene," he added.

In a Jan. 1 memorandum of understanding,

Ethiopia said it would consider recognising Somaliland's independence in return for the port access. It would lease 20 km (12 miles) of coastland around the port of Berbera, on the Gulf of Aden, for 50 years for military and commercial purposes.

Ethiopia's current main port for maritime exports is in the neighbouring country of Djibouti. "My message to Ethiopia is that ... trying to seize a piece of land to control it is something no one will agree to," Sisi said, saying cooperation on development was a better strategy.



Democratic Republic of Congo President Felix Tshisekedi arrives to be sworn in for a second term as a president during the inauguration ceremony at Martyrs Stadium in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Israeli strike on Damascus kills Iran's spy chief in Syria

Monitoring Desk
DAMASCUS: An Israeli strike on Damascus killed the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps's (IRGC) spy chief for Syria and four other Guards members on Saturday, Tehran said, in an attack that tore into a multi-storey residential building.

Iran condemned the strike as a "desperate attempt to spread instability in region", state media reported.

"Iran... reserves its right to respond to the organised

terrorism of the fake Zionist regime at the appropriate time and place," foreign ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a Britain-based monitor, said 10 people were killed in the Israeli strike on the Mazzeah neighbourhood of the Syrian capital.

The Mazzeah area is also home to the United Nations headquarters, embassies and restaurants.

Biden cancels nearly \$5 billion more in student debt relief

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: U.S. President Joe Biden on Friday announced student debt cancellation of nearly \$5 billion for an additional 74,000 borrowers, including more than half who earned forgiveness after 10 years of public service as teachers, nurses and firefighters.

The White House announcement brings the total loan forgiveness approved by the Biden-Harris administration to \$136.6 billion for more than 3.7 million Americans.

India plans to fence off Myanmar frontier

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India plans to erect a fence along its vast and porous frontier with Myanmar and will scrap a free movement border zone agreement, Indian media reported on Sunday.

The announcement by Home Minister Amit Shah comes after hundreds of troops from Myanmar who were fleeing insurgent attacks crossed into India. The government had "decided to fence the entire open India-Myanmar border".

Iran launches satellite that is part of a Western-criticized program as regional tensions spike

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: Iran said Saturday it had conducted a successful satellite launch into its highest orbit yet, the latest for a program the West fears improves Tehran's ballistic missiles.

The announcement comes as heightened tensions grip the wider Middle East over Israel's continued war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and just days after Iran and Pakistan engaged in tit-for-tat airstrikes in each other's countries.

Meanwhile Saturday, the U.S. conducted new strikes on Yemen's Houthi rebels, who have been targeting shipping in the Red Sea over the war, and Iranian-backed militias in Iraq struck a base housing U.S. troops, wounding several personnel.

The Iranian Soraya satellite was placed in an orbit at some 750 kilometers (460 miles) above the Earth's surface with its three-stage Qaem 100

rocket, the state-run IRNA news agency said. It did not immediately acknowledge what the satellite did, though telecommunications minister Isa Zarepour described the launch as having a 50-kilogram (110-pound) payload.

The launch was part of Iran's Revolutionary Guards' space program alongside Iran's civilian space program, the report said.

Footage released by Iranian media showed the rocket blast off from a mobile launcher, a religious verse referring to Shiite Islam's 12th hidden imam written on its side.

An Associated Press analysis of the footage suggested the launch happened at the Guard's launch pad on the outskirts of the city of Shahrood, some 350 kilometers (215 miles) east of the capital, Tehran. Iran's three latest successful satellite launches have all happened at the site.



DAMASCUS: Security and emergency personnel search the rubble of a building destroyed in an Israeli strike.

'4 survivors' after Russian jet crashes in Afghan mountains

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Four people survived and two are unaccounted for after a Russian plane crashed in mountainous northeastern Afghanistan, the air transport agency Rosaviatsia said on Sunday.

The Falcon 10 business jet was believed to be carrying six people on a hospital flight from India to Uzbekistan and Russia before communication was lost on Saturday evening.

"Of the six people on board the aircraft, ten-

tatively, four are alive. They have various injuries. The fate of two people is being clarified," Rosaviatsia said, citing the Russian embassy in Afghanistan.

The RIA Novosti news agency said two passengers were Russians, one who was seriously ill, and the other husband who had paid for the flight.

The two-engine plane was built by France's Dassault in 1978 and owned by a company called Athletic Group and a private individual.

UK to upgrade warship defence missile system used in Red Sea

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain's Ministry of Defence said on Sunday it would spend 405 million pounds (\$514 million) to upgrade a missile system now being used by the Royal Navy to shoot down hostile drones over the Red Sea.

The Sea Viper Air Defence system will be upgraded with missiles featuring a new warhead and software enabling it to counter ballistic missile threats, the MoD said in a statement.

The contracts were awarded to the British division of MBDA, a missiles joint venture owned by Airbus, opens new tab, BAE Systems, opens new tab and Leonardo, opens new tab, the MoD said.

"As the situation in the Middle East worsens, it is vital that we adapt to keep the UK, our allies and partners safe," defence minister Grant Shapps said in the statement.

How much carnage is enough, wonders UN General Assembly chief

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: "How much carnage is enough to call for a ceasefire" in Gaza, wondered the president of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) at a gathering of non-aligned nations in Uganda on Friday.

"That situation (in Gaza) behooves us to ask: how much is enough? And does the very concept of enough even exist in this setting?" asked UNGA President Dennis Francis as the death toll in Gaza carnage exceeded 25,000.

Secretary General António Guterres aired similar sentiments in an earlier statement, telling the world: "We cannot allow what has been happening in Gaza to continue.

We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire." Addressing a gathering of 120 nations in Kampala, the Ugandan capital, the UNGA chief said the only viable pathway for both Israelis and Palestinians to have peace "is through a negotiated political solution based on the two-state solution".

Alvi for blacklisting proven bank fraudsters, directs banks to refund Rs 2.74 million to fraud victims

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Dr Arif Alvi has asked the Banking Mohtasib to take up the matter of banking frauds with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to get essential SOPs issued so that proven fraudulent personnel's CNICs could be blacklisted, placed at Central negative list, and no Banking/financial facility could be extended to them by the Banking industry.

The President issued these directions while rejecting two separate representations filed by the United Bank Ltd (UBL) and Bank Alfalah Ltd (BAL) directing the banks to pay Rs 1.9 million and Rs 0.744 million respectively to their customers who fell victim to online banking fraud at the hands of fraudsters.

As per details, Mr Qaiser Mehmood who was holding an account with UBL received a call from a number resembling the Bank's helpline and the caller advised him to activate his disabled digital banking app. He activated

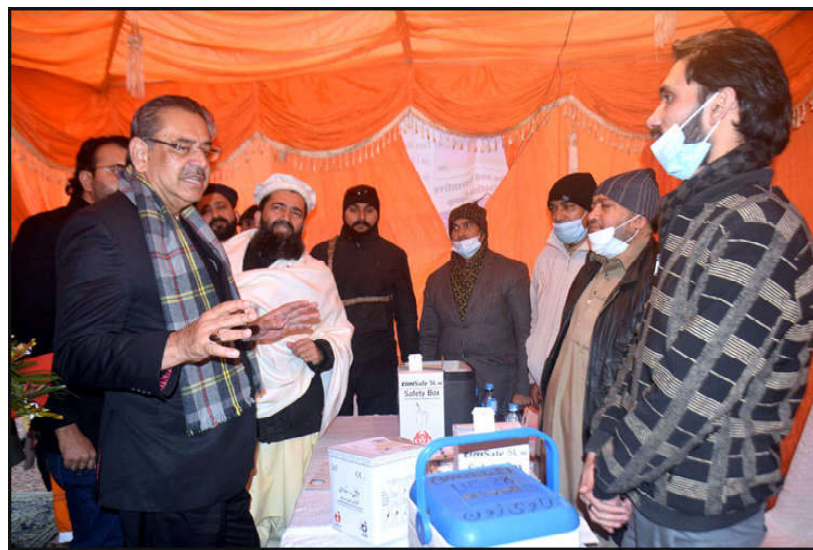
his app, after which Rs 2 million were transferred from his account through multiple transactions. Similarly, Brigadier Muhammad Arif Shaikh received a call from fraudsters asking him for his banking credentials to remove some technical flaws from his account. Later, an amount of Rs 994,000 were transferred from his account through 19 transactions. They asked their respective banks to refund their money, but to no avail. Feeling aggrieved, they separately approached the Banking Ombudsman to get relief. The Ombudsman directed the banks to refund the lost amounts to the customers. The banks, then, separately filed representations against the Ombudsman's decisions with the President.

The President held personal hearing of the cases, and having listened to the parties and going through the available record, decided the cases in the complainants' favour.

The President observed that the banks were

found non-compliant with the SBP's directives regarding the implementation of monitoring systems to detect fraudulent transactions. He added that multiple consecutive transactions were conducted but it did not raise alerts and allowed the money to pass through the system. He noted that the banks also failed to establish the legitimacy of transactions in terms of Section 41 of the Payment System and Electronic Fund Transfers Act, 2007. He said that the banks failed to submit any proof of compliance with the directions of SBP despite being given ample opportunity. He concluded that malpractice and maladministration stood established on part of the banks and they were liable to make good the financial loss of the complainants.

The President, therefore, rejected the representations of UBL and BAL and directed them to pay Rs 1,998,500 and Rs 744,000 to Mr Qaiser Mehmood and Brig Muhammad Arif Shaikh respectively.



LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed Khan along with Abdul Khabeer Azad, Chairman of Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, Pakistan visiting free medical camp titled role of Mamber and Mehrib in Healthy Society organized by Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department Punjab at Badshahi Masjid.

Aneeq inaugurates free medical camp at Badshahi Masjid

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed Khan inaugurated a health camp at Badshahi Masjid here on Sunday, and stressed the need for collective efforts to establish a healthy society.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony and a seminar on 'Role of mosques, mamber and mehrib for healthy society', he said there were more than 250,000 mosques in the country, which should be made a centre of medical and other facilities. He added that these mosques should be given the status of community centres.

The religious minister appealed to consider mosques in the lists of priorities as these could play an effective role in developing and establishing healthy society. He termed education and health the major aspects of any society and stressed the need to extend great importance toward these vital sectors. Well-being is not an inheritance but a process of continuity that is achieved over time, he added.

Caretaker Federal Minister Health Dr Nadeem Jan, Punjab Health Minister Dr Jamal Nasir, Minister Auqaf Sayed Azfar Ali Nasir, Chairman Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Abdul Khabeer Azad, Joint Secretary Ahmad Nadeem, Secretary Auqaf Dr Tahir Raza Bukhari and others were also present.

Aneeq Ahmed said that medical camp had been established at historic

Non-state actors threat to regional, national security: Mushahid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Club, said a news release issued here Sunday.

In his opening speech, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed highlighted the significance of the current scenario, dominated by turbulence and transformation. In this context, he analyzed China's Global Security Initiative (GSI) as a new framework for peaceful resolution of security issues, since GSI focuses on security as being indivisible, based on respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. It seeks also to promote a security governance framework, including A.I., cyber security and

related security threats based on accepted international norms of behavior enshrined in the UN Charter and international law.

He strongly condemned the ongoing Genocide and Crimes against humanity in Palestine by Israel. Delving into security issues, he discussed three new realities; the shattering of the Middle East status quo after October 7, serious challenges posed by Non-State Actors, and the complex security situation between Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan which is now inextricably intertwined with regional geopolitics.

Siraj asserts national progress requires breaking free from family-led parties

MARDAN (INP): Jamaat-e-Islami chief Sirajul Haq stated on Sunday that on Feb 8, the people of Pakistan will shape the future by rejecting what he described as "political jokers" through their votes.

In an indirect reference to the PML-N and PPP, Siraj asserted that national progress was not possible without liberation from the two parties led by powerful families.

While speaking during a ceremony here, Siraj stated that if the JI came into power, they would dismantle the system inherited from the British, eliminate the existing VIP culture and introduce reforms in the bureaucracy.

The JI chief expressed his commitment to eradicating non-development ex-

Five die, two injured in fog-related accidents

ISLAMABAD (INP): At least three people were killed and two others were wounded in a fog-related road accident in Kasur on late Friday night.

According to private news channel, an accident occurred at the Kutchery Road in Pattoki where a truck collided with a trailer parked on the road side due to dense fog, killing three persons on the spot and injuring two others.

Police and rescue teams reached the spot after getting information and shifted the dead and injured to a nearby hospital. In another incident, two people died when a passenger van crashed into a loader near Jehan Khan on Jhang Road in Bhakkar.



MALAKAND: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Sirajul Haq addressing annual ceremony of Khatam-e-Bukhari

"Take care of your tongue," Ahsan warns Bilawal on debate challenge to Nawaz

SHAKARGARH (INP): PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal on Sunday infuriated over People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto over challenging Nawaz Sharif for an election debate.

"It is not the level of Nawaz Sharif to debate with an 'under-training'," Ahsan Iqbal here said.

"I am warning Bilawal to take the name of our leader with due respect," PML-N leader said. "We know, how to reply, if he doesn't care of his tongue," he warned.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto in a media interview has challenged the PML-N candidate for prime minister's office to hold a television debate with him.

Political temperatures are getting high in

Sardar Mahtab firms to supports PTI

ISLAMABAD (INP): Sardar Mahtab Abbas has boldly declared that he has never cared about the consequences for principles.

According to details, following his expulsion from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Sardar Mahtab Abbas has reacted to the party's previous decision, stating that he is contesting the upcoming elections independently. He clarified that he did not seek a ticket from the PML-N, as he believes it's not the time for political compromises.

"Nawaz Sharif didn't learn from his mistakes and playing final innings of his political career," he said. "He will continue the politics of victimization after coming into power. He has to take revenge from Adiala Jail Superintendent and judges," Bilawal said.

IIU offers Sunday classes for Arabic language learning

ISLAMABAD (INP): The International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIU), invited applications from students interested in enrolling in short Sunday courses to learn the Arabic language. According to the University official, a 24 week Arabic learning course, taking place only on Sundays, is set to begin on February 18, 2024.

Admissions are open in three phases: certificate for individuals without prior knowledge of Arabic, diploma for those who complete the certificate course.



ISLAMABAD: A man walks past banner of a political party Jamaat-e-Islami candidate on a bridge in the Federal Capital, ahead of the country's general elections 2024.

Attack on PTI, PPP election offices leaves several injured in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Tensions soared in Karachi as the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) accused the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) of orchestrating attacks on their respective offices. The clashes resulted in injuries to several political workers from both parties.

According to media reports, the incident unfolded at the electoral office of PTI candidate Arsalan Khalid in Constituency NA-248 of the National Assembly. Over ten individuals, including Arsalan Khalid, were reportedly injured in the attack. PTI's spokesperson laid blame on MQM workers, alleging that the assault was orchestrated by them. The wounded party workers were swiftly transported to Abbasi Shaheed Hospital and Jinnah Hospital for medical attention. In response, PTI supporters staged a protest at Liaquat Ali Khan Chowk against the incident.

Simultaneously, in the vicinity of Hyderabad Town, within the limits of PS-250 and PS-129, an attack was reported on the Pakistan Peoples Party's office. Four party workers sustained injuries in this assault. Khawaja Sahil Mansoor claimed that MQM workers were behind the attack. Four PPP workers, injured in the incident, have lodged complaints against the assailants.

Just days earlier, during a rally following an organizational meeting in Karachi, unknown assailants opened fire, injuring two individuals. The incident occurred after Pakistan Peoples Party's candidate Agha Rafiullah refused the gathering. Agha Rafiullah remained unharmed during the incident, and the police are currently investigating the case.

Meanwhile, in the provincial capital of Lahore, an explosive attack targeted the electoral office of a Pakistan Peoples Party candidate in Constituency PP-162. Police have initiated an inquiry into the petrol bomb attack. The complainant, Mirza Abbas Khokhar's son, alleged that unknown individuals threw petrol-filled bottles, setting fire to the office.

Khursheed assures PPP would save Pakistan economically

SUKKUR (APP): PPP leader Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah on Sunday confidently declared his party will win the upcoming general elections. "InshaAllah, the next government will be of the Pakistan Peoples Party."

Addressing a gathering here, he assured that the People's Party would save Pakistan economically. He said that the PPP Government in Sindh has accomplished a lot, ended oppression, and faced challenges but has never left the field.

He mentioned that there are role model hospitals like NICVD and SIUT in Sindh, while the others have not built a single hospital in Punjab. He said that PPP has undertaken projects in both rural and urban areas of Sindh, consistently contributing to historical developments.

Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah criticized Imran Khan, stating that the PTI government has damaged the country's economy, and in 2018, an incompetent person was imposed on Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: People are sitting around fire, warm themselves as the temperature dropped in Federal Capital.



KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) Convener, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui along with Farooq Sattar, Mustafa Kamal, Nasreen Jilil and others waving hands to their supporters during public gathering as part of Election Campaign in connection of General Election 2024, at Jinnah Bagh.

Kh Asif asks PML-N workers to launch door-to-door campaign

SIALKOT (APP): Former defence minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidate from NA-71 constituency Khawaja Muhammad Asif has urged the youth to go door to door to apprise people of development agenda of the party and victory would be destiny of PML-N on February 8.

Addressing the worker convention at the PML-N House at Paris Road Saturday night, he said the youth were valuable asset to the country and they should keep unity in their ranks. He said the PML-N was a symbol of development and prosperity, and whenever the party came to power,

Sialkot, the city of Allama Iqbal, witnessed unprecedented development. Various educational institutions were built, women's university was established, and motorways were made. The former minister said Sialkot was a stronghold of the PML-N. Candidates from PP-46 and PP-47 Chaudhry Faisal Ikram and Muhammad Manshaullah Butt, respectively, City President PML-N Muhammad Rafique Mughal, Former Mayor Sialkot Chaudhry Toheed Akhtar, District Youth Coordinator Umer Chachi and City Coordinator Hafiz Chand Sheikh were also present.

ECP initiates actions against candidates over violation of election code

ISLAMABAD (INP): The monitoring teams of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) have initiated the process of issuing notices and imposing fines against candidates involved in the violation of code of conduct.

The active monitoring teams of the ECP in this regard took action against the candidates in various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the violation of the code of conduct.

Similarly, monitoring teams of the Election Commission are also active in Punjab.

In Nankana Sahib, a warning was issued to election candidates for displaying Panaflex and billboards. Panaflex and other promotional materials have been removed from Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Sargodha and Bhakkar.

Panaflex hoardings have also been put up in Chiniot, Faisalabad, Nankana, Kasur, Lahore and Multan. Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab has issued strict instructions to District Monitoring Officers in this regard.

11 outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 11 outlaws including four professional baggers from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons from their possession, a public relations officer said.

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

Following these directions, the Khana police team arrested two accused namely Shahzaib Khan and Rafiq and recovered 540 gram heroin and one dagger from their possession, while police team also arrested the accused namely Hamza involved in illegally refilling gas cylinders.

The Kirpa police team arrested an accused namely Huzaima involved in illegally refilling gas cylinders.

Over 55,000 cases pending before SC

ISLAMABAD (INP): The number of pending cases before the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan is more than 55,000 as of 16th December 2023, a report issued by the apex court read.

According to a quarterly report (from 17th September 2023 to 17th December 2023), the top court of the country has disposed of 859 during the period. The report, issued under Article 19-A which guarantees right to information, read that the number of pending cases was 56,503 on 17th September 2023 and dropped to 55,644 on 17th December 2023.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers busy in construction work to enhance the beauty of the city on the wall of a flyover at Rawal Dam Chowk in the Federal Capital.

Wanted members of snatcher and bike lifter gang arrested

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Karachi Company and Lohi Bher police team have arrested two wanted members of notorious snatcher and bike lifter gang involved in numerous snatching and bike lifting activities and recovered snatched mobile phones, motorbike, weapon used in crime and three stolen motorbikes from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police had categorically started a crackdown against criminal elements in order to save the precious lives and property of citizens.

Following these directions, the Karachi company police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending a wanted member of a notorious snatcher gang involved in numerous snatching activities in various areas of Karachi company police station. The accused was identified as Muhammad Nazeer.