

# Independent

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on Afghan Transit Trade and Anti-smuggling.

## Issue of Baloch protesting families being painted wrongly: PM Kakar

Every citizen has right to protest within constitutional limits; Says not his mandate to respond to social media criticism.

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said that issue of Baloch families from Balochistan was being projected in negative and in sharp contrast to realities as Balochs were standing with the state of Pakistan.

Responding to different media queries during his visit to Business Facilitation Center, the prime minister said that terrorists and armed militants had been involved in the killing of people of Balochistan. They were killing doctors, lawyers and teachers, he added. He reassured the State would fight with them with all force as they could not be given license to kill people.

The prime minister, referring to criticism by a section of the media, said that the government was not fighting with the Baloch families and regretted that efforts were made to spread confusion and mingle things together.

The issue of families of Balochs had been blown out of proportion, he said, adding these terrorists had been

taking money and funding from RAW and killing people in the province.

The caretaker prime minister said that about 90,000 people had been killed in the fight against terrorism but hardly nine accused had been convicted so far.

The prime minister opined that the criminal justice system in the country required improvement.

To a question, he mentioned that there was no restriction on freedom of expression.

Replying to another question regarding an alleged firing incident in DI Khan over vehicles of Maulana Fazlur Rehman Amir of JUI-F, he said that it was alarming, adding the government was responding to security threats in the southern parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with all the available resources.

The caretaker prime minister said that all the resources and security apparatus would be utilized to ensure the holding of peaceful polls on the election date and expressed the hope that they would be successful in this regard.

## China's BRI project appreciated by world as progress possible by working together: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Monday that China's Belt and Road Initiative was appreciated by the world as progress was possible only by working together.

In an exclusive interview with China Radio International, the minister said that President Xi Jinping's vision of development was based on universal development.

"The fruits and benefits

People's Republic of China Xi Jinping at the beginning of the new year, Murtaza Solangi said his vision of global development was also evident in his New Year message.

President Xi has always promoted the timeless principles of humanity and his theory was a negation of the theory that a country can achieve development only by keeping other countries behind, the minister opined.

"In our region too, President Xi Jinping's

sage of time, President Xi's globalization-based ideology will gain momentum. He said that Pakistan's relations with China entered a new era after the start of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project.

The minister said due to the cooperation of the People's Republic of China and China's leadership, Pakistan has made progress through CPEC.

When CPEC was launched, the focus was on energy and infrastructure projects, Murtaza Solangi said and added currently,

## Senate adopts resolutions about negative propoganda against armed forces

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Senate of Pakistan on Monday adopted two resolutions recommending the government to award strict punishment to those involved in negative propoganda against armed forces and ensure reform in the higher education curriculum to apprise students of the consequences and risks of drug usage.

Sponsored by PPP Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi, a resolution recommended the government to take necessary steps to award severe punishment as per law to those involved in malicious propoganda against the armed forces and other security agencies on various social media platforms.

According to the text of the amended resolution, "Cognizant of the huge sacrifices of Armed forces and other security agencies in the war against terror and

for the Defence and protection of the country's borders; Acknowledging the fact that strong army and other security agencies is indispensable for the Defence of the country, especially in view of the hostile neighborhood; Expressing deep concern on the negative and malicious propoganda against the armed forces and other security agencies on various social media platforms; The Senate of Pakistan, therefore, recommends to the Government to take necessary steps to award severe punishment as per law".

BAP Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri moved another resolution recommending the government to take immediate steps to cater needs of all students with diverse cultural backgrounds and to reform the higher education curriculum to apprise students of the consequences and risks of drug usage.



ISLAMABAD: A view of first sunrise of year 2024 through KhanaPul.

## Pakistan, India swap lists of prisoners, nuclear installations

By Czechangez Khan Jadoon

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India have exchanged their lists of prisoners and nuclear installations and facilities.

The move follows up on years-long agreements between the two arch-rivals who have fought numerous battles since their independence in 1947.

Both nations, who parted ways after ousting the Britishers, exchange the lists of prisoners on the first of January and July each year, while they share details of nuclear installations and facilities on the first date of each calendar year.

In a statement on Monday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India, inter alia, provides that both countries shall inform each other of

their nuclear installations and facilities, falling within its definition.

Signed on December 31, 1988, the agreement entered into force on January 27, 1991, the statement mentioned, noting that the two countries have been exchanging the lists since January 1, 1992.

Pursuant to Article II of the agreement, the list of nuclear installations and facilities in Pakistan was officially handed over to a representative of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, today.

"Simultaneously, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs also handed over the list of India's nuclear installations and facilities to a representative of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi," the statement read.

In another handout, the Foreign Office said today, Pakistan and India ex-

changed the lists of prisoners in each other's custody through diplomatic channels.

The simultaneous exchange of lists took place in pursuance of the Consular Access Agreement of 2008. Under the agreement, both countries are required to exchange the lists of prisoners in each other's custody on January 1 and July 1, every year.

The Government of Pakistan handed over a list of 231 Indian prisoners in Pakistan (47 civilian prisoners and 184 fishermen) to a representative of the High Commission of India in Islamabad, the statement read.

The Indian government shared the list of Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails with an officer of Pakistan High Commission, New Delhi. According to the list, there are a total of 418 Pakistanis in Indian jails (337 civilian prisoners and 81 fishermen).



of development come only when development is not limited. No country can progress in isolation", Murtaza Solangi maintained.

Welcoming the message of the President of the

globalist ideology is gaining ground," he said.

Central Asian countries, Solangi added were already implementing Belt and Road Initiative projects.

He said with the pas-

work was being done in many new areas under CPEC. Wishing Happy New Year to the people of China he said relations between Pakistan and China have always been exemplary.

## Maulana Fazal demands postponement of elections citing security concerns

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (INP): Jamiat-i-Ulema Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Monday demanded the postponement of elections by citing security concerns.

He said, "The deteriorating situation of the country is regrettable and the JUI-F is currently the target of terrorists so we don't think fair elections can be held hence, ECP

should consider our request."

The JUI chief further said the candidates of the PPP also mentioned that they could not contest the elections because of the weather and law and order. This, he said, might lead to rigging on a massive scale. On political alliance front, JUI-F chief said there would be seat adjustment wherever necessary.

## Nawaz constitutes high powered committee on matter of distribution of tickets

LAHORE (Online): PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif has constituted a high powered committee comprising senior leaders of party on the matter of distribution of tickets.

Nawaz Sharif will head the committee.

According to PML-N sources committee will include Shehbaz Sharif, chief organizer Maryam Nawaz, vice president, secretary general, provincial presidents and secretary generals.

High powered committee will issue tickets to

PML-N candidates for National Assembly and provincial assemblies.

PML-N Quaid has shortlisted the candidates in parliamentary board meetings after their interview.

Sources said committee will hold meeting continuously this week and the task of distribution of tickets will be completed till January 12.

The differences among the party candidates for the constituencies of Lahore will also be got reconciled.



ISLAMABAD: A Delegation of Kashmiris meeting with president Azak Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhary

## Rejection of nominations to be challenged: Conspiracies being made to weaken BNP even today, alleges Akhtar Mengal

Independent Report

QUETTA: The president of Balochistan National Party (BNP) Sardar Akhtar Mengal has stated that we have always waged struggle for securing rights of the people, but adding he charged that conspiracies are being made to weaken the party (BNP).

He claimed that pressure is being exerted on our companions to leave the party.

The BNP chief said that nomination papers of 12 candidates of the party contesting elections for Balochistan Assembly have been rejected without any reason.

His nomination papers have also been rejected

from four constituencies.

However, we would be challenging the rejection of papers of the candidates in the court of law.

Sardar Akhtar Mengal was addressing a hurriedly called press conference here on Monday.

The BNP President said that the province was made laboratory for experiments in every era while attempts were made to run it through artificial leadership.

Addressing the press conference, Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that the undemocratic forces always derailed democracy in the country, even our certain political parties also became tool in their hands

playing part to derail the democracy.

He said that BNP has always talked about democracy and the people for it is being punished.

The BNP chief said that the incidents of torturing and forced disappearance of the people were occurred to pressurize us through different tactics.

He said that we didn't bow to the pressure despite lot of attempts made.

Regarding the upcoming general elections, Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that there would be worst selection in the elections for the preparations have already been made, adding he alleged.

## PTI to knock SC's door against rejection of nomination papers

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) announced on Monday that it would approach the Supreme Court against rejection of nomination papers of its leaders.

PTI leader Babar Awan told media here on the premises of the Islamabad High Court that none is permitted to stop anyone from contesting election under the 1973 Constitution. But the PTI candidates were prevented from filing nomination papers all over the country, he added. Unidentified people snatched nomination papers while returning officers rejected papers of more than 300 PTI candidates, he continued.

The PTI would field candidates in each constituency, Awan said and vowed that the party would contest elections at any cost. He said that the high court has allowed the PTI founder to issue ticket to candidates. "We hope that we will get justice from the Supreme Court," Awan concluded.



QUETTA: Balochistan National Party Chief, Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal addresses to media persons during press conference at Quetta press club

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Unequal world**

A world increasingly divided between the rich and the poor – with the gap widening almost annually – has once again witnessed an astonishing \$1.5 trillion increase in the wealth of the top five richest empires. This is no small sum. In fact, for some countries, this sum is bigger than their GDP; for example, Pakistan whose GDP is a paltry \$348 billion is among these countries. In a world that wants to switch to renewable energy and phase out of fossil fuels to save the planet from further chaos, the petro-money of the Middle East has put two families from the region among the world's five richest.

The Al Nahyans of Abu Dhabi have topped the 2023 list put out by Bloomberg of family fortunes, with a total worth of \$305 billion. The Al Thanis of Qatar also added significantly to this wealth. For the first time in five years, the Waltons of Walmart are no longer the richest group in the world. Meanwhile, the family that owns Hermes continues to grow, with the focus, according to experts, being on creating generational wealth. Unfortunately, the growing influence of the Middle East is not being put to use politically, for example by using its clout as a reminder that the Palestinians have powerful friends. The same is true of Yemen, where children starve as a result of poverty which has built up over the decades and worsened by almost a decade-long war in the country.

The report is a stark reminder of wealth concentration in the hands of a few. If this money earned from oil, fashion design, retail sales, and other areas was spread out more equitably, many would benefit hugely. Inequality in the world is widening, leading to some important questions. Are the world's riches reserved only for a small number of people? Shouldn't there be some mechanism to offer more opportunities and a greater division of wealth to the world's 99 per cent who had a difficult financial year? It is almost impossible to imagine the scale of fortune a few families have amassed. The arrival of the oil-rich Gulf countries on the scene adds in some way to the complications but also depicts a changing world where the West is not necessarily the largest power holder at least in financial terms.

**Geo Strategic Concerns**

By Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai  
International Court of Justice in its unofficial press release, issued on December 29, 2023, states, "South Africa today filed an application instituting proceedings against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, concerning alleged violations by Israel of its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the "Genocide Convention") in relation to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip."

Earlier in December 2019, The Republic of the Gambia, with the support of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also filed a case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) alleging human rights violations committed by Myanmar against the Rohingya violate various provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide ("the Genocide Convention").

Both these developments are significant step towards greater international recognition of the serious alleged abuses committed against civilian population. Filing of an application at the ICJ may take the veil of secrecy off of alleged human rights violations. Perhaps now the global community can share the outrage felt by the people of the region.

Yet in another part of the globe – Kashmir – atrocities of a similar pattern have been and are being perpetrated by the 900,000 Indian military and paramilitary forces (Figure quoted from an interview with Indian novelist, Arundhati Roy) with no fear of a corrective international response. The scale of the human rights atrocities in Kashmir dwarf those in Kosovo, Bosnia, Sierra Leone, and East Timor which have triggered international interventions. But the world powers and the United Nations have remained silent, not even employing moral suasion against India's shocking indiscriminate violence in

Kashmir as was done regarding South Africa during its ugly years of apartheid. It is painful but necessary to mention here how Indian law grants virtual legal immunity to any type of war crime against humanity perpetrated in Kashmir. Rape is a recognised war crime, and countless Kashmiri women have been raped by Indian army. Torture is an international crime, as the Legal proceedings against General Augustino Pinochet in Great Britain proved. Yet Indian leaders who permit torture in Kashmir are not prosecuted for the crime in jurisdictions they may be visiting. Narendra Modi was banned to enter to the United States and Great Britain because of his involvement in massacre of Muslims in Gujarat. Now he is being given red carpet reception in many Capitols of the world. Is an international crime less criminal if the aggressor is India and victim is a Kashmiri, people ask?

The common Kashmiris also asks: Are Kashmiris less human than peoples of other nations? To borrow from Shakespeare in The Merchant of Venice: Hath not a Kashmiri eye? hath not a Kashmiri hand, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as other peoples are? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? It is true that violence characteristically stems from dehumanising an adversary or enemy. The more another seems distant, odd, inferior, or different from yourself, the easier to kill, maim, and oppress. That psychological insight is corroborated by thousands of years of experience. Take genocide. The Nazis and Germans generally perpetrated the Holocaust by demonizing Jews and inculcating the idea of their racial or religious inferiority. Jews looked different from Aryans. Jews were stigmatised as killers of

Christ, making them all decides. In this way, Holocaust participants were able psychologically to block out their villainies by perceiving Jews as subhuman, and thus their extermination as no different than killing animals for food. The Holocaust would never have reached its horrifying scale if Aryan Germans had perceived and treated Jews as human peers and subscribed to John Donne's timeless poetic recognition of the unity of mankind. It is quite possible that if international law were applied evenhandedly in Kashmir, an international war crimes tribunal would have been established years ago to try the scores of Indian civilian and military leaders guilty of crimes against humanity and aggression. What Slobodan Milosevich did in Kosovo and Bosnia pales in comparison to what Indian civilian and military grandees have done in Kashmir for 76 successive years, something resembling genocide on the installment plan.

Let us have a pragmatic view of the world. The world powers seldom place democracy and human rights above geo-strategic or economic concerns. Let me conclude with these sobering observations. Foreign policy in the United States does not emerge from a simple algorithm. It is driven in part by popular emotions, in part by daily headlines, in part by domestic considerations, and in part by long-term global concerns that transcend the momentary and transient. And what relative influence these varied elements play in a particular foreign policy decision varies depending on the country, the timing, and the circumstances. If anyone thinks there are simple markers for predicting American foreign policy, then they are seriously mistaken. It is much more ad hoc and improvised than systematic and thematic. That means the opportunities to try to reason out with the policymakers are great, but so are the hazards and imponderables of such an enterprise.—Courtesy The Nation

**Election unknowns**

By Maleeha Lodhi

Election activity has swung into high gear in the country with the filing of nomination papers by candidates and mobilisation of supporters by party leaders. The election date of Feb 8 is now cast in stone. But there are more unknowns than knowns about how the election will play out. The first unknown is the PTI factor. Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf is engaged in legal actions aimed at securing a level playing field in the poll. It has contested the decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to deprive it of its election symbol — which is how most voters identify which party a candidate belongs to on the ballot paper. Court dramas are likely to continue on this and other counts, including petitions challenging Khan's disqualification. Whatever the legal outcome, the key political question is whether the perception that PTI is being persecuted will translate into a 'sympathy wave' to boost its electoral support or deter its supporters from showing up at the ballot box.

With most of its leaders and many activists incarcerated, it will be hard for the party to mobilise its base. But the party has also shown a knack of using social media and communication technology to overcome such obstacles. Whether this will work in the complex environment of individual parliamentary constituencies remains to be tested. This brings up the second unknown. Constituency politics embedded in networks of traditional allegiances often override the personal popularity of leaders at the national level. If there was a presidential system, a leader's popularity would be enough to determine the outcome. But parliamentary elections are a different matter where dynamics are more complicated.

The phenomenon of 'all politics is local' also works to the advantage of older parties that have long dominated Pakistan's constituency-based politics. Electoral politics still piv-

ots around transactional patterns of behaviour and traditional allegiances to determine the result at the constituency level — hence the importance of so-called electables, who are local power brokers. This makes the overall outcome harder to predict.

The third unknown is the impact of the urban-rural balance, which in the past has long tilted in favour of the countryside and reinforced traditional allegiances. But greater urbanisation is altering this picture. Although urban Pakistan is still underrepresented, many rural constituencies now have urban features.

In the battleground province of Punjab, this shift is most evident. In Punjab's 144 national constituencies more than half are now either urban or 'mixed', displacing a significant urban complexion. This is weakening older alignments and reshaping voting patterns, again making outcomes harder to forecast.

New voters are a fourth unknown factor. Since the last election in 2018, over 23.5 million voters have been added to the electoral list — 18 per cent of the electorate. This could impart a significant swing factor to the election. A substantial number of new voters can be assumed to be unaffiliated to any party with no firm party preference. They are therefore up for grabs for any party able to appeal to them and get them out to vote.

The youth bulge in the electorate has, of course, attracted much attention. ECP figures show voters from the ages of 18 to 35 constitute 45pc of the electorate. This makes young voters a significant factor, even a game changer, in determining the poll outcome. But what is unknown is whether young voters will actually show up at the ballot box — which would give PTI an edge.

So far, turnout among younger voters has been exceedingly low. Official statistics are lacking on this but a Gallup-Pakistan report, relying on exit polls conducted since 1988, finds

youth turnout to be much lower than overall voter participation. It shows that usually only a quarter of young voters turned out to vote. In the past two elections, their participation was only a third compared to the average overall turnout of 52pc.

Overall voter turnout is itself a big unknown. It could be a significant indicator of how free, fair and credible voters will judge the election to be. Turnout in previous elections has ranged between 51pc (2018), 53pc (2013), 44pc (2008) and 41pc (2002). The lowest turnout in 2002 was clearly a measure of the scepticism with which people saw an election held under military rule. A very low turnout, say below 44pc, could undermine the legitimacy of the February election result.

Another unknown is how voters in Punjab will respond to the new Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party organised to upend PTI and comprised mostly of PTI deserters in a process orchestrated by the establishment. Pakistan's electoral history shows voters usually punish incumbents, just as they reject expedient alliances. Individual IPP leaders with a strong constituency base may, however, buck this trend.

What should be among election 'knowns' by now is where contesting parties stand on the consequential issues and challenges facing the country. But with elections just a month away, political parties have yet to articulate their positions on key policy issues or offer detailed programmes on what they will do if elected.

One party has made extravagant and utterly unrealistic promises willfully ignoring the dire state of the economy. At a time when the economy is still in the critical ward and needs bold and decisive action, the need for policy ideas and options has never been greater. However, this has yet to figure in the election campaign that has so far been mostly about ticket distribution and 'seat adjustment' deals.—Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**Govt-private sector liaison crucial for economic development: PM**

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said that the development model, featuring a close liaison between the government and private sector, could yield positive results for national economic growth. The prime minister, interacting with the business community at the Business Facilitation Center (BFC), said the enhanced interaction between the business community and the government, would help increase employment

opportunities, taxation as well as GDP growth. He said that owing to the mutual

cooperation between the government and the business community, the country was

heading towards achieving economic stability and revival.

**PM for legal proceedings against urea fertilizer hoarders**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said that enough urea fertilizer was available in the country to meet requirements and directed for initiation of legal proceedings against those involved in its hoarding and illegal profiteering.

He said that those exploiting farmers by urea fertilizer hoarding would not be spared. The prime minister chaired a meeting over the availability of urea fertilizer in the country. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamsad Akhtar, Caretaker Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali, Caretaker Minister for National Food Security Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik, Caretaker Minister for Trade Dr Gohar Ejaz, caretaker chief ministers and relevant officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting availability of Urea Fertilizer in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad in a meeting with Chinese Business Delegation on at Privatisation Division.

**Pakistan signs agreements with int'l companies to boost employment opportunities**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan signed over a dozen agreements with Saudi and international companies that were executed during the recent expo in Saudi Arabia to boost employment opportunities abroad for the Pakistani workforce.

APP here on Monday, he said that the agreements would open doors for the Pakistani workforce in various sectors such as construction, hospitality, information technology, services industry and various other fields globally. To a question, he said that the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), which is part of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistan and Human Resource Development, was also present at the expo through its Managing Director Naseer Khan Kashani. Other dignitaries at the expo included Pakistan's Ambassador to

Saudi Arabia Ahmad Farooq and representatives of multinational organizations.

Underlining the importance of the expo, he stated that the expo served as a pivotal forum, bringing together human resources and recruitment companies alongside reliable and accredited labour services entities.

It provided an opportunity for Pakistan to engage with the global community, understand international market needs, and "tailor our skills to meet the evolving demands of the job market", he added.

**President FPCCI entrusted the charge of Chairman FPCCI Capital Office**

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Atif Ikram President FPCCI has entrusted the charge of Chairman FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad to Mr. Karim Aziz Malik, former Vice President FPCCI & CEO Barkat Rice Mills (PVT) Islamabad, who has taken over the charge of this office today. Mr. Karim Aziz Malik expressed that the election of FPCCI has now over and the entire business community of Pakistan will be united under one roof of FPCCI without any grouping for the revival of Pakistan's economy. On the occasion, Special Prayers were held for the solidarity, Safety and Security of Pakistan and economic revival and

progress of the country. He stressed on need of aggressive and untiring sincere efforts to bring out the country from the existing economic crises. The new Chairman of FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad expressed his gratitude and congratulated the newly elected President FPCCI Mr. Atif Ikram and the Senior Vice President Mr. Saqib Fayaz Maggon and other Vice Presidents. He appreciated the efforts of the business leaders of United Business Group (UBG) SM Tanvir, Zafar Bakhtawari, Mian Akram Farid, Zubair Tufail, Khalid Javed, Mian Shokat Masood, Amir Waheed, Sohail Malik.

**LCCI starts membership renewal for 2024-25**

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has started renewal of memberships for the year 2024-25 and bills have been issued to more than 37,000 members. For the renewal of membership, proof of income tax return filing for the financial year 2022-23 will be mandatory.

Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Kashif Anwar here Monday appealed to the LCCI members to get their memberships renewed for the year 2024-25 as soon as possible to avoid rush and other problems.

**Pak earns \$372.930m by exporting transport services in 4 months**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned US \$372.930 million by providing different transport services in various countries during the first four months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

This shows an increase of 26.01 percent as compared to \$295.959 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding months of the fiscal year (2022-23), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the months under review, the exports of sea transport services witnessed an increase of 120.49 percent, going up from \$65.700 million last year to \$144.860 million during the months under review. Among the sea transport services, the exports of freight services dipped by 62.56 percent from \$53.370 million last year to \$19.980 million whereas the exports

of other sea transport services however increased by 912.81 percent from \$12.330 million to \$124.880 million current year, the PBS data revealed.

The exports of air transport witnessed a nominal decline of 1.95 percent going down from \$222.779 million last year to \$218.440 million during July-October 2023.

Among the air transport services, the exports of passenger services increased by 3.57 percent, from \$144.650 million to \$149.810 million, whereas the exports of freight services dipped by 32.51 percent, from \$11.350 million to \$7.660 million, in addition, the export of other air transport services also dipped by 8.70 percent from \$66.779 million to \$60.790 million.

Meanwhile, the exports of road transport services during the months under review witnessed a growth of 70.15 percent going up from \$4.590 million to \$7.810 million.

**Mobilink Bank closes 2023 with 41% increase in MSME Disbursements**

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank stood out for its commitment to empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), constituting a significant 36% of its total loan portfolio and a noteworthy MSME Growth (YoY) of 41% in 2023. The Bank strongly advocates for social mobility, especially in empowering MSMEs and women across remote rural regions, offering tailored financial products and services.

Mobilink Bank's inclusive loan offerings are pivotal in bringing about positive transformations within communities nationwide. In a dedicated effort to address the gender-specific impacts of natural disasters driven by climate change, the Bank has allocated PKR 1.7 billion to climate financing. Additionally, the Bank's strong commitment to environmentally sustainable practices is evident, with 10% of its branches successfully transitioning to solar power, underscoring its dedication to green initiatives.

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## CM virtually inaugurates 36 upgraded police stations

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi virtually inaugurated 36 upgraded police stations across the province here on Monday.

He also inaugurated the newly constructed Gulshan-e-Iqbal police station, said a handout issued here.

In a generous New Year gesture, he announced a waiver on fee increases for driving licences until Jan 9, extending an opportunity for citizens to obtain licences at the existing rates.

The CM inspected the Gulshan-e-Iqbal Police Station and its different sections, including the front desk, waiting room, SHO's room, IT room, and meeting room. Expressing appreciation for the initiative to provide top-

notch facilities, CM Naqvi conveyed his congratulations to the IG police, CCPO Lahore, DIG (Ops) and their respective teams.

Provincial ministers Mansoor Qadir, Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, Home Secretary, CCPO Lahore, Secretary Communication and Works, Commissioner, DIG (Ops) and others were also present.

Meanwhile, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi commenced the dawn of 2024 by inspecting public welfare projects.

He inspected the 7.3 KM long controlled access corridor Band Road for two hours to review the progress. Currently, 50 per cent completion is reported for package one and 38 per cent for package two.

In his commitment to

timely delivery, CM Naqvi set a deadline of Jan 31 for the project's completion, emphasizing a steadfast adherence to the schedule, and even advocating for round-the-clock efforts.

Expressing concern over reported extortion from the soil supplier contractor, the CM directed the police to take legal action against the extortionists.

He scrutinized construction activities, urging both the contractors to accelerate their pace. He tasked the deputy commissioner to remove encroachments surrounding the project areas. Commissioner/DG LDA briefed about the project's progress.

Provincial ministers Mansoor Qadir, Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, CCPO, secretary C&W and others were also present.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi offering Dua after virtual inaugurating of Police Station Gulshan Iqbal and other 36 Police Stations under 737 Police Stations building upgradation.

## Providing modern education IG FC North commends Cadet College Warsak for its commitment

PESHAWAR (Online): Addressing the gathering, Chief Guest Major General Noor Wali Khan commended Cadet College Warsak for its commitment to providing modern education. He acknowledged the institution's role in maintaining high academic standards, placing it on par with other esteemed educational entities in Pakistan.

Major General Noor Wali Khan credited the success to the dedicated management and faculty of Cadet College Warsak. The event drew attendees from various sectors, including parents of cadets, civil and military officials, and a diverse cross-section of the community. Established in 2009, Cadet College Warsak has become a beacon of quality education, currently hosting 650 students from across Pakistan, including tribal districts of KPK.

## Caretaker Minister chairs a meeting on newly merged Districts

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Newly Merged Districts Affairs, Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Dr. Aamer Abdullah, on Monday, chaired a meeting of the Special Steering Committee, formed for Newly Merged Districts, here at Cabinet Room, Civil Secretariat in Peshawar.

Besides Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Secretary Health Mehmood Aslam Wazir, Secretary Communications and Works Muhammad Idrees Khan, Secretary Relief Inayatullah Wasim, Secretary Industry Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, Special Secretaries Home and P&D Departments Muhammad Zabair and Kamran Afridi, Officers of Police, Pakistan Army and other departments participated.

In the meeting, the progress and implementation of the tasks given to various departments in the decisions of the previous meetings of the steering committee and provincial task force formed under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister were reviewed.

On this occasion, the forum was informed that the process of capacity building of police in NMDs is on progress. 19 DSPs and 85 inspectors of police have been promoted to the next grades while recruitment of 1571 police personals through ETEA, will also be completed soon. Similarly, 513 ghost employees have also been removed from the police in these districts.

## Titanic of PTI politics has sunk: Javed

MANANWALA (Online): PML-N central leader Mian Javed Latif has said titanic of PTI politics has sunk. "We will put the final nail in the political coffin of Intehar Khan and his coterie on February 8 and send him packing for ever, he said this while talking to media men here Monday after holding corner meetings in different villages of constituency PP-142. "My Quaid Nawaz Sharif is last ray of hope for people who will steer the country from "Masailistan" and put it on the path to progress and prosperity, he added.

PML-N will win the election with overwhelming majority from across the country, he claimed. Sheikhpura is citadel of tigers of Mian Nawaz Sharif. Our political rivals have become confused over our politics of service to people. We have accomplished record development projects in our respective constituencies.

He announced Mian Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz will soon address public meeting.



PESHAWAR: Members of Khyber Medical Employees Association are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held at Peshawar press club.

## 2024 to be a year of development, prosperity for Pakistan: Firdous

SIALKOT (APP): Former Federal Minister and Pakistan Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Central Information Secretary Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan has congratulated the nation on the beginning of the New Year.

In a statement, she prayed 2024 to be a year of development and prosperity for Pakistan, for which all have to struggle together. "It is my prayer that the sun of the New Year should be a symbol of progress and prosperity and that the name of Pakistan shine globally," Firdous Ashiq Awan prayed for the

## PML-N office arson case: Court extends physical remand of Sanam Javed

LAHORE (Online): Sessions Court has extended physical remand of PTI worker Sanam Javed.

The PML-N office arson case came up for hearing in sessions court against Sanam Javed here Monday.

The police presented her in the court on completion of her two days physical remand.

The Model town

## ANF recovers over 2 tons drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), while conducting 10 operations across the country, managed to recover over 2 tons of drugs and arrest three accused, including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He said that 1.5 kg of ice was recovered from a Bahrain-bound passenger on Flight No. GF-0791 at Faisalabad Airport. 100 grams of hashish were recovered from a parcel booked for Dubai at a courier office near Jinnah Airport. 1460 kg of hashish and 215 kg of heroin were recovered from the Mazai Adda area of Qila Abdullah.

510 kg of hashish was recovered from Pishin, while 335.6 kg of hashish was recovered from the Toba Achakzai area of Chaman.

The spokesman informed us that 68.4 kg of hashish was recovered from the Morgah Border, Khyber area, in four separate operations.

180 kg of hashish was recovered from the Gali Alam Khan area of Pishin, and 17 kg of crystal heroin was recovered from a hilly area of Chagai.

In an operation, 6 kg of heroin was recovered from a drug manufacturing factory in the 'Kabari'.

# International News

## Fighting rages in Gaza as Israel looks at new phase of war

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO/ JERUSALEM/ GAZA: Israel pulled tanks out of some Gaza City districts on Monday, residents said, as it announced plans to shift tactics and cut back on troop numbers, but fighting raged elsewhere in the Palestinian enclave along with intense bombardment.

Israel says the war in Gaza, which has reduced much of the territory to rubble, killing thousands and plunging its 2.3 million people into a humanitarian disaster, has many months to go.

But Israel has signalled a coming news phase in its offensive, with an official saying on Monday that the military would draw down forces inside Gaza this month and shift to a months-long phase of more localised "mopping up" operations.

The official said the troop reduction would allow some reservists to return to civilian life, shoring up Israel's war-battered economy, and free up units in case of a wider conflict in the north with Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah.

Artillery fire between Hezbollah and Israel has rattled the border since the start of the Gaza conflict, with Israel's military saying it carried out an air strike on Monday, and

any new escalation carries risks for a wider regional war. Tehran-backed fighters in Yemen have attacked Red Sea shipping, drawing a US military response, and an Iranian warship has sailed into the waterway, Iranian media reported on Monday.

The Gaza war was triggered by a surprise Hamas attack on Israeli towns on Oct. 7 that Israel says killed 1,200 people. Palestinian health authorities in Hamas-run Gaza say Israel's offensive there has killed more than 21,978 people.

The scale of suffering in Gaza, where the bombardment has driven almost all inhabitants from their homes, has led Israel's Western allies, including the US, to urge it to scale down its offensive.

"My wish for 2024 is not to die... Our childhood is gone. There is no bathroom, no food and no water. Only tents. There is nowhere safe. There is nothing. Our wish is to go back to our homes and end this," 11-year-old Layan Harara said in Gaza's Rafah.

Residents of Sheikh Radwan district in Gaza City, in the northern part of the enclave that Israel's offensive focused on first, said tanks had withdrawn after what they described as the most intense 10 days of warfare since the conflict began.



Displaced Palestinians, who fled their homes due to Israeli strikes, shelter in a tent camp, in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip

## Nobel winner Yunus convicted in Bangladesh labour law case

Monitoring Desk

DHAKA: Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus was convicted on Monday of violating Bangladesh's labour laws in a case decried by his supporters as politically motivated.

Yunus, 83, is credited with lifting millions out of poverty with his pioneering



microfinance bank but has earned the enmity of longtime Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who has accused him of "sucking blood" from the poor.

Hasina has made several scathing verbal attacks against the internationally respected 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner, who was once seen as a political rival.

Yunus and three colleagues from Grameen Telecom, one of the firms he founded, were accused of violating labour laws when they failed to create a workers' welfare fund in the company.

A labour court in the capital Dhaka convicted and sentenced them to "six months' simple imprisonment", lead prosecutor Khurshid Alam Khan told AFP, adding that all four were immediately granted bail pending appeals.

All four deny the charges. Dozens of people staged a small demonstration of support outside the court for Yunus, who left without speaking to media. "This verdict is unprecedented," Abdullah Al Mamun, a lawyer for Yunus, told AFP. "We did not get justice."

Yunus is facing more than 100 other charges over labour law violations and alleged graft. He told reporters after one of the hearings last month that he had not profited from any of the more than 50 social business firms he had set up in Bangladesh.

## China's Xi terms Taiwan reunification 'inevitable'

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China's "reunification" with Taiwan is inevitable, President Xi Jinping said in his New Year's address striking a stronger tone than he did last year with less than two weeks to go before the Chinese-claimed island elects a new leader. The Jan. 13 presidential and parliamentary elections come at a time of fraught relations between Beijing and Taipei, as China has been ramping up military pressure to assert its sovereignty claims over Taiwan.

China considers Taiwan to be its "sacred territory" and has never renounced the use of force to bring it under Chinese control, though Xi made no mention of military threats in his speech carried on state television.

"The reunification of the motherland is a historical inevitability," Xi said, though the official English translation of his remarks published by the Xinhua news agency used a more simple phrase: "China will surely be reunified."

"Compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait should be bound by a common sense of purpose and share in the glory of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," he added. The official English translation wrote "all Chinese" rather than "compatriots".

"Resilient economy" During his address, the Chinese president also said the country's economy had grown "more resilient and dynamic" in 2023, despite financial figures continuing to disappoint as post-Covid recovery stalls.

Xi has endured a challenging 2023 at the helm of the world's second-largest economy, with his administration struggling to sustain an economic rebound since rapidly dumping its onerous zero-Covid policy a year ago.

But he said on state broadcaster CCTV the economy had "weathered the storm" and become "more resilient and dynamic than before", hailing the promotion of "high-quality development" and emerging industries such as electric vehicles, lithium batteries and solar panels.

He said next year "we must... consolidate and enhance the positive trend of economic recovery, and achieve long-term economic stability".

## UN mission in Mali completes its withdrawal

Monitoring Desk

NEW YORK: The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, MINUSMA, is poised to complete its withdrawal from the country on Sunday, the United Nations said in a statement.

Security experts warn the area could now become the focus of a struggle in the north as rebel groups and the army seek to take areas that the UN has left, further destabilising Mali, where fighters linked to Al Qaeda and the militant Islamic State group also roam.

Violence in Mali has spiked since June when the military junta which took power in a 2021 coup ordered the UN's decade-old peacekeeping mission to leave. The UN said only a small team will stay behind to oversee the transportation of assets and disposal of UN-owned equipment.

"UN funds, agencies and programmes were in Mali well before the deployment of MINUSMA and will stay in Mali well after the withdrawal," MINUSMA chief El-Ghassum Wane said.

## Kim tells army to 'annihilate' South Korea, US if they initiate conflict

Monitoring Desk

PYONGYANG (INP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un told his top military officers to use maximum force against South Korea and the United States if they initiate a military confrontation, state media reported Monday.

Seoul and Washington have ramped up defence cooperation in the face of a record-breaking series of weapons tests by Pyongyang over the past year.

At a meeting with North Korea's major commanding officers in Pyongyang on New Year's Eve, Kim said his military should "annihilate" the enemy if provoked, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. "If the enemy opt for military confrontation and provocation against the DPRK, our army should deal a deadly blow to thoroughly annihilate them by mobilizing all the toughest means and potentialities without moment's hesitation," Kim said.

Kim's comments echo his threats made during year-end party meetings of a nuclear attack on Seoul and orders for a military arsenal build-up to prepare for a war that he said could "break out any time" on the peninsula.

During the meetings to set the policy agenda for 2024, the North Korean leader accused the United States of posing "various forms of military threat".

He also called on armed forces to "suppress the whole territory of south Korea mobilizing all physical means... including nuclear forces" in case of a "great event", referring to an armed conflict.

Kim told the meeting he would no longer seek reconciliation and reunification with South Korea, noting the "uncontrollable crisis" that he said was triggered by Seoul and Washington. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol vowed Monday to keep Pyongyang's military provocations at bay with a joint extended deterrence system with Washington, scheduled for the first half of 2024.

The deterrence system will "fundamentally deter any North Korean nuclear and missile threat", Yoon said in his New Year's Day address.

## Pakistan saw over 115% increase in tourism in 2023: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister of State for Tourism Wasi Shah Monday said that in the year 2023 Pakistan saw a 115% increase in foreign tourism which has helped the country earn \$1.3 billion in foreign exchange revenue.

In an exclusive talk with a private news channel, minister mentioned that according to the 'World Tourism Barometer' published by the World Tourism Organisation of the United Nations, Pakistan made a remarkable 92 per cent recovery to pre-pandemic levels in 2023, as the country experienced a 115 per cent surge in tourist arrivals compared to the previous year.

Minister hoped that the year 2024 will bring more tourist travel land-

scape in changing the country as a powerhouse in the tourism sector.

He said that Pakistan is promoting tourism and would identify more unexplored tourism destinations of Sindh and Balochistan comprising adventure, religious, nature, weekend, rural and tribal tourism.

Wasi added that our country enriched by beaches, cliffs, forests, hills, valleys, and rivers, and the beauty of the natural landscapes that you find all around the world, but it has them in one gorgeous, beautiful place.

"These places are mostly unspoiled, and they are mostly undiscovered where new elected government need to focus, adding, we are showcasing Pakistan's tourism opportunities at the global mar-

ket shows like WTM which would help attract more tourists to Pakistan.

He also mentioned through world tourism Mart participation Pakistan pavilion attracted a large number of travel enthusiasts, representatives of international travel companies and social media influencers. The World Travel Mart in London was one of the world's largest travel shows, connected global travel buyers with over 5,000 of the most renowned destinations and brands worldwide.

Replying to a question, he said it is a gift for the nation that Pakistan declared a best tourism destination in the world, adding, the government is simplifying the procedures and encouraging and involvement of private sector.



ISLAMABAD: Jamal Shah, Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture inaugurating Shah Alla Ditta Caves development, conservation & preservation project.

## CDA introduces state-of-the-art fast-track services

ISLAMABAD (APP): Building Control Directorate of Capital Development Authority (CDA) has introduced state-of-the-art fast-track service by modernizing the system of providing amenities to the citizens.

In this context, CDA started to ensure the approval of the building plan in the facilitation centre on the fast track.

Under this modern and fastest system, residential buildings of 356 yards will now be approved with an additional fee of Rs 20,000 thousand with required documents within two

days, while residential buildings larger than 356 yards will be approved with a fee of Rs 30,000 thousand. Additionally, commercial buildings up to 10000 square yards will also be approved within three days. A separate desk has also been established for all these matters. It should be noted that the citizens coming to this place will not have to wait in the line of one window separately.

Similarly, arrangements have been made to set a good environment for the citizens who will visit here.

## SC adjourns hearing of petition against delimitation of NA-165 after election

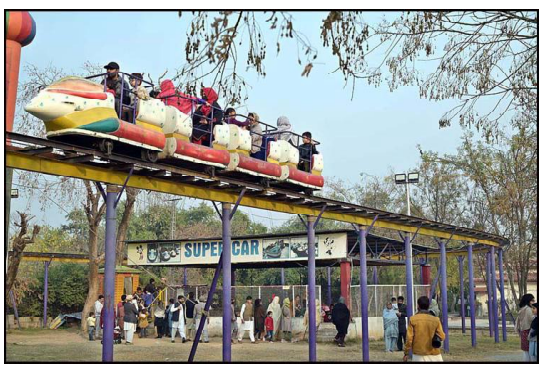
ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has adjourned hearing of petition against delimitation of NA-165 after election.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah has remarked our last order is this the election will take place on the delimitations which were framed before issuance of election schedule. He gave these remarks during hearing of the case on Monday.

The counsel for petitioner took the plea Elec-

tion Commission (EC) gave decision against us after December 15. Upon it DG Law EC told the court the delimitation was notified before election schedule.

The court remarked December 13 notification has been maintained. Justice Mansoor remarked we can do nothing in this case at present. The matter was postponed after election PML-N candidate Saud Majeed had challenged delimitation of NA-165.



ISLAMABAD: People enjoying mini train ride at Lake View Park.

## VC AIOU says: 'We aim to make education accessible and affordable'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, congratulated the students on the beginning of the new year and said that our 2024 resolution is to make education accessible and affordable for everyone.

He emphasized the importance of hard work and education as the key to success.

Dr. Nasir highlighted education as the ladder of development and urged the younger generation to prioritize education and play an active role in the progress of the country and the nation. Our New Year resolution is to make education accessible and affordable for everyone.

Dr. Nasir Mahmood stated that Allama Iqbal Open University is committed to keeping its doors open for those who seek education and is ready to provide them with all possible support to include them in the educational network.

Admissions for the spring semester of 2024 will commence on January 15. The university will be awarding scholarships to talented and deserving children nationwide, who cannot afford the fees.

In his message, the Vice Chancellor has directed the regional heads of the university to take special care of the students' facilities and provide them with full support.



LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar receives briefing about the overall working and current progress of the Business Facilitation Center.

## Mushaal concerned over deteriorating political, HR situation in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Human Rights & Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick Monday has expressed serious concern over the deteriorating political and human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

While talking to Pakistan Television, Mushaal Hussein Mullick warned that brazen demographic

change by India in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir is creating tensions that could push the region to a disastrous war, adding, "India is expected to register up to 2.5 million new voters from Indians in the contested Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)".

In replying to a question, she regretted that the prisons inside the IIOJK jails were still waiting for basic facilities of medicines

and lawyers, adding, that they were deprived of basic needs.

She also called upon International organizations and human rights platforms to speed up their efforts and raise voices for the rights of innocent Kashmiri people. Additionally, she also shared her own experience of being targeted during a journey to Norway where she had faced significant harassment by an Indian national.

## Safety of the citizens top priority of NH&MP:IG

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of the National Highways and Motorways Police (NHMP), Sultan Ali Khawaja, said on Monday that the safety of citizens' lives and property while driving on national highways and motorways is our main concern.

According to a private news channel, Inspector General of National Highways and Motorways Sultan Ali Khawaja said that the increase in fines was imposed by the updated twelfth schedule of the National Highways Safety Ordinance 2000 to ensure the rules and regulations

while driving vehicles on the highways.

According to highway officials, the fine for exceeding the speed limit in a passenger vehicle has been raised to ten thousand rupees, five thousand for cargo vehicles, two thousand five hundred for car riders, and fifteen hundred for motorcyclists.

A fine of five thousand rupees will be imposed for driving a motorcycle, car, or light transport vehicle without a license, and ten thousand rupees for passenger and cargo trucks.

One thousand rupees for not wearing a helmet while riding a motorcycle,

one thousand rupees for not wearing a seat belt while driving a car, and three thousand rupees for passenger and heavy vehicles.

A five hundred rupee fine will be imposed for motorcycle and car drivers, two thousand rupees for light transportation, and five thousand rupees for passengers and large vehicles for using a phone while driving. A two thousand rupee fine for driving an unlicensed motorcycle or light transport vehicle and a five thousand rupee fine for passenger carriers and heavy trucks will be obligatory.



ISLAMABAD: People are crossing the busy Kernal Sher Khan Road instead of using over head pedestrian bridge, which may cause any incident any time.

## 248 people killed in IIOJ&K during last year: LFK report

ISLAMABAD (APP): A total of 248 people had been killed in multiple incidents of violence across Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by the Indian forces, according to an annual review report titled 'Human Rights Situation in IIOJK' released by Legal Forum for Kashmir (LFK).

The armed action of India's occupying forces against the native population as a result of heightened military presence has resulted in the killing of 82 indigenous freedom fighters from January to December 2023, said a press release.

According to the LFK annual report, January-December 2023 saw a new trend of state repression and counterinsurgency operations in the war-torn region of IIOJK. On the ground, the violations of International Human Rights law (IHRL) and International Humanitarian law (IHL) led to appalling human tragedies. Indian occupying authorities and the

occupying forces stationed in IIOJK have perpetrated a series of 'Atrocity crimes': Indian occupying forces persisted in their repressive policies and disregard for international law and the principle of the Right of Self-determination. A total of 260 Cordon and Search Operations (CASOs) were reported by the local media which are just a fraction of the total Search Operations launched by the occupying forces. The report said that at least 70 encounters took place during which vandalism, and destruction of 138 civilian properties were reported. Also, 171 instances of Internet shutdown in IIOJK were reported.

India's Infamous anti-terror investigation agencies National Investigation Agency (NIA) & State Investigation Agency (SIA) have attached 200 properties across IIOJK in the year 2023. It further said that Indian occupying authorities annihilate the critical voices of Kashmiris by pervasive surveillance to monitor

their daily lives, violating the rights to freedom of expression, opinion, and privacy rights of Kashmiris.

To intensify restrictions on social media users in IIOJK, police have been given free access to track accounts of all Kashmiris in the name of monitoring anti-India activities. Police claimed to have secured direct cooperation from social media giants, including WhatsApp, X, Snapchat, Instagram, Telegram, and TikTok, it added.

LFK reports the torture and custodial death case at Dhera Ki Gali and Baffliazi in the Poonch-Rajouri belt of IIOJK. According to the families, the three men - Mohammad Showkat, 22, Safer Hussain, 45, and Shabir Ahmad, 32, were detained by IOF at the hilly Topa Pir village in Poonch district on December 22, 2023. The torture victims and the families of the deceased testified that before the custodial death of three civilian's Indian army stripped them

naked and used chilli powder over the sensitive body parts to inflict more bodily harm.

The report said that India has accelerated its efforts to dominate every means of dissent and seize properties of native inhabitants, paving the way for outsiders to settle in the region. In the name of "retrieving state land", the occupational authorities and their auxiliaries seized over 178005.213 acres in Kashmir region and 25159.56 acres in Jammu as alleged "encroached" by the residents. In its annual report, LFK called the international community to take cognizance of the evidence presented in this report. All the cases of extrajudicial killing, arbitrary detention, and torture of civilians, the curbs on freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion, the demographic changes, and all other measures aimed at the ethnic cleansing of Kashmir Muslims must not go unheeded.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, Chairman Senate Functional Committee on Devolution presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

## Minister lays foundation stone of Shah Alla Ditta Caves preservation project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Syed Jamal Shah on Monday laid the foundation stone of Shah Alla Ditta Caves development, conservation, preservation and restoration.

Federal Secretary of National Heritage and Culture Division Humaira Ahmed, Director General Department of Archaeology & Museums (DOAM) Dr Abdul Azeem and other senior officials were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that the Department of Archaeology & Museums (DOAM) Islamabad has declared the site a "Protected Antiquity" under the Antiquities Act 1975 on 13-08-2016.

He said that DOAM, National Heritage & Culture Division, has started conservation, preservation, restoration & development of the caves during the current financial year.

He said that the work includes Archaeological excavation, complete documentation of the site, geotechnical study of binding materials, construction

of drainage works as well as Soft and hard landscaping.

Shah Alla Ditta caves are situated on the southern side of the Margalla hills in a small picturesque valley, 14 kilometers north-west of the capital city of Islamabad. Caves consist of two natural rock shelters of Kanjur stone situated on either side of a natural spring of hot water.

The front side of the eastern cave is covered with a wall of undressed kanjur stone laid in mud mortar. The facade of the cave is covered with mud plaster having many coatings of red color.

On the smooth surface of the wall, some paintings are executed in black color but in the later period, the paintings are covered with a layer of whitewash.

The paintings are of Hindu origin, probably of god Vishnu (the savior).

Interior of the cave is divided into upper and lower halves. Walls are treated with mud plaster having many coatings of white wash but now the color of the walls become blackish due to the smoke of the fire used by the dwellers.



ISLAMABAD: Students are leaving to home in school bus as today was the first after winter vacation in Federal Capital.

## Islamabad police commended for good performance in 2023

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan extended heartfelt thanks to the dedicated officers, women, and staff of the Islamabad Capital Police for their unwavering commitment and relentless efforts throughout 2023.

In a special New Year message, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan acknowledged the sacrifices and hard work put in by the police force, ensuring the safety and security of Islamabad's residents despite numerous challenges. He expressed pride in their accomplishments, crediting their daily hard work, compassion, and dedication for the department's success in various endeavors.

In his message, ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan urged everyone to continue their service in 2024 with the same zeal, dedication, and professionalism. He emphasized the goal of creating a safe and secure environment in Islamabad, where both resi-

dents and visitors feel protected.

Dr. Khan extended gratitude to the residents of Islamabad for their unwavering support throughout 2023, especially during challenging times such as protests and political activities that could have disrupted the city's peace. He praised the cooperation extended by the residents and thanked those who continued their businesses, contributing to maintaining a peaceful environment.

Acknowledging the essential role played by various government entities, ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan thanked the governments of Pakistan, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and other provinces for their direct involvement and support. He expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Interior, Secretary Interior, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, and their entire staff for their cooperation and provision of resources.



ISLAMABAD: A view of the yellow leaves on road side after dropping from trees as indicating autumn season in Federal Capital.

## Diverse undergraduate programs Admissions start at Dar-ul-Madina Intl University

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dar-ul-Madina International University, has officially announced the commencement of admissions for Bachelor's programs in Arabic, Education, Islamic Studies, and Islamic Banking and Finance.

The university, located on Sector G-11, Shabbir Sharif Road, Islamabad, chartered by the government of Pakistan and recognized by the Higher Education Commission, has gained prominence for its commitment to providing quality education in the realm of Islamic studies.

Dar-ul-Madina International University offers a comprehensive BS Arabic program, aiming to equip students with a deep

understanding of the Arabic language, literature, and culture.

The BS Education program at the university is designed to prepare future educators with the skills and knowledge necessary for a dynamic and evolving educational landscape.

Renowned for its expertise in Islamic studies, the university offers a BS program that delves into various facets of Islamic theology, history, and jurisprudence. Reflecting the university's commitment to contemporary relevance, the BS Islamic Banking and Finance program integrates traditional Islamic financial principles with modern banking practices.