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Quetta

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## Govt forms committee to probe May 9 incidents

**Committee headed by the caretaker Law Minister, comprises four members, including the Minister of Interior, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, and Minister of Human Rights; The committee is mandated to suggest preventive measures to ensure that such a breach of national security is not repeated.**

ISLAMABAD (INP): The caretaker government, led by Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar, in response to the May 9 incidents, has established a Cabinet Committee tasked with reviewing the events and proposing measures to prevent their recurrence.

According to media reports, the committee, headed by the caretaker law minister, comprises four members, including the Minister of Interior, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, and Minister of Human Rights.

The committee's mandate involves unveiling the causes behind the May 9

incidents, identifying key figures, planners, and facilitators, and determining the reasons and responsibilities associated with the events. It aims to provide recommendations to avert similar incidents in the future. The committee is set to deliver its report to the cabinet within two weeks.

APP adds: Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Saturday said there was a dire need to carry out a holistic investigation of the May 9 incidents to determine causes, responsibility, and future course of action to prevent

recurrence of such events.

Speaking in television talk shows of private media, the minister said the investigation of those involved in May 9 was underway on an individual basis, but Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar deemed it appropriate to probe into the matter holistically.

He said the committee that was formed the other day would not only investigate the May 9 riots thoroughly but also give its recommendations to prevent a repetition of such events by strengthening the existing legal regime.

Continued on page 2



KARACHI: President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi visits Saylani Welfare Trust at M Ali Society

## Appellate Tribunal allows Jam Kamal to contest election

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Appellate Tribunal comprising Mr. Justice Hashim Khan Kakar has rejected the appeals filed against acceptance of the nomination papers of the leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and former Chief Minister Balochistan, Jam Kamal Khan and allowed him to contest the general elections.

The Tribunal heard the appeals against acceptance of the papers of Jam Kamal Khan and dismissed the same after arguments of the lawyers.

The opponent party had raised objections of holding Iqama on Jam Kamal Khan.

However, the lawyer of Jam Kamal defended his client saying that the duration of Iqama had been expired in 2018.

After the arguments and routine proceedings, the Tribunal dismissed the appeals against acceptance of Jam Kamal and thus allowed to contest elections.

Meanwhile, the Tribunal deferred the hearing on

appeals filed against acceptance of the nomination papers of PPP leader and former chief Minister Nawab Sanaullah Zehri and President of BNP, Sardar Akhtar Mengal till January 8, 2024.

It may be mentioned here that the objections had been filed against acceptance of the nomination papers of Nawab Sanaullah Zehri and Sardar Akhtar Mengal.

At the outset, a total of 75 appeals were heard by the appellate tribunals in Quetta on Saturday.

The judge of Tribunal, Mr Justice Hashim Kakar heard 17 appeals and allowed three candidates to contest the elections.

The tribunal rejected an appeal and dismissed five others besides issuing notices to parties on eight appeals. Similarly, the Appellate Tribunal-II comprising Mr Justice Amir Nawaz Rana heard 58 appeals.

This tribunal allowed 44 candidates to contest elections and reserved decisions on eight appeals besides issuing notices to the parties on six appeals.



QUETTA: Chairman PkMAP Mehmood Khan Achakzai and Nawab Ayaz Jozegzai addressing party workers in Kuchlak

## PML-N blasts for backing election delay, says won't allow them to escape ballot

LAHORE (INP): PML-N Spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb on Saturday said it was three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif who never enjoyed a level-playing field – an obvious reference to how he was kept out of elections in 2002, 2008 and 2018. Talking to reporter outside an anti-terrorism court where she appeared in connection with a case, she said the PTI wanted to avoid elections and had initially reached the Lahore High Court (LHC) for the purpose.

Marriyum blasted the PTI for backing the resolution passed in the Senate a

day earlier, which called for postponement of general elections scheduled next month on May 8. Pakistan and the people needed polls, she reaffirmed and added that they won't allow anyone to run away from elections.

Continuing with her arguments about the level-playing field, Marriyum mentioned how the PTI founding chairman has been getting relief from courts and reminded the media persons how the person who orchestrated the May 9 violence was greeted with remarks like

Continued on page 2

## President visits Saylani Welfare Trust

KARACHI (APP): The President Dr. Arif Alvi visited the Saylani Welfare International Trust Langar Khana here on Saturday.

He met with deserving people and ate lunch with them. He also inaugurated the Saylani School of Business and Islamic Leadership and visited a classroom.

Earlier, the President was received by the Saylani Welfare Chief Maulana Bashir Farooqi.

## 4.6 magnitude earthquake jolts Quetta

QUETTA (APP): An earthquake of 4.6 magnitudes on the Richter Scale jolted Quetta and its adjoining areas on Saturday morning.

According to Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), tremors were felt in Quetta and suburbs. According to the National Seismic Monitoring Centre (NSMC), the epicenter of the earthquake was Hindu Kush region of Afghanistan, while its depth was 98 kilometers.

A meeting chaired by the Secretary Health Abdullah Khan considered the strategy about enforcement of Drug Act and prevention of sale of the fake medicines here on Saturday.

The meeting reviewed the laws of Balochistan Drug Act and amendments in it.

## Quetta administration working hard to provide relief to masses

QUETTA (APP): The initiatives taken by the Quetta administration have brought improvement in the civic life of the capital city of the province.

The administration has taken measures under the supervision of Commissioner Quetta Division Muhammad Hamza Shafiq to ensure hard work and commitment to improve governance.

The data issued here reveals that the district administration has conducted 338 raids on various commercial centers to provide relief to the people and control inflation in a short period of three months.

During the inspections,



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Ministers Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozegzai and Asifur Rehman Dommar meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

## Bilawal says polls on Feb 8 even if UN, OIC pass resolutions

LAHORE (INP): Amid apprehensions of further delay in general elections in the country, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said Saturday that the polls will be held on February 8 as per schedule even if "they" get resolutions passed from the United Nations (UN) or the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The remark came during his press conference in Lahore, wherein he was questioned about the approval of a resolution by the Senate to delay the polls.

Bilawal said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a schedule for the polls on February 8 so the polls will be staged on the same date.

"No matter if [they] get a resolution passed from the Senate, the UN or the OIC, elections will be staged on February 8," the former foreign minister told reporters.

An independent lawmaker in the Senate moved a resolution seeking deferral of polls in the light of extreme weather and security situation in the country, which was adopted by a majority of 14 senators present in the legislature on Friday.

However, a fresh resolution was tabled in the upper house for the elections' conduct on February 8 as per schedule.

Jamaat-e-Islami's (JI) Senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan, in the resolution submitted to the Senate Secretariat today, pointed out that holding elections is a constitutional requirement.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court was also moved to initiate contempt proceedings against senators involved in passing a resolution in the Senate for polls delay.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Information Secretary Marriyum Aurangzeb also stressed that polls in the

country will be held as per schedule.

Talking to the media after appearing before an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore earlier in the day, the former information minister said that PML-N was the only party that opposed the resolution.

"Elections will be on February 8 [even if] other parties cry or shout," said Marriyum.

Ruling out the possibility of the polls being put off, Bilawal recalled Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa's remark of the election date being "set in stone".

The PPP leader said that he thinks everyone has trust in this remark of the top judge and stands by him on this matter.

He expressed confidence that the general elections will be staged on time and the Pakistanis will have the chance to exercise their right to vote and form a government of their choice.



LAHORE: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addresses to media persons during press conference, held at the Head Office of ISAAC TV in NA 127 Modern Colony

## Meeting chaired by Secretary Health: Balochistan Drug Act to be enforced; stern action to be taken against fake medicines

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Provincial Health Department decided to take stern action against selling of fake medicines besides enforcing the Balochistan Drug Act in true spirit.

A meeting chaired by the Secretary Health Abdullah Khan considered the strategy about enforcement of Drug Act and prevention of sale of the fake medicines here on Saturday.

The meeting reviewed the laws of Balochistan Drug Act, Advocate Kailash Nath Mehta also presented his point of view on the related matters.

Secretary Health, Arif Khan, Advocate Kailash Nath Mehta, Secretary Quality Control Board, Moez Khan, Chief Drug Inspector Zahid Salik and Staff Officer to Secretary Health Shokat Zehri.

The meeting was briefed about the the amendments in laws of the Balochistan Drug Act.

The legal point of view on the reforms in the Drug Act was also presented in the meeting.

The former Chairman Drug Act, Advocate Kailash Nath Mehta also presented his point of view on the related matters.

## Every citizen has right to disagree with judiciary: CJP

Says live coverage gives people confidence that justice is being served

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa said Saturday that not every citizen of the country needs to agree with the court's rulings but justice being served should be apparent in the decisions.

"Every citizen has the right to disagree with the decisions of judiciary. It isn't necessary that the citizens concur with [the decisions] but justice should be seen being done in judicial decisions," the top judge said while addressing the ceremony for the launch of the Federal Judicial Academy's e-campus in Islamabad.

He said that the academy was working under a strong board and its success is the success for everyone.

CJP Isa said that as many as 3,200 judges are

working in the country and the academy is providing training on different levels.

He said that the academy brings together judges from different provinces and regions on a single platform where they can share their experiences and ideas with each other.

He further stated that he feels satisfied by seeing the use of modern technology in the judicial academy. The top judge said that live coverage of the hearings of the cases gives the viewers, especially the students, an opportunity to learn, the top judge said while commending the live hearing of the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Act case.

"Live coverage gives people the confidence that justice is being served," CJP Isa said.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah presenting a copy of FJA Vision to Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr Justice Qazi Faez Isa in the Conference on the Launch of Vision and E-Campus at the Federal Judicial Academy

## Fresh resolution lands in Senate demanding timely general elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): A day after Senate adopted a resolution seeking delay in Feb 8 general elections, a new resolution was submitted in the Senate on Saturday, emphasising the need to adhere to "constitutional requirements" and ensure the timely conduct of the polls.

The upper house of the Parliament had on Friday passed the resolution seeking to delay the polls due to security concerns.

PML-N Senator Afnan Ullah Khan had opposed the non-binding resolution, which was moved by independent Senator Dilawar Khan during a session with only 15 lawmakers in attendance.

Later, the passage of the resolution was roundly criticised by various political parties, while the care-

taker information minister had insisted that there was no directive of the prime minister or the federal cabinet for delay.

In the latest development, JI Senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan submitted a fresh resolution in the Senate secretariat, urging that polls should be conducted on time.

The inclusion of the resolution in the agenda of the upcoming session of the Senate remains uncertain, as the date for the session has not been confirmed.

"I introduce this resolution in the house, asserting that conducting elections is a constitutional requirement. It is the fundamental responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan and the caretaker government to ensure the

Continued on page 2

## Aneeq leaves for Saudi Arabia to finalize Hajj arrangements

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed, on Saturday departed for Saudi Arabia to finalize the arrangements for Hajj.

During the visit, the minister is scheduled to hold significant meetings with Saudi officials and evaluate the arrangements for Hajj.

The minister will also visit Jeddah to attend the International Hajj Conference organized by Saudi Arabia.

Secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Dr. Attaur Rahman, along with Joint Secretary Hajj, Sajjad Haider Yaldrum, is also accompanying the minister on this visit.

## Envoys' Conference 2024 concludes



ISLAMABAD (INP): Envoys' Conference 2024 concluded today after deliberations on steering Pakistan's foreign policy through present day challenges and opportunities.

According to the Spokesperson of Foreign Office Muntaz Zahra Baloch, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar and Foreign Minister Jaitil Abbas Jilani shared their vision of Pakistan's foreign policy.

The envoys discussed key aspects of Pakistan's foreign policy, emphasizing economic diplomacy and Pakistan's continued commitment to purposes and principles of the UN Charter, multilateralism and international law.



## Digital ads trucks in New York flash messages urging UN to resolve Kashmir dispute

NEW YORK (APP): A noted Kashmir advocacy organization rented mobile digital advertising trucks displaying sharp messages around New York City that exhorted the United Nations to implement its decades-old resolutions pledging to the people of Kashmir their right to self-determination as they drove around the landmarks of Manhattan.

The electronic screens on the trucks carried messages such as "From Kashmir to Palestine: Occupation is Crime"; "(Indian) Supreme Court Decision is a Delusion: Kashmir Needs a Resolution"; "Indian Forces on Killing Spree: Kashmir Needs to be Set Free"; "Kashmiris Reject Indian Occupation: UN Resolution Only Solution"; "Indian Brutality in Kashmir Galore: World Community Cannot Ignore"; "Kashmir Facing Existential Threat: United States Needs to Act"; "Settler Colonialism and Demographic Alterations: India Shreds UN Resolutions"; and "Indian Judiciary a False Glitter: Manipulated by Hindutva Litter".

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, secretary general of the Washington-based World Kashmir Awareness Forum (WKAF), which rented the trucks, called the move an effective way to spread a message as the brightly lit words on the screens catch the attention of the people walking on the streets and those coming in and out of government and commercial buildings.

The digital trucks were operational all day on Friday, passing by the UN headquarters, Times Square, Freedom Tower, Battery Park, Central Park, Indian Mission, and Indian Consulate while criss-crossing several city streets and avenues as part of observance of Right of Self-Determination Day.

On Jan. 5, 1949, the UN Security Council passed a resolution supporting the Kashmiris' right to decide their future by themselves through a UN-supervised plebiscite.

In a statement issued on August 8, 2019, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, while commenting on the deteriorating situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir following New Delhi's annexation of the disputed territory, said, "The position of the United Nations in this region is governed by the UN Charter and applicable Security Council resolutions."

Speaking at the event, Dr. Fai emphasized that the unresolved conflict over Kashmir threatens the international peace and security of the world.

"It is far past time for the UN to take forceful action in order to restore the faith of common people that it is an agency that can live up to its bold charter and mission of bringing peace and stability to the world," he said.



LAHORE: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhattu Zardari exchanges views with the Founder and Chairman of Grace Assemblies Church Bishop Naem Parshad during meeting on the visit to NA 127 Bihar Colony



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali in a group photos newly elected Peshawar Press Club President and other cabinet members during celebration ceremony held at Peshawar press club

## Pakistan to play India in New York in T20 World Cup

LAHORE (INP): Rivals India and Pakistan will play their Twenty20 World Cup group game in New York on June 9 while co-hosts United States will take on Canada in the opening match, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said.

The ninth edition of the T20 World Cup, which will be co-hosted by the United States and the West Indies, runs from June 1-29, starting with the U.S. playing Canada in Dallas. The India v Pakistan game will be played in a 34,000-seat modular stadium which will host eight matches. A record 20 teams were split into four groups with 55 games to be played in the month-long tournament, with the top two from each group qualifying for the Super Eight round. Dallas, Florida and New York will host only group matches, while the Super Eight, semi-finals and final will be held in the West Indies. The final will be played in Barbados on June 29.

"The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 marks an

exciting expansion of our sport with more teams than ever before set to compete in this event," ICC Chief Executive Geoff Allardice said in a statement. "It's going to be an incredible spectacle bringing together 20 international teams from Africa, the Americas, Asia, East-Asia Pacific and Europe." Defending champions England are in the same group as Australia, who won the 2021 tournament and also won the 50-over World Cup last year. The two Ashes rivals play each other on June 8 in Barbados. The 2023 one-day international World Cup schedule was announced barely four months before the tournament began while there were also many matches rescheduled at the last minute, leaving travelling fans irate. With the T20 World Cup schedule being released six months before the tournament, Cricket West Indies Chief Executive Johnny Grave said it marks a "significant milestone" in their preparations.

## Fresh resolution lands...

*Continued from page 1*  
timely holding of elections," reads the draft of the resolution.

The resolution further stated that a verdict of the Supreme Court of Pakistan regarding the polls was in field while the ECP had also announced that elections would be held on Feb 8, 2024.

It termed the resolution passed on Friday by the Senate seeking delay in polls as "unconstitutional and undemocratic".

The JJ senator's resolution emphasised that the Senate lacked the authority to act contrary to constitutional mandates.

"Therefore, this resolution calls for the insistence that free and fair elections be conducted in accordance with the directives of the Supreme Court of Pakistan," it asserted.

The resolution further called for ensuring a level playing field for all political parties. It urged the nullification of the resolution passed by the upper house

on Friday. Meanwhile, Senator Dilawar has denied that he presented the resolution for poll delay at someone's direction.

Speaking to media on Friday night, Khan clarified that the resolution wasn't introduced abruptly, adding that extensive consultations had taken place on the matter with the Balochistan Awami Party.

"The resolution was put forward following a consensus within the BAP," he emphasised.

The senator pointed out that, aside from the PML-N, no other party opposed the resolution. "We didn't present on anyone's instructions," he asserted.

In the same programme, BAP Secretary-General Senator Manzoor Kakar said that a four-month delay in elections wouldn't be detrimental.

He called on all political parties to unite in support of the resolution passed by the Senate.

## Fazi to leave for Kabul today

ISLAMABAD (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUIF) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman will leave for Kabul today (Sunday) at the invitation of the Taliban government. During his visit to Kabul, Pakistan-Afghanistan matters and other issues will come under discussion. It should be remembered that the representative of the Taliban government and Afghan envoy in Islamabad had officially invited Maulana Fazlur Rehman a few days ago to come to Afghanistan on behalf of his government.

Relations between the Taliban government and Pakistan have seen a rapid deterioration after an increase in terrorist attacks in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## PML-N blasts for...

*Continued from page 1*  
"good to see you" in the Supreme Court by the then chief justice Umar Ata Bandial.

The PML-N leader said people knew who was responsible for the May 9 attacks on military installations and other important locations and they would hand over Pakistan to the ones who stood for May 28 [nuclear tests conducted by Nawaz Sharif government in 1998], adding that Article 6 should be slapped on those elements.

She also blasted the PTI former chairman over an article recently published in the Economist, in which he talked about "farce" elections and inflation as well as how he had "saved" Pakistan from "default".

The PTI had pushed Pakistan towards default which the coalition government led by PML-N had avoided, she said, adding that rising prices were a PTI gift.

She also rubbished the claims that the PTI candidates' nomination papers were rejected without any reason and called the narrative as a propaganda and lie designed to gain sympathy.

The PML-N was ready for polls and had been the first party to publish the list of candidates by sharing the names from Balochistan, Marriyum told reporters.

## EC decides to call consultative meeting on Senate resolution

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has decided to call its consultative meeting in connection with Senate resolution.

The resolution seeking postponement of polls adopted by Senate has been received in EC.

Sources said EC has decided to summon meeting with reference to Senate resolution regarding postponement of election.

As per sources the resolution has been sent to law wing of EC for its consideration to postpone the election.

Notification was issued by Joint secretary and Senate secretariat.

The copy of approval of resolution has been sent to President, Prime Minister, Election Commission, ministry of law and justice and other relevant departments.

## Babar Azam hard worker, but needs 'big innings': Mohammad Hafeez

Sports Desk

SYDNEY: Pakistan Cricket team's Director Mohammad Hafeez Saturday said former captain Babar Azam is a hard worker and trains hard in practice sessions, but needs a "big" innings to restore his confidence.

The veteran cricketer's statement during a post-match presser in Australia after the Green Shirts lost their third and final match in the Test series against the Aussies, keeping the score 3-0.

"A big innings will restore his confidence. Red ball cricket brings sophistication to the game. A red-ball cricketer can play all formats," Hafeez said, adding that red-ball cricket polishes the skills of cricketers.

The team director appreciated the former skipper for playing well in matches but also hinted at letting Babar rest.

He said it is important to consider what the former skipper himself wishes. He

## Quetta administration...

*Continued from page 1*

Taking action against encroachments, the authority has cleared Joint Road and Kasi Road from encroachments. To improve traffic in the city, 87 rickshaws were confiscated while 493 were fined for violating traffic rules. A fine of Rs 3.8 million has also been imposed on commuters over the violation of traffic rules in the city.

In various operations, drug addicts have been caught and handed over to ANF for rehabilitation.

The process of Quetta Master Plan has been expedited and a survey has been conducted by NESPAK.

As many as 160556 illegal immigrants had been repatriated to their home country through the Chaman border so far.

The plan of establishment of a solid waste energy plant on a public-private partnership basis in the provincial capital to generate electricity and biogas from domestic waste has been finalized while the work on waste to waste-to-energy project under USP is in progress.

The plan for privatization of the solid waste management system of Quetta under Public Private Partnership has been finalized while the work on producing energy from waste project under USP is

According to sources it has been directed that EC should change its election schedule forthwith in view of prevailing situation in the country.

Senate secretariat has directed ministry of parliamentary affairs to take immediate action.

It may be mentioned senator Dilawar Khan had tabled resolution in Senate seeking postponement of election.

It was said in the text of the resolution that the security situation in the country is very critical. Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Mohsin Dawar have been attacked. The winter weather is at its peak in different areas of country. The situation in different areas of Balochistan and KP is critical. Therefore, the election scheduled for February be postponed.

Hafeez maintained that the management is there for Babar if requires any help. "Not necessarily to rest, [he] can talk about improving any technique."

Speaking about Shaheen Shah Afridi, the veteran cricketer said the pacer himself sought rest ahead of the third Test.

"[We] rested Shaheen Afridi due to workload. We didn't want him to suffer any injuries due to the workload. Shaheen's return after injury put a lot of load on him," he said, adding that the management doesn't want to ruin anyone's career due to workload.

"The impression that Shaheen was rested because of the T20 series is wrong," he added.

Meanwhile, the veteran batter acknowledged pacer Naseem Shah's talent but said he was replaced by Aamer Jamal, as he is suffering from injury.

"It is not like the team can't function without him or his injury is causing immense damage to the team," he added.

The minister questioned whether the "ghost articles" could be published if nothing was written to the media from inside the jail. Suspension and termination of the sentence were two different things, he said, adding Imran Khan was not free as his Toshakhana case was not over yet.

The minister said Imran Khan was still a convict as per the spirit of the law. He said the former PTI chairman had not given any interview to any critical journalist during his government's tenure. The situation did not differ any even when he was ousted from power, he added.

Solangi said the "ghost article" published in The Economist was based on propaganda. "We are writing to The Economist about this ghost article in detail," the minister added.

He said there was no comparison between the interviews of former president Asif Ali Zardari and Imran Khan since the former was not a convict at that time.

Immense importance was given to the source in

## Australia clean sweep another Pakistan series

Beat Pakistan by eight wickets to give a perfect send off to David Warner in his farewell Test

Sports Desk

SYDNEY: David Warner made crucial 57 runs in his farewell Test innings to chase 130 runs set by Pakistan for Australia's victory that also ensured the hosts clean sweep the series 3-0 on Saturday.

Aussies beat the visitors by eight wickets in the last innings, drawing a curtain to the latter's hopes to end a run of 16 successive losses in Australia since 1995.

Pakistan could add just 47 runs to their overnight tally at the cost of the last three wickets, to be dismissed for 115 an hour before lunch.

Playing his 112th match before retiring from the format, Warner shared a hug with opening partner and childhood friend Usman Khawaja at the boundary rope and was given a guard of honour by the tourists as he came to the crease.

Khawaja departed lbw for a duck in the opening over, but Warner played like a man on a mission and

was soon cutting the ball through the covers in trademark style for his first four.

He brought up his 37th Test half century with a single to square leg, and Australia went to lunch with the win all but in the bag on 91-1, 39 runs from their target.

There were seven boundaries and a couple more chances in Warner's 75-ball innings before spinner Sajid Khan trapped him in front with Australia 11 runs from victory with a day to spare.

A crowd of more than 22,000 at his home Sydney Cricket Ground rose for a final ovation as Warner left the field, his part in the 2018 ball-tampering scandal that earned him a one-year ban from international cricket forgiven.

Warner's innings gave him a career tally of 8,786 runs in 112 tests at an average of 44.59 with 26 centuries since his debut against New Zealand in 2011.

Marnus Labuschagne (62 not out) got the home

side across the line with a single shortly after Warner's departure.

As in the second Test in Melbourne, Pakistan had only their own batting frailties to blame for missing out on the chance to snap their long losing streak in Australia.

They were looking good to set their hosts a far more imposing target on a deteriorating pitch before Josh Hazlewood (4-16) took three wickets in the penultimate over of the day on Friday.

On Saturday morning, Mohammad Rizwan scored 28 before he was caught by Warner off the bowling of Nathan Lyon with Aamer Jamal holing out for 18 three balls later. Hasan Ali was bowled by Lyon for five to end the innings.

Seamer Jamal, who took a six-wicket haul on debut in the first Test in Perth and another in the first innings in Sydney, was not brought on to bowl until after lunch in a baffling decision by captain Shan Masood.



QUETTA: National Party Central Leader, Sardar Kamal Khan Bangulzai along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Quetta press club

## Govt forms committee to...

*Continued from page 1*

Solangi said the caretaker government never viewed the investigation of the May 9 incidents as invalid. The law would take its course in the matters related to the May 9 tragedy, he added. He said it was imperative to bring forth the reality before the people as to how these events were planned and what was its purpose.

The law minister would be convener of the committee which would collect the details about the events that led to the May 9 incidents, Solangi said, adding the body could include a co-opted member to address any issues stemming from its proceedings.

He said the interior minister would provide secretarial support to the committee which would have two weeks to furnish the report. The minister said the committee would work by the law and compile its recommendations in light of the information provided by the state institutions.

Solangi said the "ghost article" published in The Economist was based on propaganda. "We are writing to The Economist about this ghost article in detail," the minister added.

He said there was no comparison between the interviews of former president Asif Ali Zardari and Imran Khan since the former was not a convict at that time.

Immense importance was given to the source in

journalism, he said, adding it was not allowed to publish someone's article in the name of another person.

He asked whether The Economist had given such a facility to any other person in jail. To another query, he expressed full confidence in the Election Commission of Pakistan for holding the elections.

He said the government would extend administrative and financial assistance to the ECP in this regard.

Solangi said the country's history suggested that the elections were held in the country amid the severe weather and security concerns.

The ECP had given dates for the general election and the government would assist in holding the polls at the given time, he added. He said it was the responsibility of the administration and provincial governments to provide security to all the political party leaders including Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

As regards the role of the caretaker government, he said multiple initiatives including actions against smuggling had been taken to chart the country on the path of economic progress. The minister said the power to fix or change the date of elections solely rested with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) under Article 218(3) of the Constitution.



QUETTA: Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering, and Management Sciences (BUIEMS) Staff Association leader, Noman Khan along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Quetta press club



## Kashmiris will not give up their right to self-determination: Raza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Brussels-based Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) Ali Raza Syed has said that Kashmiris would not give up their right to self-determination promised by the international community. In a statement issued from Brussels on the Right to Self Determination Day observed on January 5, the Chairman KC-EU said, the UN resolution on January 5, 1949 provides a base for settlement of the Kashmir dispute while India's ad-

verse attitude had been an obstacle to settlement of the Kashmir dispute. It is unfortunate that the world body has also failed to implement its resolutions, resulting in the continued sufferings of the Kashmiri people. The UN Security Council's resolution calls for an internationally supervised plebiscite in the entire territory of Jammu and Kashmir, he said and added that the State of Jammu and Kashmir was to obtain independence in Au-

gust 1947 under the partition formula but Indian forces illegally captured two third of the territories of Jammu and Kashmir in October 1947. Ali Raza Syed added that peace in South Asia was connected with the settlement of Kashmir conflict. The region will not witness of the peace and prosperity until the resolution of this issue, he underlined. He said, all of the Indian acts including constant occupation, genocide of

Kashmiris, extra judicial killings of the innocent people, revocation of special status and merging Jammu and Kashmir into its federal territory in August 2019 and modifying domicile rules in the occupied Kashmir are illegal and inhuman. Ali Raza said, the Indian occupation should be ended and people of whole region of Jammu and Kashmiris should decide about their political future under UN resolutions freely.



ISLAMABAD: District Judiciary Judges in group photo with the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Qazi Faez Isa at the Federal Judicial Academy.



ISLAMABAD: President Ex-Servicemen Society Lieutenant General (R) Abdul Qayyum addressing press conference along with others at press club.

## Modi regime continues to snatch properties of innocent Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Narendra Modi-led Indian government continues to snatch the properties of innocent people in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K) to punish them for their affiliation with the ongoing freedom movement. In a fresh move, the Modi regime has seized the residential property of a civilian, Mushtaq Ahmad, in the Chanapora area of Srinagar.

The property was attached by India's dreaded National Investigation Agency (NIA), according to KMS. The Indian authorities have already confiscated the headquarters of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference

(APHC) in Srinagar and hundreds of houses and properties belonging to Hurriyat leaders and organizations including Syed Ali Gilani Shaheed, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Aasiya Andrabi, and Jamaat-e-Islami across occupied Kashmir. The occupation authorities have also demolished many residential houses, shops, shopping complexes, and other properties in the occupied territory. The attaching or confiscating of Kashmiris' properties every other day by India is a new normal in occupied Kashmir. The action is aimed at forcing the Kashmiris to give up their support for the ongoing freedom struggle. The ac-

tion is a sheer political vendetta on the part of Modi's Hindutva regime. Indian troops are also regularly destroying the Kashmiris' houses during violent military operations. Demolition of properties, illegal confiscations, and forced evictions are part of India's systematic campaign to cripple the Kashmiris economically. Modi must remember that India's brutal military occupation and colonial tactics have failed to subdue the Kashmiris' resolve for freedom in the past and will meet the same fate in the future as well. India should stop its state terrorism and fulfill its promise of giving the Kashmiris their right to self-determination.

## Embassy of Japan announces MEXT teachers training scholarship 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of Japan in Pakistan has announced MEXT Teachers Training Scholarship 2024 for Pakistani teachers who have teaching experience of 5 years in primary or secondary school, public or private. As per the criteria, teachers aged 35 or less would be eligible to apply for the scholarship, said a news release issued by the embassy here on Saturday. The purpose of this training course is to provide an opportunity for Pakistani teachers to conduct

research on school education in Japan and learn new methodologies and teaching techniques from Japanese experts which may help them in their professional growth. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) of Japan offers each year scholarships to international teachers who wish to conduct research on school education at designated educational institutions in Japan as teacher training students under the Japanese Government MEXT Scholarship program.

## COMSTECH efforts to supervise Ph.D. Dissertations in Pakistan acknowledged

ISLAMABAD (APP): The COMSTECH team has extended congratulations to the Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary for successfully supervising 100 Ph.D. Dissertations in Pakistan. Prof. Choudhary, a globally recognized medicinal chemist and Mustafa (PBUH) Prize laureate, has contributed immensely to the fields of organic and bioorganic chemistry with 1,175 research papers, 76 books, and 40 chapters in prestigious US and European publications. According to COMSTECH, Prof. Choudhary's groundbreaking work includes securing 40 US pat-

ents, earning him widespread recognition. Prof. Choudhary's impact is evident through 41,000 citations of his research globally, showcasing an impressive h-index of 81. His academic journey encompasses D.Sc., Ph.D., and Post-Doctorate Chem. qualifications. The distinguished professor has received accolades from the governments of Pakistan, including Hilal-e-Imtiaz, Sitara-e-Imtiaz, and Tamgha-e-Imtiaz. Internationally, he has been honored with awards such as the Mustafa (peace be upon him) Prize, ECO Award, Khawarizmi Award, Chinese Friendship Award, COMSTECH Award, TWAS Award, Prof. Abdus Salam.

## Winter camp concluded at AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): The closing ceremony of a two-week winter camp for children and the graduation ceremony of a three-month Turkish language course was concluded here on Saturday. Addressing the closing ceremony, Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that parents should allow their children to do activities from an early age that will bring out their hidden talents. He said that to develop children's creativity, it is important to keep them in their imaginary world. Dr. Nasir said that we organize summer camp, winter camp and other educational activities for children in cooperation with Yunus Emre Institute of Turkey. The ceremony began with the national anthems of Pakistan and Turkey. The Education Attaché of Turkish Embassy, Dr. Mehmet Toyran and Director, Yunus Emre Institute, Dr. Halil Tokar were the guests of honour. Country Director, Red Crescent Turkey, Ergest Limka, Muhsin Balci, Turkish language teachers Mrs. Halil Tokar, Dr. Rashid and calligrapher, Wasil Shahid also participated in the event. The closing ceremony was hosted by Director of Academic Planning and Course Production, Dr. Zahid Majeed, Deans, Professors and Principal Officers of AIOU also participated in the event.

## Law Ministry committed to safeguard interests of people of Kashmir: Irfan

ISLAMABAD (Online): A delegation comprising representatives from various Bar Councils of Pakistan called upon Minister for Law and Justice Ahmad Irfan Aslam in Islamabad. The Law Minister commended the lawyers for their proactive stance on the Kashmir issue and emphasized the importance of crafting a unified counter-narrative involving all key stakeholders. They discussed the issue of the Indian Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Modi government's revocation of special status for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. He said Law Ministry is committed to working collaboratively with all relevant parties to safeguard the interests of the people of Kashmir.

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## Tayyaba Gill victim of harassment records her statement against Javed

ISLAMABAD (Online): Immoral acts. Shahzad Salim registered false case against her at behest of Javed Iqbal and arrested her. She also said that NAB investigation officer Imran Dogar and others arrested her and took her to Lahore where she was harassed. Imran Dogar along with other officers subjected her to gang-rape and made video of it. She said her husband was asked to remain silent otherwise the video will be made viral. She requested that stern action be taken against Javed Iqbal, Shahzad Salim, Imran Dogar and others. The ombudsman for protection of women against harassment issued notice to 12 persons including Javed Iqbal and directed them to appear before it on person on January 16.

Tayyaba Gill has filed petition against former chairman NAB Justice (Retd) Javed Iqbal and others in 2022. Chairperson Fauzia Waqar of federal Ombudsman for protection against harassment of women at work place heard the case after over one year. The petitioner Tayyaba Gill said in her statement that Javed Iqbal asked her to do immoral acts in connection with hearing of her application. Javed Iqbal blackmailed her. He threatened not to hear her case if she does not do

## CDA to hold first auction of FY 2024 on Jan 10, 11 & 12

ISLAMABAD (INP): Nauman Khalid, a Member of Technical & Digitization of Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Saturday said that the authority would hold the first auction of the plots on January 10, 11 and 12 in F-9 Park, Islamabad. He along with his team visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and briefed the business community about the auction of CDA plots, said a press release. CDA would auction a total of 35 plots out of which 11 plots would be auctioned on the first day, 10 on the second day and 14 on the third day, he added. The categories of plots include Marakaz, Blue Area, Park Road, apartments, hotels, petrol pumps, hospitals, timber, agro-farms, I&T Centers, Aabpara Market, Class-III shopping centers and revision of deferred plots, he added. Nauman Khalid said that CDA would give possession of auctioned plots on payment of 75% of the premium while a 10% rebate would be given on payment of the lumpsum amount. He also briefed the business community about various development initiatives of CDA including the development of a cycling lane in Islamabad to reduce traffic congestion, the introduction of more bus routes, digitization of land records, automation of approval of building plans and automated parking. He said that ICCI should cooperate with CDA in making the auction successful. He said that ICCI should give a list of prioritized issues of the business community and CDA would form a team to address them. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI said that CDA should ensure the provision of all required infrastructure and civic amenities for the plots being auctioned to save the investors from unnecessary problems. He urged the CDA to introduce mobile apps to provide online services to the business community and the citizens regarding the approval of building plans and other plot-related matters. He also urged to set up its Facilitation Desk in ICCI to facilitate the business community in CDA-related affairs, besides the replacement of old sewerage lines with new ones and the development of markets. He assured ICCI would cooperate in mobilizing investors for active participation in the CDA's auction of plots. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI shared many useful ideas to make the auction process of CDA more attractive which would get the attention of local and foreign investors.

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## Decision on appeals of son of president Alvi, Khurram Sher reserved

ISLAMABAD (Online): Decision has been reserved on appeals of Awab Alvi son of president Arif Alvi and PTI leader Khurram Sher Zaman. Appeal plea of PTI leader Aslam Khan against the decision of Returning Officer (RO) has been accepted. The appeal plea of Khurram Sher Zaman against the rejection of his nomination papers from NA-241 came up for hearing Saturday. Counsel for appellant said nomination papers of Khurram Sher Zaman have been rejected. Returning Officer (RO) has said he is not Sadiq and Ameen. The counsel said how can RO declare any person Sadiq and Ameen. Election commission told private ceremony was held in governor house. The counsel for Awab Alvi said the allegation for holding private ceremony in governor house is not correct.

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## Authorities prepare for tourist influx PDMA forecasts season's first snowfall in Murree

ISLAMABAD (APP): In anticipation of the season's first snowfall, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has issued a forecast for Murree and surrounding areas, with the snowfall expected to commence on Tuesday morning, January 9. The weather in Murree, Galyat, and nearby regions is predicted to turn cold and dry, with temperatures dropping further following rain and snowfall on Monday and Wednesday, a spokesperson from PDMA told a private news channel. In response to a query about the tragic events of January 2022, when 22 lives were lost due to a snowstorm that left many stranded on the roads around Murree, he said the authorities have been diligently working to prevent a recurrence. The disaster was attributed to the negligence of local authorities, allowing an excessive number of vehicles (over 13,000) into Murree, surpassing its capacity of 4,000, the spokesperson maintained. To mitigate such risks, he noted that the administration of Murree has taken proactive measures. Last week, three facilitation centers for tourists were set up, and this number has now been increased to 13. The focus is on ensuring the safety of visitors, particularly those arriving in their cars, said the spokesperson. Authorities are keen to avoid a repeat of the 2022 tragedy, he said, emphasizing the importance of responsible management and adherence to capacity limits to ensure the safety of both tourists and residents in the picturesque hill station. Meanwhile, travelers, accompanied by families primarily arriving from various districts of Central Punjab and northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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ISLAMABAD: Motorists on their way at Islamabad Highway during foggy weather in Federal Capital.

## ICP continues its campaign to check traffic rules violations

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The campaign of Islamabad Capital Police to check violation of traffic rules is in full swing and special efforts are being made to maintain traffic discipline in the city. The main objective of this road safety campaign is to ensure safety to the people while road users are being educated for lane discipline during driving. Following the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has constituted special teams to control lane violations on various roads and ensure smooth flow of traffic in the city. Strict checking is being made against those not using helmets during bike ride. Police teams remain present on all important roads and boulevards of the city in order to educate road users about traffic rules. FM Radio 92.4 is also disseminating the messages about road safety and to educate the audience about traffic rules. Islamabad Capital Police has appealed to the citizens to cooperate with the force by following traffic laws.

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## Notorious snatcher gang arrested; weapons recovered

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Karachi Company police team arrested two wanted members of a snatcher gang involved in numerous snatching activities and recovered weapon from their possession, a public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police officer (CCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

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ISLAMABAD: A worker is busy in arranging flower pots in Nursery at Sector H-9 in Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: A worker is busy in painting the fancy flowers pot in Nursery at Sector H-9 in Federal Capital.

## Wildlife experts advocate for animal rights in country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned wildlife and animal behaviour expert, Dr. Ijaz Ahmed, emphasized the imperative need to not just consider the well-being of animals as a moral obligation but as a fundamental right within our society. Speaking to Pakistan Television News on Saturday, Dr. Ahmed asserted that animals, like humans, experience pain and deserve to have their intrinsic rights acknowledged. In a call for a societal mindset shift, Dr. Ahmed urged the public to recognize the emotional capacity of animals and their right to coexist in human societies with dignity and respect. However, it's dis-

heartening to witness the widespread use of animals for entertainment, particularly in circuses and amusement parks, he added. Expressing concern over the gradual disappearance of animal biodiversity in Pakistan, Dr. Ijaz Ahmed highlighted the alarming consequences of vanishing jungles. As these natural habitats diminish, countless species face the threat of losing their homes, he added. He further said that the diminishing jungles also result in a decline in biodiversity, particularly affecting Pakistan's aquatic ecosystems. Dr. Ijaz emphasized the necessity of protecting aquatic animals, underscoring the impor-

importance of preserving their habitats for the benefit of future generations. As diverse species face a decline, he underscores the urgency of educating the younger generation to instill a sense of responsibility. Additionally, he emphasizes the need to preserve natural habitats and establish wildlife sanctuaries as crucial steps in the ongoing efforts to conserve Pakistan's rich and diverse wildlife. A prominent animal rights activist, Anees Jilani, urged for a comprehensive overhaul of Pakistan's antiquated animal rights laws to align them with contemporary societal values. Talking to the programme, he said that the existing laws, under which the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) operates under the 1890 Act, have proven ineffective and are in desperate need of reform. Anees Jilani shed light on some key provisions of the outdated act, emphasizing that it criminalizes cruelty to animals, including baiting or inciting animals to fight. Highlighting the deficiencies in society's operation, he said that it was officially neglected and there was a dire need to empower society. "We are still following the same fine amount imposed under the 1890 Act that meant an offender could be fined only

between Rs 50 and Rs 500. This also explains why the law lost its deterrent effect," he noted. Jilani contends that animals are not meant for captivity, as their well-being is compromised in confinement. Wildlife parks, similar to those found worldwide, should replace circuses, promoting ethical and cruelty-free treatment of animals. In the pursuit of societal change, educational institutions play a pivotal role, adding to the importance of teaching children about animal rights. The curriculum should incorporate the importance of animal rights, with an emphasis on empathy and responsible behaviour.

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Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**  
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**Delay talk**

With about a month remaining in the general elections, some in the Senate seem to have just woken up to the realisation that the polls are being held in winter and in an adverse security environment. On Friday afternoon, as TV channels broke the news of the passage of a Senate resolution seeking a further delay in polls, lingering fears about the fate of Pakistani democracy were once again thrown into sharp relief.

As the names of those who had tabled the proposition were flashed on screen, one was tempted to speculate, based on their past activities in the Senate, who the sponsors of their latest mischief might be.

As more details emerged, however, there was some comfort to be found in the fact that the resolution was the work of just a handful of lawmakers seemingly taking advantage of their peers' absence. It soon also emerged that arguments in favour of another delay had been forcefully rebutted by a PML-N senator, Afnanullah Khan.

With the Supreme Court firm in its determination to hold elections on February 8, and the PML-N too now publicly opposed to any further delays, we can continue to hope that the electoral process will continue moving forward despite such distractions and theatrics.

The less said about these senators' 'adventure', the better. The actions of a few bad apples have brought parliament into much disrepute over the last few years. The wilful abandonment of the Constitution — the source of all lawmakers' relevance and power — has the potential to destroy the entire edifice of the Pakistani political system.

It is beyond understanding why some continue to persist in this approach. While keeping with democratic norms, they must be identified and held to account for their repugnant actions — either by the people, exercising their right to do so through the ballot box, or by the parties and lawmakers who have elected them to the upper house.

Lastly, it must be said that Senator Afnanullah's speech inspired a fair bit of melancholy. It was both sad and satisfying to see a PML-N leader making the same arguments against delaying elections that had been made last year by many well-meaning citizens as they exhorted the PDM-led government and the ECP not to abandon the constitutional scheme on election timelines.

Those responsible had been repeatedly warned then that the precedent they were setting would one day cause them great regret. Time has proven that the warning was a prescient one.

After delaying the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab assembly elections on the pretext of inadequate security, the PML-N is now forced to argue that conditions were much worse during elections held in 2008 and 2013. It seems we have come full circle. One wonders what other lessons are in store in the days ahead.



**Zafar Masud**

"Market knows everything best" is considered the most cogent of arguments by free-market supporters. This may be true in some instances but in most cases it's unfounded, given the inherent imperfection of markets. While Chicago School orthodoxy says markets produce the best outcomes for society, behavioural economists insist that it's humans who make markets. This means that humans can strive to improve their functioning.

Shiller, a Yale-based behavioural economist, argues that markets are shaped by 'animal spirits'; individual actors have irrational tendencies, which can be amplified by the collective mood of the market. This sometimes results in irrational and suboptimal outcomes, such as speculative

asset bubbles.

Dr Bogan, a Cornell economist, aptly encapsulates it: "Markets are not perfectly efficient because it's a collection of people, and they have flaws, biases, imperfections. And so markets aren't perfectly efficient either".

Even in a 'relatively' perfect environment, markets tend to be imperfect. The 1997 Asian currency crises, the 2008 banking crisis in the US, and most recently in Europe, are typical cases in point where governments had to intervene to save falling 'free-market players' in the 'larger public interest'.

The fact is that it's the interest of people which is at the heart of any policymaking. While markets should be free to operate with minimal regulations, regulators must have enough in their arsenals to ensure that there's no exploitation of consumers, and there should be perfect competition and a level playing field. In Pakistan's case, markets and economic freedom are challenged and at the same time regulators' independence and capacity are hampered. In the Heritage Foundation's Economic

Freedom Index, Pakistan ranks 152<sup>nd</sup> out of 180 countries. This indicates a heavily regulated economy. The worst situation is where there's no regulator or government agency — significantly lacking expertise (like E&P, agriculture, etc) and at times having a conflict of interest of sorts (like CAA, FBR, etc) — to act as regulators. A serious effort is warranted to alleviate these conflicts; establishing regulators where they're missing, and building requisite capacities and expertise where they exist, making them independent and centres of excellence.

Our business and social maturity lifecycle is also in its infancy and warrants a dynamic regulatory environment while keeping markets functioning with adequate economic freedom. This makes the role of regulators even more central and inevitable. It's not only the re-constitution of the economy, it's the re-prioritisation of the entire society and its actions to create an efficient market.

As society becomes more responsible, the need for regulation will certainly subside. However, leaving things entirely to the mar-

kets prematurely, without a robust regulatory environment could result in irreparable loss to a country that has over 40 per cent of the population below the poverty line and is confronted with abject illiteracy.

We must take stock of our realities on the ground, and then devise the required role of regulators, who would ensure avoiding distortions through interventions necessary to keep order in the market.

Ha-Joon Chang in *Edible Economics* states: "We fundamentally go wrong when we start stating economics as a science. The critical thing to keep in mind here is that economics is not a science; there are no perfect provable answers."

There is no single economic solution or model that works in all situations — choosing the right economic answer depends on the circumstances of the economy and the conditions it faces. Economics is a study of human activity with all the emotion, ethical stands and imagination that everything human involves".

Our policymaking pendulum, in Pakistan, swings from one extreme to the other, with policies

implemented in patches, lacking cohesion, which end up doing more harm than helping the functioning of markets. For example, the ambition of following the free market monetary system whilst pursuing pro-elite, rent-seeking policies on the fiscal side, results in market failures, leaving the tools available to control inflation and unemployment less effective or even redundant at times. Therefore, 'holistic and balanced' are the functional words for all our policy actions — from macroeconomic policy to regulating markets.

Modesty is the key and balance is a necessity. Human nature is a reality; people, nations, and markets are unique, and their maturity life cycles are distinct. The right mix of free markets and regulation is needed based on the specific environment. The line must be drawn by the government to ensure that regulations and timely actions shall only come into force to protect the interest of consumers; otherwise, let the markets operate freely. As Stefan Dercon alludes in his fascinating book *Gambling on Development*: "Success does not depend simply on

whether the development process is state-led or market-led. Relevant factors are the quality of public administration systems, and how well policies and investment projects are implemented. Countries need to find a balance which is appropriate to their context".

While law by its very nature is definitive, regulations give regulators a wide landscape now known as "regulatory discretion", and there's always a risk that the regulators are quick to frame new regulations and resultantly over-regulate. It is also vital that the regulators assess, contextualise and address regulatory gaps in the light of next-generation laws and regulations.

In Pakistan, while we surely need strong regulators to tackle market failures and protect consumer interest, a balanced policy environment is imperative, which appreciates ground realities, instead of discretionary and impulsive policy responses that swing from one extreme to the other. This equilibrium certainly ensures attracting higher private-sector investment and supports stronger, sustainable growth and job creation. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Victims of our own narrative**

**Sartaj Aziz: public service embodied**



**Ishrat Husain**

Very few Pakistanis have made a name for their significant contributions on national and international fronts and are admired for their personal attributes. Sartaj Aziz was one of them — an active student leader during the freedom movement, a civil servant par excellence, an international mover and shaker, a politician of integrity and stature, and an academic of high calibre.

As finance minister, he was responsible for the economic reforms of 1991 which if they had been implemented consistently, zealously and uninterrupted over time would have transformed Pakistan to the status of an upper-middle-income country by 2030. Pakistan would have retained its historical edge over India and Bangladesh and earned respect and

prestige in the international community.

Mr Sartaj Aziz's emphasis on a strong well-functioning government playing the role of an enabler and facilitator and the private sector carrying out production, distribution, trade and exchange of goods and services along with active participation in international trade and attracting foreign direct investment would have led Pakistan's economy to greater heights.

He was passionate about agriculture development due to its linkages with poverty reduction, mitigation of rural-urban income inequality, contribution to domestic industrialization and services and absorption of new entrants to the job market. Not only did he play a leadership role in setting up the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) for developing countries by mobilizing the newly acquired resources of oil-exporting countries, but he was also instrumental in producing one of the most thoughtful and practicable strategy papers on agriculture development for Pakistan.

Had we sincerely implemented the recom-

mendations and action plan outlined in that report (which are still valid even today after four decades), our agriculture sector would not have faced the stagnation it has experienced in the last few decades. Our international trade balance on agriculture commodities and products would have been highly positive, contributing to the orderly evolution of the current account balance, obviating the need for excessive external borrowing and falling into a debt trap.

Very few people give Mr Sartaj Aziz credit for his successful stewardship of the National Water Policy of 2018 — a consensus document on a highly contentious issue in inter-provincial relations. His cool temperament, intimate knowledge of the subject, and non-intimidating power of persuasion led to the signing of the policy document by all the provincial chief ministers. He was trusted by the provinces and thus this remarkable feat was achieved.

It is another matter that this consensus was not translated into action and our water distribution inefficiencies, leakages,

waste and misallocation result in losses of billions of dollars of foregone output of high-value-added commodities. We continue to remain dependent on four major crops including water-intensive sugarcane and are unprepared to meet the challenges of climate risks that are likely to produce floods, droughts, heatwaves etc.

Similarly, the country owes a great deal to Sartaj Sahib for his report on the merger and revitalization of the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and on Gilgit-Baltistan. Many of the problems lingering from the post-merger era could have been managed reasonably well if the proposals put forward in the report were put into action. The level of dissatisfaction, heightened violence, and undesirable intrusion of outsiders would have been averted and the lives of the people inhabiting these areas and going through displacement, disturbance and disillusionment would have been much better.

Mr Sartaj Aziz's organizing abilities were recognized by his party, the PML-N, when he was elevated to the position of

secretary-general. A non-family member with no political roots or backing of influential party leaders, he was brought in to fill the position on merit — a rare phenomenon in the political history of Pakistan. It is another story that his frank and honest appraisal of his government and leadership of certain policies cost him the coveted position of the president of Pakistan which he was promised. The dignity, grace and elegance he would have brought to that office would have been a matter of great pride for Pakistanis. Despite this, he never showed any resentment, remained loyal and steadfast to his party and did his best when he was asked to take over the foreign ministry.

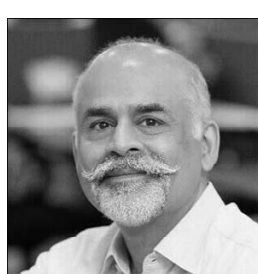
On a personal note, I will always remain grateful to him for his advice, counselling and guidance to me over a long period of 50 years. I met him for the first time when he was at IDS Sussex researching the Chinese Communism — one of the pioneering studies carried out by an outsider. Since then, we remained in close contact, and he

was kind enough to guide me on many occasions.

I had the pleasure of working with Sartaj Sahib directly for the first time when he held the portfolio of agriculture in General Zia's cabinet. He asked the World Bank to deputize me to work with him as the chairman of the National Agriculture Commission. I learnt a lot from him during this brief stint about the political economy and power relations in the rural areas which subsequently culminated in my research study on the Elitist Economy of Pakistan.

For the younger generation of Pakistan, which is always yearning for role models, I would certainly recommend Sartaj Sahib as someone to emulate in letter and spirit. A man of the highest integrity, competence and knowledge, he always displayed a great deal of zeal and dedication to whatever assignment he was entrusted. Many of his colleagues found that he was not fit for politics. I would humbly disagree. We need more Sartaj Azis to enrich our political landscape. -- Courtesy TheNews

**Temple template**



**Shahzad Sharjeel**

In a world becoming numb to desecrations, the word consecration throws one off. It means pran pratishtha in Sanskrit, akin to 'inauguration' in English. In the context of the desecrated Babri Masjid, Babur is tiger in Turko-Persian languages. And the consecration of Ram Mandir is scheduled for January 22 at the erstwhile site of the mosque named after the Mughal emperor. One respects the right of any religion's followers to name their places of worship as they wish. But as the new edifice will be a mandir or temple, the site's new nomenclature is likely to rattle around in memories for a while. The mosque stood for nearly half a millennium; the temple is said to have been designed to last a thousand years.

The BJP is accused of using religion to play divisive politics and, therefore, the Ram Temple as another feather in its cap before the general elections in less than four months. However, the entire gamut has its pitfalls, and the ruling party is not alone in this quandary. Some 7,000 guests are said to have been invited, and 3,000 among them are VVIPs, including politicians, movie and sports stars. Some of these invitees are still determining whether to feel honoured or ensnared — if they do not attend, their absence will be seen as an affront to one of the most central deities in Hinduism and those who choose to be present risk antagonising a sizeable section of the electorate, mainly the Muslim

voters.

Among the opposition, the biggest challenge is faced by the Congress party. While the BJP basks in the glory of taking up the temple project, it is Narasimha Rao of the Congress who allowed the mosque to be razed during his premiership. Neither old hardliners such as L.K. Advani and M.M. Joshi or the Modi-Shah combine could have done it if it was not for Mr Rao, who thought that by 'letting it happen' he would take the wind out of BJP's sails forever.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Sonia Gandhi have been invited to the inauguration. But, so far, the grand old party has not arrived at a decision. Its second-tier leadership did test the waters with statements like "What objection can there be? Sonia ji is very positive about this. Either she will go, or a delegation from the party will attend." Other than the Communist Party of India (Marxist) which declined citing the constitution's secular nature, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is the only front-liner to have unequivocally turned down the invite. However, the temple template is certainly gaining political currency as Ms Banerjee has allocated 100 crore rupees for the construction of a replica of Jagannath Puri temple in Odisha, scheduled to be inaugurated in her state within six months.

Prime Minister Modi visited Ayodhya on Dec 30 to inaugurate a new airport and revamped railways. After all, pre-victory rousing of the crowds for power politics is spectator sport of full contact variety. Hence, the atmosphere around the temple consecration is such that Ayodhya's five-star hotels are reportedly cancelling more reservations than they are making to accommodate the government-sanctioned

VVIP brigade.

Moral equivalence is never a good idea. But to underline the nature of political power, let us remember that the one who pays the piper calls the tune. When power changes hands, many a place acquires new identities. Hagia Sophia in Turkey is a recent example. A sixth-century cathedral turned into a mosque in 1453, a museum in 1935, and a mosque again in 2020. There was an outcry against Tayyip Erdogan's decision to turn the Unesco heritage site into a place of worship for Muslims. The Turks remained unmoved, and master architect Mehmet Yilmaz's decade-long re-arch has identified more than 300 Ottoman mosques, shrines, and seminaries throughout Europe that have been turned into churches and bell towers. On the other end, the joint administration of Jerusalem constantly remains under discussion as part of the two-state solution to the Palestine issue.

The entire subcontinent is dotted with mausoleums built over samadhis and vice versa. The shrine of Udero Lal, more commonly known as Jhuley Lal in Sindh, is jointly managed by Muslims and Hindus because he has disciples from both faiths. So, as we remind ourselves of the importance of tolerance, co-existence, and respect for religious beliefs, let us also remember the power dynamics. The best laid plans continue to bear unintended consequences. Before we concern ourselves with what the Ram Temple consecration could mean for Muslims in India, we should consider whether this would have come to pass had there been 600 million of us in India. Nothing stops us from building mosques, mandirs, gurdwaras, churches, fire temples, and seats of learning to commemorate the past and herald an inclusive future. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Settling scores**



**Adeel Wahid**

Revenge is a powerful emotion. It has provided a great theme to many enduring stories over time, and for a reason. Its driving force, the underlying motivating factor, stems from a desire to attain justice against an injustice committed against one's own self or those associated with the self. It can, in a way, serve as a means of restoring the cosmic moral balance, and also one's dignity and place in the world.

But, at the same time, it can also morph into an all-consuming passion, requiring a sacrifice of other principles one may otherwise hold dear. This becomes particularly problematic when an officeholder harbours the principle of vendetta, since the position of power can be utilised to exact vengeance, blinding one to the demands of the office occupied. And it is even more egregious when vengeance may have a role to play in how a judge may come to render his decisions.

In the unique two-part movie, *Gangs of Wasseypur*, the audience is treated to this raw, unfiltered emotion, palpating and passed on from one generation to another. Shahid Khan, first, seeks to avenge his father's death. And then after Shahid's death, his son, Faizal Khan, makes his entire existence about avenging the deaths of his father and grandfather. Timid by nature and physique, Faizal is transformed into a force to be reckoned with due to his thirst for vengeance.

In a memorable final scene, as Faizal prepares to finally settle all scores with Ramadhir Singh, the arch-nemesis behind the murders of his brother, father and grandfather, Faizal's wife desperately implores him to consider his yet-to-be-born child before rushing towards his own death. Faizal, however, remains undeterred, blinded by the one real passion of his life. Even though a loving and considerate husband otherwise, Faizal puts all else aside, making everything subservient to his desire for revenge.

It may be a forgivable trait in a fictionalised local gangster, it is not an ideal governing emotion for politicians, generals and justices. As members and sympathisers of one political party were recently hounded, members of the other political parties openly and loudly celebrated. They reminded, justifiably so, that they were on the receiving end not so long ago. They endured these situations silently and stoically. And hence they jeered those they saw crumbling as the winds, may, gales of forceful change blew, showing satisfaction on what appears to be a law of nature that what goes around comes around. In recent history, one party had been provided muscle to go after all others. Then the tables turned.

As the dismantling project proceeded, ordinary people, the rank and file, also came within its ambit. The treatment previously reserved for the alleged dissident Baloch and Pakhtuns was mainstreamed. Lessons needed to be taught, which, at times, meant that even the families needed to be harassed, threatened and humiliated. People had to be sent for visits to the northern areas. Threats worked for the most part, but some

people needed to be broken down as well. Scores had to be settled.

Those aggrieved often had to appear in courts, with bowed heads in front of judges, who themselves may have had a few of their own scores to settle. The burning desire for personal revenge and justice, as a moral principle, may, at times, not go hand-in-hand. Being a judge requires that justice be done with the reviled, the abominable, the abhorred; that it be done with the people who may have committed wrongs themselves, to safeguard them against a disproportionate retribution; and more importantly, justice may also need to be done with those who may have wronged the judge himself.

"If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?" Shakespeare's reviled Shylock sought to humanise himself, in front of an Elizabethan audience, which, at the time, had a firm conception of Jewish people being unforgivably greedy and vengeful. Shylock, in his famous monologue, also declared "If you wrong us, shall we not revenge? ... The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction".

If the one governing principle becomes revenge, perpetrated by the office-holders themselves, for both real and perceived slights, then there is a potential of it becoming a never-ending game. The only real incentive then is to be in a position where someone seeks to avenge themselves against you, but cannot. This may require entering deals, cutting corners and betraying all other espoused principles. But the thing about tables is that they keep turning. -- Courtesy Dawn



## CM Naqvi inaugurates Punjab's 1st e-registration model centre

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the first e-Registration Model Centre of the province for the transfer of land located at LDA Plaza Kashmir Road here on Saturday.

Sub-Registrar offices of Ravi Town, Samanabad Town and Data Gunj Baksh Town have been shifted for the facilitation of citizens at the e-Registration Model Centre, a model e-Registration system for the transfer of land in Punjab. The CM ordered to complete further two e-Registration Centres at Raiwind and Shalimar by 31st January. He conducted a detailed visit of the e-Registration Model Centre and inspected the e-Registration system for the transfer of land. He directed to formulate a system for the payment of online fee for the

facilitation of citizens. He also visited the branch of Punjab Bank at the e-Registration Centre. He inspected the Sub Registrar offices of Ravi Town, Samanabad Town and Data Gunj Baksh Town established at the centre. The CM conversed with citizens who had come for their transfer of land and inquired about the e-Registration system. He asked a Garhi Shahu citizen

Registration Model Centre as whether anyone asked him for money for the registry. The citizens by appreciating the e-Registration system replied that no money was being taken and the registration system was much simplified and easier now. Mohsin Naqvi revealed that the land transfer process of all the three towns would be done under a single roof at the e-Registration centre.



**PESHAWAR:** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurates smart classrooms at KMU institute of Medical Sciences Kohat.



**LAHORE:** Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi offering a Dua inaugurating Punjab First E-Registration Model Center at LDA Plaza Kashmir Road.

## Firdous promises more facilities for villages

SIALKOT (APP): Former Federal Minister and Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Central Information Secretary Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan has said women living in villages face more difficulties, unfair distribution of resources, unavailability of basic necessities of life and forced to live a life of deprivation. She expressed these views during an election campaign in her constituency NA-70 and addressing a women gathering in Thaba, Najwal, Malagar Pur, Jagoo Chak, Rum and Siddara. She said, "Due to lack of education, health, employment, drinking water, infrastructure, travel facilities in villages, women

are facing enormous problems. As a woman I am well aware of them." She said that to remove the deprivations of women, she had provided gas to remote villages of Pakistan. "Four degree colleges have been established in villages. Sharifan Bibi Memorial Hospital, equipped with modern medical facilities for better healthcare of mother and child, has been established in Kubbe Chak, where all kinds of medical facilities are being provided to women," she added. She appealed to people to vote for her so that she could play a role in resolving the problems of rural people on a priority basis.

## Development projects reviewed

SIALKOT (APP): Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain has said that a 3.4km sewer line is being built on Khawaja Muhammad Safdar Road in four sections, out of which work on two sections has been completed. He expressed these views while reviewing asphalt work of the Commissioner Road to Paris Road section. City Manager PICIP Ali Khan was also present. The DC said that the section from Model Town Road, Pulley to Jail Road Chowk had been completed first and the third section from the Shell Chowk to Jail Road Chowk would be completed by January 9 and 10, while the last and fourth section on Khawaja Safdar Road from Commissioner Road to Cantonment Plaza Chowk would be completed by

January 20. He said that the restoration of Khawaja Safdar Road would improve traffic flow in the city and citizens would get great relief. He also reviewed the ongoing development project for the establishment of the Business Facilitation Center (BFC) at the Anwar Club Auditorium, Sialkot. Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Muzaffar Mukhtar was also present. The DC said that the Business Facilitation Center (BFC) would provide all facilities to the business community under one roof with the aim of promoting ease of doing business and encouraging investors. He said that representatives of 18 different provincial departments would be present at the Business Facilitation Center.

## Govt offers financial aid to families of martyred labourers

DG KHAN (APP): The Punjab government distributed checks amounting to Rs 1.5 million among the families of the six laborers who embraced martyrdom in North Waziristan, here in DG Khan. According to official sources, on behalf of Caretaker Chief Minister (CS) Punjab Syed Mohsin Naqvi, Commissioner DG Khan Division Dr Nasir

Bashir, and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shahid Luk, he visited the Chababri-Zareen area and expressed sympathy with the families of the laborers who embraced martyrdom during an incident of terrorism in Shumali Waziristan. They condemned the heinous incident and stated that the fight against the menace of terrorism would continue.



**LAHORE:** Coolies gather around the fire to counter coldness during the winters in Provincial Capital.

## DPO DIK visits check post attacked by militants

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): District Police Officer Dera Ismail Khan Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani on Saturday visited the various check posts of Darazinda and Daraban circle including a check post where a day earlier an attack by militants was foiled by the cops deployed there.

According to the police spokesman, he met with policemen who had vigorously forced the assailants to flee the area. The DPO appreciated the cops for their alertness and for launching a prompt action against militants.

He inspected different areas of the post and asked the policemen to adhere to the security SOPs.

## ANF recovers 12 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover over 12 kg drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday. He informed that 150 grams weed was recovered from two parcels sent from the UK at the courier office in Rawalpindi. 510 grams Ice and 90 grams heroin were recovered from two different parcels sent from Jinnah Airport to Bahrain and Australia.

## 5622 FIRs lodged against underage drivers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police registered over 5622 FIRs against underage drivers during a special campaign so far, said a police spokesman. He informed that police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Mahmood Hamdani were taking action by the law against underage drivers. The CPO had directed the City Traffic Police officers to take solid steps to control traffic rules violations and underage driving, he said. The parents were also advised to discourage driving by underage drivers.

## PML-N to put country on road to progress again: Kh Asif

SIALKOT (APP): Former defence minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz senior leader Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said all development projects have been launched by the PML-N in the past, and it would put the country on the road to progress again.

Speaking at his election campaign inaugural ceremony in Union Council Rangpura here late Friday night, he said whenever the PML-N came to power, the country and the nation made progress. He said the

biggest gift Mian Nawaz Sharif government gave to the people of Sialkot was the Motorway project, which was completed with Rs 40 billion. Kh Asif said Sialkot had always been the stronghold of PML-N and hoped the party candidates would emerge victorious from the district in the elections on February 8. He is contesting elections from NA-71 Sialkot constituency, and the PML-N candidate for PP-46 constituency is Chaudhry Faisal Ikram.



**KARACHI:** Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori offering Fatcha for people killed in a bomb blast at a memorial city of Kerman, Iran during his visit to Iranian Consul General.

## Commissioner visits RIUT, inspects medical treatment facilities

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatta here on Saturday visited Rawalpindi Institute of Urology and Transplantation (RIUT) and inspected the medical treatment facilities being provided to the patients.

Vice Chancellor, Rawalpindi Medical University, Dr. Umar, DMMS, RIUT Dr. Azhar, Xeon Building and other officers were present on the occasion. The Commissioner took notice of non-functional heating system in some wards of the hospital due to technical fault in HVAC sensors.

He said that HVAC sensors should be replaced immediately and the heating system should be made fully functional as the patients could not bear this cold.

The Commissioner also visited Emergency, Operation Theater,

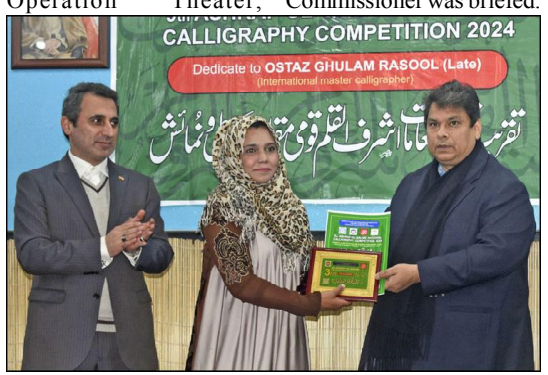
Radiology, Dialysis Center and OPD.

The DMS briefed the Commissioner about the facilities being provided to the patients in the hospital. The Building Department representative also briefed about the repair work.

The Commissioner was informed that in this state-of-the-art 250-bed hospital, more than 100 emergency patients are admitted and provided medical treatment daily while on an average, 250 to 300 patients visit the OPD of the hospital daily. Currently, five departments of the hospital are fully functional.

So far, the patients are being provided surgery, dialysis, pathology, radiology and nephrology medical facilities at RIUT.

The transplant unit would also be fully functional by March, the Commissioner was briefed.



**LAHORE:** Caretaker Provincial Information Minister Amir Mir presents certificate to artist during "Ashraf-ul-Qalam National Calligraphy" exhibition at Khana-e-Farhang Iran.

## UHE initiates Rs165m endowment fund

LAHORE (APP): The Finance and Planning Committee of the University of Home Economics (UHE) Lahore, has greenlit the formation of an endowment fund amounting to Rs. 165 million. The decision was made during a 15th meeting of F&PC chaired by Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Faleeha Zahra Kazmi. The endowment fund was earmarked for initiatives such as student scholarships, research, and the overall welfare of academics and staff of the university. In addition to approving the establishment of the endowment fund, the committee also approved the Board of Management structure for overseeing its operations. A six-member Board of Management will

serve for a term of three years. Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr. Faleeha Zahra Kazmi emphasized that the principal amount of the endowment fund shall not be utilized under any circumstances unless approved so by the syndicate in very special circumstances. The dedicated bank account shall be established for the endowment fund in a scheduled bank.

She said that the net income earned from the principal amount of the fund after meeting the operating expenses shall be utilized for the promotion of its aims, and objectives with 40 percent of the generated income being reinvested into the fund. A significant portion of the income, 20 percent.

## Strength of teaching workforce leads to nation's sustainable uplift: CM

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar has said that a nation's sustainable development relies on the strength of its teaching workforce and that teaching graduates have the potential to shape the future and elevate society. This he said while speaking at the convention -2023 of Government Elementary College of Education, Hussainabad. The convocation was attended by Minister of Education Dr Rana Hussain, VC Karachi University Khalid Iraqi, Muhammad Ali Taba, CEO Durbeen Salma Alam, Shahzad Razi, Khalid Mahmood and others. The Chief Minister referred to it as a notable

achievement that the first-ever batch of Hussainabad Teachers Training College has graduated under the leadership of Durbeen. He mentioned that Durbeen took over the college in 2019 through a public-private partnership, and today, we are seeing the results of that collaboration as we proudly graduate the first batch. The CM mentioned that the graduates who came before us not only excelled in their studies but also secured positions that were comparable to those of entry-level banking and medical professionals. They are now the driving force behind the educational landscape and are imparting knowledge to shape the minds of tomorrow at esteemed

institutions such as Zindagi Trust Government Schools, Khatoon-e-Pakistan, and SMB Fatima Jinnah. Baqar emphasized that the teaching profession, which gave rise to all other professions, is the backbone of any nation. He explained that a strong teaching workforce is crucial for a nation's sustainable development. He added that the graduates of this profession have the potential to shape the future and uplift society. The interim Chief Minister expressed that government schools are a symbol of the power of education, where all students are given equal opportunities, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

## Four perished in Hafizabad roof collapse

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least four people have lost their lives when the roof of their house collapsed in Ramke Chattah area of Hafizabad district on Saturday.

According to police officials, the family lit a fire on the roof to provide heat to their goats.

The fire engulfed the roof of the rickety house and caved in, killing four people and injuring another four.

The rescue teams pulled out four bodies and four injured persons from the rubble. The condition of two of the injured was stated to be critical.

## PP-80: Tribunal dismisses appeal against Maryam papers acceptance

LAHORE (APP): An appellate tribunal on Saturday dismissed an appeal, filed against acceptance of nomination papers of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz from provincial assembly constituency PP-80 (Sargodha). The tribunal comprising Justice Asjad Javaid Ghural heard the appeal and upheld the decision of the returning officer.

Advocate Mehr Tahir had challenged the acceptance of nomination papers of Maryam Nawaz from PP-80. He submitted that the returning officer concerned had illegally accepted the nomination papers. The PML-N leader had filed nomination papers for six seats for the general election. Her nomination papers had been submitted from NA-119 and NA-120, besides PP-80, PP-159, PP-160, and PP-165.



**LARKANA:** Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari and Bibi Sanam Bhutto inaugurate free medical camp at Ghari Khuda Bakhs organized by Peoples Doctors Forum in collaboration with SZABIST foundation and Sindh Institute of Vision Sciences.

## Governor KP visits PPC; congratulates newly elected office bearers

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Saturday visited the Peshawar Press Club (PPC) and congratulated the newly elected cabinet.

Governor Ghulam Ali said that democracy is a system in which everyone has the right to their own opinion. The Governor said that it is his wish that the elections be held peacefully. He said that a democratically elected government should now come into power and start working.

## Man killed over old enmity

SIALKOT (APP): A man was killed over an old enmity at Bhaid Pulley, Model Town, on Saturday. According to a Rescue 1122 spokesperson, 35-year-old Tazeem Akhtar was shot dead by his rivals over an old enmity. The assailant fled the scene. According to family members, they had an old enmity and the opponent party shot him dead and fled. Rescue 1122 shifted the body to Allama Iqbal Memorial Hospital (AIMH).

## 21st convocation of UET Taxila held

ATTOCK (APP): University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Taxila conducted its 21st Convocation on Saturday, in the Multipurpose Hall.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman was the chief guest of the event. During his speech, Governor Punjab urged the graduating students to contribute to the nation's prosperity. He stated that the government is dedicated to reorganizing the improvements in education and giving research and development a large amount of funds.

He further stated that the Pakistani government

has sanctioned a sum of Rs 1.2 billion to engineering institutes in the country to modernize existing labs and construct brand-new, cutting-edge facilities.

In the ceremony, 1184 degrees total including 29 PhDs, 75 MSs, and 1080 degrees for undergraduate students were given out. Medals were given to 31 students based on their best academic performance.

Governor Punjab had on this occasion laid the groundwork for the Software Technology Park and the "University Solarization Scheme of 1.5 Megawatt."

## Commissioner reviews election arrangements

SARGODHA (APP): Deputy Commissioners of all districts to finalize logistics and contingency plans for presentation in the next meeting. "Sensitive polling stations should be identified, and CCTV cameras be installed there. Alongside completing the polling scheme, arrangements for vehicles for election staff and security officers should be ensured," he added. The Commissioner directed

further stated that



## Pak and UAE to maximize bilateral trade and facilitate investment in key sectors

ABU DHABI (Online): Dr. Gohar Ejaz (HI, SI), Pakistan's Minister for Commerce, Industries and Investment, and Dr. Thani Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the United Arab Emirates, held a productive meeting at Abu Dhabi to strengthen bilateral economic ties between the two nations.

The discussions focused on maximizing bilateral trade volume and identifying promising avenues for UAE's investment in Pakistan's service and logistics sectors. These avenues encompass vital areas such as infrastructure development of ports,

logistics hubs, and aviation facilities, expansion of shipping & cargo services, and investment in modern technologies & services to enhance efficiency.

Both ministers expressed their unwavering commitment to streamlining procedures and creating an environment conducive for UAE investors. They acknowledged the immense potential for collaboration in these sectors, which would not only boost trade but also generate employment opportunities and contribute to the overall economic growth of both countries.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Ejaz said

"We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead with this renewed focus on economic cooperation with the UAE. Our shared vision for a vibrant and interconnected future paves the way for mutually beneficial investments and trade initiatives."

This meeting marks a significant step forward in the Pak-UAE economic partnership. By prioritizing investments in infrastructure development, modern technologies, and key service sectors, both nations aim to achieve sustainable growth and strengthen their presence in the global marketplace.



**GWADAR:** Member CMIT Abdul Rauf Baloch reviews the flood affected Agricultural Land leveling.

## Pakistan domestic debt increases by 12430bn rupees during one year

KARACHI (Online): During the tenure of the coalition and caretaker government, the debts increased by 12 thousand 430 billion rupees in just one year.

With reference to the State Bank document, it was informed that the debt of the federal government has increased to 63 thousand 390 billion rupees by November 2023.

According to the document, the domestic debt of the federal government reached 40 thousand 956 billion rupees, while the foreign debt of the federal government increased to 22 thousand 434 billion rupees. This increase in the debt of the central government took place

during November 2022 to November 2023.

During the first 5 months of the current fiscal year (July to November 2023), debt of the federal government increased by 2 thousand 549 billion rupees as compared to October, the debt of the federal government increased by 907 billion rupees in November 2023.

According to the document released by the State Bank, in November 2022, the debt of the federal government was 50 thousand 959 billion rupees, while in June 2023, the volume of federal government debt was 60 thousand 841 billion rupees.

## 160 high-end e-buses to boost green transportation in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Online): The delivery ceremony for 160 Suzhou Higer high-end pure electric buses exported to Pakistan was held in Suzhou Industrial Park, China.

It is reported that the order value of the order exceeds RMB 150 million, which is the first time that Pakistan has introduced pure electric buses in large quantities. Honored guests including Mr. Rana, Director General of the Capital Development Bureau of Pakistan, Amer, General Manager of NTRC Commercial Projects, Mr. Amir, Chairman of Pakistan UAE Company, Huang Shuping, General Manager of Suzhou Higer, Qiu Yuanhong, Deputy General Manager, Xie Jianghong, Customer Service Director, Jiang Haifeng, General Manager of Overseas Sales attended the ceremony. Rana and Mr.

Amer delivered speeches respectively, expressing high recognition for this batch of buses, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday.

The day before the ceremony, Pakistani side tested these buses, which performed perfectly in appearance, performance and all other aspects.

Currently, Higer's new energy buses have occupied the largest market share in Pakistan to contribute to Pakistan's green and low-carbon travel.

Entered the Pakistani market in 2006, in response to the local dusty and congested road traffic characteristics, Higer has continued to carry out technological innovation and customized high-quality buses for Pakistan that can calmly cope with the local climate environment and complex road conditions.

The batch of pure electric buses exported this time have the advantages of zero emissions, low operating costs, and low noise pollution, which will greatly improve the efficiency of public transportation operations and the quality of residents' travel.

In addition, the cruising range of the buses exceeds 250 kilometers and the entire vehicle uses the most advanced cathodic electrophoresis technology, through which own an anti-corrosion period of more than ten years. In terms of software intelligence, 160 pure electric buses are equipped with the intelligent operation system T-BOX, which can monitor driver behavior and vehicle operation data in real time to ensure operational safety and protect passenger travel.



**LAHORE:** Provincial Minister Industries and Commerce SM Tanveer presides over the Board meeting of Punjab Small Industries Corporation.

## BFC removes all obstacles to investment: SM Tanveer

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce SM Tanveer said on Saturday that the Business Facilitation Centre (BFC) had removed every obstacle in investment and made the process of issuing NOCs (no objection certificates) for setting up a new factory easy and fast.

He stated this while chairing a meeting of the Board of Directors (BoD) of Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) here at its office. The BoD meeting discussed five-point agenda and approved the Service Level Agreement for running the Business Facilitation Centre. The meeting also reviewed colonisation and development issues of

Small Industrial Estates and also approved some administrative issues of the PSIC. SM Tanveer said that colonisation is the first priority of the government and the industrialists are being provided all possible facilities to set up new factories.

The minister said if new factories were set up, economic activities would increase and people would get employment. He said the establishment of Business Facilitation Centre was an important development towards speeding up economic activities.

Provincial Secretary Industry and Commerce Ehsan Bhutta, MD PSIC Sidra Yunus, DMD and board members attended the meeting.

## Dollar slides down against rupee in open market

KARACHI (Online): The dollar became cheaper against the rupee in the open market on Saturday.

According to the report of the Forex Association of Pakistan, the value of the dollar decreased by 11 paisa against the rupee in the open market on Saturday, which made the value of the dollar decreased from Rs.282.36 to Rs.282.25.

The value of the Euro decreased from 308.65 rupees to 308.76 rupees due to a decrease of 11 paisa, while the value of the British pound increased from 358.13 rupees to 358.56 rupees due to an increase of 43 paisa.

## Gold rates increase by Rs.1,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,000 and was sold at Rs.218,000 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs.217,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 857 to Rs.186,900 from Rs. 186,043 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.171,325 from Rs. 170,539, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram Silver remained stagnant at Rs.2,660 and 2,280.52 respectively.

## Five fertilizers shops sealed, owners held for overcharging

DG KHAN (APP): The local administration sealed five fertilizer shops and also arrested their owners for overcharging in Dera Ghazi Khan district.

According to the agriculture department and police sources, Assistant Director of Agriculture Kaleem Koraiya visited different areas to ensure the sale of fertilizers at the recommended prices.

He, however, found five dealers involved in overcharging.

## LCCI urges govt to withdraw hike in power tariff

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Saturday expressed deep concern over increase in power tariff and demanded the government withdraw the decision which would hit the trade and industry hard.

LCCI President Khashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt said in a media statement here that National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has jacked up the power tariff by Rs. 4.12 per unit on account of fuel charges adjustment (FCA) for the month of November 2023 and issued

a notification in this regard, which would hike the electricity bills. They said that load-shedding is also affecting the manufacturing sector, while repeated hike in power tariff is hitting exports and local businesses alike.

LCCI office-bearers claimed that majority of people have been sent bills many times more than their monthly income. They demanded that facility of free electricity for all segments should be withdrawn immediately as the time the country was facing economic challenges and enormous debt burden and currently the government could not afford such facilities.

## China's road freight volume up 8.9 pct in first 11 months

BEIJING (Xinhua/APP): China's road freight volume rose 8.9 percent year on year in the first 11 months of 2023, official data showed. A total of 36.9 billion tonnes of road cargo were transported during the period, according to the Ministry of Transport.

In November alone, China's road freight volume came in at 3.61 billion tonnes, soaring 15.5 percent over a year earlier.

In the January-November period, China's total commercial freight volume went up 8.1 percent year on year to 50.02 billion tonnes, the data revealed.



**MULTAN:** Labourers are busy manually cutting huge piece of wood at their workplace.

## SCCI president hosts luncheon to celebrate UBG win in FPCCI elections

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Abdul Ghafoor Malik hosted luncheon to celebrate the victory of United Business Group (UBG) in Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) annual elections 2024-2025, where the services of group leader Riaz-ud-Din Sheikh were appreciated.

The ceremony was attended by Group leader Sialkot Business Community and the UBG leader Riaz-ud-Din Sheikh, Senior Vice President (SVP) SCCI Wahab Jahangir, chairmen of associations and trade bodies, former SCCI Presidents, SVPs, PCIs, Chairman SIAL Sohail Barlas, former SIAL Chairmen, President

Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) Dr. Mariam Nouman and Sialkot business community.

Addressing to the participants, Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Abdul Ghafoor Malik congratulated Riaz-ud-Din Sheikh, chairmen and group leaders of associations, former SCCI Presidents, President Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) Dr. Mariam Nouman and Sialkot business community for the outstanding success of United Business Group (UBG) in Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) annual elections 2024-2025.



**ISLAMABAD:** Vendors are busy in their routine work at Oranges bidding point of the Fruit and Vegetables Market as the prices of fruits and vegetables are seen to hike in the first week of the Year 2024 in Federal Capital.

## MEPCO sends report of 70 overloaded feeders to WB for financing

MULTAN (APP): Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) has completed a survey of 70 overloaded feeders and sent a report to the World Bank for financing. MEPCO environment wing has prepared a complete report after a survey in various areas of Multan, DG Khan and Khanewal for the bifurcation of 70 overloaded feeders and replacement of their conductors.

Environment section

engineer Nargis Memon informed in this regard that they met with the consumers concerned related to feeders personally and compiled a report after listening to their problems. The group meetings were conducted with the domestic, commercial and household women consumers connected to these feeders by visiting Multan, DG Khan, Mian Channu, Kot Chutta, Shujabad and Jalal Pur areas.

## Gansu's installed new energy power capacity exceeds 50 gigawatts

LANZHOU (Xinhua/APP): The total installed capacity of new energy power generation in northwest China's Gansu Province had exceeded 50 gigawatts by the end of 2023, according to State Grid Gansu Electric Power Co., Ltd. Rich in wind and solar energy resources, Gansu has stepped up new energy development in recent years.

## Wall Street up despite US jobs data dashing early rate cut hopes

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Wall Street stocks edged higher, despite strong US jobs numbers pouring cold water on hopes the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates in the next few months. The Fed signaled last month it sees itself beginning to cut interest rates in 2024, which helped stock markets finish the year on a strong note. But minutes from its policy meeting, released this week, showed officials were in no hurry and expected to keep borrowing costs.

## Uncalled load shedding of gas, electricity continued

PESHAWAR (APP): Even after the closure of the CNG station, domestic consumers are facing difficulties and there is no sign of gas in the suburbs including urban areas.

Unannounced load shedding of gas is being done for 14 to 16 hours in urban areas, said a consumer Paras Ahmad Khan. "I do not know what to do either to continue with gas connection or to convert to LPG or other means," he said. Similarly, there is the same with

electricity but no heat was paid to the problem being faced by the people.

There is no gas in several areas including suburbs, Charsadda road wherein dozens of CNG stations but the consumers are facing hardship with no gas for cooking.

People of the Nadapa Bala, main Charsadda road and suburbs areas including Budh Bear, Matni, Lala Musa, Kohat Road, University Road, Charsadda Road, Bakhshi Pul, Nasapa Bala.



**MUZAFFERABAD:** Employees of Pakistan Post are busy in their work at General Post Office in the Capital of A.J.K.



**HYDERABAD:** Truck holders on the way loaded with sugarcane at flyover of Tando Yousuf.

## 100 retaining piles completed for Walton Road Flyover

LAHORE (Online): Executive Director Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as the Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), celebrates pivotal achievements in the CBD Punjab Boulevard and Walton Road Upgrade projects.

With the completion of 100 out of 148 retaining piles for the CBD Punjab Boulevard, Walton Road Railway Crossing Flyover, CBD Punjab showcases remarkable progress in enhancing Punjab's infrastructure.

CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin's site visit underscored CBD Punjab's hands-on approach in overseeing these monumental projects.

Executive Director Technical, Riaz Hussain, provided a comprehensive update on the CBD Punjab Boulevard and Walton Road Railway Crossing Flyover developments, highlighting meticulous planning and execution.

The presence of distinguished officials, including Chairman CBD Punjab, Fazeel Asif Jah, Executive Director Commercial CBD Punjab, Mohammed Omer, Director Project Management CBD Punjab, Asif Iqbal, Director Construction CBD Punjab, Asif Babar, Director Architecture CBD Punjab, Sameer Aftab, and senior representatives from Nespak and NLC, reflects collaborative support for these ventures.



## Blinken meets Turkey's Erdogan Turkey says it discussed Gaza, Sweden's NATO accession with Blinken

**Monitoring Desk**  
ISTANBUL: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was meeting the leaders of Turkey and Greece on Saturday at the start of a week-long trip aimed at calming tensions that have spiked across the Middle East since Israel's war with Hamas began in October.

The Biden administration's most senior diplomat began in Istanbul, meeting Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan, a strong critic of Israel's military actions in Gaza, for talks.

Blinken and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan had earlier discussed the war and humanitarian crisis in

Gaza and Turkey's process to ratify Sweden's membership of NATO, Turkey's foreign ministry said in a statement.

US officials have been frustrated by the lengthy process, but are confident Ankara will soon approve Sweden's accession after it won the Turkish parliament's backing last month, said a senior State Department official traveling with Blinken, speaking on condition of anonymity.

US lawmakers have held up the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey until it signs off on the addition of Sweden to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Sweden, which along with Finland applied to join NATO following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, would become the alliance's 32nd member. Finland joined last year.

Blinken will later travel to the island of Crete to meet Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis. Fellow NATO member Greece is awaiting the approval by the US Congress of a sale of F-35 fighter jets.

"We'll be discussing this issue. I think there will be positive developments," Greek Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis told Greek Skai television.



Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri meets with European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell in Beirut, Lebanon.

## USCIRF wants pressure on India over religious injustices

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has expressed 'extreme disappointment' over the State Department's continuous failure to designate India as a "Country of Particular Concern (CPC)" and has called for a congressional hearing on the matter.

In a statement issued in Washington on Friday, the commission high-

lighted how India has repeatedly met the legal requirements for the designation that would increase pressure on New Delhi to treat its religious minorities properly.

Last month, US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken slapped this designation on Burma, China, Cuba, North Korea, Eritrea, Iran, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan but spared India.

## Trump's firms took millions from China, others during his rule

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW YORK: Former US president Donald Trump's businesses received at least \$7.8 million from foreign governments, including China, during his time in the White House, a congressional report claimed just a day before the anniversary of the deadly January 6 US Capitol attack.

Officials from Saudi Arabia, India, Turkey and Democratic Republic of Congo were among some 20 countries' representatives who paid money to Trump's hotel and real estate businesses during his presidency, Democrats on

the House Oversight Committee wrote in their report. The authors said that such revenues from overseas governments violated a constitutional ban on "foreign emoluments".

"As President, Donald Trump accepted more than \$7.8 million in payments from foreign states and their leaders, including some of the world's most unsavory regimes," said the report titled "White House for Sale". "We know about only some of the payments that passed into former President Trump's hands during just two years of his presidency from just 20.

## Iran arrests 11 suspects over twin bomb blasts as mourners demand revenge

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: Iranian authorities said on Friday that security forces had arrested 11 people suspected of involvement in two bomb blasts that killed nearly 100 people at a memorial service for a slain military commander.

The Islamic State (IS) militant group claimed responsibility for the attacks in Kerman, southeastern Iran, on Wednesday.

Iran's intelligence ministry said in a state-

ment security forces detained two people for providing support to the two suicide bombers in Kerman and nine others based in other parts of Iran who were suspected of links to the incident.

The bombings were the deadliest such attacks in Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

As victims were buried on Friday, mourners wept over their coffins and crowds chanted "revenge, revenge", state TV showed.



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, accompanied by Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Ibrahim Kalin, head of Turkey's National Intelligence Agency (MIT), meets with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Istanbul, Turkey.

## Israel, Hezbollah exchange fire across Lebanon border amid concern over Gaza war spillover

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: Lebanon's Iranian-backed Hezbollah group said on Saturday it had fired rockets at Israel and its arch-foe said it had struck a "terrorist cell" in retaliation, as top U.S. and EU diplomats visited the region to seek ways to halt spillover from the war.

Shortly after rocket sirens sounded across northern Israel, the Israeli military said that "approximately 40 launches from Lebanon toward the area of Meron in northern Israel were identified".

There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

Hezbollah said it had hit a key Israeli observation post with 62 rockets as a "preliminary response" to the killing of Hamas' deputy chief Saleh al-Arouri on Tuesday.

Tensions have been especially high since Arouri was killed by a drone in the southern suburbs of Beirut, a stronghold of Hamas' Lebanese ally Hezbollah, in an attack widely attributed to Israel.

The head of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, said on Friday Lebanon would be "exposed" to more Israeli operations if his group did not respond to the killing.

## Gaza has 'simply become uninhabitable'

**Monitoring Desk**  
UNITED NATIONS: UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths on Friday said Gaza had become "uninhabitable" after relentless bombing by Israeli forces in retaliation for the Hamas militant group's attack in October.

"Three months since the horrific 7 October attacks, Gaza has become a place of death and despair," Griffiths said in a statement.

"Gaza has simply become uninhabitable.

Its people are witnessing daily threats to their very existence—while the world watches on.

## Bangladesh poll booths burn on election eve as train arson kills 4

**Monitoring Desk**  
DHAKA: Polling booths were set ablaze in Bangladesh on the eve of Sunday's general elections, while four people, two children among them, were killed in a train fire that the government decried as arson targeting democratic values.

Friday's fire broke out at about 9pm, injuring eight passengers as it spread to four compartments of the Benapole Express headed for the capital, Dhaka, at a time when the main opposition party is boycotting the elections.

"The timing of this tragedy, just a day before the election ... shows an

absolute intention to hinder the festivity, safety and security of the democratic processes of the country," Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen said.

"This reprehensible incident, undoubtedly orchestrated by those with malicious intent, strikes at the very heart of our democratic values," he added in a statement, vowing that authorities would bring the perpetrators to justice.

The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has asked people in the South Asian nation to shun the poll and called a two-day strike nationwide from Saturday.

## Myanmar rebels claim control of key town near Chinese border

**Monitoring Desk**  
MYANMAR: A Myanmar rebel alliance group has gained control of a key town along the country's volatile northern border with China after weeks of fierce fighting with junta troops, it said in a statement.

The "Three Brotherhood Alliance", as the group is known, said it took over Laukkai town after the military's regional headquarters located there surrendered. The fall of Laukkai is the latest victory in a sweeping offensive by an alliance of rebel groups that began in October and has become the most significant threat to Myanmar's military government since it seized power in a 2021 coup.



Firefighters try to extinguish a fire caught on a passenger train, ahead of the general election in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

## Haley, DeSantis turn fire on Trump in GOP race

**Monitoring Desk**  
LOS ANGELES: Two Republicans jostling for a distant second place behind Donald Trump in their race to be party flag-bearer took potshots at the former US president on Thursday, days before the first vote in the White House nomination process.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and one-time UN ambassador Nikki Haley turned their fire on their party's presumptive nominee just 11 days before Republican voters in Iowa

make their choice. Neither candidate mentioned the other much during back-to-back "town hall" events on CNN.

Instead, they both sought to paint their own candidacies as a better bet than Trump to unseat Democratic President Joe Biden in November's presidential election.

"The reality is, rightly or wrongly, chaos follows (Trump)," Haley, a former South Carolina governor, told an invited audience in the Midwestern state.

## Congo election commission cancels 82 candidates over fraud in December polls

**Monitoring Desk**  
KINSHASA: The Congolese election commission said it had cancelled votes cast for 82 out of 101,000 candidates in legislative and local polls held in December for their involvement in alleged fraud and other issues that disrupted the general election.

Those struck off include contenders for national, provincial and municipal assemblies, the results of which are yet to be published amid the messy fallout from the Dec. 20 poll that threatens to further destabilize Democratic Republic of Congo, a top producer of cobalt and Africa's second-largest

country. A statement late on Friday from the CENI election committee did not address the presidential vote that took place on the same day. This handed President Felix Tshisekedi a landslide victory last Sunday, but the opposition has contested the result over widespread electoral irregularities reported by their own and independent monitors.

The commission said it had launched an inquiry after the polls to look into "acts of violence, vandalism and sabotage perpetrated by certain ill-intentioned candidates against voters, their staff, their assets and electoral materials."

## US to provide assistance to Japan on airplane recorders in fatal collision

**Monitoring Desk**  
JAPAN: US aviation safety officials will provide assistance to Japan in the reading of airplane recorders after a deadly collision between a Japan Airlines widebody jet and a small Coast Guard plane this week. National Transportation Safety Board Chair Jennifer Homendy told reporters Japan had sought assistance with the Honeywell-manufactured recorders. "We will help on that," she said, adding it is unclear if the recorders will be brought to Washington for analysis or if NTSB personnel will travel to Japan.

The suspect was identified as Dylan Butler, a student at Perry High School, officials said at a news briefing. He was found dead with an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound by responding officers.

## Sixth-grade student killed in Iowa school shooting, suspect dead

**Monitoring Desk**  
PERRY: A sixth-grade student was killed on Thursday morning and five other people wounded when a 17-year-old opened fire at an Iowa school on the first day of classes following the winter break, law enforcement officials said.

The suspect was identified as Dylan Butler, a student at Perry High School, officials said at a news briefing. He was found dead with an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound by responding officers.

## Taiwan slams Chinese balloons as safety threat, psychological warfare

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: Taiwan's defence ministry accused China on Saturday of threatening aviation safety and waging psychological warfare on the island's people with a recent spate of balloons spotted near or over the island, days before key Taiwanese elections.

The potential for China to use balloons for spying became a global issue in February when the United States shot down what it said was a Chinese surveillance balloon. China said the balloon was a civilian craft that accidentally drifted astray.

Taiwan is on high alert for Chinese military and political activity ahead of the Jan 13 presi-

dential and parliamentary elections. It says China is exerting military and economic pressure in an attempt to interfere in the elections.

China views the island as its own territory, a claim Taiwan's government rejects.

Since last month Taiwan's defence ministry has reported several instances of Chinese balloons flying over the sensitive Taiwan Strait. It said this week some balloons had flown over Taiwan island near major air bases.

In a statement on Saturday, the ministry said the balloons were a "serious threat" to international aviation safety given their flight paths.

## Iran Guards commander challenges 'enemy' naval presence in region

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: The commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards vowed on Saturday to reach "the enemy" far and near as tensions soar on key shipping routes where Tehran's allies have been attacking vessels.

"Today, we are facing an all-out battle with the enemy," said Guards commander Hossein Salami at a ceremony in the southern Gulf port city of Bandar Abbas, where the Guards' navy unveiled a new ship named "Abu Mahdi" and 100 missile launchers.

Salami did not name the enemy, but 22 nations have agreed to participate in a US-led coalition to safeguard commercial traffic in the Red Sea from attacks by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi movement.

The Houthi attacks since November are a show of support for the

Palestinian group Hamas in its war with Israel.

In response, many major shipping companies have switched to the longer and more costly route around the Africa's Cape of Good Hope rather than pass through the Suez Canal, which handles about 12% of global trade.

"We need to defend our national interests to wherever they extend," Salami said in a televised speech. "It will be harmful for the enemy to be found near and at a half distant. They should stay away from this area."

The Guards' navy, he said, had made a "brilliant leap in its offensive and defensive powers" to challenge the world's naval powers.

According to Iranian media, Iran's Alborz warship entered the Red Sea earlier this month to secure shipping routes.

## War, weather put ocean shippers on notice for rough seas in 2024

**Monitoring Desk**  
LOS ANGELES: Recent hostilities in the Red Sea have thrown global shippers of vital goods for a loop - but it is hardly the only issue that big carriers are facing as 2024 kicks off.

Giants like Maersk say the industry, which handles 90% of global trade, faces the possibility of significant disruptions, from ongoing wars to droughts affecting key routes like the Panama Canal. Complex vessel schedules are likely to be knocked out of sync for giant container ships, fuel tankers and other commodity haulers throughout the year.

That will increase delays and raise costs for retailers like Walmart, IKEA and Amazon, as well as food makers such as Nestle and grocers including Lidl.

"This is seemingly the new normal - these waves of chaos that seem to rise and fall. Before you get back to some level of normalcy another event happens that sort of throws things out of whack," said Jay Foreman, CEO of Florida-based Basic Fun,

who sends toys from factories in China to Europe and the United States.

Added 2024 risks include a possible expansion of Red Sea attacks to the Arabian Gulf, which could affect oil shipments, and further souring of China-Taiwan relations that could also affect important trade lanes, said Peter Sand, chief analyst at freight data provider Xeneta. Russia's war in Ukraine continues to affect the grains trade since it invaded its neighbor in 2022.

Maersk on Friday joined other major ocean carriers in rerouting ships away from the Red Sea to avoid missile and drone attacks in an area that leads to the vital Asia-Europe Suez Canal shortcut. That route handles more than 10% of total ocean shipments and nearly one-third of the world's container trade. While tankers carrying oil and fuel supplies for Europe continue to pass through the Suez Canal, most container ships are rerouting goods around Africa's southern tip as Yemeni Houthis attack vessels.

## Anti-racists slam blackface use in Spain's Epiphany parades

**Monitoring Desk**  
ALCOY: Anti-racism activists in Spain have called for a ban on the use of blackface seen in many of the country's traditional Epiphany celebrations.

Rita Bosaho, the first Black woman in Spain's parliament, said the practice - part of annual Jan. 5 parades on the eve of Epiphany that depict the biblical Three Kings who brought gifts to Jesus - tarnish the memory of enslaved people and disempower Black children.

In the parades, actors portraying the kings, or Magi, ride past on floats and fling sweets, which are eagerly scooped up by children. Early Christian texts describe one of the kings, Balthazar, as African and Renaissance paintings often depict him as Black.

The eastern town of Alcoy has a long tradition of parades, dozens of people act the role of pages accompanying the kings in Friday's event, their faces painted black

and with exaggerated, red-painted lips. Some ran along the edge of the crowd high-fiving children.

Bosaho, who led the Equality Ministry's racial diversity department from 2020 to 2023, said the use of blackface in the parades persisted because of a lack of debate on racism that she said permeated Spanish society.

"It sends a message that racism, that our skin doesn't matter," Bosaho added.

A spokesperson for the Equality Ministry was unavailable for comment during the holiday period.

A 2021 study commissioned by the Equality Ministry found that although nearly half of people of African descent living in Spain were born in the country, only 12% described themselves as "Afro-Spanish" and 60% said they did not feel Spanish due to discrimination they suffered.



Participants dressed in costumes, and wearing blackface, take part in the annual Epiphany eve parade of the Three Kings, in Alcoy, Spain.



## President orders restoration of WAPDA welfare grant to special person

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Arif Alvi has directed WAPDA to immediately pay and restore the welfare grant to a retired employee's special child from the date of its discontinuation.

He also ordered WAPDA to initiate disciplinary proceedings against delinquent officials who decided to stop the welfare grant despite the fact that the grant had been issued for life after fulfilling the required criteria, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release on Saturday.

While accepting a representation of Syed Noor Ali Zaidi (the complainant) against Wafaqi Mohtasib's decision, the president said that the delinquent officials caused an embarrassing situation, not only for the family of a retired employee but also for WAPDA, by unjustly stopping the welfare grant to a person with disability (PWD) who had been declared unemployable for life and was totally dependent on his parents.

He said that WAPDA should contact the Ministry of Human Rights, which has a definite program to teach more than 50

skill sets to PWDs and later link them to possible employers. He stressed that on such issues, it was the responsibility of institutions like WAPDA to guide PWDs, take social responsibility, and ensure that they become employable.

As per details, the complainant had alleged before Wafaqi Mohtasib that he was the special child of a retired employee of WAPDA and that the medical board had declared him unemployable for life and recommended him for the WAPDA Welfare Fund under the rules.

According to him, he

was getting the welfare grant regularly until he reached the age of 21, when WAPDA struck his name off the WAPDA medical treatment book.

Feeling aggrieved, he approached Wafaqi Mohtasib, who passed the order that WAPDA did not commit any maladministration as the complainant was 30 years of age and was not entitled to the free medical facility and welfare grant, as per rules. Feeling aggrieved, the complainant raised the matter with the president by filing a representation against the mohtasib's order.

With much of the territory already reduced to rubble, UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths said Friday that "Gaza has simply become uninhabitable".

The UN's children's agency warned that clashes, malnutrition and a lack of health services had created "a deadly cycle that threatens over 1.1 million children" in Gaza.

Israeli forces were continuing "to fight in all parts of the Gaza Strip, in the north, centre and south", military spokesman Daniel Hagari said late Friday. Hagari said Israeli forces were maintaining a "very high state of readiness" near the border with Lebanon following the killing of a top Hamas commander in a strike in Beirut.



QUETTA: Chairman Pakistan Oil Tankers Association Mir Shams Shahwani, Mir Nawab Mengal, Mir Haji Anwar Lehri, Younis Bareech and Mir Adnan Lehri meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi addressing books launching ceremony at Arts Council of Pakistan.

## GDA establishes Tourism Committee to encourage investors

QUETTA (APP): Director General Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) Dawood Khan Khilji has established Tourism Committee to ensure an attractive environment for investment in the tourism sector of port city. The Committee headed by Director Administration while the members include Director of Finance, Director of Urban Planning and others would take steps for the exploration of the tourist spots and opportunities in Gwadar, said a news release here Saturday.

The GDA has already approved a comprehensive tourism policy through its governing body in order to revamp and develop the sector to increase the revenue.

The tourism policy has been formulated in view of the global and natural tourism importance of Gwadar, which includes the

basic principles of local-private partnership, ease of doing business, innovation and sustainability, improving the quality of services and protecting the rights of tourists in Gwadar.

The initiative would also help the development of the tourism sector and the creation of employment opportunities.

The Tourism Committee would take into account the modern demands of tourism and evaluate the views and observations of various stakeholders and work towards achieving the overall strategic goals for the development of regional tourism.

Under the new strategy, employment opportunities will be provided in the tourism sector. In the future, new activities would be added to the tourism market along with regulating tourism activities.

The Tourism Policy

of GDA has been prepared in accordance with international modern requirements and practices.

The tourism committee is responsible for setting up a tourism wing, manpower requirement and review of potential tourist destinations in Gwadar under the Master Plan.

In this regard, a case study would be conducted to assess the potential opportunities for promoting tourism in the area.

Gwadar which is naturally considered as the hub of tourism where there are many other opportunities including historical and cultural sites, clean beaches, seafood, food street, water sports, scenic views, ferry service and others.

The GDA is committed to develop the spots and ensure all facilities to cater the needs of local and foreign tourists visiting its beautiful coastal line.

## UN warns Gaza 'uninhabitable'

UNITED NATIONS (INP): Israel bombed Gaza on Saturday as the United Nations warned the Palestinian territory has become "uninhabitable" after three months of fighting that threatens to engulf the wider region. Israeli strikes early Saturday on Gaza's southern city of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of people have sought shelter from the fighting.

Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict, with the UN warning of a deepening humanitarian crisis as famine looms and disease spreads.

Abu Mohammed, 60, who fled to Rafah from the central Burej refugee camp, said Gaza's future was "dark and gloomy and very difficult".

## SC moved to initiate contempt proceedings against senators seeking poll delay

ISLAMABAD (INP): petition has been moved in the Supreme Court for initiation of contempt proceedings against the Senate chairman and senators over the passage of a resolution on Friday calling for the postponement of the Feb 8 general elections.

The petition was filed by advocate Ishtiaq Ahmed Mirza on Saturday.

The petitioner contends that the adoption of the resolution in the Senate constituted contempt of court, and adds that untimely elections would be a constitutional violation.

The petitioner has requested the apex court to initiate contempt of court proceedings against the Senate chairman and senators who passed the resolution seeking delay in the next general elections.

He also mentioned the recent attempts on the lives of JUI-F chief Fazlur Rehman, former lawmaker Mohsin Dawar, and other political figures.

Senator Dilawar claimed that various political parties had expressed their reservations about holding elections during cold weather.

Fourteen members of the upper house attended the session when the resolution was tabled.

Senator Dilawar, while arguing in favour of his resolution, said many political leaders had been receiving threats.

He also mentioned the recent attempts on the lives of JUI-F chief Fazlur Rehman, former lawmaker Mohsin Dawar, and other political figures.

Senator Dilawar claimed that various political parties had expressed their reservations about holding elections during cold weather.

## Over 100 drug addicts arrested in main city nullah operation

QUETTA (APP): Over 100 drug addicts and drug peddlers were arrested during an operation conducted by the police in main city nullah, circular road here on Saturday.

According to the police sources, the operation was conducted early Saturday morning in the main city nullah.

During the operation, over 100 drug addicts and peddlers were

arrested. Scene was also created on the occasion when some from the addicts and peddlers resisted and opened fire on the police party.

However, the police retaliated and during this course, two drug addicts were injured. They were shifted to the civil hospital under police custody.

Meanwhile, the arrested drug addicts were also removed to different police stations.

## Cross border trade via Khunjab Pass to continue till Jan 16

ISLAMABAD (INP): The cross border trade across Khunjab Pass will continue till January 16, boosting the trade ties and providing crucial gateway to Pak-China commerce.

Connecting Gilgit Baltistan to China's Xinjiang region, the Khunjab Pass stands as the highest paved international border, cementing a vital link for both nations, according to Radio Pakistan.

The Pass was traditionally closed from November to March due to extreme cold weather conditions but it has been temporarily reopened this week specifically to facilitate trade activities.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people offering funeral Leader of the Prominent religious figure Allama Masoodur Rehman Usmani, at Aabpara Chowk in the Federal Capital.

## No one to be allowed to embezzle funds allocated for public interest: Rauf

QUETTA: The Member Chief Minister Inspection Team (CMIT), Abdul Rauf Baloch has asserted that no one would be allowed to embezzle funds allocated for the public interest.

He said that the provision of funds was ensured by introducing the scheme of tractors' hours for the small growers. The amount helped the growers to level the land otherwise affected due to the floods in different areas.

These views were expressed by the Member

CMIT during visit of Panjur, Turbat and Gwadar. The concerned officers of different departments were also present.

During the visit, Abdul Rauf Baloch inspected different schemes.

He said that the monitoring and inspection of the schemes would remain continued in future as well.

Rather the steps would also be taken at the government level for taking immediate action against those involved in the negligence and carelessness, adding he warned.

## Parvez hospitalized with chest infection

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi has once again been shifted to hospital from Adiala Jail due to chest pain.

Doctors diagnosed chest infection after Parvez Elahi's thallium scan was done at the Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology (RIC) last week. Jail sources stated

## Speakers urge UN to implement its resolutions to settle Kashmir dispute

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): The speakers of a conference held in Muzaaffarabad have urged the United Nations to implement its resolutions to resolve the Kashmir dispute. The conference was organized by All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter in connection with the Kashmiris' Right to Self-determination.

The speakers said the Kashmiris have never accepted India's illegal occupation of their motherland and would continue their freedom movement despite Indian state terrorism. They said due to the criminal silence of the international community and the United Nations, the Indian

troops are continuously killing innocent people in occupied Kashmir. Indian troops have killed around 100,000 Kashmiris and subjected thousands of others to custodial disappearance since 1989 till date, they added. The speakers said that India itself had taken the Kashmir dispute to the United Nations but later it backed away from its promise of giving the Kashmiris the right to self-determination and deployed lakhs of troops to continue its forced occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. They said now is the time for the United Nations to take effective notice of the ongoing Indian oppression in the occupied territory.

## PTI issues show cause notice to Senator Gurdeep

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI has issued show cause notice to its senator Gurdeep Singh on the matter of not pointing the of lack of quorum in Senate during the approval of resolution seeking postponement of election.

Omar Ayub Khan secretary general PTI has issued notice to senator Gurdeep Singh directing him to give written reply within three days of receipt of this notice.

Senator Gurdeep Singh remained present in the house during the acceptance of resolution seeking postponement of election.



QUETTA: CEO Sher Ahmed addresses to participants during awareness conference regarding Right to Self Determination Day organized by Youth Forum for Kashmir, held at Quetta press club.

## Abdul Ghafoor Kalmati laid to rest in Gwadar; many attend funeral

QUETTA: The elderly politician from Makran and former Provincial Minister, Mir Abdul Ghafoor Kalmati was laid to rest in the ancestral graveyard in Kalmat area of Gawadar on Saturday.

A large number of people belonging to different walks of life including politicians, social personalities, elders and other people attended the funeral

prayer and burial of Abdul Ghafoor Kalmati.

Among them were also the president of Balochistan National Party, Sardar Akhtar Mengal and other party leaders.

Mir Abdul Ghafoor Kalmati died in Karachi after protracted illness on Friday.

His body was taken to Gwadar from Karachi on Friday morning.

## Elections 2024: Zardari meets Hamid Kazmi

MULTAN (APP): President Pakistan People Party Parliamentarian Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday met with ex-federal minister Hamid Saeed Kazmi and discussed the political scenario for south Punjab, particularly Multan, in the wake of upcoming general elections. According to the party sources, Ex-Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, Makhdoom Ahmed Mahmood, Khawaja Rizwan Aalam, Mahmood Hayat Touchi Khan, Abdul Qadir Shaheen and Ahmed Mujtuba Gilani were also present on this occasion.



MULTAN: Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari exchanges views with Former Federal Minister Allama Hamid Saeed Kazmi during meeting held in Multan.

## Advocators of delay in general elections enemies of democracy: Baloch

LAHORE (INP): Acting Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Liaquat Baloch has said that the elements sowing uncertainty and advocating for a delay in the timely general elections are, in fact, enemies of democracy.

Speaking during a corner meeting in NA-123 Lahore on Saturday, he asserted that the resolution passed by only 14 senators in favor of postponing the national vote holds no value.

Liaquat Baloch pointed out that the Supreme Court has removed all ambiguities regarding any delay or postponement of the polls. According to him, the resolution adopted by the Senate undermines the credibility of the upper house.

The Election Commission should not succumb to any pressure and must ensure that the people of Pakistan exercise their right to elect representatives in a free and fair manner, upholding the supremacy of the constitution, he emphasized.

The JI Acting Ameer further highlighted Punjab's historical role in promoting harmony among all provinces, expressing dismay at elements that have brought shame to the largest province.

He mentioned that JI has issued 237 and 250 national and provincial assembly tickets throughout Punjab, signaling a clear message and commitment to a better future for the province.

If elected with the support of the people, the JI would work towards progress and prosperity in Punjab, he assured.

In a separate statement, Liaquat Baloch demanded the restoration of passenger flights for Gilgit Baltistan, stating that the suspension of flights for over two months has created severe difficulties for the people in the hilly area, virtually blocking their access to other parts of the country.



MUZAFFARABAD: Activists of Tehreek-e-Shababul-Muslimen holds placards and shouting slogans during protest against the Indian oppression in City.

## Hearing of Toshakhana, 190 million pounds references adjourned

RAWALPINDI (Online): The court has adjourned hearing of Toshakhana and 190 million pounds references till Monday.

The accused could not be indicted in Toshakhana reference. The distribution of copies to the accused was postponed till January 8 in 190 million pounds reference. Hearing of bail pleas of PTI founder and Bushra Bibi was adjourned till January 8. PTI founder requested the court to allow him to hold telephonic talk to his sons. The court accepted this plea.

During hearing of the case the Deputy Prosecutor General (DPG) NAB insisted on framing indictment in Toshakhana reference.

DPG NAB Sardar Muzaffar Abbasi told the court copies of Toshakhana reference have been provided seven days before.

Counsel Latif Khosa said the bail pleas of PTI founder and Bushra Bibi heard first of all.

The court fixed January 8 for indictment and hearing bail pleas.

Counsel Farooq H Naik appeared in 190 million pounds scandal on behalf of Malik Riaz.

Farooq H Naik filed 3 applications in the court.

One petition pertained to appearance through video link, second exemption from attendance and third plea related to suspension of arrest warrants.