

# Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 06. No. 17 Rajab 20, 1445 AH Thursday February 01, 2024 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

## Toshakhana reference: Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi sentenced to 14 years

Both barred from holding public office for 10 years, fined Rs787m each

RAWALPINDI (Online): Judge Muhammad Bashir of Accountability Court (AC) Islamabad has awarded 14 years Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) each to Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi and fined Rs787 million each in Toshakhana reference.

The accused have been declared disqualified for holding any public office for 10 years.

Under NAB ordinance the two accused will not be able to make any financial dealing with any bank or financial institution.

On reaching jail Bushra Bibi was arrested under court's decision.

NAB deputy prosecutor General Sardar Muzaffar Abbasi was present in the court along with his team.

The court ordered at the inception of hearing the two accused be called in the

court. Jail authorities presented both the accused in court.

The court while addressing Imran Khan inquired Khan Sahb have you prepared statement under 342.

Imran Khan replied yes he has prepared. But first let my lawyers and Bushra Begum come. I will file my statement.

The court said you should file your statement in the court as we have to move ahead in the proceedings.

Upon it former Prime Minister said why the court is in haste. Islamabad High Court has already rejected our plea for stay order. I have been called by assistant superintendent jail for marking my attendance.

The PTI founder left for his barrack after saying this.



Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is addressing the election rally of Pakistan People's Party in Malakand district.

## Bilawal vows to bury old politics of revenge, divisiveness

MALAKAND (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday resolved to start a process of reconciliation in the country by burying 'old politics of revenge, divisiveness and hatred' if his party is voted to power in Feb 8 elections.

Addressing an election rally in Malakand, the former foreign minister hit out at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif for their politics of revenge and divisiveness.

He said Mr Sharif had vowed to fight for the sanctity of vote but the situation was other way around in this election.

Bilawal said the former PTI chairman used to call the political opponents thieves, adding that if the people attached to the PTI founder were "angels".



NAROWAL: Senior Vice President PML-N Maryam Nawaz addressing a public gathering in Zafarwal.

## Maryam continues to fire salvos at Imran

NAROWAL (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senior Vice President and chief organiser Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday took jibe at the embattled PTI founder who, she said, spread evil in the country.

Speaking to constituents in Narowal, she applauded the large crowd that gathered over there. She said she was eagerly waiting for her visit to Narowal.

She said many conspiracies were hatched against Nawaz Sharif, asking what injustice did not happen to him. She claimed, "One by one

all the enemies of Nawaz Sharif are getting exposed as today people see all cases against the PML-N supreme as just conspiracies to keep him out of power."

Speaking about Bushra Bibi, she said she was not elated about the arrest of the former premier's wife.

She, however, recalled the time when she had spent time in prison emphasising she too was someone's wife.

"The PML-N has not seen as much relief as they (PTI) are getting from courts today," she claimed.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir chairing the 262nd Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at the General Headquarters.

## Vows to deal with terrorists with full might No one will be allowed to sabotage elections: Military top brass

CCC discusses deployment of Pakistan Army to assist ECP in peaceful conduct of February 8 general elections: Vows to expose India's violations of international norms; Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity sacrosanct, inviolable: COAS

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday said that Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity were sacrosanct and inviolable.

"Pakistan believes in peaceful co-existence with all states, however, there would never be any compromise over country's sovereignty, national honour and aspirations of Pakistani people," he said while chairing the 262nd Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at the General Headquarters.

According to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhada (martyrs), including officers and men of the

Armed Forces, law enforcement agencies and the citizens who have laid their lives for ensuring peace and stability in the country.

The forum resolved that terrorists, their facilitators and abettors, working on behalf of hostile forces to destabilise Pakistan, would be dealt with full might of the state.

The conference was briefed on the callous Indian campaign of extra-territorial and extra-judicial killings, perpetuating state-sponsored terrorism and targeting Pakistani citizens.

It agreed that blatant violation of international laws by India and its real face be exposed to the world.

The international community has already shown serious concerns

over the criminal behaviour of India and its use of state apparatus for killing spree around the world," the forum noted.

It reiterated unequivocal support for Palestine and the people of Gaza while noting the extremely negative fallout of the conflict and the potential to spill over in the wider region.

The immediate need for a permanent ceasefire and enduring solution to the Palestinian question was unanimously recognised by the forum.

In the same vein, the forum reiterated Pakistan's resolve to support the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) for their right of self-determination.

Pakistan would con-

tinue to morally, politically and diplomatically support the Kashmiri brothers and sisters till justice was served in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, it added.

The forum also discussed deployment of Pakistan Army to assist the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the peaceful conduct of general elections 2024.

"The Pakistan Army will perform assigned duties as per the constitutional mandate, under the guidelines of ECP. No one would be allowed to indulge in violence in the name of political activity and sabotage the quintessential democratic exercise of conduct of free and fair elections," it resolved.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister, Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar addresses to participants during seminar on Social Protection organized by Social Protection Department, held at local hotel in Karachi.

## Govt increases petrol price by Rs13.55 per litre

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Wednesday increased petrol and diesel prices in a fortnightly review.

A notification issued by Finance Division states that the petrol price has been jacked up by Rs13.55 to Rs272.89 per litre while high speed diesel price has been increased by Rs2.75 to Rs276.21 per litre.

The revised prices will come into effect from February 1, 2024.

The latest increase comes as tension continues to flare up in Middle East amid Israeli military strikes in Gaza.

The notification added that the increase in petroleum prices had been recommended by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra).

## Nothing educates & illuminates better than cinema: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday underlined the need for promoting cinemas in the country to foster cultural values of tolerance and harmony in the society.

Addressing the screening ceremony of a Kazakh movie at the Pakistan National Council of Arts, he said, "Nothing impresses, educates and illuminates better than cinema. Probably hundreds of high-pitch, hyperbolic and hyper ventilating speeches cannot educate you like this movie, I am sure, can educate and sensitize you better." He expressed gratitude to the ambassador of Kazakhstan in Pakistan and Caretaker Minister for Culture and Heritage Jamal Shah for inviting him to speak on the screening of

"Kazakh Khanate".

"Nobody probably in this auditorium can truly represent cinema better than Jamal Shah. He lives and breathes cinema," he said while expressing the resolve to work with his cabinet colleague to promote the culture through cinema. "We will try both with and without the government to do our job to address the challenges people faced today," he said while highlighting the urgency for the next elected government to address the poly crises such as culture of intolerance, extreme polarization amid the heavily divided global landscape.

"We have huge challenges in front of us and one of those challenges in the domain of culture and perception is extreme intolerance, and personality cult and cult worship that won't be cured by criminalizing things."

## US calls Imran Khan's imprisonment sentence 'matter for Pakistan's courts'

WASHINGTON (APP): The United States Tuesday sidestepped comments on the 10-year sentence awarded to ex-Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief, Imran Khan, for leaking state secrets — known as "cipher case", saying it was a matter for the Pakistani courts. "It is a legal matter ultimately for Pakistan's courts," State Department Spokesperson Mathew Miller told reporters at his daily press briefing while responding to series of questions.

"We have been following the cases ... brought against the former prime minister but I don't have any comment on the sentencing," Miller said. "As we have stated consistently, we continue to call for the respect of democratic principles, human rights."

## FM Jilani meets EU Commissioner for Climate Action

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani on Wednesday met with the European Union Commissioner for Climate Action Wopke Hoekstra in Brussels.

The foreign minister appreciated the EU's support for resilient recovery following the devastating floods in 2022, the Foreign Office Spokesperson posted on X.

They also discussed pathways for strengthening green cooperation between Pakistan and the EU.

## Sindh CM urges govt partners to help establish social protection system

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar on Wednesday urged the provincial government's partners to help establish a social protection system that empowers and safeguards the most vulnerable segments of the society.

Speaking at a "Consultative Seminar on Social Protection in Sindh", he commended the organizers in bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise for exploring ways to strengthen the social protection system in the province.

The chief minister expressed gratitude to the participants for their valuable contributions to the crucial dialogue, highlighting the collaborative spirit that was essential for the success of the government's endeavours.

He stated that the Sindh Government "provides effective social assis-

tance and protection to the most vulnerable people".

He emphasized the crucial role of a well-coordinated and comprehensive social protection system in alleviating poverty and promoting equity among the diverse population of the province.

He also stressed the importance of being aware of the significant impact the government's decisions could have on the lives of "those who rely on these systems for their well-being".

He said that the discussions in the seminar and the associated documentation had shed light on the challenges within the social protection framework.

"These challenges include fragmentation across programmes, gaps in coverage, coordination deficiencies, targeting inefficiencies, and inadequacies in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms."



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to PM on Aviation Air Marshal (R) Farhat Hussain Khan called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## We don't want to give such order which causes delay in election: SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) during the hearing of the case related to acceptance of nomination papers has remarked we don't want to give such order which causes delay in the election.

Appeal of candidate from PP-224 regarding acceptance of his nomination papers came up for hearing before single bench of SC led by Justice Jamal Mandokhel here Wednesday. Special secretary Election Commission (EC) appeared in the court.

The court remarked during the hearing of the case petitioner filed appeal late by 12 days. Permission for election could have been given had the appeal been filed in time. We don't want to give such decision which causes delay in the election.

Justice Jamal questioned from special secretary why the EC has kept schedule for small period.

EC should have known that appeals have to be filed. Special secretary EC told the court if nomination papers are accepted at this stage then the election can delay in the constituency. The process of printing of ballot papers has been completed. In several districts the process of sending ballot papers is underway.

Special secretary told the SC 260 million ballot papers have been printed for 850 constituencies. 850 tons paper was sought for the previous election and 2170 tons paper has been sought for this election. 2400 tons paper was needed before the candidates in large number. The size of ballot papers has been reduced to meet the need of paper.

The court later dismissed the appeal of candidate from PP-224 seeking acceptance of nomination papers after hearing the arguments.



ISLAMABAD: President, Dr. Arif Alvi exchanging views with Major General (Retd) Faheem-ul-Aziz, High Commissioner-Designate of Pakistan to Sri Lanka during meeting held at Aiwane-Sadar in Islamabad.

## Election Commissioner Sindh reviews ballot papers, election material arrangements

KARACHI (APP): The Provincial Election Commissioner of Sindh Sharifullah on Wednesday reviewed the arrangements for the delivery of ballot papers and election material for the general elections scheduled for February 08, in the metropolis.

He reviewed the arrangements along with Joint Provincial Election Commissioner Sindh Sardar Nazir Abbas, District Election Commissioner Karachi West Ahmad Nadeem Sheikh and District Election Commissioner Keamari Humaira Binte Muaz in districts West and Keamari. Sharifullah during the

review instructed the polling staff to perform their duties responsibly and honestly. He said that all matters related to the elections must be resolved in line with election rules and through the handbook provided by the Election Commission of Pakistan.

The Provincial Election Commissioner along with Joint Provincial Election Commissioner also visited the storage place of ballot papers and other sensitive election material. He directed the polling staff to fully implement the instructions of the Election Commission regarding the delivery of election materials, transport and security arrangements.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Interior, Commerce, Industries, Overseas Pakistanis and Investment, Dr. Gohar Ejaz addressing to foreign and local investors at Overseas Chamber of Commerce and Industry Karachi.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Cipher case result**

The writing had been on the wall. Given how hastily the special court, appointed under the Official Secrets Act, had been proceeding in the cipher case trial, seemingly without regard for due process, a rushed verdict had been expected.

It was delivered yesterday, a week before the country heads to polls, with sentences of 10 years' imprisonment for both former prime minister Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. Special Court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain, who oversaw the proceedings inside Adiala Jail, read out the verdict even as the accused — now convicts — were protesting the denial of their trial rights.

It bears noting that the Islamabad High Court had ordered retrials of this same case on two previous occasions, noting each time glaring procedural irregularities in how it was being conducted. The third attempt doesn't seem to have gone differently, and many observers predict the higher courts may not be charitable towards the special court whenever the verdict goes into appeal. Given the IHC's earlier rebukes, it is worth asking what the special court was seeking to accomplish by concluding the matter so hastily. Considering that the death penalty had been sought against both politicians, the situation called for far more restraint.

Instead, there were some bizarre developments over the weekend: the judge appointed state counsel for the defendants without their consent, and later reportedly denied the defendants their right to cross-examine the prosecution's witnesses. Meanwhile, the legal teams appointed by the two accused complained that they were repeatedly denied access to the proceedings.

To top it off, on Monday, the case was wrapped up at breakneck speed in a marathon session that ran till well into the night. Everything made it seem as if some kind of deadline had been set for the trial to be concluded and a verdict issued.

From Mr Khan waving a paper from the podium as he addressed a large political gathering, claiming that he had unearthed a conspiracy against his government, to his conviction for divulging state secrets, the cipher saga will be remembered as a sorry episode in our diplomatic, legal and political history.

A diplomatic faux pas was needlessly dragged into a political dispute. The immediate fallout saw already soured relations with the US deteriorate further, and for no meaningful purpose.

Politically, the conspiracy narrative proved less useful in bolstering public sympathy for the PTI than its political opponents' failure to manage the precarious economic situation they inherited from its ouster. Lastly, whatever case there may have been against Mr Khan and Mr Qureshi, it was weakened irreparably by conducting the trial in haste. What good did any of it achieve? One can only marvel at the short-sightedness displayed by all actors in this sordid drama.

**Changing India**

Javid Husain

Two critical developments are radically transforming India, with far-reaching implications for its minorities, the region, and the world at large.

The first and foremost is the transformation of a secular India, as envisioned by its founding fathers, into a Hindu rashtra driven by Hindutva. The second development is the rapid economic growth of India over the past three decades, which has catapulted its economy to the fifth position at the global level.

The growing sway of Hindutva in India under the leadership of the Modi-led BJP, which is closely allied with RSS, gives shrinking political and social space to non-Hindu religious minorities, which are facing increasing difficulties in leading their lives according to their own social and religious customs, besides discrimination generally.

This is not surprising if one looks at the philosophy of RSS as defined by its founder, V.D. Savarkar, and his successors. For instance, M.S. Golwalkar, the second RSS supreme leader, stressed that non-Hindu minorities "must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment — not even citizens' rights".

The statements and policy decisions of the Modi-led BJP government and its leaders clearly reflect this policy of Hindutva in action.

There have been frequent reports of mob attacks on Muslims and their persecution; in some cases, there has been a tragic loss of lives with the connivance of local officials. As chief minister of Gujarat, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi was implicated in the deadly anti-Muslim attacks.

The official consecration of the Ram temple on the site of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya under Modi's leadership is the latest example of the continued implementation of the Hindutva agenda. BJP activists are agitating to replace mosques with temples at many other sites.

The growing sway of Hindutva in India is not only bad news for the Muslims and other minorities in the country, it is also the harbinger of a belligerent approach by New Delhi towards its neighbours in pursuit of its hegemonic designs in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

Under Modi, one can expect India to pursue a hard-line policy in handling its relations with Pakistan.

The annexation of occupied Kashmir by India in August 2019, in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, was a clear example of this belligerent approach, as was the earlier Indian air attack on Balakot.

Indian support to terrorist groups in Balochistan and its nefarious designs against Pakistan's security were established by the arrest of Indian agent Kulbhushan Jadhav in March 2016. India has also been following a long-term policy of weakening Pakistan's friendly relations with Iran by attempting to exploit Pakistan-Iran policy differences on Afghanistan, cross-border terrorism, and sectarian issues.

It is unfortunate that both Iran and Pakistan in the past failed to come to grips with the machinations of India and some non-regional powers in exacerbating their bilateral tensions on account of the issue of cross-border terrorism as reflected by the recent exchange of air strikes between them.

Hopefully, the recent visit of the Iranian foreign minister to Islamabad would lead to the strengthening of Pakistan-Iran cooperation in combating cross-border terrorism as announced by the foreign ministers of the two countries.

India's rapid economic growth provides it with the resources for the build-up of its military might and the realisation of its hegemonic designs in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

According to IMF estimates, India's GDP was estimated to be \$3.73 trillion in 2023 as against \$341 billion only for Pakistan. This enabled India to increase its defence budget to \$81.4bn as against \$10.3bn for Pakistan in 2022, according to the research institute Sipri. The huge and growing difference between the power potential of the two countries could have serious consequences for Pakistan's security.

Pakistan, therefore, cannot afford to lower its guard in the management of its relations with India. We should avoid the mistakes of the two extremes of appeasement, which will merely embolden India, and a high-risk and adventurist policy which will prove to be counterproductive as our Kargil experience shows.

Instead, Pakistan should adopt a long-term approach for the realisation of its own strategic goals based on the synthesis of the political, economic, diplomatic, and military dimensions of policy in facing the enduring threat to its security emanating from India. - Courtesy Dawn

**Israel über alles**

Mahir Ali

Once the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague endorsed the substance of South Africa's case against Israel (albeit not in its entirety) last week, the Zionist project's international collaborators were as desperate for a distraction as Israel. The latter promptly provided it with the allegation that a dozen UNRWA employees participated in the Oct 7 atrocities in southern Israel.

Led by the US, Germany and UK, a number of Western nations and their allies suspended their crucial funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which was set up in 1949, in the wake of the Nakba, to provide means of subsistence to Palestinian refugees. These include basic education, primary healthcare and other vital services. Its operations stretch from Gaza and East Jerusalem to the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

A secondary distraction was provided by a drone attack that killed three US personnel and injured dozens in Jordan. US media reports suggest the drone wasn't intercepted based on the suspicion that it might be 'friendly' (Israeli), and that the US authorities had no idea where it came from, although they showed no hesitation in blaming 'Iranian-allied' militias and vowing vengeance. That's the latter-day equivalent of the much-mocked command to 'round up the usual suspects', but perhaps the bigger question is why there should be a US military base where Jordan's borders meet those of Syria and Iraq — or anywhere else in the country.

'Guilty until proved innocent' also applies to UNRWA, which has previously been accused by Israel of preaching hatred in its schools — which

mind you, help to place the Palestinians among the best-educated Arab populations. The accusation cannot be taken seriously in a milieu where reciting the true history of Israel as a colonial-settler society is deemed antisemitic, and there is no equivalent focus on the pernicious nonsense drummed into the innocent minds of Israeli schoolchildren.

UNRWA has suspended nine of its accused employees pending an internal probe, and two others are among the dozens of staff killed in Israel's latest invasion of Gaza. It is distressing that the accusations involving 0.01pc of its 13,000 employees, whether or not true, have been deemed sufficient by so many Western states to cut off funding to one of the only organisations that may be able to avert a famine. All too many of them, meanwhile, continue to arm and diplomatically abet the perpetrators of what the ICJ deems a potential genocide.

That impression was consolidated on Sunday when 11 members of the Netanyahu cabinet attended a congregation in Jerusalem tagged the 'Victory of Israel Conference: Settlement Brings Security', which called for the 'voluntary migration' of Palestinians away from the Gaza Strip. That not only defies the ICJ's interim injunction against incitement to genocide, but also reflects the Nazi attitude towards European Jews before the Germans opted for gas chambers.

Notwithstanding the 'never again' slogan of 80 years ago, the Zionists brought with them to the 'promised land' the Nazi concepts of lebensraum and Untermenschen — territorial expansion and lesser beings, the first applying to European Jews and the second to Pal-

estians. The devotion to their would-be exterminators stretched to hiring one of Hitler's leading henchmen, Otto Skorzeny, as a Mossad hitman — after he had, equally deplorably, served as military adviser to Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser.

It was the Nazi regime's expansionism, rather than the related Judeocide, that propelled the British and eventually Anglo-American response — although the latter was also instigated by the Soviet advance into Eastern Europe after the Red Army had turned the tide against the Wehrmacht. It remains to be seen how far the Israel Defence Forces will go before any nation other than the dispersed Palestinians steps up to challenge the Israelis.

The resistance so far has been restricted to so-called non-state actors. Saudi Arabia remains keen on establishing formal ties with Israel. Arab and other Muslim states have vaguely backed South Africa's case at the ICJ, but none of them has officially signed up as a party to the dispute, as Germany has disgustingly done on behalf of Israel, even as it staves off its own neo-Nazis.

Whatever the ICJ's verdict, it is likely to come too late to halt the genocide. It may depend on how far Israel goes henceforth, but its establishment is accustomed to defying UN injunctions — as long as the pecuniary and moral assistance from the US and the rest of the West remains intact. It does not have much to worry about on that score. Its self-conception of uber alles remains intact among its acolytes, whose every action is directed towards enabling Israel to achieve its clearly genocidal and arguably Nazi-like aims. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**Gohar urges private sector to help achieve \$100 billion exports target in 5 years**

*Also says government to increase FDI for boosting country's economy*

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Commerce and Interior Dr Gohar Ejaz on Wednesday said that the government intended to take the exports to US\$ 100 billion in next 5 years and the business community should play an active role in achieving the target. Pakistan needed to boost exports to improve its economy, and for that the private sector should focus on diversification, he added.

The minister was talking to an delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) that called on him led by its Ahsan Zafar

Bakhtawari, an ICCI news release said.

He said that the business community should partner with the government in accelerating the economic development. The business community should also take an active part in corporate social responsibility activities to address issues of the poor segments of the society and promote welfare activities in the country, he added.

Gohar Ejaz assured that he would cooperate in resolving the key issues of the businessmen to facilitate them in business promotion. Speaking on the



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Interior, Commerce, Industries, Overseas Pakistanis and Investment, Dr. Gohar Ejaz addressing to foreign and local investors at Overseas Chamber of Commerce and Industry Karachi.

**Ambassador Blome says: US, Pakistan working together for climate-smart agricultural practices**

ISLAMABAD (Online): U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome said on Wednesday that the United States and Pakistan are collaboratively striving to provide farmers, ranchers, and foresters with innovative revenue streams.

"Joint efforts aim to assist farmers in adopting climate-smart agricultural practices while expanding market options and ensuring fairer prices for their produce," he said while

addressing an event organized to celebrate the Pakistan Agricultural Development project, a 20.9 million dollar US Department of Agriculture-funded initiative with a wide array of impressive accomplishments.

"Together, we provided 63,000 farmers with training on using Good Agriculture Practices. We introduce new production techniques and improved post-harvest storage and processing," he added.

He said, "We established model plots with select farmers and private sector service providers to demonstrate the benefits of these practices. Jobs have been created for 600 women in Khairpur and Sindh through the establishment of three date-pitting centers," he added.

Pakistan Agricultural Development grants enabled farmers to build high-efficiency drip irrigation systems.

**ADB committed record climate finance of almost \$10 billion in 2023**

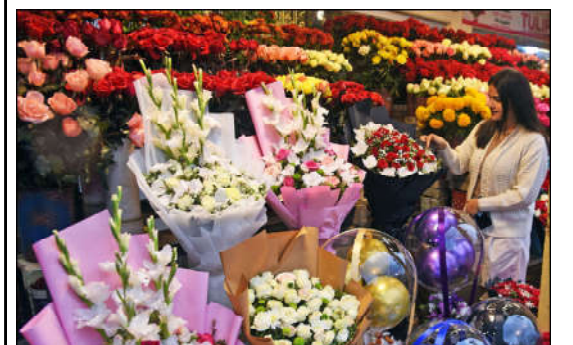
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Asian Development Bank (ADB) committed a record amount of climate finance in 2023 to help its developing member countries (DMCs) in Asia and the Pacific cut greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of a warming planet. The ADB committed \$9.8 billion in climate finance from its own resources last year — \$5.5 billion for mitigation and \$4.3 billion for adaptation — a more than 46% increase on its 2022 climate financing commitments.

"The bank's climate adaptation finance commitments in 2023 mean that the ADB has provided more than \$10.4 billion in

cumulative adaptation financing from 2019 to 2023 — surpassing its target of \$9 billion in 2019-2024 a year early," an ADB press release said on Wednesday.

The ADB said that adaptation financing was critical in Asia and the Pacific which was experiencing more extreme heat, droughts, and heavy rains, but where investments in adaptation remained a fraction of what was required.

"Climate change threatens the future of all development. 2023 was the hottest year on record and saw a swath of extreme, deadly climate impacts in our region," said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa.



ISLAMABAD: A woman is buying flowers at flower market in sector F-6 during rainy weather in the Federal Capital.

**Atif Ikram says: Saudi Arabia is most potential market for Pakistan's exports**

ISLAMABAD: The Commercial Session of Pakistan consulate General Jeddah organized an



interactive session with Pakistani businessmen based in Saudi Arabia and Saudi Importers and the occasion of visit of Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) to Saudi Arabia. Mr. Khalid Majid, Consul General of Pakistan alongwith other senior Officials of the Consulate and Commercial Section were also attended

**Rupee gains 04 paise against dollar**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Wednesday gained 4 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.50 against the previous day's closing of Rs 279.54. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.8 and Rs 281.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 35 paise to close at Rs 302.33 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.68, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.89, whereas a decrease of 59 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 354.26 compared to the last closing of Rs 354.85. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 02 paise each to close at Rs 76.09 and Rs 74.52.

**Macroeconomic stabilization leads to improvement: Report**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The country's economy experienced a notable stabilization during the first half of the current fiscal year (2023-24), owing to implementation of effective measures and prudent policies by the interim government that played a pivotal role in achieving this milestone.

"The first half of FY2024 has ended with economic stabilization. The government's effective measures and prudent policies helped stabilize the macroeconomic situation, leading to a gradual improvement in economic activities," says Monthly Economic Update and

Outlook for January 2024 released by finance ministry here Wednesday.

According to the report, this persistent uptick in economic indicators has resulted in improved GDP growth of 2.13% in the first quarter of FY2024, with expectations for continued growth in the second quarter.

It is apparent from better growth prospects in the real sector visible in month-on-month (MoM) increase in Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) growth, an improvement in high-frequency indicators and better crop prospects. Despite the challenges, external stability has been

observed as evident from a surplus in the current account in December, it says adding on the fiscal side, the revenue performance is encouraging, however, there is significant pressure on expenditures attributed to higher markup payments.

"Despite this, the government is taking measures to manage non-markup spending, which is evidenced by continuous improvement in primary surplus," it adds.

According to the report, Pakistan has recently received a tranche equivalent to US\$ 705.6 million, following the successful completion of

the first review by the Executive Board of International Monetary Fund (IMF) under Stand by Arrangements (SBA), which is providing market confidence and exchange rate stability.

The report predicted that economic activities would further strengthen during second half of FY2024 — contingent on the continuation of sound and prudent economic policies which will gear toward achieving the set growth target for the current fiscal year.

The report highlights the performance of agriculture sector saying, wheat crop for Rabi 2023-24 has been cultivated on an

estimated area of 9.160 million hectares, surpassing the sowing target of 8.998 million hectares by 1.8 percent to achieve the production target of 32.12 million tonnes.

During Jul-Dec FY2024, the agriculture credit disbursement reached to Rs 1105.8 billion as compared to Rs 842.4 billion last year, an increase of 31.3 percent. According to the report, Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) during November 2023, increased by 1.6 percent on YoY basis against the decline of 4.9 percent in the same month last year. While on a MoM basis.

## CM Naqvi inaugurates first govt cancer care hospital

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: The first cancer hospital at the government level has been made operational on the special direction of Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi.

The CM inaugurated the Mayo Cancer Care Hospital at Manawan, here on Wednesday.

Mohsin Naqvi while announcing to provide free treatment facility to the patients in the cancer hospital revealed that every patient will be provided free treatment and no patient suffering from any stage will be denied treatment in the first government cancer hospital. For the time being, the cancer hospital comprises 100-beds and will be increased up to 1000-beds in the coming few years. The CM visited the cancer hospital and reviewed facilities being

provided to the patients. He obtained a token from the machine and ordered to simplify the automated system, adding that besides English writing, Urdu writing should also be displayed on the token machine for the facilitation of the patients. The CM reviewed the treatment mechanism of the cancer patients and monitored the whole chemotherapy mechanism. He visited the room for collecting blood samples and also planted a sapling in the lawn of the hospital.

Mohsin Naqvi issued directions to write in the Urdu language on the sign boards for the facilitation of patients. He revealed that chemotherapy and surgery will be carried out in the cancer hospital. All the administrative and financial affairs of the cancer hospital have been handed over entirely to the

King Edward Medical College University. A state of the art hospital has been built for the treatment of cancer patients at the government level, he added.

The CM apprised that the cancer treatment is highly expensive which a common man cannot afford, adding that free treatment will be provided to the patients in this hospital. It is a dire need of the people of Punjab to have a high-quality cancer hospital at the government level. It is the foremost responsibility of the government to provide a state of the art hospital for cancer patients at the government level, he added.

CM Naqvi while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Mayo Cancer Care Hospital apprised that the first complete cancer care hospital of Punjab has been established.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi cutting the ribbon to inaugurate Mayo Cancer Care Hospital Manawan.

## CM KP directs to compliance with Urban Mobility Plan

**Independent Report**  
ABBOTTABAD: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Shah chaired a meeting in Islamabad to deliberate on the Urban Mobility Plan concerning divisional headquarter Abbottabad.

In the meeting, senior officials from the National Highways Authority (NHA), Planning Commission, as well as pertinent federal and provincial officials were also present.

The meeting focused on the approved strategies for constructing an interchange along the Hazara Motorway to facilitate Abbottabad City. NHA has outlined plans to establish an interchange linking Abbottabad and Sherwan Road, while the PC-1 for the proposed project has also been approved by the C&W Department.

In addition to the interchange, the project encompasses the construction of a flyover and tunnel.

## Two outlaws arrested by Shikarpur Police

**Our Correspondent**  
SHIKARPUR: Shikarpur Police succeeded in arresting two snatchers/outlaws in injured condition after a police encounter took place near Shar Laaro in the jurisdiction of Lakhli Ghulam Shah Police Station on Wednesday.

According to initial reports, the Lakhli Police with the help of villagers caught the two robbers after an encounter took place between the outlaws and the police and arrested the two robbers identified as Abdul Qadeer Shar and Syed Musharaf Ali Shah in injured condition and also recovered two pistols from their possession.

## Punjab Governor says: Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) life and teachings are source of guidance for all mankind

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman today attended the "Serat-ul-Nabi (SAW)" prize distribution ceremony at Al Hamra Hall Mall Road Lahore as a special guest.

Speaking on this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that love and reverence for Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) is a part of every Muslim's faith. Governor Punjab said that Prophet Muhammad's life and teachings are the source of guidance for all

mankind. He emphasized that we should take guidance from Seerat Tayyaba (Peace be Upon Him) in order to build a society based on love, tolerance, and brotherhood. Governor Punjab appreciated the author of the book, Rai Manzoor Nasir, and said that he did a commendable work by writing a very simple and easy to understand book on the Prophet's (PBUH) life and teachings. Governor Punjab also appreciated the efforts of Rai Manzoor Nasir for organizing the first unique competition.



LAHORE: Governor of Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman, giving check to winner Muhammad Ismail during International Competition Serat-ul-Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him) at Al-Hamra Hall, in Provincial Capital.

## Bangash inaugurates Reconstruction and upgradation of LMH

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Finance, Ahmad Rasool Bangash on Wednesday formally inaugurated the reconstruction and upgradation of Liaquat Memorial Hospital Kohat to be completed with an estimated cost of Rs. 2 billion.

Medical Superintendent LMH, Dr. Hashim Jamsheed Syed, Principal Kohat Medical University Professor Dr. Musarat Jabeen and Dr.

Fauzia Gul also addressed the inauguration ceremony and thanked the finance minister for taking a keen interest in the affairs of the hospital.

The minister also inaugurated the Town Municipal Administration (TMA) Shabistan Plaza with a cost of Rs. 432 million. On the occasion, Tehsil Mayor Kohat, Qari Sher Zaman and Town Municipal Officer, Muhammad Shoaib briefed the provincial minister regarding municipal services.

## Punjab Police will never forget eternal sacrifice of constable Arshad: IGP

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: IGP Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar visited Qila Gujjar Singh Police Lines, attended the funeral prayers of Shaheed Constable Muhammad Arshad of Lahore Police.

Regional Directorate Commander Anti-Narcotics Force Brigadier Sikandar Hayat, CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana and other senior officers also offered the prayer.

Lahore 31th January 2024:

Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar attended the funeral prayer of martyred Constable Muhammad Arshad of Lahore Police at Police Lines Qila Gujjar Singh. Regional Directorate Commander Anti-Narcotics Force Brigadier Sikandar Hayat, CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana, DIG Organized Crime Unit Captain Retired

Liaquat Ali Malik, DIG Admin Lahore Muntazar Mehdi, DIG Investigation Imran Kishwar, SSP Discipline Lahore Sohaib Ashraf, Lahore Police SSPs, SPs and ANF officers were also present in the funeral prayer. Muhammad Arshad, a constable posted at Achhra Police Station, was martyred by the firing of a drug dealer. IG Punjab saluted the body of Constable Muhammad Arshad, laid floral wreath. Prayers were prayed for the high ranks of constable Muhammad Arshad's soul, Active squad of police also saluted the martyr.

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar while paying tribute to Constable Muhammad Arshad's eternal sacrifice said that Constable Muhammad Arshad made the department proud by sacrificing his life in the line of duty.

## Commissioner reviews law, order situation

**FAISALABAD (APP):** Commissioner Silwat Saeed has said that law and order should be the first priority of the administration.

She was presiding over a video-link meeting in connection with general election, here on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dr Muhammad Abid, Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh, and Capital Police Officer (CPO) Capt (ret) Muhammad Ali Zia.

The deputy commissioners of Jhang, Chinot and Toba Tek Singh participated in the meeting through video-link.

The election commissioner and officers of law-enforcement agencies were also present.

## KP CIP official pays surprise visit to inspect ongoing dev. projects

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Project Director of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KP CIP), Syed Zafar Ali Shah, on Wednesday paid a surprise visit to a sewerage treatment plant executed in Mardan and inspected ongoing developmental progress there.

He chaired a meeting attended by Director Technical, Mian Muhammad Shakeel, Chief Engineer of Cities Implementation Unit

(CIU) Mardan, Engineer Muhammad Khalil Akbar, PMSCS Resident Engineer, Arshid Qayum Babar, General Manager of Matracon, Imran Haider, and Deputy Manager of the Project, Qasim Mumtaz Awan.

During the meeting, the General Manager of WSSCM and Chief Engineer of CIU Mardan, Engineer Muhammad Khalil Akbar, briefed the Project Director about the ongoing development works.

## Suspect killed in police encounter

**PESHAWAR (APP):** The suspect, identified as Mujahid, son of Sabz Ali, who had escaped after shooting and killing Constable Amir Ghulam by taking out a gun from the clerk's room under the pretext of using the washroom, was killed in a police encounter at Safan check post, Badaber.

SSP Syed Ashfaq Anwar and Superintendent of Police Operations.

# International News

## Biden says he's decided response to Jordan strike

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden said on Tuesday he had decided on a response to a drone strike that killed three American troops in Jordan but said he did not want a wider war in the Middle East.

Facing growing pressure in an election year, Biden said he held Iran responsible for supplying the weapons to the people who carried out the deadly attack on a military base.

The White House warned that "multiple actions" were likely in retaliation for the first fatal attack on US forces in the region since the Gaza crisis broke out in October, but gave no further details.

Biden, 81, who was hitting the campaign trail in Florida, has previously

blamed Iran-backed militias for the attack which has further raised fears of a regional conflict.

"Yes," Biden told reporters at the White House when asked if he had decided on his response, but he did not give details on what actions he would take.

"I don't think we need a wider war in the Middle East. That's not what I'm looking for," he added when asked about fears that taking on Iran could inflame a broader conflagration.

Iran has denied any links to the drone strike, and said it was not seeking an expansion of conflict, either.

Republicans have urged the Democrat to punish Iran for the drone strike on a US military facility near the Jordanian-Syrian

border, with some urging direct strikes on Iran itself.

But Biden's administration believes hitting Iranian territory could cause the region to erupt, with strikes on Iranian-backed militias and possibly on Iranian Revolutionary Guard facilities in other countries more likely, US media reported.

"It's very possible that what you'll see is a tiered approach here, not just a single action but potentially multiple actions," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters aboard Air Force One.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the response "could be multi-leveled, come in stages, and be sustained over time."



President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Judge Joan Donoghue speaks during a hearing in a case whereby Ukraine accused Russia of violating an anti-terrorism treaty by funding pro-Russian forces, including militias who shot down the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, and discrimination, in The Hague, Netherlands.

## Israel returns 100 bodies to Gaza authorities

**Monitoring Desk**  
DOHA: Several unidentified Palestinian were laid to rest at a mass burial in Gaza on Tuesday after Israeli authorities handed over bodies they had been holding in Israel.

Many onlookers covered their noses with masks as about 100 bodies were placed in graves in the southern city of Rafah before bulldozers piled sand on them. Palestinian officials said the bodies included victims of the war and corpses that had been dug up as Israeli forces

pushed through Gaza. Israel did not comment on the assertion that some corpses had been dug up.

"They were buried anonymously following Islamic Sharia. We don't know where they were injured or even their names," said Abu Taha, a doctor, at the scene. The bodies were photographed before burial and the victims' injuries documented, he said. "God willing, after the war ends, DNA and other tests will happen but at the time being."

## US says fentanyl talks with China 'meaningful'

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: Talks between the US and Chinese officials on stemming the flow of chemicals used for the production of deadly fentanyl have been "substantive" but "much more" needs to be done, the head of the White House delegation to Beijing said on Wednesday.

Washington hopes for deeper law enforcement cooperation, including on tackling illicit finance, and wants Beijing to put further controls on the chemicals that can be used to make fentanyl, said Deputy Assistant to the President.

## World Court to rule on Russian violation of international treaties in Ukraine

**Monitoring Desk**  
THE HAGUE: The United Nations' top court will rule on Wednesday on whether Russia violated an anti-terrorism treaty by funding pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine, including those who shot down Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in 2014.

Kyiv says Russia also violated a human rights treaty by discriminating against ethnic Tatars and Ukrainians in Crimea, the peninsula that Russia declared annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

Ukraine had asked the

International Court of Justice to find Russia guilty of breaching obligations under the two UN treaties, which both countries have signed, and to order it to pay reparations.

In a hearing at the court in The Hague last June, Russia dismissed Ukraine's allegations as fiction and "blatant lies".

Lawyers for Moscow denied systematic human rights abuses in Ukrainian territory that it occupies and rejected the accusation that it violated the UN treaty against the financing of terrorism.

## 150 people are killed in Gaza in 24 hours, Health Ministry says

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW YORK: Gaza's Health Ministry says 150 people have been killed in the territory in the last 24 hours and another 313 were wounded as Israeli forces continue to battle militants, even in the northern part of the territory.

The north, where entire neighborhoods have been flattened, was the initial target of Israel's ground offensive in late October.

Israel's military said Wednesday that its forces killed more than 15 Hamas militants in northern Gaza over the past day and targeted militant infrastructure in a school.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

has rejected two key demands made by Hamas in indirect cease-fire talks, saying that Israel will not withdraw from the Gaza Strip or release thousands of jailed militants.

The latest deaths bring the Palestinian death toll from Israel's offensive to 26,900, according to the Hamas-controlled Health Ministry. It does not distinguish between civilian and combatant deaths but says most of those killed were women and children.

Hamas' Oct. 7 attack in southern Israel that sparked the war killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and about 250 people were taken hostage, according to Israeli authorities.

## Taiwan holds military drills to defend against the threat of a Chinese invasion

**Monitoring Desk**  
KAOHSIUNG: Almost every day, Chinese warships sail in waters around Taiwan and warplanes fly toward the island before turning back. What if they suddenly attacked?

Taiwan's military conducted a two-day exercise at sea, on land and in the air this week to practice defending against such a surprise attack. As journalists looked on from fast escort boats, a mine layer released at least a half dozen dummy mines from a chute in its stern.

Maj. Gen. Sun Li-fang, the chief defense ministry spokesperson, told reporters at Zuoying Naval Base in southern Taiwan that China's recent actions threaten to spark a conflict that could have devastating effects on the entire region, where billions of dollars in trade pass the 160 kilometer- (100 mile)-wide waterway separating Taiwan from China.

"Any unilateral military action could very easily escalate tensions and sabotage stability in the Taiwan Strait region," Sun said. "So the Chinese Communists should immediately cease these sorts of undermining actions."

China claims the self-governing island of 23 million people as its own territory and says it must come under Beijing's control. The long-running dispute is a flashpoint in U.S.-China relations. As relations between the rivals have deteriorated in recent years, fears have grown that America could get pulled into a war if hostilities break out. Later in the day, journalists witnessed a simulated attack by China at a military base in the eastern county of Taitung.

Troops in red helmets representing the People's Liberation Army parachuted in, while Taiwanese army drones buzzed overhead.

## US blocks \$3-b drone sale to India until 'meaningful investigation' of plot to kill Sikh leader

**NEW DELHI (INP):** The US government has held back delivery of 31 MQ-9A Sea Guardian and Sky Guardian drones to India until New Delhi carries out a "meaningful investigation" into the conspiracy to assassinate Sikh leader, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, who hold dual US and Canadian citizenship, is a New York-based activist of Khalistan movement - the struggle for independent homeland for Sikhs by separating Punjab from India.

The Wire reported that the proposed \$3 billion purchase includes 15 Sea Guardian drones for the Indian Navy, while the Indian Air Force and Army are supposed to get eight Sky Guardian drones each. The report said that Washington has also held back smaller Indian acquisitions, including a proposal to buy six Boeing P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft. These are to

supplement 12 P-8I Poseidon aircraft that the Indian Navy already operates.

Ironically, the Indian Ministry of Defence's internal approval for the now-stalled drone procurement came in June 2023, a week before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Washington. This was also the time when the conspiracy to kill Pannun - set in motion by an Indian security official named CC1, according to a federal indictment made public last November - shifted to high gear.

Today, "the purchase is stuck in the US Congress because of anger over the brazen attempt to assassinate Pannun. US representatives have frozen the legislative movement needed for proceeding with the sale," the Wire quoted a highly-placed source in Washington as having said.

## Japan earthquake survivors battle unsanitary conditions with no running water

**Monitoring Desk**  
SUZU: A month on from a huge earthquake that struck Japan's west coast, survivors are battling freezing and unsanitary conditions while tens of thousands of homes remain without running water.

Some areas in the isolated Noto peninsula may not have water restored for another two months, the government of Ishikawa prefecture said, adding to risks for those living in cramped evacuation centres where authorities say respiratory infections and gastroenteritis have been detected.

"There's no water, so we can't wash our clothes or bathe," said Yoshio Binsaki, a 68-year-old resident of the battered coastal town of Suzu, as he prepared to haul a 20 litre (5.3 U.S. gallon) water tank to his car to take home. More than 230 people died in the magnitude 7.6 quake, Japan's deadliest in eight years, which also left 44,000 homes fully or partially destroyed while 40,000 have no running water.

## President Dr. Alvi says Youth may play active role for overall progress & development

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Wednesday said youth could play a pivotal role in transforming the destiny of the country through optimum utilization of intellect, morality and education. He said the country required strong leadership and appropriate use of intellect and expressed the optimism that youth was fully capable of playing an active role in the overall progress and development. Addressing the convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), the president said education and health had a vital role in the robust development of China and added Pakistan ought to follow the Chinese model to materialize the goals of rapid development. Calling the passed-out AIU graduates as elite of the country, he said they

had the distinction to secure a graduate degree in a country where 44% or more than 26 million children were still out of school. He pointed out that all the regional countries had 98% ratio of school-going children. "In order to accommodate all out-of-school children, the government will have to build 50,000 additional schools which is not an easy task, keeping in view the resource availability," he added. He pointed out that around 300,000 mosques in the country could be utilized to educate the out-of-school children. President Alvi regretted there had been no sense of sympathy with humanity though the developed world posed itself as champion of democracy. He said the world was now just going after the

vested interests, as zero sympathy was being shown by the West amid the atrocities with innocent people of Gaza. He said Pakistan intended to get the Kashmir issue resolved at United Nations platform but despite the lapse of over 70 years, the issue still remained unresolved. He called for an end to the exploitation of wealth in the world to ensure a person his due right, eventually leading to peace and unity. He advised passed-out graduates to continue the struggle for the pursuit of knowledge in practical life. He also asked the women graduates to opt for the practical life even after getting married. He said in today's era of technology, women could simultaneously manage their jobs and family life.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) at Jinnah Convention Centre.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) at Jinnah Convention Centre.

## CM calls for more investment in higher education

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar suggested that universities can enhance their infrastructure, faculty quality and research capabilities through increased government funding and public-private partnerships. This he said while speaking at Habib University during his visit on Wednesday morning. President Habib University Wasif Rizvi, Lt Gen (ret'd) Tariq Waseem Ghazi and faculty members received the chief minister and visited him multi-layered campus. The chief minister said that the provincial government has established several universities in the province for which efforts were being made to make them the best educational institutions. "The estab-

## Independent candidate for NA-8 Bajaur shot dead

PESHAWAR (APP): Rehman Zeb, an independent candidate for the National Assembly seat NA-8, Bajaur was shot dead by unknown assailants on Wednesday. Police said Rehman Zeb along with his friends was going for his election campaign in Bajaur when armed men fired at them near Siddique Phatak. Rehman Zeb and his three friends sustained bullet injuries in the firing and were rushed to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital in Khar where he succumbed to injuries. Rehman Zeb was an active worker of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf and was contesting from NA-8 as an independent candidate after having some rifts with party leadership for not allowing him the party ticket. A large number of his supporters and relatives gathered in front of Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Khar after hearing the tragic news of Rehman Zeb's death.

## Asifa Bhutto seeks public support on Election Day

HYDERABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party leader Asifa Bhutto Zardari has expressed the belief that the future government will belong to the PPP, with Bilawal Bhutto as its Prime Minister. She said people should place a stamp on the arrow on election day to make us successful so that people's rule can be established across the country. We believe in serving the people and we stand with our people in every difficult time. Asifa Bhutto reached Hyderabad on Wednesday regarding the election campaign and addressed the workers at different places in the city while starting a rally from the residence of the candidate of PPP Jam Khan Shoro. On this occasion, she stated that political parties in the country fight elections for power, but we fight elections for the people and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto also raised her voice for the wellbeing and prosperity of the common man, the poor, labourers and farmers. Asifa Bhutto said that we have presented a ten-point manifesto in the elections, which reflects the public aspirations, and we will fulfil our manifesto. She added that in five years, we will double the salaries of government employees and labourers, provide 300 units of electricity free of cost to the people, and provide health facilities to the poor, farmers and women.

## ECP summons meeting to discuss deteriorating security situation in KP, Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has summoned a meeting on Thursday to discuss the worsening law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. According to ECP spokesman, the meeting will be attended by the Interior Minister, Secretary of Interior, Chief Secretaries, Inspector Generals of Police from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, along with representatives from intelligence agencies. The ECP has also sought a report from the Chief Secretary and Inspector General of Police of Balochistan to take appropriate action in accordance with election laws.

## Three passengers die, 20 injured in Shikarpur road crash

SHIKARPUR (INP): Three passengers died while 20 passengers injured when a van overturned on Quetta Road near Hamayun Chowk in Shikarpur on Wednesday. According to police, the passenger van overturned when its driver lost its control due to overspeeding. The police said that the injured including children and women who are being rescued by 1122 rescue team and police have reached the spot. The passenger van was going to Thal from Jacobabad, police said. They said the deceased include 30-year-old Tariq, a resident of Mirpur Barro, Sajjad and Afkhani Lashari, a resident of Jacobabad while among the injured are 20 people including Abdul Nabi, Shamsuddin.

## Karachi Central Jail launches online family meetings for inmates

KARACHI (INP): Karachi Central Jail administration has started revamping the jail system by taking another step with the launching of an online system for families to schedule meetings with prisoners on Wednesday. Soon, families can connect with inmates through a user-friendly mobile application. According to jail officials, the administration marked the inauguration of a video link system for prisoner court appearances yesterday.

## Aneeq Ahmed says: Holy Prophet (SAWW) Seerah must for Quran's comprehension

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed on Wednesday stressed for following the Seerah of Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) in true sense in order to have a full comprehension of the Holy Quran. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Seerat Chair at Federal Urdu University, he said that truth was the basic trait of Seerat. Follow the truth, speak the truth and its implementation in every sphere of life were the lessons derived from the Holy Prophet's Seerah, he added. The minister said the establishment of the Seerat Chair at the Urdu University was a commendable initiative for guiding the new generation. The greatness of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) would continue to be articulated until the Day of Judgment, and familiarity with his life was essential for leadership, he added. Those doing the job of preaching Islam should align their conversations and discussion with the Holy Quran and Seerat Tayyiba, as both had been leading the human mindset and would continue to do till the end of time, he added. "Today, we must reflect on whether we are disloyal to our Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). Our religion is complete, containing solutions to all issues. Knowledge and action are both necessary," he said, adding that students must be made aware of challenges such as secularism, artificial intelligence, and contemporary issues.



WASHINGTON: Raja Nasir Ali Khan Maqpoon, Minister for Planning & Development Gilgit-Baltistan called on Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan in Washington DC.

## PPP to address challenges, protect people's rights if voted to power: Khursheed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Syed Khursheed Shah on Wednesday said that if voted to power, his party would involve everyone in addressing the country's challenges and to protect basic rights of people. Talking to PTV News, he said that whenever the PPP took reins of government it always endeavoured to resolve their problems and provide them maximum relief. He urged the public to exercise their right to vote carefully and choose the leadership which was committed to working for the country's development. Khursheed Shah said that PPP co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari had taken difficult but right decisions during difficult times. It was the PPP which could save Pakistan economically, he claimed. He said that the PPP Government in Sindh had undertaken many development projects despite odds and accomplished them. He mentioned that there are role model hospitals in Sindh, while the others have not built a single hospital in Punjab. He said that PPP has undertaken projects in both rural and urban areas of Sindh, consistently contributing to historical developments.

## Commissioner SBA visits different schools of Daur, inspect polling station setup

HYDERABAD (APP): Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Syed Muhammad Sajjad Haider visited different schools of Tehsil Daur on the consecutive second day where polling stations are set up for upcoming general elections and inspected the availability of basic facilities. The Commissioner was accompanied by SE Education Works Department Shafique Ahmed Channar. The Commissioner went around Govt Boys Elementary School Baloo Ja Quba, GPS Faqir Rasool Bus Zardari, GPBS Tando Ghulam Ali and GPBS Sher Muhammad Zardari and inspected the polling stations set up there. Commissioner observed that at some schools the work progress was slow while at some sites the work done was substandard and the ramp walk was not according to the instructions of the Election Commission. He expressed dissatisfaction with the Education Works Department and said that just one week was left in election day but the work was running at a slow speed.



KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) Leader, Rauf Siddiqui along with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) candidates and others parties candidates are addressing to media persons during press conference regarding seats adjustment in General Election 2024 coming ahead, held at Karachi press club.

## PPP candidate demand army person's on polling day

LARKANA (APP): In response to a question, he said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave awareness to the people of the country, under the awareness which the people are asking the elected representatives today and we are bound to answer the people's questions, while we believe that within Sindh Some development works have not been done, the reason being that after the corona, there was a situation of rains and floods, due to which the party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the former provincial government, allocated various funds to help the people in ration, housing and health.

## IGP Sindh chairs meeting to review election arrangements

HYDERABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Riffat Mukhtar Raja on Wednesday presided over a high-level meeting in Shahbaz Hall to review security arrangements, preparation, law and order situation in Hyderabad Range. On this occasion, DIG Hyderabad and SSPs of relevant districts gave separate briefings about the prevailing situation and election security plan in range and districts respectively. He informed that to improve the police communication system modern techniques and equipment were being used and in this connection, various exercises and rehearsals were being carried out and every possible step was being taken to face any untoward situation. IGP directed to ensure

## JUI-F candidates withdraw in favour of MQM-P

KARACHI (APP): Several candidates fielded by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal-ur-Rehman (JUI-F) for National and provincial assemblies slots in Karachi during the February 8 elections have announced to withdrawal in favour of the candidates of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P). The announcement to this effect came in a joint press conference by MQM-P senior leader and candidate for NA-237 Rauf Siddiqui and JUI-F leader Molana Ghayas, at Karachi Press Club here. They told the media at KPC that the JUI-F-supported candidate from NA-237 Karachi Maulana Ehsanullah Hazarvi has withdrawn in favour of MQM-P candidate Rauf Siddiqui, JUI-F candidate for Sindh Assembly seat PS-104 Karachi.

## Orangi police nab three-member gang involved in street crimes

KARACHI (INP): Orangi police station apprehended a three-member gang allegedly responsible for multiple street crime incidents. The arrests were made near Mughal Kante on Main Manghopir Road, as confirmed by the spokesperson of West District Police in a statement issued on Wednesday. The police operation resulted in the arrest of three suspects affiliated with a dacoit gang: Ghulamullah, son of Obaidullah; Habibullah, son of Umar Khan; and Bahram Khan, son of Abdul Samad. The suspects were taken into custody with the seizure of three illegal pistols along with ammunition, four confiscated mobile phones, and a used motorcycle.

## HESCO anti-theft operation continues: 409 more illegal connections detected

HYDERABAD (APP): The Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) during the ongoing operation against power thieves and defaulters detected 409 more power theft connections in the last 24 hours, including one industrial, five commercial and 403 domestic connections. The HESCO authorities disconnected all these connections and issued detection bills of 199,698 units worth of 5.945 million rupees to the consumers involved in the theft.



KARACHI: Jamiat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Chief, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman addresses to participants during Aptitude Test Examination ceremony of the IT courses program under "Bano Qabil Mega Project" organized by Al-Khidmat Foundation, held at Orangi Town area in Karachi.

## City's district East police discusses security arrangements for election-2024

KARACHI (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) district East Karachi Syed Irfan Ali Bahadur on Wednesday chaired a meeting regarding security arrangements for the general elections -2024 in a meeting at Rangoon Wala Hall here. Investigation SSP, Special Branch SSP and Divisional SPs attended the meeting, said a spokesperson of the district East police. Other police officers including SDPOs, Investigation DSPs, SHOs, SIOs, Intelligence staff, QRF East and HMs of district police also participated in the meeting. The meeting was informed about the standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued by the higher officers with regard to security arrangements for elections. SSP East Syed Irfan Ali Bahadur during the meeting took a complete review of the current situation of law and order in the district and the arrangements made by the police on the occasion of the general elections. SDPOs and SHOs were issued orders for the comprehensive strategy and effective policing on the day of the general elections. On the occasion, a fool-proof plan was also devised for the security of all polling stations, polling staff and polling including ballot boxes, ballot papers, etc. It was also decided that anti-riot/reserve and QRF platoons should be kept ready and alert all the time to deal with any emergency situation. It was also decided that it is mandatory to provide breakfast and food for the people on time. The police officers should provide full security at the entry and exit gates of the polling stations in their areas to ensure that every person is searched.



HYDERABAD: Peoples Party (PPP) Leader, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari addresses during election campaign rally in connection of General Election 2024 coming ahead, at Fatch Chowk in Hyderabad.

## Ignoring critical issues like climate change equivalent to suicide: Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that the climate change issue was disregarded by most of the political parties in their party's manifesto. In a statement issued here on Wednesday, he emphasized that a significant threat like climate change cannot be overlooked as ignoring this issue amounts to a collective suicide. Mian Zahid Hussain said that while the economy was somewhat mentioned in the political parties' manifestos, climate change has yet to find the place it deserves. Pakistan was one of the top five countries affected by climate change, he said adding that our agriculture, which was already very weak, was now gradually being destroyed, and the industry was also at risk. However, the majority of politicians and voters were not very interested in the most critical issues like climate change, which was equivalent to suicide. He said climate change can only be considered an important subject in a country with literate voters. He observed that since voters were not worried about this problem, politicians were not too interested in it because representatives keep the people's priorities in mind. He said politicians are chanting slogans about the economy, human development, and reforms.



LARKANA: Peoples Party (PPP) Leader and Candidate for PS-12 Constituency, Suhail Anwar Syal addresses to media persons during press conference, at Larkana press club.