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## CM satisfied with relief activities carried out in rain & snow affected areas

Mir Ali Mardan directs to Commissioners & DCs to take precautionary measures to cope with any emergent situation in view of weather conditions

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has expressed satisfaction over the relief activities carried out in the rain and snow affected areas of the province. In this regard, the caretaker Chief Minister appreciated the performance of Pak Army, Frontier Corps (FC), Levies, Police, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and district administration. Moreover, he has directed to all the Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners to take precautionary measures to cope with any emergent situation keeping in view the weather conditions.



HYDERABAD: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a meeting.

## Bilawal urges people to bury politics of hatred, division with their votes

HYDERABAD (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has urged the people to defeat the politics of division and hatred by supporting his party in the upcoming general elections. Addressing a large public meeting in Hussainabad area here on Sunday evening, Bilawal blamed Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and other parties for con-

tinuing to sow division and hate for political gains. "If any city has seen the politics of hatred, divide and terror, Hyderabad is one such city whose people have suffered losses and have given sacrifices too," he observed, referring to the ethnic tensions which prevailed in the city in the 1980s and 1990s. "But the peaceful people of Hyderabad did not back out or surrender to those tactics for which I

Continued on page 2

## Internet service to be temporarily restricted in Turbat, Mach & Chaman: Jan Achakzai

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The internet service will be restricted temporarily in the sensitive areas of the province including Turbat, Mach and Chaman. According to the caretaker Provincial Minister for information, Jan Achakzai, it is important to ensure safety and security of the common citizens as there is a concern that terrorists may exploit the social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and similar other channels for communication purposes. Consequently, in order to mitigate the risk, internet service will be restricted in the lead-up to the elections in the areas including Turbat, Chaman and Mach, added Jan Achakzai.

## 1,688 candidates set to compete NA, PA seats in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): A total of 1,688 candidates will contest for 16 National and 51 Provincial Assembly general seats from the province of Balochistan on February 8. Notable figures in the lineup of candidates comprise Maulana Fazlur Rahman, who heads Jamiat Ulema e Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), Senate Chairman Sadiq



KILLAABDULLAH: Chairman PkMAP Mehmood Khan Achakzai addressing a public meeting in connection with general elections



LAHORE: Honorable Chief Guest Mr. Murtaza Solangi, Caretaker Federal Minister of Information & Broadcasting, addressing at seminar on "Political participation and empowerment of Youth, women, transgender and cultural minorities" organized by PID.

## PM Kakar says: India's Aug 5, 2019 illegal, unilateral actions on IIOJK violate int'l laws, UN charter

Right to self determination, a cardinal principle of int'l law: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 in IIOJK were a blatant violation of international law including the UN Charter, 4th Geneva Convention and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

"India has since been engaged in efforts to further entrench these illegal measures through a series of steps aimed at altering the demographic structure and political landscape of IIOJK," the prime minister said in a message on the observance of Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5. He said that the "Kashmir Solidarity Day" was annually observed on the 5th February to express Pakistan's unwavering support to the Kashmiri people's just struggle for realization of their right to self-determination. It was also an occasion to pay rich tribute to the

sacrifices made by their Kashmiri brothers and sisters during the last seventy-six years, he added. The prime minister said that Pakistan had consistently maintained that a lasting solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was possible only in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people.



## Governor Balochistan calls for drawing attention of International community towards resolution of Kashmir issue

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has underlined the need to draw attention of international community towards the issue of Kashmir. He said that it has always been the stance of Pakistan on the Kashmir issue from the day one that

## Earthquake jolts Zhab, Loralai

QUETTA (APP): An earthquake of 4.2 magnitude on the Richter scale jolted Loralai and its adjoining areas on Sunday. According to a private news channel, the National Seismic Monitoring Centre (NSMC) confirmed that tremors were felt in Loralai and the adjoining areas. However, no loss of life or damage to property has been reported from any part of Loralai.

the Kashmiris should be given the right of plebiscite in accordance to the resolutions of United Nations. The Governor stated so in a message issued here on Sunday. The message marked the Kashmir Solidarity Day being observed today (Monday, 5th of February). In his message, the Governor said that the real objective behind observing the Kashmir Day is to express complete solidarity with the Kashmiri people. He said that the whole world knows that Kashmiri people are facing the Indian cruelties and barbarism in the Occupied Kashmir, and every kind of brutality is being meted out with them just to suppress their struggle for independence. He said that the Kashmir Solidarity Day is aimed at expressing solidarity with the Kashmiri people. He said that this is high time for the international community to pay attention towards the issue of Kashmir and thus mobilize the public opinion in this regard. The Governor said that Pakistan has always supported the fair stance of the Kashmiri brethren, and has been highlighting the cruelties and highhandedness unleashed by Indian forces.

## SAPM inaugurates welfare projects worth Rs 1.8 bln for Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Jawad Sohrab Malik on Sunday inaugurated a series of welfare projects worth Rs 1.8 billion for Industrial and Mine workers in Balochistan. He said these initiatives, funded by the Workers Welfare Fund (WWF), are poised to significantly enhance living standards and educational opportunities for mine and industrial workers across the province, said a news release issued here. He further said the cor-

## All set to observe Kashmir solidarity day in befitting manner today

RAWALPINDI (APP): All is set to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day here on Monday in a befitting manner, said a district administration spokesman.

He said that Kashmir Solidarity Day would be observed on Feb 5 to express wholehearted support of the Pakistani nation to the just struggle of Kashmiri people for their inalienable right to self-determination.

He informed that like other parts of the country, all arrangements had been finalized to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day here to reiterate complete solidarity with the brethren of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). India was keeping a major part of the international

## Public holiday declared in Balochistan on Feb 8

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has declared public holiday on February 8 (Thursday) in the province. According to an official notification issued here by the Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD) the other day, the public holiday has been declared on Feb 8 in order to enable the voters to exercise their right of franchise freely and conveniently.

## Solangi says Pakistan to become strong, prosperous when minorities given equal rights

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Sunday that minorities play an important role in the nation-building process and Pakistan will become strong and prosperous only when the minorities are given equal rights as envisaged by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Constitution. Delivering his speech at a seminar organized by the Press Information Department (PID) regarding elections 2024 he said only those nations that have made rapid strides towards development and prosperity believed in diversity. "Pakistan will be strong only when we give equal civil rights to minorities," Murtaza Solangi said. He remarked that the creation of Pakistan in it-

self was the negation of the concept of majoritarian rule as All India Congress leadership wanted to impose the will of a certain group over the other people on the basis of the majority. He said that minorities had played a significant part in the achievements of Pakistan, especially as they were playing an active role in the health and education system. The minister said that the present caretaker government was a constitutional and legal set-up which would ensure the conduct of free and fair elections in the country on February 8.

In the preamble of the Constitution of Pakistan, it is written that this country will be run by its elected representatives who come to power through elections, he maintained.

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LAHORE: President PML(N) Mian Shahbaz Sharif along with other party leaders addressing a press conference.

## Karachi rains enough to compare the performance: Shehbaz to Bilawal

LAHORE (INP): PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday mocked PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari over his repeated invitation for a live debate, as he cited the example of heavy rain in Karachi which has paralysed life in the megacity, which, he said, was enough to compare the performance of two parties. Media persons were reporting just few weeks ago that the PML-N leadership could not face the people and had decided to stay at home, he recalled and noted that the massive rallies held in different towns and cities were a proof of how much love and support the masses had for

Nawaz Sharif - the three-time prime minister who is eyeing a record fourth stint in office. Addressing a press conference, he said it seemed that the people would give a clear mandate to the PML-N to govern the country for the next five years. About the alleged political victimisation of the PTI founder, Shehbaz said the same person used to claim that he won't spare anyone and send everyone to prison, as the rivals were booked in bogus cases, at a time when he himself resorted to corrupt practices. Democracy doesn't mean that a person involved in illegal activities should be forgiven, he asserted.

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کشہیر  
فروری

توٹے گی اب ہر زنجیر  
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بھارتی جبر و استبداد کا شکار ہیں اور اقوام عالم سے انصاف کے متقاضی ہیں

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# New Delhi losing battle of hearts and minds in held Kashmir

LAHORE (APP): Political experts and analysts have urged the international community, particularly the UN, to stand up for the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), who are facing the worst and most brutal violations of their human rights in the internationally recognized disputed territory.

Political experts and analysts said on Sunday that Kashmir had been a burning issue since the Partition of the Indian Subcontinent in 1947. Pakistan and India have fought three wars over Kashmir in 1948, 1965, and 1999, but have been unable to settle the dispute.

After the Partition of Indian Subcontinent, millions of Kashmiris felt unsafe and uncertain about their fate. They were required to accede to either of the two countries on the basis of wishes of their people and the geographical location.

Since 1947, Article 370 had given Jammu and Kashmir a semi-autonomous constitutional status.

Earlier, under its provisions, the region had freedom in all matters except its constitution, legislature, flag, foreign affairs, communications and defence. An-

ger has simmered in the region and the situation further worsened when Narendra Modi-led regime on August 5, 2019 abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, by repealing articles 370 and 35-A.

Meanwhile, Modi-led BJP government imposed a lockdown in the occupied Kashmir, allowing Indian forces to perpetrate unspeakable crimes against the masses, with complete impunity.

In IIOJK, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and other bodies have strongly condemned the Modi-led fascist Indian government for forcibly implementing secret and nefarious agenda by usurping all fundamental rights of the people of Kashmir, including social, political, economic and religious rights.

Ending the old status of Kashmir is an attempt to usurp the rights of Kashmiri people by eradicating their fundamental rights related to their social, linguistic, cultural, economic and political existence, former chairperson HRCPC told APP.

By abrogating the Article-370 and Article-35A, Indian parliament illegally allowed non-Kashmiris to

resettle in Kashmir permanently. Whereas actually, the Constitution of Kashmir first defines membership and settlement.

According to this amendment, non-Kashmiris are now allowed to buy property, keep it and settle in Kashmir permanently, the sources said. According to the current change, regarding land as a sole property, will not allow them to live on land as they have historically been doing.

These changes will also subject to population-rearrangement in Kashmir, they informed while replying to a query.

Moreover, the Indian forces were using rape, molestation and sexual violence against women and children as a weapon of war, besides collective punishment, in a bid to suppress the legitimate freedom movement in the occupied valley," they said.

Unfortunately, Kashmiris have speculated since decades, that India intends to settle paramilitary families and military settlements there, as well as establishment of semi-permanent military colonies in Kashmir.

Indigenous Kashmiris, have long faced threats to their existence as well as their inherited rights, espe-



cially 'relative' land rights. This will make indigenous peoples aliens.

Former senator from Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Sehar Kamran (TI), told APP that the latest controversy had been reported by international media that extrajudicial-murders of a number of Kashmiris have become a routine in the Kulgam area of the occupied territory.

Cruelty knows no

bounds, and after the men were gunned down, their bodies were not returned to their families, she condemned adding that New Delhi was losing the battle of hearts and minds in occupied Kashmir.

The Indian occupational forces' state terrorism, war crimes and human rights violations had made life a nightmare for over one million oppressed Kashmiris, especially

women, senior citizens and children in IIOJK, she remarked. Violating all fundamental rights, India had imposed military siege on some 10 million Kashmiris in IIOJK, by converting the territory into biggest jail on earth, where over 900,000 Indian forces had been deployed with no regards for human rights, she lamented.

Since 1989, she said, the Indian occupational forces had committed worst

crimes, as more than 162,000 Kashmiris had been subjected to inhuman torture, including beatings with iron rods, stripping naked, heavy roller treatment, hanging from ceiling, electrocution, burning of the body with iron rods, sleep deprivation, solitary confinement, sexualised torture including rape, molestation and sodomy.

Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik's wife Mushaal Hussein Mullick told APP that the RSS-inspired 'Hindutva' ideology was being pursued by BJP-led Modi government is a major threat to 'foreign investment' in India.

She said fascist Modi and the Indian Army were turning Kashmiris into a minority in the valley by issuing domiciles to Indian citizens. In IIOJK, over 100,000 Kashmiris had been killed by Indian forces since 1989, while more than 7,200 people were murdered in custodial torture by Indian army.

The Kashmir Media Service (KMS), in its recent report, revealed that so far more than 11,000 women had been raped by Indian soldiers and over 110,000 children turned orphans, whereas around 23,000 women were made widows by the Indian troops.

Besides, the growing Indian atrocities in the occupied valley and the illegal August 2019 revocation had resulted in worldwide criticism against the extremist policies of Modi-led government.

The KMS, while quoting the APHC spokesman, denounced the ill-designed proposal of the so-called Delimitation Commission (DC) to increase six seats for Jammu and one for Kashmir valley for the so-called IIOJK Legislative Assembly on the false census-reports. International Forum for Justice, Human Rights Jammu and Kashmir Chairman Muhammad Ahsan Untoo appealed to the international community and world human rights organisations to hold India accountable for its state terrorism in the territory.

In a message from Kot Bhalwal Jail in Jammu, he said the entire world was standing with the people of Ukraine, but turned a blind eye to what India had been doing in IIOJK for the last several decades.

However, the apathy and hypocrisy of other countries by keeping mum over India's atrocities in IIOJK due to their economic interests is an eye-opener for the global champions of human rights.

## Bilawal urges...

Continued from page 1  
want to salute you," he said.

He alleged that while the PML-N had indulged itself in the politics of hate and divide at the center, MQM-P was doing the same in Hyderabad and Karachi.

The PPP's chairman added that those parties had turned politics into personal revenge, a deed which had always resulted in losses to the country, democracy, federation and the public.

"But they aren't worried about it. They just want to become prime minister for the fourth time," he said, referring to PML-N's leader and former PM Nawaz Sharif.

He appealed to the people that while making decision about their votes they should consider which political party could serve them without discrimination.

Bilawal said the PPP only wanted to tackle the problems like poverty, inflation and unemployment with the support of the public.

Revisiting the PPP's 10-point charter of economy, he promised to double the income of Pakistan's people; to build 3 million homes for poor families with ownership rights for women; and supply up to 300 units free solar electricity. He assured the women that he wanted to serve them the way a son served his mother. According to him, the PPP's government at the center would not only enhance grants under Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), it would also provide interest free loans to women to establish small businesses.

## Pakistan to...

Continued from page 1  
He said despite all the speculations, the government stood its ground on holding elections on the schedule given by the Election Commission of Pakistan.

Murtaza Solangi said that the caretaker regime would hand over the country to the elected government in a better condition than it was given on August 17 last year.

He expressed the hope that the government coming to power after February 8 elections would focus on the basic problems of the country including the economy.

"No country can become strong and prosperous without economic security and strength," he said.

He hoped that the new government would vigorously take up the agenda of economic reforms, take steps for increasing the tax base and improve governance.

He said that in the age of social and digital media, artificial intelligence, deepfakes, voice cloning, misinformation etc had become a challenge which were needed to be tackled.

He said the time had come to work collectively for the promotion of unity, rather than spreading hate and disharmony.



**LAHORE: Honorable Chief Guest Mr. Murtaza Solangi, Caretaker Federal Minister of Information & Broadcasting, receiving shield from Executive Director General/PIO Mr. Tariq Mehmood Khan at seminar on "Political participation and empowerment of youth, women, transgender and cultural minorities".**

## CM satisfied with...

Continued from page 1  
by taking wholehearted part in the rescue activities together with the civil administration in difficult time as per its past traditions.

Moreover, the Chief Minister directed to the Commissioners and district administration to ensure safety measures by clearing the water courses in

## 1,688 candidates set to...

Continued from page 1  
derway featuring Balochistan National Party Chief Akhtar Jan Mengal, former Chief Minister Sanaullah Zehri, and former Deputy Chairman Senate Abdul Ghafoor Haidari.

According to the details available to APP, the province has a total of 5.37 million registered voters, including 3.02 million male voters and 2.35 million female voters.

Apart from the provincial capital Quetta, Pishin, and Khuzdar, National Assembly seat NA-251 covers multiple districts, including Shirani, Zhob, and Qila Saifullah, with 17 candidates vying for victory.

In NA-252, the constituency includes the districts of Musa Khel, Barkhan, Loralai, and Dikki. Thirty-five candidates, including two seasoned politicians, Sardar Yakub Khan Nasir and Mir Baz Muhammad Khetran, are competing in this area. Moving on to NA-253, it encompasses Harnai, Sibi, Kohlu, and Dera Bugti.

In Dera Bugti, around 30 candidates, including Nawabzada Shazin Bugti and Dostin Domki, are in the electoral race. Shifting focus to NA-254, covers Jhal Magasi, Kachhi, and Nasirabad, with 27 candidates, including Khalid Magasi, Yar Muhammad Rand, and Humayun Aziz Kurd, competing for victory. In NA-255, which encompasses Sohbatpur, Jafarabad, Aosta Muhammad, and Naseerabad, a total of 46 candidates, including Mir Chingiz Khan Jamali and Mir Khan Muhammad Jamali, are participating in the electoral contest.

In NA-256, spanning Khuzdar, 15 candidates, including Akhtar Jan Mengal, seek success. Moving to NA-257, covering Hub, Lasbela, and Awaran, 18 candidates, including Jam Kamal and Aslam Bhutani, are in the contest. Similarly, in NA-258, encompassing Panjgur and Kech, 18 candidates are vying for vic-

## Chinese and Pakistani Universities to establish Civil Aviation School

HANGZHOU (INP): The University of Sargodha (UoS) and the Civil Aviation University China (CAUC) have agreed to explore cooperation avenues and establish a Civil Aviation School at UoS in Punjab.

During his visit to China to attend the First Forum on Asian Development at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, UoS Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas, met with the President of CAUC.

The meeting aimed to foster international collaboration and educational advancement in aviation. An

## India's Aug 5, 2019 illegal...

Continued from page 1  
Jammu and Kashmir would be made in accordance with the will of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.

However, the caretaker prime minister said, over the last seventy-six years, India had carried out a relentless campaign to intimidate and suppress the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

In IIOJK, the iron-fisted Indian approach frequently manifested itself in extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions and custodial torture, he added.

Prime Minister Karar said India had muzzled the media and incarcerated the Kashmiri leadership and human rights defenders, adding these excesses have been well-documented by several human rights organizations and international media outlets.

He said the Indian Supreme Court's judgment of 11 December 2023 on the status of IIOJK was another step towards denial of the Kashmir people's right to self-determination.

## All set to observe

Continued from page 1  
ally acknowledged disputed Himalayan Jammu Kashmir state in her illegal and forced occupation at the might of her occupational military power since October 27, 1947, against the aspirations of the people of the State.

The spokesman said that it would be a public holiday and preparations were in full swing to observe the Day to highlight the plight of the oppressed Kashmiri people and remind the world community of its obligations towards the resolution of the longstanding dispute.

He informed that rallies, public meetings, and seminars would be held on Monday to draw attention of the world community towards grave human rights violations and brutalities against innocent Kashmiris by the Indian security forces.

The banners highlighting the plight of innocent

## Human chains at all Pakistan-AJK entry, exit points on Feb 5 to be hallmark of Kashmir Solidarity Day

MIRPUR (APP): Human chains at all Pakistan-AJK entry and exit points by people of Pakistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir will be the hallmark of the scheduled February 5 national Kashmir Solidarity Day being observed across the country, including AJK.

Like across Pakistan, adequate arrangements have been given final touches in all ten districts of AJK to celebrate Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 to reiterate complete solidarity with the brethren of turbulent Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir state, coupled with the renewal of the pledge to continue extending fullest support to the Kashmiris globally acknowledged legitimate right to self-determination, which has been denied by India for the last 76 years.

India has kept the bulk of the internationally acknowledged disputed Himalayan state

in her illegal and forcible occupation against the aspirations and wishes of the people of the state.

The day will dawn with special prayers for the martyrs of Kashmir, the victory of the freedom struggle, and an expression of solidarity with the Kashmiri people. Besides mass rallies, symposia, walk-for-peace, convention meetings, and speech declarations, a unique ceremony at all six bridges linking Pakistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir — including Barakot, Kohala, Azad Pattan, Hollar, Dadayal, and Mangla bridges— where human chains comprise gatherings of thousands of Pakistanis and Kashmiris to convey solidarity with each other will be the hallmark of the day-long events everywhere to observe the Day in an appropriate mode.

It would be a state holiday throughout Azad Jammu and Kash-

mir and the rest of the country on this occasion to observe the day.

Meanwhile, organizers, including the eminent icons of the local civil society, including leaders of various public representative bodies, pointed out that the fact remains that the people of Jammu and Kashmir, come what may, would never accept statuesque, and finally, India shall have to leave the internationally acknowledged disputed Jammu and Kashmir territory in her unlawful occupation. People and the government of Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir observe the solidarity day every year, not only to renew their deep-rooted love and affection for the people of occupied Jammu & Kashmir but also to reiterate their commitment and dedication to the liberation of the motherland from the Indian forced and illegal occupation.

# 5th

## FEBRUARY 2024

### KASHMIR SOLIDARITY DAY

This 5th February, we renew our steadfast support for the Kashmiri people in their struggle against the unjust Indian occupation. Our solidarity knows no bounds; it echoes through our hearts, ethical principles and political dedication.

PID(I)4710-D/23 **Government of Pakistan**





ISLAMABAD: A view of huge banners displayed in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day at Constitution Avenue.

## Kashmir Solidarity Day about sending powerful message of support to resilient people of J&K struggle

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick has said that Kashmir Solidarity Day serves as a reminder that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are not alone in their struggle against the Indian illegal occupation. She was addressing a press conference along with senior Hurriyat leaders Farooq Rehmani, Ghulam Muhammad Safi and Mehmood Ahmad Saghar. The SAPM emphasized the unwavering support of the people of Pakistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), the Pakistani and Kashmiri Diaspora, and the global community for their Kashmiri brethren in their just struggle for the right of self-determination.

She described the people of Jammu and Kashmir as a barrier against Modi's attempts to create an Akhand Bharat. She characterized the Hindutva regime of India and the Zionist regime of Israel as significant threats to world peace.

She asserted that both Modi and Netanyahu were in a race, with Modi pursuing a brutal genocide in Kashmir and Netanyahu in Palestine.

Expressing deep concern over the situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), Mushaal said that the authentic political leadership were unjustly incarcerated under various pretexts. She lamented the Indian government's ban on representative political parties that voice the aspirations of the people in IIOJK. She expressed her fear that her husband Mohammad Yasin Malik, a prominent figure in the political landscape of IIOJK, might be unfairly targeted and made a scapegoat for Modi's electoral triumph.

She asserted that India was actively altering the demographics of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by indiscriminately granting Kashmiri domiciles to non-Kashmiris.

She emphasized that the move by India was aimed at influencing any potential future plebiscite as outlined in the United Nations resolutions. She highlighted the historical stance of the people of IIOJK in boycotting farce elections in the region.

She cautioned that any potential increase in turnout during the upcoming September elections could be attributed to the illegal settlements and the illegal issuance of Kashmiri domiciles to non-Kashmiris.

## Cycle rally held to show solidarity with people of Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (APP): YFK International Kashmir Lobby Group hosted "Pedal for Peace: Kashmir Solidarity Day Cycle Rally" to show solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The rally, commencing at D Chowk and culminating at the Islamabad Press Club, was organized in commemoration of Kashmir Solidarity Day, seeking to raise awareness and highlight the urgency for international support in addressing the challenges faced by the Kashmiri population.

The event provided a platform for community leaders, activists, and organizers to address the participants, sharing insightful perspectives on the current situation of IIOJK. All the participants gathered at the Islamabad Press Club where speeches were featured that underscored the broader context of Kashmir Solidarity Day. The participants of the rally collectively conveyed a message that the people of Pakistan stand with the people of IIOJK. More than 100 cyclists holding placards in support with people of IIOJK participated.



ISLAMABAD: A view of Pakistani and Kashmiri flags displayed alongside Constitution Avenue in front of Supreme Court, in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day in the Federal Capital.

## Pak HC calls upon ensuring Kashmiris' right to self determination

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan High Commissioner in Malaysia Syed Ahsan Raza Shah on Sunday urged the international organizations and human rights bodies to ensure right of self-determination to the oppressed Kashmiris in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) under the relevant United Nations' resolutions.

He was addressing a Kashmir solidarity day event held at the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) jointly organized by collaboration of Majlis Perundangan Pertubuhan Islam Malaysia (MAPIM) and High Commission of Pakistan in Kuala Lumpur with the collaboration of IAIS, a press release said.

The high commissioner apprised the partici-

pants that for last seven decades, the Indian state had systematically converted Jammu and Kashmir into the largest open prison, where it had been oppressing the innocent Muslims through worst forms of human rights abuses and ethnic cleansing. Ahsan Raza said the illegal Indian armed forces continued to use rape as a weapon of war; they had blinded hundreds of Kashmiri children and youth by firing pellet guns directly at the faces; similarly, torture, illegal detentions, implication in fictitious cases, indiscriminate use of force under the impunity of draconian laws and systemized campaigns to rob the Kashmiris of their distinct cultural and religious identities marked the reality of India's brutal occupation of the occupied territory.

## Wanted members of snatcher & bike lifter gang arrested; cash and valuables recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Khanna and Shams Colony police team have arrested two wanted members of notorious snatcher and bike lifter gang involved in numerous snatching and bike lifting activities and recovered snatched cash and motorbike from their possession, a public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police had categorically started a crackdown against criminal elements in order to save the

precious lives and property of citizens. Following these directions, the Khanna police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending a wanted member of a notorious snatcher gang involved in numerous snatching activities in various areas of Khanna police station. The accused was identified as Masood Nawaz. Police team also recovered and snatched cash from his possession. Similarly, the Shams Colony police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending a wanted member of a notorious bike lifter gang involved.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers busy planting trees on greenbelt at Expressway in the Federal Capital.

## Pakistan will continue unwavering support to Kashmir: A.M. Shahid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former ambassador A.M. Shahid on Sunday highlighted the prolonged sufferings of the people in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), emphasizing Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kashmiri brethren. Talking to Radio Pakistan, he underscores the 76-year-long suffering of the people in IIOJK, enduring Indian atrocities.

A.M. Shahid expresses concern over the lack of global response to the human rights violations in IIOJK, calling for serious consideration of the Kashmiri people's plight.

A.M. Shahid criticizes India's move to revoke articles 35-A and 370, asserting that it aimed to change the dynamics of the occupied valley. He highlights the determination of Kashmiris to achieve their right to self-determination despite brutal acts by Indian forces. The former ambassador asserts that the Modi regime, post the August 5 move, has struggled to control the situation.

## DC directs crackdown on alms seekers in Federal capital

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a decisive move led by Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon, Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates took robust action against beggars across Islamabad on Sunday. The ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said that thirteen beggars were apprehended in various city areas and promptly handed over to Kohsar police station.

The initiative targeted professional beggars who also faced detention, while

underage children found begging were compassionately directed to the Edhi Center. This ongoing operation, orchestrated by Assistant Commissioners, aimed to curb the pervasive issue of begging. Under Memon's watchful eye, the crackdown demonstrates a commitment to maintaining order and upholding the law.

The relentless effort to address the beggar predicament showcased the administration's dedication to fostering a secure environment for Islamabad's residents.

## DRO visits NA-47, NA-48 polling stations

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a recent general election oversight, District Returning Officer (DRO) Irfan Nawaz Memon on Sunday undertook a comprehensive visit to various polling stations within capital's National Assembly Constituencies NA-47 and NA-48.

According to ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum, the electoral inspection featured a collaborative effort, with Memon flanked by Returning Officers for NA-47 and NA-48, Assistant Returning Officers, law enforcement representatives, and various stakeholders. Memon's focus was on fortifying security measures, and his meticulous review prompted him to issue precise instructions for enhancements. The visit showcased a collective commitment to ensuring a robust and secure electoral process. The collaborative effort of Returning Officers, law enforcement, and stakeholders reflects a shared dedication to the integrity.



ISLAMABAD: A view of political parties displayed banners on street light poles alongside a road in the Federal Capital, ahead of upcoming general election 2024.

## 20th death anniversary of famous singer Malika Pukhraj being observed today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 20th death anniversary of famous Pakistani singer Malika Pukhraj is being observed on Sunday.

Malika Pukhraj's original name was Hamida. She was born in 1910 at Hamirpur Sudhar near Akhnoor Jammu. Her family moved to Pakistan after the partition.

Malika Pukhraj had complete mastery over raags. She also had a great attachment to Urdu and Persian poetry and literature.

Malika Pukhraj sang Hafiz Jalandhri's famous song 'Abhi To Main Jawan Hoon' Adam ki ghazal 'woh Baatain Teri, woh Fasane Tere' in a unique manner that came to be considered as her identity.

Malika Pukhraj's husband Syed Shabir Hussain Shah was a highly educated government officer and author of the famous Urdu novel 'Jhok Sial'. Pakistan's famous singer Tahira Syed is their daughter.

The Government of Pakistan awarded Malika Pukhraj with the Presidential Medal for acknowledging her performance.

Her biography was published as 'Song Sung True' which was translated from Urdu to English by Salim Qadwai.

## No zoo in Islamabad violating IHC verdict please: Experts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The well-known biodiversity expert Z B Mirza said: CDA cannot fool the cabinet to take a favourable decision on its summary in the presence of IHC verdict that had clearly asked "to end the cruelty against the animals, and free the animals in their habitats". He said the CDA attempt to reestablish the zoo in Islamabad and grabbing the land is "mischievous by the dishonest officials". They know they cannot do it but only after misguiding the Federal Cabinet. The biodiversity lovers will not support any uncalculated decision by the CDA Board or the Federal Cabinet.

Another senior biodiversity expert Dr. Ejaz Ahmed said: Though zoos play an important role in education and awareness regarding different species and their behavior, if animals are kept with care. But we have seen that due to

## ICP conducts grand operation against encroachment and double parking in rural areas

ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the special directions of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police conducted a grand operation against encroachment and double parking in the rural area, a public relations officer said.

He said that the loca-



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## World Cancer Day being observed today

ISLAMABAD (APP): World cancer day is being observed today with an aim to raise awareness about the disease and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. This year theme of the day is 'close the care gap: everyone deserves access to cancer care.' It is a part of a 3-year long campaign from 2022 to 2024.

This marks the second year in a three-year campaign, emphasizing the need for global efforts to address disparities in cancer detection, treatment, and support services.

The theme for World Cancer Day 2024 underscores the commitment to creating a more equitable healthcare landscape. The campaign aims to address disparities in access to cancer care, emphasizing the importance of making these services universally accessible. The overarching agenda for 2024 is 'Together, we challenge those in power.'

World Cancer Day holds immense importance as a global effort to combat cancer. The focus is on promoting prevention, early detection, and effective treatment options to improve outcomes for individuals facing cancer.

It serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing battle against the disease and provides a platform to celebrate the triumphs of survivors. The day encourages collective action to strengthen cancer care, detection, prevention, and treatment.

## No entry on motorways for vehicles without M-Tag after Feb 5

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Highway and Motorway Authority (NHMA) has made M-Tag registration compulsory for all vehicles on motorways from February 5.

According to details, this was being done for motorists convenience and a free flow of traffic through the entrance and exit points of motorways. To get M-Tag the motorists can visit the customer care center with their vehicle registration book/card and CNIC.



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

Monday February 05, 2024

## Last leg

We are now in the home stretch. This past week saw a flurry of political activity as parties started to dig in and brace for their final showdown, scheduled for next Thursday.

Though we had not seen the same level of feverish campaigning that usually precedes general elections in Pakistan, there was some welcome improvement over the last few weeks, even if it has seemed at times that it is just two parties swapping the limelight between them.

The PTI, the third main contender, remains absent from TV screens. There has been very little it has been allowed to do, and jalsas would have been out of the question with the state trying to suppress it. The smaller parties, too, seem to have largely avoided expending much time or effort on elections 2024. This lack of enthusiasm has left the polls looking like a three-way fight — albeit one in which one of the main contenders has been handicapped.

How will the results shape up? It is anyone's guess. A number of factors are in play, going for and against each party. The PML-N and PPP look strong on paper. Their traditional networks within the zaat-biradari system and the state apparatus are active. The state is keeping the PTI in check. The two can also campaign freely: they may put up banners, organise corner meetings, hold jalsas, get TV airtime and, most importantly, seek votes with the help of recognised poll symbols.

The PML-N enjoys the further advantage of being perceived as the 'favoured' party, which is expected to boost its prospects in areas where thana-katcheri politics rule the day. The PTI, meanwhile, is banking mainly on public sympathy to turn the tide. It is tapping into public discontent against the status quo and hoping the youth vote can swing the election in its favour.

A lot will also depend on voter turnout: a high turnout is expected to favour the PTI. Will it be able to get its voters out? How each party manages election day activities will also matter. Can they mobilise and ferry enough voters to the booths? Can polling agents protect their candidates' votes during the counting process? Given how vitiated the pre-poll process has been, should we expect a changed atmosphere on polling day? There is a lot riding on these elections, and the path to power, as ever, lies through Punjab.

Will we see a new victor emerge? The PML-N is looking to break out of central Punjab and make inroads in the north and south. The PPP is hoping to regain the ground it lost a decade ago. And the PTI is refusing to back out of the fight. It promises to be a contest that will be remembered for a long time.

### Muhammad Amir Rana

A positive development for Pakistan's upcoming general elections on Thursday is the declining influence of the Afghan Taliban as a source of inspiration for voters. This starkly contrasts with the 2002 elections, where a pro-Taliban religious alliance secured record votes, particularly in Balochistan and KP. Back then, the Taliban's recent overthrow by the US-led coalition stirred sympathy votes. Conversely, with the Taliban now ruling Afghanistan, concerns arose about a similar pro-Taliban wave in the 2024 elections. However, initial indications suggest the Taliban's appeal has diminished in Pakistan, although a deeper analysis is still needed.

The upcoming elections in Pakistan are a crucial test of public sentiment regarding the Taliban's influence. The election results, particularly in the Pakhtun-dominated areas, will provide valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of power and ideology in Pa-

kistan.

Despite the Afghan Taliban's diminished influence, their support for the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) remains unabated. JUI-F leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman's recent visit to Afghanistan to secure an unannounced ceasefire during the elections has, apparently, yet to yield results. Therefore, another critical aspect of the elections will be gauging the extent to which the TTP's actions have damaged the Taliban's image and their influence in Pakistan. While JUI-F may garner votes from its strongholds in Balochistan and KP, a significant decline in overall support for the religious parties would suggest a negative perception of the Taliban due to the actions of the TTP. A low turnout in these areas traditionally associated with the Taliban and TTP influence would signal public disapproval of their activities.

While the JUI-F might benefit from established support in some constituencies, it is crucial to recognise its potential role as a tool by the Pakistani establishment to

counter the PTI in KP. It is worth noting that the 2002 general election saw the religious parties' alliance Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal win due to Gen Pervez Musharraf's strategy of marginalising major parties like the PPP and PML-N. While the MMA touted their victory as a success of religious unity, they failed to replicate it in subsequent elections. The JUI-F's and Jamaat-i-Islami's attempts to position themselves as anti-establishment also failed to win the public's trust. This ultimately led Maulana Fazlur Rehman to realign himself with the establishment.

The alliance between the religious parties and the establishment is widely recognised and enduring despite the complexities in their relationship. In the 2018 general elections, the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) was utilised (in Punjab), in a manner similar to the MMA in 2002. With over two million votes secured in the previous election, the new leader faces the challenge of maintaining the party's voter base. Elections have long

been held in a controlled environment, with the establishment often ensuring its desired outcome. However, the 2024 elections occur in a more tightly controlled context due to the country's political turmoil and economic crisis. In this scenario, voters in Punjab, KP, and urban Sindh may prioritise issues such as inflation, price hikes, and unemployment over traditional ideological or ethnic considerations. General sympathy towards Imran Khan and PTI may also influence their choices.

A few political pundits forecast that the TLP would be used again for electoral engineering. However, it would be risky for the PML-N and pro-establishment parties, as they have failed to dent the PTI vote bank. The TLP can prove counterproductive for them as it holds more lethal narratives against the PML-N and its allies.

Religiously motivated groups openly oppose electoral processes and democratic principles. Recent statements condemning elections and threats to political leaders highlight this challenge. Religious

political parties face pressure to denounce groups like the TTP and IS-K and counter their narratives online and in communities. However, concerns about safety often lead to silence, which can embolden these groups. While their direct impact on voter participation remains unclear, these militants continue influencing public perceptions and potentially expanding their reach. A recent report by a UN monitoring team suggests the TTP established a new base in KP in mid-2023, where individuals trained as suicide bombers were reportedly located.

Among the religious political parties, the JUI-F could potentially benefit significantly. Besides their internal political dynamics, their ties with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and direct contacts with the TTP make them valuable for the establishment. Recent reports suggest Maulana Fazlur Rehman brokered a temporary ceasefire with the TTP during his visit to Afghanistan, facilitated by the Haqqani Network. This ceasefire coincided with a decrease in claimed terror-

ist attacks in Pakistan. However, some factions within the TTP remain dissatisfied and continue to launch attacks.

If these reports are accurate and the JUI-F secures enough seats in the elections, the party could become crucial in back-channel negotiations with the Taliban. Nonetheless, this involvement would likely come at a price, with Maulana Fazlur Rehman seeking a significant share in the future set-up and pro-TTP and Taliban elements gaining strength in the bordering regions with Afghanistan. While the Taliban may influence some voters, their regime is also seen by many in Pakistan as a desirable model Islamic state. This narrative has serious implications for institutional stability and the state and society of the country, as Dr Akmal Hussain briefly discusses in his recent book, *Pakistan, Institutional Instability and Underdevelopment*. Ideological narratives that contradict state policies and social norms can distract state institutions, especially when they are used as cheap political tools. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Now, the chase sequence

### Ghazi Salahuddin

When one of the time bombs seemingly planted for the final days of the electoral campaign exploded on Tuesday morning, there naturally was a rush of spirited reactions in the media. Anchors and leading commentators — the usual suspects — were at hand to breathlessly interpret the surprise development.

I am referring, of course, to the sentencing of former prime minister Imran Khan and his foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the cipher case. Both were awarded 10 years in prison by the special court set up under the Official Secret Act for the breach of state secrets.

This was certainly a big news story, coming like a bolt from the blue. It electrified the political environment, giving rise to partisan assessments as to what it really meant and how it would play out.

Yes, we had another shocking twist in the tale the very next day, on Wednesday, when an accountability court sentenced Imran Khan and his

spouse Bushra Bibi to 14 years in jail in the Toshakhana reference, with a fine of Rs1,540 million. But my attention, initially, is restricted to what happened on Tuesday.

Watching the show on different channels around noon, I began to wonder about the impact that the news would make on the ongoing election campaign. Surely, the voters (and that means everyone, everywhere) would be talking about this judgment made in indecent haste.

I went to the Karachi Press Club for lunch and then decided to walk the crowded streets of Saddar to try to get the feel of what was happening. This has been my practice since my early days in journalism, ages ago. A journalist friend with whom I often share my thoughts was with me.

And both of us, with our mutual interest in old Karachi, had a wonderful time. But there was no talk in any of the many casual encounters with shopkeepers and strangers about politics. There was no direct or indirect reference to the court

judgment or the election campaign that is supposedly gaining momentum. This means that names that readily provoke an emotive response, such as Imran Khan or Nawaz Sharif or Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, were just not uttered.

What I must explain here is that everyone is expected to have their political opinions and prescriptions for how to set things right. However, the idea was to not broach the subject of elections or the sentencing of Imran Khan specifically.

We only wanted to gauge the atmosphere as such and see if there were any signs of political activity. When there is a sense of excitement at the popular level, affecting the proverbial common man, it would easily become visible and audible to one who is watching the scene closely. At least I did not find any intimation of political involvement or any specific interest in elections.

Surprising, isn't it? It is possible that I missed something that may have lurked just beneath the surface. Nor am I able to relate my experience,

which admittedly extended to less than two hours, to what is being shown and debated in the media. Still, I am reporting the situation that I encountered at a time when a major development had taken place. Imran Khan being sentenced to 10 years should make waves across the various levels of public opinion — and it may have.

Theoretically, these lower-middle- and working-class people constitute a large chunk of our electorate. They are the 'awam' that politicians speak about so passionately and pretend to be defending their interests and cause. But these people who constitute the crowds that sometimes degenerate into mobs do not appear to have any say in how power is acquired and how it is exercised.

In fact, the people are merely observers and not participants in the entire process. They are made to believe that democracy means the holding of elections every five years. And it is only at the time of elections that they gain any importance, irrespective of who they vote for

and how their votes are counted.

But there is something very special about the present electoral exercise. There is this massive side show built around the conflict between the followers of Imran Khan and the powers that be. Yet, what occasionally happens on the streets is not half as dramatic as the proceedings of courts held within the premises of Adiala Jail. That is where the two remarkable judgments were made on Tuesday and Wednesday.

If the two judgments had the undertones of tragedy, what transpired in the Adiala Jail courtroom on Thursday had a touch of melodrama. A verbal clash between Imran Khan and the former husband of his third spouse Bushra Bibi was reported like a scene from a play.

As I have suggested, a lot is happening on various fronts. There have been more instances of violence in Balochistan and

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The pace of rallies of the PML-N and the PPP has greatly picked up, with very inventive advertising of the

two parties on television.

Consider this as the chase sequence that marks the climax and the end of a movie. The elections are now only four days away — and only three for campaigning. By late night on Thursday, the votes would have been counted and the contours of the next administration will begin to emerge. There are many who are putting their money on the PML-N roaring ahead.

Meanwhile, every moment seems pregnant with possibilities. What is happening on the sidelines will not terminate with the announcement of the election results. There is that Harold Wilson quip that a week is a long time in politics. In today's Pakistan, a day is a long time in politics, particularly during this last week of the campaign.

On February 9, shall we see the dawn of a new day? In their rallies, Nawaz and Bilawal have promised the moon. There will be time for them to recall what British politician Ken Livingstone had said: "If voting changed anything, they'd abolish it." -- Courtesy TheNews

## Fight to forgive

### Muna Khan

Could you forgive your daughter's murderers, and then hire two of them to come work for the organisation set up in her name?

This is what Linda and Peter Biehl did in South Africa following the stoning and stabbing of their daughter Amy by a mob in Cape Town in 1993. Amy, then 26 and a Fulbright scholar, was helping educate previously disenfranchised voters ahead of the historic 1994 elections that would see Nelson Mandela become president.

Four men were found guilty of Amy's murder but they applied to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for amnesty. Amy's parents, who attended the hearing, did not object to their release in 1998. Later, they met two of the murderers and then hired them to work in the foundation they created in Amy's name to continue her dream of imagining a world where reconciliation was possible.

In September last year, the Amy Biehl Foundation marked 30 years since her murder at one of the schools they've built in Cape Town. Linda was there along with two of her daughter's murderers, who continue to work with the foundation; one of them told the media his relationship with the Biehls allowed him to become the person he is today and also allowed him to forgive himself.

They have all shown what reconciliation looks like, and how it can extend to, and then allow, a community to move forward.

But getting there is a difficult process. In order to learn how to let go of hurt feelings, I have been practising alternative

forms of therapy and reading ancient texts. We have much to learn from our elders.

The Buddhists, for example, say forgiveness ends suffering. It is ultimately for yourself, for your peace of mind, to let go of the pain you carry. Most religious teachings echo similar sentiments.

No one advocates holding on to anger unless they find gain in it, and that thinking is not beneficial for societies. I believe we, as a nation, desperately need to let go of anger, resentment and hurt caused by a myriad of leadership failings and mistrust.

The challenge is to forgive the very people or institutions that caused the mistrust in the first place. It is complicated, especially when no one is asking for forgiveness or, they are forced to say sorry to avoid punishment and then banished. This happens with one-time favoured groups who run afoul of the powerful; their 'crime' is a damnation until it is not, and then all is forgotten. This script is old and tiresome but there are too many players who happily acquiesce in going along as they gain power. Forgiveness will not work without accountability. But who has the power to forgive? What is deemed forgivable?

Lucy Allais, a philosopher at Johns Hopkins University who studies forgiveness and punishment, told Vox in 2022 that "forgiveness is most fundamentally a release from blame and anger".

There is certainly a lot of that in Pakistan right now and it is proving a stumbling block to our progress. The anger is both online and on the streets.

I watched a lot of folks share videos of jour-

nalists unable to contain their excitement at the disqualification of Nawaz Sharif in 2017.

The video of a reporter showing viewers the inside of the former prime minister's fridge resurfaced as did the video of a journalist in a tub. 'Do they feel shame now that Imran Khan has been convicted,' screamed half of Twitter?

I don't know what answer — or apology, if it came — could have pacified the outraged mob.

Does social media cause this anger or does it reveal it, as Allais herself asks. We've seen how quickly a mob comes together to 'cancel' people in social media trials. There is no room for atonement in the virtual world while in the real world, the judicial system seems to be failing people.

In this atmosphere, can one even talk of forgiveness and reconciliation? We are days away from elections whose results will be rejected by X percentage of the population. This is the self-perpetuating cycle that does not allow room for reconciliation. Those to blame can also offer a way out.

These stakeholders must reckon with their past and accept that the only way forward is to come together as leaders invested in Pakistan's progress, with different ideas on how to get there. They can teach us how to disagree without being disagreeable. People tend to assume the best of themselves and the worst of their opponents. "We need to see people as potentially better than the worst things they've done," says Allais. It is a tall ask but one worth attempting. We will eventually get it right. This hope is worth fighting for. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Securing borders

### Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Pakistan's national security has lately been under threat on its eastern as well as western borders. On the eastern frontier, India's attitude towards Pakistan has unfortunately hit a new low. The Modi regime is constantly innovating prickly ways to assert its growing hubris in the neighbourhood and beyond. Its latest practice is to deploy assassins on foreign lands to kill so-called anti-India elements. The evidence shows that Indian intelligence operatives managed to have not only Mohammad Riaz and Shahid Latif assassinated on Pakistani soil, but many more Pakistani citizens too, for which investigations are underway. This is in line with what Indian operatives did in Canada and the US when they targeted Sikhs calling for an independent state of Khalistan.

Using assassins to kill on foreign soil is a variant of the earlier policy of sending in Indian operatives, such as Kulbhushan Jadhav, who would enter Pakistan under fake identities to destabilise the country. However, the cause of regional peace will not be served if India continues to commit state terrorism while accusing Pakistan of cross-border terrorism. Both countries would do well to eliminate transnational terrorism through cooperation rather than confrontation.

Pakistan's western frontiers are also in the grip of cross-border terrorism. Last month, Iran attacked a target inside Pakistan, ostensibly to eliminate an alleged hideout of Jaish al-Adl, an anti-Iran Sunni militant group active in Sistan-Baluchestan, Pakistan responded with a strike

against Baloch terrorist elements in the border town of Saravan. Both governments swiftly resolved the matter through diplomacy. But soon after, nine Pakistanis were murdered in Saravan. The Iranian foreign minister has since visited Pakistan to calm tensions. Ultimately, the root cause, which is the alleged presence of terrorist elements on both sides of the border, would need to be addressed to avert the recurrence of such incidents.

Ever since the Taliban came to power in Kabul in 2021, the TTP has been reinvigorated. The group had been beaten in operations in Swat, South Waziristan and North Waziristan as well as the countryside intelligence-based operation Raddul Fasaad. The TTP's resurgence resulted from the Afghan Taliban rulers' release of TTP prisoners in the name of facilitating talks with Pakistan. A tentative ceasefire was agreed to, leading to senior TTP leaders being freed from prisons in Pakistan and the resettlement of hundreds of TTP fighters in the country.

Instead of appreciating the gesture, the TTP used the opportunity to regroup and resume its attacks against targets in Pakistan, particularly the security forces. Despite this setback, Islamabad has, prudently, maintained its contacts with Kabul at multiple levels to stress that Afghanistan's strategic interests would be better served if Kabul restricted the space given to the TTP for cross-border terrorism, and reoriented its policies to focus on peace and development.

Ever since the launch of CPEC in 2015, Pakistan's detractors have tried to carry out acts of terrorism against Chinese nationals working on

CPEC projects here. At the request of China, Pakistan's steadfast friend, the government constituted a strong force to safeguard CPEC projects and Chinese nationals. This has improved the security situation, although occasional terrorist attacks still occur.

All this requires an in-depth review of our security and foreign policies. An opportunity will arise when a new government is elected this month. After holding consultations with think tanks, academia, and intelligentsia, the elected government must institute a mechanism to undertake such a review on a new agenda of peace that should be pursued with not only our neighbours but also other powers of relevance to Pakistan.

Recently, a national conference was convened in Islamabad by the Sanobar Institute in collaboration with two partners from academia and the think tank community to prepare a strategy manifesto for the new government with recommendations for Pakistan's security and foreign policies. Similar efforts are currently underway in several universities and think tanks, born of a desire to see our country achieve the glory that Pakistan's founder had envisioned for it. Based on the Quaid's advice, and the imperative to stabilise its borders, Pakistan must address the internal and external reasons of militancy. Internally, militant, extremist, sectarian and sub-nationalist forces need to be dealt with politically first, and kinetically later if required. Externally, we should engage with all neighbours such that it builds their stakes in Pakistan's stability. In the medium to long term, this approach can ensure border stability and progress. -- Courtesy Dawn



## Chairs 39th cabinet meeting CM Punjab approves upgradation of Bab-e-Azadi Orders foolproof security for general elections

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi presided over the 39th Punjab cabinet meeting at CM Office, here on Sunday.

Another national and historical decision had been taken in the Punjab cabinet meeting which pertains to undertaking the upgradation of the Bab-e-Azadi at Wahga border crossing, which would be redesigned on the pattern of the Lahore Fort. The cabinet granted an approval for extension and redesigning project of Bab-e-Azadi, the Parade Ground, along with issuance of funds.

The CM said that Bab-e-Azadi would be upgraded on the pattern of Lahore Fort and the entrance gate would be designed on the pattern of

Alamgiri Gate of the Lahore Fort. Mohsin Naqvi ordered to install big LCDs for showing parade at the Bab-e-Azadi. He said excellent facilities would be provided along with undertaking extension of the Parade Ground, adding that the parking area would be made further spacious.

It was informed during the briefing that seating capacity of the people in the Parade Ground would be enhanced approximately up to 18,000 after its upgradation and the height of Bab-e-Azadi project would be approximately 120 feet. Approval for the issuance of funds was accorded in the meeting to undertake remodelling of Liberty Chowk along with making an agreement with the Bank Alfalah for the biggest National Flag of

South Asia and undertaking construction as well as extension of the Lahore Metro Bus Service corridor. Approval was granted for the nomination of the new board members and the Punjab government's 2023 policy to allot government residences. The cabinet also granted an approval for extending the Speedo Bus Service agreement from Bahawalpur to Lodhran and the provision of wheat flour to the Prisons Department by the Food Department. Approval was granted to endorse the decisions of the 14th meeting of the Cabinet Standing Committee for Legal Affairs and Privatisation, 8th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th meetings of the Cabinet Standing Committee for Law & Order.



**KARACHI:** Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister, Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar along with Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, Chief Justice Sindh High Court and other Judges of Sindh High Court are cutting inaugural ribbon to inaugurate the 28th Chest Pain Unit of NICVD, at Sindh High Court Bar Association.

## Steps to ensure for a democratic, peaceful election: Minister

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: The Minister of Information and Public Relations for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, emphasized the crucial collaboration needed from both candidates and the public to ensure the success of the upcoming general elections.

Speaking at a press conference in Nowshera, he highlighted the need for cooperation with the administration, police, and election commission staff to guarantee security and seamless logistical arrangements.

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, and Inspector General of Police, Akhtar Hayat

Khan, have undertaken comprehensive reviews of security and administrative preparations by visiting various districts across the province.

Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, in conjunction with the Chief Secretary and IGP, affirmed the government's dedication to conducting peaceful general elections on February 8.

"All provincial preparations are finalized," stated Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel. "Security measures are in place, administrative arrangements are complete, and all available resources have been deployed to create a conducive environment for all election candidates," he said.



**LAHORE:** Honorable Mr. Tariq Mehmood Khan, Executive Director General/PIO, receiving shield from Ms. Bushra Bashir, Director PID Lahore at Seminar on "Political Participation and Empowerment of Youth, Women, Transgender and Cultural Minorities".

## Nisar Khoro says: PPP will not blackmail MQM-P or anyone else

**LARKANA (APP):** The People's Party will hold a power show in Larkana on February 6, and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will address a large public meeting in connection with the election campaign at Municipal Stadium Larkana. In this regard, a meeting of party leaders was held at Khor House Larkana under the chairmanship of People's Party Sindh President Nisar Khoro, including candidate of P.S. 11 Jamil Ahmed Soomro, candidate of N.A. Khurshid Junejo, Nazir Baghio, ex-MNA, Nida Khuro, ex-MPA, and the leaders women's wing. It was decided to ensure full public participation in the meeting on February 6.

Speaking on this occasion, People's Party Sindh President Nisar Khoro said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will give a roadmap for the future in the Larkana rally, and the

Prime Minister of the country will not be from Lahore but from Larkana. He said that the People's Party will not blackmail MQM Pakistan or anyone else, and there will be an option to get the support of independent candidates to form the government in the federation.

He said that people will not accept Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister for the fourth time after fleeing the country after apologizing to dictators Perviz Musharraf and Imran Khan. He said that the deal leader wants to come to power once again by making a deal in which the people will fail, so the decision of the people's vote in the country should be given importance. He said that the way of dealing with and coming to power on someone's shoulders should be stopped because undemocratic attitudes.

## Caretaker CM, CJP attend funeral prayer of lawyer Rashid Rizvi

**KARACHI (APP):** The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar and Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa attended the funeral prayer of renowned lawyer Rashid A. Rizvi, here Sunday.

A large number of people including Caretaker Sindh Information Minister attended the funeral prayer.

The funeral prayers were held at Yasrab Imam Bargah.

## Caretaker Law Minister visits Shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar

**HYDERABAD (APP):** Caretaker Sindh Minister for Law and Aqauq Umer Soomro visited the shrine of Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar on Sunday.

Former Caretaker Sindh Minister Iftekar Ahmed Soomro was also accompanied with him.

The Caretaker Law Minister laid a floral wreath on the Shrine and offered fateha and prayers for the development and prosperity of the Country and Sindh as well.

## Dignity kits distributed amongst women by SRSO Sami Bhutto

**SHIKARPUR:** Sindh Rural Support Organization-SRSO distributed the dignity Kits amongst the women at Moriiani Union Council Bhirkhan of Lakhli Taluka on Saturday.

According to details, with the financial assistance of UNHCR Pakistan, Sindh Rural Support Organization-SRSO arranged a program at village Moriiani and after formal assessment distributed the dignity Kits amongst the women of that village. Speaking on the Muhammad Panjal the DM of SRSO depicted that not only this but under this project SRSO had trained 20 women for Beautification Course of Beauty Parlour and sewing Course to 20 women and also distributed multiple kits amongst them. SRSO would continue its positive efforts to promote the women by empowering them through multiple aspects including technical support.



**LAHORE:** Caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab Mohsin Naqvi inaugurates up gradation and renovation of Punjab Dental Hospital.

## CM Sindh approves Rs14bn for completion of Malir Expressway's add. works

**KARACHI (APP):** Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar, presiding over the 44th Public Private Partnership Policy (PPP) Board meeting, approved Rs14.5 billion to complete additional works on the Malir Expressway.

The meeting was held at the CM House and was attended by provincial ministers - Mubin Jumani, Ishwar Lal, Omar Soomro, Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam, Chairman P&D Shakil Mangnejo, Secretary Local Govt Manzoor Shaikh, SMBR Zahid Abbasi, Secretary Finance Kazim Jatoi,

Secretary Irrigation Niaz Abbasi, Secretary Law Ali Ahmad Baloch DG PPP Unit Asad Zamin, VC NED Dr Sarosh Lodhi, Asif Brohi and others.

The PPP Policy Board acknowledged the detailed multilayer verification process carried out by the Department through the Independent Engineer of the project, third-party engineering firm and NESAPK for awarding the additional works to the existing Concessionaire of the project. The latest concern regarding the achievement of the Commercial Operations Date has been

resolved. The Board emphasized that, given the current high-interest scenario in the country, it would be more sensible for the Sindh government to provide the necessary funding. The chief minister instructed the Finance Department to arrange the required funding of Rs 14.5 billion within two months to ensure that the project completion does not encounter any delays.

The CM directed the Local Government department to get the required approvals from the Sindh Cabinet in line with the directions of the PPP Policy Board.

## Sindh Police prioritizes integrated communication system for Elections 2024

**KARACHI (APP):** In preparation for the upcoming General Elections 2024, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIGP) Technical and Transport, Sharjeel Kharal, has emphasized the need for a robust and integrated communication system.

Presiding over a crucial meeting, Sharjeel Kharal underscored the importance of aligning communication efforts with the directives outlined by IGP Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja.

The gathering, attended by key stakeholders including

AIGP Motor Transport and Telecom Sindh, DSPs, Range In-charges, and other motor transport officers, focused on streamlining communication channels to ensure seamless coordination during the electoral process.

The DIGP directed the implementation of effective communication strategies, emphasizing the issuance of regular awareness letters and orders to all relevant officials. Stressing the significance of timely sharing of security guidelines and real-time reports.

## Two women die in road accident

**FAISALABAD (APP):** Two women were killed in a road accident in the area of Dijkot police station.

A Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday that a speeding bus hit a motorcycle near Jahangir Mor on Samsundri Road. As a result, Khalida Perveen (53) and Chashman Shehbaz (21) received serious injuries and died on the spot whereas Rescue 1122 shifted Shehbaz (32) of Chak No.253-RB Islam Nagar to Allied Hospital-II (DHQ Hospital) in a critical condition.

The area police took the bodies into custody while an investigation is under progress, he added.



**Chairman Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao addressing during a public gathering (Jalsa) in the city.**

## CM KP says: Kashmiris struggle for right of self-determination can't be suppressed through oppression

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Shah here Sunday said that in Kashmir Solidarity Day, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the provincial government express complete Solidarity with Kashmiri people.

He reiterated their resolve to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to them in their struggle to get the right to self-determination.

In a statement issued

on Kashmir Solidarity Day, Syed Arshad Hussain Shah said that the right to self-determination was the fundamental right of the people of Kashmir, and their struggle for the same could not be suppressed through oppression by the Indian government, adding that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stand side by side their Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their just struggle, and will continue to do so until they get their right to self-determination.

The Caretaker Chief

Minister urged upon international community and the human rights organizations to take notice of the Indian government brutalities in occupied Kashmir, and play their due role in giving Kashmiri people their inalienable right to self-determination by getting implemented the resolutions of United Nations in letter and spirit.

He maintained that the decades-long struggle of Kashmiri people for their freedom is unprecedented all over the world.

## Pakistani nation to express solidarity with Kashmiris in their struggle

**PESHAWAR (APP):** The people of Pakistan inside the country and across the world is observing Kashmir Solidarity Day tomorrow (Monday) to express solidarity with Kashmiris in their struggle for the right to self-determination. Since 1990, the Nation of Pakistan observes February 5th as Kashmir Solidarity Day.

Political parties, civil society organizations, lawyers, students and traders are all set to stage rallies and processions to express solidarity with Kashmiris brethren in their struggle for independence from the Indian occupation and reiterate their persistent support and

send a loud and clear message to the world that Kashmiris are not alone in their struggle against the occupying forces.

Talking to APP, Professor Dr Aziz Hilali of the Abasyn University, Peshawar said that Pakistan observes Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 each year to show their support and express solidarity with the people living in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

He said that the nation pays tributes to unparalleled commitment with Kashmiris for the attainment of their legitimate right of self-determination. The entire

Pakistani nation stands with Kashmiris and it is the firm belief of the nation that the Kashmiris will succeed in their struggle to secure freedom from oppression and illegal occupation. Pakistan remains the big freedom supporter of Kashmir since the conflict had begun.

They call for international community to intervene in the matter of Kashmir and save innocent lives from the Indian fascist government. Many of the freedom fighters have lost their lives while fighting for the right of self-determination and Pakistan show solidarity with those people and observe a national-wide

## Governor for investing more in education sector

**Independent Report**  
BAHAWALPUR: Governor Punjab Engineer Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman has said that education is pivotal for the development and prosperity of a nation and we must focus on providing quality education to our youth.

Talking to APP, he said that it is the need of the hour to invest more in the education sector. He said that unfortunately, the PTI government gradually reduced funds for educational institutions for four years, affecting the quality of education.

He told that annual grants for Cadet College Hassan Abdal, Lawrence College Ghora Gali, and Sadiq Public School Bahawalpur were planned to be cut down to zero by the PTI government, however, recently the grants of these educational

institutions were increased substantially.

He said that a high-level financial committee has been formed to resolve the financial issues of the Bahawalpur University of Bahawalpur.

He told that initially grants of Rs 55 million are being planned to be given to the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. In response to another question, Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman told that the Punjab University's annual budget had a deficit of Rs 2 billion for which suggestions have been sought by the university administration.

Governor Punjab said that it was a moment of pride and honor that Sadiq Public School Bahawalpur has completed 70 years. He said that being an alumnus of the school, he has a great affiliation with the institution.



**LAHORE:** Provincial Minister for Education Mansoor Qadir meeting with Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman.

## DC Murree says: Traffic management plan being implemented to facilitate tourists

**RAWALPINDI (APP):** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Murree, Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi, has said that the traffic management plan is being implemented to facilitate tourists and avoid gridlock on the roads of Murree. He said that 13 tourist facilitation centers were established at different places in Murree, and a control room had also been made fully functional.

The DC said that the district administration had made excellent arrangements to promote tourism in the region besides helping and assisting the tourists. A large number of tourists visit 'Queen of Hills', Murree, to enjoy the

snowfall in winter, he said, adding that solid steps were taken by the district administration to provide assistance and guidance to the tourists.

He informed me that on the directives of the Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta, the administration was ensuring strict implementation of the Murree Contingency Plan to facilitate the tourists.

All the machinery, along with the drivers, was available around the clock during the snowfall season, he said. According to the Murree Contingency Plan, additional staff has been provided to traffic police and related departments.

## Rwp Ring Road project to prove game changer for people: Commissioner

**RAWALPINDI (APP):** Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta has said that Rawalpindi Ring Road project would prove to be a game changer for the people of Rawalpindi and the plantation drive on both sides of Rawalpindi Ring Road would be started from February 15.

The Commissioner said that the ring road project would be completed within stipulated time frame as over 20 percent physical work of the ring road project had been completed. After the traffic network design to link the

ring road with the motorway, work on Thalian Interchange would be started, he added.

Swan Bridge should be completed as soon as possible, he directed the authorities concerned.

The rest area being built on the ring road would be developed on the pattern of Bhera rest area, Liaquat Ali Chhatta informed.

Liaquat Ali further informed that the project would be completed before October. The ring road project would help reduce traffic load on the roads of Rawalpindi city and ensure a smooth flow of traffic.



**NOWSHERA:** Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah talking to media person regarding arrangement during general election 2024.

## Kashmiris in their struggle

terrorism against the Kashmiris including extrajudicial killing and arbitrating detentions, fake encounters, stage crackdown and search operations, custodial torture and enforced disappearance and forced arrest of the Kashmiri leaders using pellet guns and destruction of houses.

As per the statement of the Martin Sugarman, the correspondent of the Daily Loss Angles and Indher Torai that over 900,000 Indian forces made Kashmiris one of the biggest open prison house. India's illegal and unilateral action of 5th August 2019, the removal of the Article 370 and 35 (A).



## Governor KP says: Gemstones is a valuable sector, need development through comprehensive planning

PESHAWAR (APP): With the development of natural resources like minerals, tourism, gemstones, the province can be taken out of the backwardness and made a major contributor to the country's economy, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said during his visit to All Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association (APCEA) in the city of Namak Mandi.

The Governor, during his visit met with the business community dealing in precious stones, representatives of APSIA, the people of the area and urged upon of making a comprehensive planning and police for this valuable

sector development that could play a key role in Pakistan economy in general and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said that economic stability can be brought only by the provision of facilities to all the business community of the province, including those associated with the gemstone sector, and the promotion of business and industry in the province.

Significant development can be made possible in this sector, he added. He said, in this context, the business community associated with the Gemstones sector

should get the support of students who have graduated from universities who are familiar with modern technology, so that the youth can get employment with the precious stones of the province.

Exports can be increased along with introducing tourism at the global level, the Governor said, during his visit to the office of All Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association (APCEA) located in Namak Mandi, a congested area of inner city Peshawar.

During the meeting with the representatives and officials of the present and



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali talking to Gem Stone traders during his visit to All Pakistan Commercial Exporter Association at Namak Mandi.

## Pak economic prospects look promising: Meher

LAHORE (APP): Coordinator of Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman, Meher Kashif Younis Sunday said the future economic prospects of Pakistan look promising but their actual realisation would depend on successful integration into the global economy, sound macro-economic policies and close coordination between academia, industrialists and policymakers at all levels in addition to political stability and good governance. Speaking here at a workshop on "Impact of Tripartite Collaboration for Economic Growth", he said under a constellation of these favourable conditions, it would be possible to add 2 to 2.5 percent points to the current trend growth rate whereby per-capita income would double in next decade, Meher said Pakistan's future direction should focus on analytically examining the issue by bringing together

government policy, industries and academia, co-evolving socio-economic systems and focusing on industries core role in the development process. The Coordinator said Pakistan's geographic location has not been cashed effectively for intra-regional trade and investment, to realise its future potential, Pakistan must position itself for integration into the regional and global economy, benefit from its youth population and advance technology.

He said studies suggest that universities and industries can promote long term growth with political support in a large population to counter political pressure that limit the state's ability to organise development.

Meher Kashif said global hyper connectivity is causing a surge in the technological innovation which is not exogenous to the socio-economic system.

## Korea to provide seed potato to Pakistan for producing virus-free seed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Republic of Korea under its Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP) would provide 160,000 tons of certified seed potatoes to Pakistan during five years.

The initiative maiming at to ensure the availability of virus-free seeds potatoes and contributing significantly to the agricultural sector development, said Chairman Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali.

Talking to APP here on Sunday, he said that

four aeroponics greenhouses, 32 screenhouses and supplying a cold store and 100 KW solar systems to meet goals would also be established.

The PARC) in collaboration with Korean Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA) was working on aeroponic technology, which will transform Pakistan's potato production, he added.

PARC-KOPIA were also working for achieving self-sufficiency in potato seeds, which would reduce the reliance on imported

seeds. He further informed that only 2% of Pakistan's potato seed requirement was being fulfilled locally and we relied on importing 98% of its seed demand.

With the implementation of this cutting-edge facility, Pakistan is poised to achieve self-sufficiency in potato seed production, he added.

Dr Ali said that the aeroponic technology, which can yield 50 to 60 potato seeds per plant compared to just five from conventional methods.



FAISALABAD: A worker is busy in his work at a local Textile mill in the city.

## Women labour can increase economic output, says PFC

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday said that in countries with greater gender inequality, closing the gap in women's labour force participation could increase economic output by an average of 35 percent.

Talking to delegation of women entrepreneurs led by Ms Maheen, he said, "We have to narrow gender gap which is harming national as well global growth."

He said that keeping women out of economic opportunities is unfair and also harms growth and resilience for all.

"Over the time, gender-sensitive macroeconomic and financial policies will result in higher growth, greater economic stability

and resilience, and lower income inequality—a dividend not just for women, but for everyone," he added.

He said out of 190 countries surveyed, the World Bank found that women were equal legal standing with men in just 12 countries which speaks of sorry state of affairs worldwide.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq mentioned that according to organisation for economic cooperation and development, the gender based discrimination in social institutions costs the world economy US \$ 6 trillion but in recent years countries have reduced these costs through social and legal actions such as curbing underage marriages, criminalisation domestic violence and increasing the number of female elected officials.

## Economists pilloried for getting forecasts wrong

PARIS (AFP/APP): Economists are taking flak after missing the mark on inflation, failing to anticipate disruptions in global supply chains and forecasting a recession that has not materialised.

European Central Bank president Christine Lagarde joined the chorus of criticism at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, last month.

"Many economists are actually a tribal clique," she said, referring to a lack of openness to other scientific disciplines.

"They quote each other—men more than women but that's another story," the former IMF chief and French finance minister said. "But they don't go beyond that world because they feel comfortable in that world."

Economists need to get out of their comfort zone of Excel spreadsheets and rigid models, some economists say about their own kind.

The world "has changed a little bit", Peter Vanden Houde, chief eurozone economist at ING bank, said sarcastically.

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MUZAFRABAD: A vendor is displayed fancy plants pots attraction for customers at his nursery in the city.

## Political stability guarantees sound economy: Malik

LAHORE (APP): SAARC chamber of commerce and industry former President Ifkhar Ali Malik Sunday said that political stability is pre-requisite for sound economy which will promise greater weal for the people from different strata of the society.

Talking to a delegation of traders, he said that at present, Pakistan cannot endure political turmoil or instability, asserting that uninterrupted stable democracy is needed for sustained economic growth to cope with the multiple challenges in the country.

He said that politics of confrontation and violence is not the solution.

He said time has changed as now the influential nations are paying more attention to

financial warfare to continue their dominance. These countries are successfully using their weapons of economic destruction to weaken economics of poor nations to achieve their unholy designs. "It is indeed important to increase our exports and for that purpose we need to reduce our cost of doing business so that our products remain competitive in the world markets," he added.

Malik said trade facilitation is the key to promoting industries and "we need to remove all the obstacles and create the culture of trade facilitation." He stressed the need for consistency in the government policies and a clear roadmap to move forward," he added.



RAWALPINDI: A vendor is displaying dry fruits attraction for customers at his shop in the city.

## CTI handlooms can produce carpets, other products

LAHORE (APP): Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Chairperson Ejazur Rahman has emphasised the importance of handloom sector and said that there was a need to plan in the context of manufacturing other products on handlooms.

"The modern handloom developed by the CTI can produce a wide range of products apart from carpets," he said while briefing a delegation visiting the institute on Sunday.

Ejazur Rahman said that there is a need to highlight the importance of handloom sector in Pakistan. "In the current situation, we need to plan in a wider perspective apart from the production of handloom carpets for

which different brands will have to help us to bring this idea to completion.

He said Pakistan's hand-made products have immense fame but they are not available in the local and international markets in such numbers; however, the Carpet Training Institute and its modern handlooms can be very helpful in this regard.

He apprised the delegation about the advanced handlooms, developed by the institute and suggested that various brands should enter into joint ventures on an experimental basis and the sure success will not only promote the products in the local markets but they can also be developed as an export industry.

## Pak delegation visits Deep Space Exploration Laboratory in China

BEIJING (APP): A Pakistani delegation led by Mohammad Yousuf Khan, Chairman of Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission visited the Deep Space Exploration Laboratory in Hefei, China to forge a stronger pace partnership with China in deep space exploration endeavours.

During the visit, the Pakistani side led by Mohammad Yousuf Khan, Chairman of the Commission and Wu Weiren, Director of Deep Space Exploration Laboratory engaged in extensive discussions on future deep space exploration missions.

The meeting held recently was also attended by the engineers from the Chang'e-8 mission.

Wu Weiren presented an overview of China's progress in lunar and planetary exploration

missions to the delegation and said that the inclusion of Pakistan's ICUBE-Q CubeSat on the Chang'e-6 mission has expanded the collaboration between the two countries in the field of deep space exploration and laid a solid foundation for international lunar scientific research cooperation, as per local media. Mohammad Yousuf Khan introduced the basic details of Pakistan's proposed collaborative projects on the Chang'e-8 mission and expressed a willingness to further enhance bilateral cooperation in lunar exploration.

"The laboratory is currently establishing an International Society for Deep Space Exploration, with the objective of fostering an international platform dedicated to scientific research and academic exchanges in lunar and planetary exploration.

## LCCI concerned over increase in power tariff

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has expressed deep concern over NEPRA decision to increase power tariff by Rs. 4.57 per unit under monthly Fuel Charges Adjustment (FCA) mechanism and feared that it would hit the trade and industry hard.

In a media statement, issued here on Sunday, LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhary and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt said the December FCA of Rs 4.57 kWh would replace Rs 4.13 kWh of November 2023. They said that repeated hike in power tariff,



RAWALPINDI: A vendor is displaying dry fruits attraction for customers at his shop in the city.



LAHORE: A vendor is displayed fruits at his stall attraction for customers at Shadman Sunday weekly bazaar in Provincial Capital.

## 51 power pilferers netted across MEPCO region

MULTAN (APP): Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) teams have raided and caught 51 more power pilferers in a day during ongoing operation across the region on Sunday.

The taskforce teams have raided at various places and got registered 27 new cases against power pilferers and caught three more power pilferers with red hand.

Over Rs 2.7 million fine was imposed on power pilferers. Rs 31.3 million was recovered from running and dead defaulters in a day.

The recovery from domestic, commercial, industrial and tubewell defaulters was made during the ongoing operation.

## KPBOIT inks MoU with Chinese group for investments in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): In order to enhance investment opportunities in mines and minerals sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a Memorandum of Understanding has signed by Vice Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade Engr. Said Mahmood and Mr. Jianxin Hou, Chairman Shandong Xinxu Group Corporation, China.

The MoU signing ceremony was held the other day, in Shandong in China, and was witnessed by the high profile public and business community of the province. On this occasion during his speech, the Vice Chairman of KP-BOIT shared various

opportunities in value addition in the mines and minerals sector for Chinese investors and ensured full facilitation from the KP government side.

Through this MoU both parties may, to the best of their mutual endeavor and capabilities, strive to enhance investment in value addition in the mining sector of KP Province, provide specific project information, identification of joint venture partners, facilitating procedural matters with respective authorities remaining within respective legal mandate. Similarly, partners may conduct matchmaking meetings.



LAHORE: People are busy buying warm clothes and jackets in Landa bazaar at Shadman Sunday weekly bazaar in Provincial Capital.

## Brazil's industrial output inches up 0.2 pct

RIO DE JANEIRO (Xinhua/APP): Industrial production in Brazil edged up 0.2 percent in 2023 from the previous year, the state-run Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics reported Friday.

In December 2023, industrial output advanced by 1.1 percent from a month earlier, marking the fifth consecutive month of growth. Positive results in the sector in 2023 were driven by extractive industries, coke, oil derivatives, biofuel products, and food products. Within the major economic categories, semi-durable and non-durable consumer goods showed the most dynamism, growing by 2.1 percent.

## Livestock Dept issues 20 licenses to businessmen

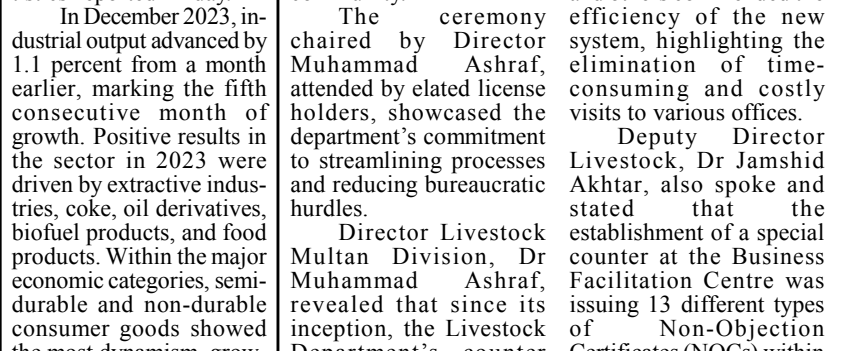
MULTAN (APP): Livestock Department's counter at the Business Facilitation Center (Multan) successfully issued 20 licenses within one week of inauguration, facilitating the Livestock and Poultry business community.

The ceremony chaired by Director Muhammad Ashraf, attended by elated license holders, showcased the department's commitment to streamlining processes and reducing bureaucratic hurdles.

Director Livestock Multan Division, Dr Muhammad Ashraf, revealed that since its inception, the Livestock Department's counter received 57 applications,

marking a significant milestone. Expressing their gratitude, license holders namely Farman Ali, Muhammad Akram, Akhtar Hussain, Mohsin Raza, Liaqat Ali, Ghazanfar Abbas, Muhammad Kashif and others commended the efficiency of the new system, highlighting the elimination of time-consuming and costly visits to various offices.

Deputy Director Livestock, Dr Jamshid Akhtar, also spoke and stated that the establishment of a special counter at the Business Facilitation Centre was issuing 13 different types of Non-Objection Certificates (NOCs) within 30-day timeframe.



RAWALPINDI: A vendor is displaying dry fruits attraction for customers at his shop in the city.

## LESCO collects Rs 8.94m from 404 defaulters on 143<sup>rd</sup> day of recovery campaign

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), in collaboration with Tehsildars (Recovery), recovered Rs 8.94 million from 404 chronic defaulters in all five districts - Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara - on the 143<sup>rd</sup> day of its recovery campaign.

A LESCO spokesman told the media here Sunday that on the 143<sup>rd</sup> day, Chief

Engineer O&M (T&G) Zafar Iqbal with the support of Tehsildar City Mujahid Zia and Tehsildar Shalimar Noreez Humayun recovered outstanding dues of Rs 0.90 million from 53 defaulters in Northern Circle and Rs 2.43 million from 65 defaulters in Eastern Circle respectively. Similarly, LESCO Manager (Material Disposal) Engineer Anwar Watto along with Tehsildar

Model Town Rana Arsal and Tehsildar Cant. Sajjad Qureshi recovered Rs 2.26 million from 60 defaulters in Central Circle, and Rs 0.72 million from 23 defaulters in South Circle; while Manager (Technical) Engineer Muhammad Farooq with the assistance of Tehsildar Nankana Sahib Muhammad Iqbal Rasheed and Tehsildar Sheikhupura Muhammad Aslam Gujjar recovered Rs 0.48 million.



## US retaliatory strikes in Iraq, Syria claim 40 lives

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The United States launched air strikes in Iraq and Syria against more than 85 targets linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) and militias it backs, reportedly killing nearly 40 people, in retaliation for a deadly attack on US troops.

The strikes, which included the use of long-range B-1 bombers flown from the United States, were the first in response to the attack last weekend in Jordan by Iran-backed fighters, and more US military operations are expected in the coming days.

The strikes intensified a conflict that has spread into the region since the Oct 7 Gaza conflict.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson Nasser

Kanaani said in a statement the attacks represented "another adventurous and strategic mistake by the United States that will result only in increased tension and instability".

Iraq summoned the US charge d'affaires in Baghdad to deliver a formal protest.

Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces, a state security force including Iran-backed groups, said 16 of its members were killed, including fighters and medics. The government earlier said civilians were among 16 dead.

In Syria, the strikes killed 23 people who had been guarding the targeted locations, said Rami Abdulrahman, director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which reports on war in Syria.

US Lieutenant General Douglas Sims, the director of the Joint Staff, said the attacks appeared to be successful, triggering large secondary explosions as the bombs hit "militant weaponry".

He said the strikes were undertaken knowing that there would likely be casualties among those in the facilities.

Despite the strikes, the Pentagon has said it does not want war with Iran and does not believe Tehran wants war either, even as Republican pressure has increased on US President Joe Biden to deal a blow directly.

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said after the strikes that Biden had directed additional action against the IRGC and those linked to it. "This is the start of our response," Austin said.



Security forces inspect a damaged car at the site of a U.S. airstrike in Al-Qaim, Iraq.

## At least 28 people died when shelling hit a bakery in Russian-occupied Ukraine

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW YORK: Moscow-installed officials say Ukrainian shelling killed at least 28 people at a bakery in the Russian-occupied city of Lysychansk.

At least one child was among the dead Saturday, local leader Leonid Pasechnik wrote in a statement on Telegram. A further 10 people were rescued from under the rubble by emergency services, he said.

Ukrainian officials in Kyiv did not comment on the incident.

Both Moscow and Kyiv have increasingly relied on longer-range attacks this winter amid largely unchanged positions on the 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line in the nearly 2-year-old war.

However, Ukrainian forces have come under intense Russian attack over the past 24 hours, with continuous assaults along

the front line, Ukraine's General Staff said in a statement Sunday.

Fighting has been particularly fierce in the eastern city of Avdiivka, where Moscow is attempting to encircle Kyiv's troops, while Ukrainian forces have also been on the defensive in Kupiansk. Lyman, Bahmut and Zaporizhzhia, officials said.

The military administration for Ukraine's northern Sumy region said Sunday that Russian forces had shelled the region in 16 separate attacks the previous day, firing on the border communities of Yunakivka, Bilopillia, Krasnopillia, Velyka Pysharivka, and Esman. Gen. Serhii Naiev, commander of the Ukrainian Joint Forces, also said that Kyiv's troops had pushed back Russian sabotage and reconnaissance units attempting to cross the border in the Sumy region.

## Civilians to replace Indian troops in Maldives

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: India will remove its troops in the Maldives by May, the Maldivian Foreign Ministry said on Saturday, as the two countries seek agreement on a pullout that has strained ties.

The roughly 80 soldiers stationed in the Indian Ocean archipelago will be replaced by civilians, officials from both countries said.

As global powers jostle for influence in the Asia-Pacific region, India and China have wooed the Maldives, which has traditionally been close to neighbour India.

New Delhi's ties with Male have under strain since Mohamed Muizzu was elected president of the Maldives last year, pledging to end the country's "India First" policy.

He has called for the withdrawal by March 15 of the troops stationed to provide support for military equipment given to the Maldives by New Delhi and assist in humanitarian activities in the region.

## 200,000 protest against far-right across Germany

**Monitoring Desk**  
BERLIN: Around 200,000 people took to the streets in Germany on Saturday, most of them in the capital Berlin, as nationwide protests against the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party entered their fourth week. Protests also took place in cities such as Mainz, Dresden and Hanover, in a sign of growing alarm at strong public support for the AfD.

Roughly 150,000 people flocked to the Reichstag parliament building in Berlin, where protesters gathered under the slogan "We are the Firewall" to protest against right-wing extremism and to show support for democracy.

"Whether in Eisenach, Homburg or Berlin: in small and large cities across the country, many citizens are coming together to demonstrate against forgetting, against hatred and hate speech," Chancellor Olaf Scholz wrote on X.

He said the protests were "a strong sign in favour of democracy and our constitution".

The AfD's success has stoked concern among Germany's mainstream parties, who fear it could sweep three state elections in eastern Germany in September, even though recent polls have shown a slight decline in AfD support.

Jakob Springfeld, who speaks for the NGO Solidarity Network Saxony, said he was shocked that it had taken such a long time for mass demonstrations against the far-right, given the AfD had been successful in many smaller communities already. "But there's a jolt now. And the fact that the jolt is coming provides hope I believe." Earlier this week, a Forsa poll showed that backing for the AfD dropped below 20 per cent for the first time since July, with voters citing nationwide demonstrations against the far-right as the most important issue.

## Philippines ready to use 'forces' to quell any secession attempt

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: The Philippine government is ready to use "authority and forces" against attempts to divide the nation, a security official said Sunday, after former President Rodrigo Duterte threatened to separate some southern islands from the rest of the archipelago.

Duterte has called for the independence of his hometown Mindanao from the Philippines as his alliance with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr disintegrated this week over disagreements around efforts to amend the constitution.

Marcos said amending the 1987 constitution was meant to ease foreign investments, but Duterte accused him of using constitutional change to stay in power.



PARIS: A police official speaks to the media after a man carrying a knife wounded three people at the Gare de Lyon train station.



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol presides over the central integrated defence meeting in Seoul, South Korea.

## 15 killed as Ukraine shells Russia-held city

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: A Ukrainian attack on the eastern occupied city of Lysychansk killed at least 15 people and wounded 10 others, Moscow-installed authorities said Saturday, adding that there were likely more dead in the rubble underneath a bakery that was struck.

Lysychansk, in the Lugansk region, fell to Russian forces after a brutal battle six months into Moscow's offensive in 2022.

Russia's forces said that Ukraine had struck a

building housing a popular bakery and that it believed more victims were buried in the rubble.

"According to current data as a result of the shelling of a bakery in Lysychansk 15 people died and 10 were wounded with varying degrees of severity," the Russian-installed health minister of the Lugansk region, Natalia Pashchenko, said on Telegram.

"Rescuers have also found, preliminarily, around 10 people under the rubble."

## S. Korea summons Russian envoy over 'rude' remarks

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: South Korea summoned Russia's ambassador on Saturday to protest "rude and ignorant" remarks after Moscow's foreign ministry blamed Seoul for rising tensions on the peninsula. Nuclear-armed North Korea has this year declared Seoul its "principal enemy"; closed agencies dedicated to reunification and outreach, and threatened war over "even 0.001 millimetres" of territorial infringement.

Russia has recently formed closer ties with North Korea, with the South and United States claiming Pyongyang has

shipped weapons to Moscow for use in Ukraine.

Moscow's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said this week the heightened tension on the Korean peninsula was "primarily due to the brazen policy of the United States and its allies, including the Republic of Korea and Japan", referring to South Korea by its official name. Zakharova made the remarks when asked about South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's recent description of the North as the only country in the world that has legislated the preemptive use of nuclear weapons.



PARIS: People, some holding up the Palestinian flag, shout slogans in support of Palestinians during a demonstration.

## Brazil's military reinforces border with Venezuela and Guyana

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANAUS: A convoy of military trucks and armored vehicles set off for Brazil's northern border on Friday to reinforce the presence of the Brazilian army in response to tensions over Venezuela's claim to Guyana's Essequibo region.

More than two dozen armored cars arrived in Manaus by river transport and some left by road for Boa Vista, capital of Roraima state, where the local garrison will be increased to 600 soldiers, the army said in a statement.

The armored vehicle

reinforcements include six Cascavel, a six-wheeled Brazilian armored car with a 37-mm cannon; eight Guarani, a 6x6 personnel carrier; and 14 Guacuru, a four-wheel drive multitask light armored car, the army said.

The heavier armored cars were transported on flatbed trailer trucks.

Army Commander General Tomas Paiva said the Boa Vista garrison would become a regiment with the tripling of equipment and men, and part would stay in the city while some would be deployed to Pacaraima on the border with Venezuela.

## Eleven killed in Guatemala road accident

**GUATEMALA CITY** (INP): Eleven people, including nine migrants, were killed Saturday in a collision between a van, a motorcycle and a truck on a road in western Guatemala, authorities said.

The accident occurred around dawn on a highway in Suchitepequez department, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) from the capital Guatemala City.

"What is understood at this point, is that a farmer's truck slammed into a van (with the migrants in it) and a motorcycle," Guatemala's Migration office said in a statement.

It said the migrants were crossing Guatemala "on their way to the United States."

The driver of the pickup truck and motorcycle, both Guatemalans, also died, it said.

Nine people died at the scene of the accident and the other two died after being transferred to the hospital in the city of Mazatenango, officials said.

Central America is a busy transit route for thousands of migrants from South America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia seeking a better life in the United States.

## Israel pummels Gaza cities as air strikes kill 100 Palestinians

**Monitoring Desk**  
DOHA: Israeli air strikes killed almost 100 Palestinians in the Gaza cities of Rafah and Deir Al Balah on Friday night and Saturday, health officials said, as residents of the enclave feared Israel would expand its ground offensive into those last remaining areas where people have sought shelter.

Rafah is on Gaza's southern border with Egypt and more than half the enclave's 2.3 million people have fled there as the Israeli military presses its four-month-old operation against the Hamas group. Health officials said an Israeli air strike on a house in Rafah killed 14 people, including women and children.

Authorities in Gaza said on Saturday that more than 27,000 Palestinians have been confirmed killed since the start of the crisis

on Oct 7, 107 of them in the past two days, with thousands more feared lost amid the ruins.

Tens of thousands of people have arrived in Rafah in recent days carrying belongings in their arms and pulling children on carts, since Israeli forces launched one of their biggest assaults to capture nearby Khan Yunis, the main southern city.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant had said on Thursday forces would now press on to Rafah. "The place turned black, I couldn't see what's in front of me. It was all dust and dirt. I was touching my surroundings, I was looking for my mobile to use the flashlight to look for my children, where are they? I found them under the rubble," said Ahmed Bassam Al Jamal, whose son was killed in Rafah.

## Yemen's Houthis vow response after US, British strikes

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The United States and Britain launched strikes against 36 Houthi targets in Yemen, in the second day of major U.S. operations against Iran-linked groups following a deadly attack on American troops last weekend.

The strikes late on Saturday hit buried weapons storage facilities, missile systems, launchers and other capabilities the Houthis have used to attack Red Sea shipping, the Pentagon said, adding it targeted 13 locations across the country.

They are the latest blows in a conflict that has spread into the Middle East since Oct. 7, when the Palestinian militant group Hamas stormed Israel from the Gaza Strip, igniting a war that has drawn Tehran-backed groups into attacks on U.S. and Israeli targets on several fronts.

The Houthi military

spokesperson Yahya Sarea said the strikes "will not pass without a response and consequences."

"The building I live in is shook," said Fatimah, a resident of Houthi-controlled Sanaa, adding that it had been years since she had felt such blasts in a country that has suffered years of war.

The Houthis did not announce any casualties.

The Yemen strikes are running parallel to an unfolding U.S. campaign of retaliation over the killing of three American soldiers in a drone strike by Iran-backed militants on an outpost in Jordan a week ago. On Friday, the U.S. carried out the first wave of that retaliation, striking in Iraq and Syria more than 85 targets linked to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and militias it backs, reportedly killing nearly 40. The violence has added to concerns of the potential for further escalation.

## Red Sea crisis spurring demand for rail freight via Russia - CNBC

**SANA'A** (Online): The Houthi rebel attacks on vessels in the Red Sea have spurred burgeoning interest in alternative routes such as the China-Europe rail route that runs through Russia's Far East, CNBC reported on this week.

Companies that organize the shipment of goods have registered a sharp increase in enquiries and bookings for the route, according to the article. Transit via rail is attractive to shippers because it is cheaper than air freight and quicker than using ocean transportation.

RailGate Europe, which transports goods including furniture, toys, clothes, and automotive parts from China through Russia to European countries, told CNBC that the transit time is "significantly better" than via ocean. The journey takes between 14 and 25 days depending on its origin and destination, according to the company's

chief business development officer, Julija Seiglaite.

However, some firms have been raising concerns about sending goods via rail through Russia. "Since [the] war in Ukraine started, many companies were afraid to deliver their cargoes via Russia as train passes [through] part of Russian territory," Seiglaite told CNBC.

"Since [the] war started, [the] number of bookings decreased significantly via Russia, but within [the] last year, this route is recovering due to good transit time and prices," she said, adding that demand for rail transit had spiked since the Houthi started attacking vessels in the Red Sea.

Bookings for the China-Europe rail route were up 37% over the past four weeks, according to Igor Tambaca, the managing director of the Dutch logistics company Rail Bridge Cargo.

## Fear and triumph as Indian holy city mosque dispute heats up

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Varanasi, where Hindus travel to cremate their dead by the Ganges river, is the latest flashpoint in a running battle to claim centuries-old Islamic monuments for the country's majority faith.

Campaigners have found an ideological patron in Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who last month inaugurated a grand new temple on the site of a mosque notoriously demolished by Hindu zealots decades earlier.

"We are witnessing repression and cruelty," Yaseen, 78, told AFP.

"This is not just the issue of one mosque. Their slogan says that ... 'not even one tomb or mosque will be spared.'"

Yaseen is joint secretary of the Gyanvapi mosque, one of the largest Muslim congregations in the heart of Varanasi.

Hindus in the city have long maintained that the structure was built over a shrine to the Hindu deity Shiva during the Mughal

empire that ruled over much of India centuries ago.

Muslim worshippers have been attending the mosque under police guard for years to prevent the simmering dispute from boiling over.

But this week marked a major escalation with a local court ordering the mosque's basement thrown open to Hindu worshippers within seven days of its ruling.

A Hindu prayer ceremony was held there the following morning and India's top court has refused to hear a request by Muslim petitioners to invalidate the order.

Yaseen said the ruling and subsequent rush of worshippers to the site, unimpeded by authorities, had demonstrated official backing for the Hindu claim, leaving him deeply distressed. "They are coming through the courts, through the system," he said.

"Whatever hurt I could feel as a Muslim, I felt it. I was restless the entire night."



## Balochistan to continue support of Kashmiri brethren for right of self-determination: Domki

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that the independence of Kashmir is the basic right of Kashmiri people and no power of the world can deprive them of the right of self-determination.

In a statement issued here on eve of the Kashmir Solidarity Day being observed today (Monday), the caretaker Chief Minister said that the final decision about State of Jammu and Kashmir can only be made as per the aspirations of Kashmiri people and in accordance with the United Nations' resolutions.

He said that solution of the Kashmir dispute is the ultimate goal of Pakistan.

The Chief Minister pledged that people of Balochistan would continue its support to the Kashmiris clearly as long as they get right of self-determination.

He also said that the Kashmir issue is one of the oldest issues on agenda of the security council of UN,

which can't be resolved due to the Indian attitude and gross violation of human rights by its forces beside negation of the International laws.

The Chief Minister maintained that the peaceful movement of freedom of the Kashmiris is a great example for securing rights, which can't be suppressed anyway.

He stressed that it is very necessary to resolve the Kashmir issue and international community including UN should play its effective role in this regard.

Ali Mardan said that the Kashmiri people are fighting for freedom and their right to self-determination from the illegally Indian occupation and the time is not far when they will be successful in their struggle.

He said that the Kashmiris will succeed in their legitimate struggle for freedom for which thousands of youths, children, elders and women have sacrificed their lives.

The caretaker chief minister said that the resili-

ence of the Kashmiri people stands witness to the fact that India has miserably failed in its attempts to suppress their freedom struggle despite using its military might.

He said that India is continuously violating all international laws and conventions in IOJK and people were even deprived of their basic human rights in the territory but now India will not hide its evil face in front of the world for long and neither will the suppress the voice of the Kashmiris anymore.

The caretaker chief minister appealed to the United Nations and the international community to play pivotal role to stop unabated human rights abuses by Indian troops of Kashmiris and to take serious steps to resolve the long pending dispute in accordance with the UN resolutions.

He said that Pakistan has always played a pivotal role in promoting the Kashmir cause and highlighting the Kashmiris' plight both at the regional and international level.



ISLAMABAD: SAPM Jawad Sohrab Malik Unveils Welfare Projects Amounting to Rs. 1.8 Billion for Balochistan.

## Kashmir Solidarity Day reflects powerful recognition of bond between Pakistanis, Kashmiris

MIRPUR (APP): A zad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) President Barrister Sultan Mehmoood Chaudhry and Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq on Sunday said the day serves as a powerful recognition of an age-old and unbreakable social, cultural, and religious bond between Pakistanis and Kashmiris.

In their separate messages issued on the eve of Kashmir Solidarity Day, they expressed their solidarity with the people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and said that the government and people of AJK stand shoulder to shoulder with their brethren in their struggle for the right to self-determination.

Kashmir Day, they said, would be celebrated in AJK with a renewed commitment to strengthen the ongoing freedom struggle.

They assured the Kashmiri people on the other side of the line of control (LoC) that the people of Pakistan and AJK would stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them till they achieved their cherished goal of freedom from India's occupation.

Lauding the Kashmiris' resilience and courage, they said, "Time is not far away when the people of IIOJK will achieve their cherished goal of freedom".

They also paid eulogizing tributes to the

Kashmiri martyrs who sacrificed their precious lives for the noble cause of freedom.

Denouncing India's belligerent military occupation and its sledgehammer policy against the Kashmiris, the president and prime minister noted that India has miserably failed in its attempts to break the Kashmiris' resolve despite using all possible means of oppression and suppression.

"The Indian forces have used all means of oppression and suppression to subdue innocent Kashmiri people, but they stood firmly to their ground with the utmost courage and resilience," they further added.



MULTAN: Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Chairman Jahangir Tareen addressing a press conference.

## For food producers and processors BFA implements mandatory labeling, expiry date requirements

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: Balochistan Food Authority has made it mandatory for all food producers and processors in the province to ensure complete labeling as well as mentioning expiry dates on food products and beverages.

In a communiqué issued by BFA head office, that all food producers and processors across the province have strictly been directed to implement the prescribed labeling SOPs to ensure that all food items and beverages have mandatory labelling in accordance with the law.

With a special focus on public health, BFA is committed to taking special measures to ensure food safety in line with national and international standards. Under the implemented guidelines, specific operating procedures have been issued for all food products, including packaged foods, to comply with the mandatory labeling requirements. All manufacturers, packers,

distributors, importers, exporters, and vendors are required to strictly adhere to these instructions without any exceptions. The current SOPs for labeling have been implemented immediately in the best interest of general public.

According to the instructions, the food product's name, complete list of ingredients with relevant quantities, full name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor, importer, exporter, or vendor, country of origin, manufacturing date, expiry date, other instructions, essential information, weight or volume, packaging date, and the price of the consumed product must be clearly indicated on the food products.

Final products or packaged foods, such as food allergens like gluten in wheat, products made from eggs, fish products, peanuts, milk, and milk-based products including lactose, must also be clearly mentioned.

## Jahangir says: Ready to work with Nawaz Sharif

MULTAN (INP): Jahangir Tareen, the Chairman of the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), declared at an election rally in Multan that in the event of the government formation, he will collaborate with Nawaz Sharif, who will serve as their leader.

Addressing the crowd, Tareen, rooted in Multan, expressed his commitment to improving the local economy, ensuring salary increments for workers, and working collectively to make the country prosper.

He emphasized the need for prayer and unity, stating that regardless of political affiliations, everyone must work together for the nation's betterment. Tareen predicted economic growth, job creation, and national development under Nawaz Sharif's leadership, aiming for a brighter future post-February 8. Meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League-N President and former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif countered allegations of corruption during a press conference.



Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushall Hussain Malik addressing a press conference along with senior Huriyyat leaders Farooq Rehmani, Ghulam Muhammad Safi and Mehmood Ahmed Saghar in Islamabad.

## Caretakers leaving, new govt coming after Feb 8 elections: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Sunday said the caretaker government would be leaving and the new government would be formed after the elections on February 8, putting behind all the speculation and conspiracy theories of the past months.

In an interview with a private television, he said from day one there was no doubt that the elections would be held on time and now this would be happening in the coming days after all the speculations.

The caretaker government performed its duties according to the constitutional mandate and he would take responsibility for all the decisions taken during its tenure, he added.

To a question, he said, "Our democracy is evolving and we are a transitional democracy with all its flaws and weaknesses."

Parliament would be formed after the polls and it would take up necessary constitutional and legal reforms to strengthen democracy according to suggestions from different strata of society, he remarked.

The prime minister said terrorism was a serious issue and its surge happened due to the withdrawal of the United States and NATO forces from Afghanistan, who left behind modern weapons which came in possession of terrorist groups.

"We have taken up a clear position against the terrorist groups and the law

enforcement agencies are steadfastly taking on the terrorists with bravery," he observed.

The prime minister said during his tenure, he represented Pakistan at the United Nations and interacted with the world leaders and explained Pakistan's perspective to them.

He said he also met with the Chinese leadership, policymakers and think tanks at the Belt and Road Forum in China to exchange ideas on achieving shared prosperity for humanity.

"We signed 10 memorandums of understanding with China on increasing cooperation especially on the projects of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)."

## Jan concerned about silence of Intl. community on cruelties in Indian occupied Kashmir

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has expressed concern about the silence of international community on the cruelties happening in the occupied Kashmir and stressed that it has to take notice of the same.

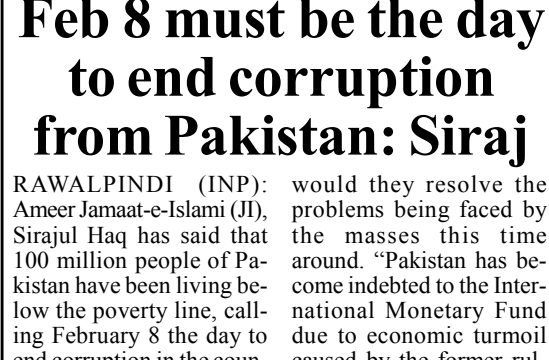
He said that the Pakistani people would continue to raise its voice against the Indian cruelties and express solidarity with the Kashmiris.

In a statement issued on eve of the Kashmir solidarity day on Sunday, the caretaker Provincial Minister said that the solidarity would continue to be expressed until the Kashmiris get the basic right of self-determination.

Jan Achakzai said that the Kashmir issue could have been resolved through implementation on the resolutions adopted in the security council of United Nations on August 12, 1948 and May 5, 1949.

But India always avoided implementation on these resolutions just because it knew that Kashmir would become Pakistan.

The caretaker Minister stressed that the international community would have to ensure protection of basic rights of people of Kashmir.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Sirajul Haq addressing during a public gathering (Jalsa) at Liaquat Bagh in the city.

## Feb 8 must be the day to end corruption from Pakistan: Siraj

RAWALPINDI (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul Haq has said that 100 million people of Pakistan have been living below the poverty line, calling February 8 the day to end corruption in the country.

Addressing a public gathering in connection with the General Elections 2024 in Rawalpindi, he said that the two parties had ruled the country for most of the time during the last 25 years but failed 'miserably' to resolve the public issues.

Sirajul Haq said, "The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Pakistan People's Party ruled Pakistan many times and now the people have every right to ask them as to why they should be voted once again."

He said that those who could not deliver during the 25-year regime, how

would they resolve the problems being faced by the masses this time around. "Pakistan has become indebted to the International Monetary Fund due to economic turmoil caused by the former rulers," he added.

The JI chief said that PML-N supremo still believes that he would be the prime minister for a record fourth time.

Taking a jibe at the PML-N and the PPP, the JI Ameer said that the world has stepped on the moon and Pakistan is left behind in the politics of 'two families'.

He urged that this 'family politics' needs to be ended forever on February 8.

Speaking on the Gaza situation and Israel's atrocities in Palestine, Sirajul Haq said that our rulers did not utter a single word in favour of Palestine.

## ECP to wrap up delivery of 260M ballot papers to 859 constituencies by today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is set to conclude the ongoing distribution of 260 million ballot papers to the Returning Officers (ROs) of 859 constituencies nationwide by Monday.

An ECP spokesperson said in a statement that the Commission has concluded the printing of ballot papers in three government printing presses for the upcoming Feb 8 elections.

Reprinting of ballot papers in particular controversial constituencies has been finalized, following the directives of the superior judiciary in specific court cases.

The commission's spokesperson noted that 220 million ballot papers were printed for the 2018 general elections, utilizing 800 tons of special security paper in the process.

For the upcoming 2024 general elections, he said the Election Commission has printed 260 million ballot papers, using 2,170 tons of paper—a significant increase due to the surge in the number of candidates, which is 150 times more than the 2018 elections.

## Govt, people of Pakistan condole demise of President of Namibia

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government and the people of Pakistan were deeply saddened at the passing of President Hage G. Geingob of Namibia, said a Foreign Office Spokesperson in a statement on Sunday.

She said, "President Geingob was a visionary statesman, a leading icon of the liberation struggle of Namibia and the chief architect of the Constitution of Namibia."

"President Geingob will always be remembered for his services to the Namibian nation and his distinguished legacy as a leader of the Global South. Our heartfelt condolences to President Geingob's family and the people of Namibia," she added.

## 2024 Elections: ECP achieves milestone with completion of ballot paper printing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has successfully completed the printing of 260 million ballot papers for all constituencies in the country ahead of the 2024 elections.

According to ECP spokesman, "National Assembly ballots are identifiable by green paper, whereas Provincial Assembly ballots are printed on white paper. Except for 31 districts, the distribution of printed ballot papers has been finalized across the nation."

Printing, which commenced on January 14, concluded by February 3. In compliance with a Supreme Court directive, ballot papers for 11 National Assembly and five Provincial Assembly constituencies underwent reprinting, with the

original ones set for destruction as per the court order. ECP officials disclosed that this time, a total of 260 million ballot papers were printed, reflecting a 54.74% rise in candidates compared to the 2018 elections. Despite a 195% surge in demand for special paper, effective management led to a reduction from 2400 tonnes to 2177 tonnes.

The distribution of printed ballot papers comprises 5% single-column, 50% double-column, 30% three-column, 11.15% four-column, and 2.4% five-column formats, gearing up for the scheduled February 8 polls. Political parties and independent candidates are actively participating in campaigns, with the election drive slated to conclude on February 6 at 12 pm.



LUKY MARWAI: Quaid Jamiat Maulana Fazlur Rehman is addressing the election rally.

## AJK PM says Kashmiris rejected all sinister Indian actions by RSS-backed Modi regime

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhary Anwarul Haq said that Kashmiris have out-rightly rejected all the illegal actions of the RSS-influenced regime led by Modi has taken vis-à-vis Kashmir on and after August 5, 2019.

"India's unilateral actions and deviation from UN resolutions are not acceptable under any circumstances," the AJK PM said in his Kashmir Solidarity Day message issued here on Sunday.

Denouncing India's belligerent approach and its expansionist designs in the region, he stated, "Pakistan is a harbinger of peace and

prosperity in the region, while India has emerged as the promoter and exporter of terrorism in the region."

He said that the extremist mindset of the Indian government poses a serious threat to the region's peace and security.

"It is high time that the United Nations play its much-needed role to help stop the human rights violations being committed by the Indian army in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and ensure early implementation of its resolutions that recognize the Kashmiris' inalienable right—the right to self-determination," he further added.

## Pakistan's aid to Gaza continues, meeting urgent humanitarian needs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), following the government's directive, in coordination with Al-Khidmat Foundation dispatched the fifth tranche of humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza.

The tranche, transported by a Pakistan Airforce C-130 aircraft, marks Pakistan's ongoing commitment to supporting the people of Gaza, a news

release said.

The officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), NDMA, Pakistan Air Force and representatives of Al-Khidmat Foundation attended the send-off ceremony at Nur Khan Airbase on Sunday.

The humanitarian assistance flight destined for Gaza will land in Al-Arish, Egypt, where the Pakistan's Ambassador will take charge of the supplies and oversee their transportation.



QUETTA: Central leader of National Party Senator Mir Kabir Muhammad Shahi addressing a Press conference

## Solution of public problems always remained priority of PPP: Asif Zardari

TALAGANG (INP): Former president and co-chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Asif Zardari has said that resolving the public problems always remained top priority of PPP and it paid special heed towards highlighting the social development work.

While addressing a public gathering in Talagang on Sunday, he promised the people a chance to earn money in Pakistan instead of going abroad.

Asif Ali Zardari said we will give you the chance to earn here adding that he would give them their due agricultural earnings.

He highlighting how he served the people during his tenure said that the PPP always paid heed to the voice of the poor. "We made a card in the name of Benazir Bhutto to help poor women," he pointed out.

The PPP co-chairman said that he was aware that the people of Talagang needed water, infrastructure, passport offices, and also a place to visit the commissioner and his deputy. "The love you showed me for two days will never be forgotten," he vowed.

Earlier, Asif Ali Zardari said that the PPP could enter in alliance with any party after elections.

In an informal conversation with journalists, Zardari said that he was working on a strategy for Bilawal Bhutto to become prime minister of the country.

"It has been decided that the party that will win the majority, will be offered first opportunity to form its government," PPP co-chairman said.

"The independents would become important for all parties," Zardari said.