

# Independent

Member APNS &amp; CPNE

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www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. EC-116 B/ID-445 Vt XXV No 181, Shaban 09, 1445 AH Tuesday February 20, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs.15

## 28,185 patients treated under HCP during three months: Caretaker CM directs to expand circle of information and awareness about Health Card Program

Digital supervision and monitoring system established for bringing transparency in Health Card Programme

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has directed to the concerned authorities to expand circle of information, awareness and consciousness about the Health Card Programme (HCP) so that every individual of the province is aware about the resources allocated for one and benefit from the vital programme.

The caretaker Chief Minister was chairing a meeting held to review the Balochistan Health Card Programme here on Monday.

Those who were in attendance at the meeting were included the caretaker Provincial Minister for Health, Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozgezi, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Rashid Razaq, Secretary Health, Abdullah Khan, Chief Executive Officer of Health Card Programme, Asadullah Kakar, Secretary Finance, Babar Khan, Chairman Balochistan Revenue Authority, Noorul Haq Baloch.

The meeting reviewed the overall performance of the Health Card Programme

besides the issues and hardships being faced by it.

The CEO of Health Card Programme briefed in detail the meeting about the three months performance after its launch besides the challenges being faced in smooth implementation of the programme.

Expressing his views on the occasion, the caretaker Chief Minister said that Health Card Programme is such a historic programme of the province's history under which every poor and rich person has the quality healthcare and treatment

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ISLAMABAD: Leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) addressing a Press conference

## Four-parties alliance decides to continue protest against "rigging" in elections

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The four-parties alliance of Balochistan has decided to continue protest against the alleged rigging in general elections in the province.

The alliance also decided to expand the protest together with other democratic parties of the country after making contacts with them.

This was decided in a meeting of the four-parties alliance held under the chair of Chairman Pashoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Mehmoed Khan Achakzai here at his residence the other day.

Others who participated in the meeting were included: President Balochistan National Party (BNP), Sardar Akhtar

Mengal, President National Party, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch and Chairman Hazara Democratic Party (HDP), Abdul Khaliq Hazara besides four members each of the four parties.

The meeting discussed about the general elections 2024 and vehemently rejected them after detailed deliberations.

The elections 2024 were declared the most rigged elections in the history of country, as mentioned in a press release issued here at end of the four-parties alliance meeting.

Meanwhile, the meeting directed the four-parties alliance coordination committee to prepare future plan of protest.

## US, Chinese diplomats calls on Shahbaz

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Chinese and American diplomats have separate meetings with President PML-N Shehbaz Sharif on Monday.

According to the sources privy to development, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the newly formed government in Pakistan and the possible challenges it would face and to inform about the support required to fight it.

Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong reiterated to increase the pace of CPEC and to provide diplomatic and economic support to the newly formed government.

The Chinese ambassador assured full support for Pakistan, in regional security and foreign infiltration

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QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presiding over a meeting to review performance and activation of Balochistan Health Card Program.

## PTI-backed candidates to join Sunni Ittehad Council in bid to grab reserved seats

PM's candidate Omar Ayub asserts PTI will form govt in Centre; ensure release of party founder

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Barrister Gohar Khan Monday announced that independent candidates backed by the party will officially join the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) in the National Assembly (NA) as well as in provinces including Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

The development comes a day after PTI's senior leaders, Barrister Gohar, Omar Ayub, along with SIC head Sahibzada Hamid Raza, visited the Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) Central Secretariat in Islamabad and held discussions on prospects of closer cooperation in parliament and at the provincial level.

MWM Chairman Allama Raja Nasir Abbas Jafri, Vice Chairman Allama Ahmed Iqbal Rizvi, and others were also

present. The meeting discussed the country's political situation and important issues in the wake of recently held elections and their outcome.

The party, which could not directly take part in elections due to the non-allotment of electoral symbol, wants its share of reserved seats for women and minorities by using the platform of other like-minded parties.

Addressing a joint press conference in Islamabad today, Barrister Gohar said the PTI-backed independent candidates are required to join any party within three days following the issuance of notification under the law.

He said the decision to join SIC has been taken with consensus and demanded the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to allot the PTI reserved seats in line with the law.

## Election 2024: IHC suspends victory notifications of three PML-N NA candidates

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday suspended the victory notifications of three Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidates of the National Assembly.

A two-member bench of the IHC — comprising Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir — issued the order against PML-N's Tariq Fazl Chaudhry, Anjum Aqeel, and Raja Khurram Nawaz.

Chaudhry had won with 102,502 votes, as per unofficial results from the NA-47 constituency, but his victory was challenged by his rival candidate.

Aqeel had secured victory from the NA-46 constituency and bagged 81,958 votes. However, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed independent candidate Amir Mughal challenged it.



QUETTA: Provincial President PML (N) Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Jamal Shah Kakar, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Shoaib Nosherwani, Sardar Fateh Muhammad Muhammadhassani, Sardar Masood Luni and others addressing a Press conference

## PML-N has majority in Balochistan: Jaffar Mandokhail desires to form provincial govt.

Says no agreement with PPP about slot of Chief Minister Balochistan as yet

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The provincial President of PML-N, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has claimed that his party has secured majority in the recent elections in Balochistan as such it is our desire to form his party's government in the province. Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail was addressing press conference at the party's provincial secretariat on Monday.

Also present on the occasion were the senior leaders of PML-N and MNA-elect Jamal Shah Kakar, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, Sardar Masood Luni, besides other parliamentarians-elect.

The provincial President of PML-N maintained that the party has won highest number of seats in the province.

On the occasion, he dispelled the impression that any agreement has been made with PPP about the Chief Minister Balochistan. He said that we are in contact with other parties and independent candidates to muster their support for formation of government in the province. He vowed to take all allies in the province together.

Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail on the occasion condemned the statement of Chairman PkMAP Mehmoed Khan Achakzai about the PML-N president Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif. He said that Mr. Shahbaz Sharif did never claim to be the blue eyed person of Establishment.

He said that there has been no confrontation of Chairman PkMAP with PML-N.

## Senate rejects criminal law amendment bill 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Upper House of the Parliament on Monday rejected a bill to amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill 2023 with a majority vote.

Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani was in the chair when Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, presented a motion for consideration and passage of the bill, but it was rejected by the Upper House.

When asked to vote on the bill by the chairman, as many as 24 lawmakers voted against the legislation, while 14 members of the Senate expressed support in favour of the bill.

## Terrorists attack police vehicle on security of polling in Tank

TANK (APP): The armed terrorists here on Monday attacked police armoured vehicle on security of polling at NA-43, Tank cum Dera Ismail Khan.

According to initial reports shared by the police spokesmen, some armed terrorists attacked police armoured vehicle on security duty for polling station at Kot-Azam in Tank.

The polling process was halted for some time due to the attack.

## State to defend civil servants, act against 'violent trolls': PM Kakar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday vowed that the State of Pakistan would defend the civil servants in discharging their constitutional duties and act against those "violent trolls" involved in blackmailing and pressuring them.

The prime minister, in a statement, said that the people of Pakistan had spoken with a clear voice on February 8 and had given a split mandate.

"Some elements with a proven track record of violent behaviour and vigilantism (however) are now using different tricks, including weaponisation of social media in blackmail-

ing, vigilantism and pressuring civil servants to switch their loyalties from the State of Pakistan to the violent gang," he added. Such action, he said, was a clear violation of the Article 5 and other articles of the Constitution and the laws of the land.

"The State of Pakistan shall defend the civil servants in discharging their constitutional duties, act against these violent trolls and ensure exemplary punishment to them."

Prime Minister Kakar said that there should be no doubt about the government's commitment to the noble civil servants serving the State and the people of Pakistan.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor University of Mekran Panjgur Prof. Dr. Abdul Malik Tareen meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## Produce petitioner who wanted to get Feb 8 elections cancelled: SC

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa on Monday ordered the officials to present the petitioner before the court after he sought to withdraw his plea through which he had demanded declaring the Feb 8 elections null and void and adjourned hearing till February 21.

The chief justice ordered the SHO concerned to trace Brig@Ali Khan and present him before the three-member bench which also comprises Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali.

Making it clear that the country's top court will hear the matter, Chief Justice Isa remarked whether such persons filed petition only to get instant fame.

While noting that Brig@Khan had requested to withdraw the petition on Feb 13, the very day it was filed, the court questioned as if publicity was the sole

goal by resorting such tactics.

The application was shared the entire world through media, the chief justice noted, adding that he should come and the court would hear the matter.

In a report, the apex court was informed that the petitioner could neither be approached through the address given in the plea nor the WhatsApp service.

Later, the three-member bench issued the necessary orders which read that they would not allow anyone to use the Supreme Court for ulterior motives and issued a notice to the petitioner through the defence ministry, while adjourning further hearing till Feb 21 (Wednesday).

Brig@Khan had moved the Supreme Court to get orders for a probe into alleged rigging and holding the fresh elections.



QUETTA: Inspector General National Highways and Motorway Police Salman Chaudhry meeting with Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh

## Missing Baloch Students Case: IHC expresses dismay over absence of Caretaker PM

Court summons care taker PM, Defence minister, Interior minister once again

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday ruled that the caretaker prime minister should be removed from his office as he failed to answer in the missing Baloch students' case. The Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar didn't appear before the court in person for second time in the case pertaining to the non-recovery of Baloch students. "The Prime Minister didn't appear in the court for second time. He was summoned because he was answerable for all this," Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani remarked.

Earlier, Justice Kayani had remarked that death sentence should be handed down to those behind forced disappearances.

The people involved in such disappearances should be awarded death sentence

twice, he said during the last hearing. Justice Kayani said that defence secretary, interior secretary, DG ISI and DG MI are government officials and therefore PM was summoned because he was answerable for it.

All these officers are also responsible for this and no one is beyond the law, court ruled.

"Where are caretaker ministers, interior secretary and defence secretary," Justice Kayani questioned.

The court remarked that 12 missing students have not been recovered yet. Attorney General Mansoor Usman said that there were eight missing students yet. "Three consecutive governments couldn't do anything for missing persons," the court ruled and added that it is utter failure of state institutions.



QUETTA: A view of dinner hosted by Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozgezi in honour of Caretaker Provincial Ministers Dr. Qadir Bakhsh, Prince Ahmed Ali, Sardar Ejaz Jaffar, Sheikh Mehmoedul Hassan, Mir Zubair Jamal and Sardar Asif Dummer

## Journalists should do court reporting with more responsibility: IHC CJ

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad High Court's (IHC) Chief Justice Aamer Farooq on Monday said that journalists should do court reporting with more responsibility.

He said the media was the fourth pillar of state and today was an era of electronic and social media after the print media.

He was addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office-bearers of Islamabad High Court Journalists Association (IHCA).

The chief justice congratulated the new-elected body of IHCA and said that the role of media was imperative to aware the public about court proceedings. The reporters should, however, avoid reporting of unnecessary and irrelevant discussions during the hearings.

He said that when a court gave a verdict it became a matter of public domain. The verdicts could be criticized but at the same time the facts should be reported correctly.

The chief justice said that they were answerable as public office-holders.

Errors in decisions could be possible and that was the reason that the people used to approach the apex court. "Every institution has its own respect," he said, adding that only the facts should be reported instead of personal criticism.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq reiterated that he could understand the compulsion of the media-persons that they required some "spicy content", but it was important for them to do a responsible and standard journalism.

TV channels mostly did discussions on court remarks instead of the judgments, he added.

The chief justice, however, appreciated the court reporters for doing responsible and quality journalism.

IHC's Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, President Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCA) Naveed Hayat Malik, Additional Attorney General Munawar Dogal, Deputy Attorney General Raja Arshad Kayani, Assistant Attorney General Azmat Bashir Tarar, Secretary General RIUJ Asif Bashir Chaudhry, senior journalists Saghir Ahmed Chaudhry, Aamer Saad Abbasi, Afzal Javed, President Supreme Court Press Association Aqeel Afzal and others also attended the ceremony.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgi-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan presiding over the meeting regarding the land reforms committee at CM Secretariat.

## PM Anwar ul Haq granted full authority by Forward Bloc

MIRPUR AJK (APP): A meeting held at Jammu Kashmir House, Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, leading the parliamentary party of the Forward Bloc, has been granted full authority to make political decisions, underscoring confidence in his leadership within the incumbent coalition government of Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting, chaired by PM Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, extensively deliberated upon various issues, encompassing the prevailing political landscape and the performance of the State's coalition government, as stated in an AJK government handout issued on Monday.

While unanimity prevailed, some members expressed reservations regarding certain activities of one of the coalition parties.

Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq reiterated a stringent

stance against corruption, asserting a zero-tolerance policy. He emphasized that accountability is imperative for those found culpable of malfeasance, underscoring that adherence to the law is non-negotiable.

The PM emphasized that misuse of authority and government resources will no longer be condoned, affirming strict adherence to regulations, including refraining from official vehicle use in parks and markets.

The parliamentary party, in a unanimously adopted resolution, extended full solidarity to the people of Indian Occupied Kashmir, acknowledging their sacrifices. They lauded the Prime Minister's performance over the last ten months, endorsing his authority to make decisions promptly or after due consultation with allied parties, aimed at better serving the state's populace.

Attended by AJK government ministers and officials, including Abdul Majid Khan, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, and Chaudhry Arshad Hussain, the meeting underscored the commitment to collective action in advancing the welfare of the state's inhabitants.

However, Deputy Speaker Chaudhry Riaz Gujjar and Chaudhry Muhammad Akhlaq were unable to attend due to prior commitments.

Diwan Ali Khan, although present initially, had to depart to attend the Chagatai Scouts Conference shortly after the meeting, as per the official handout.

In essence, the gathering epitomized a resolute commitment to principled governance, accountability, and solidarity with the oppressed, ensuring a cohesive approach towards serving the interests of Azad Jammu & Kashmir.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with American Business delegation led by Ahmed Nadeem Khan, Chairman and President of Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc. USA during meeting held at Parliament House in Islamabad.

## Parliamentary leaders commend Senator Sadiq Sanjrani's role

ISLAMABAD (APP): During a meeting of the House Business Advisory Committee (HBAC) on Monday, the parliamentary leaders of various political parties in the Senate acknowledged and eulogized the role of Senator Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani for efficiently running the affairs of Upper House of Parliament during his tenure as Chairman of the Senate.

The leaders expressed these views in a meeting of House Business Advisory Committee (HBAC), said a news release.

A meeting of the House Business Advisory Committee was presided over by Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani.

Members observed that Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani adopted all-inclusive and participatory approach for the House and provided ample opportunity to all the members to discuss and debate issues of national significance.

"Political acumen of Sadiq Sanjrani is highly

praiseworthy and his approach is unique", members said.

Chairman Senate also thanked members of the HBAC and other senators. He expressed his gratitude for the cooperation extended by members during the last six years.

The Committee also discussed in detail legislative business to be transacted during the 335th Session of the Senate.

The session would take up discussion on other issues of extreme public significance. The HBAC decided that the current session would continue for more than two weeks.

The meeting was attended by Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem, Senator Sherry Rehman, Senator Kamil Ali Agha, Senator Waqar Mehd, Senator Sardar Shafiq Tareen, Senator Afanullah, and Senator Molana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri. Secretary Senate Mohammad Qasim Samad Khan was also present during the meeting.

## China congratulates Pakistan for holding elections smoothly

BEIJING (APP): A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson on Monday congratulated Pakistan for holding general elections of the national and provincial assemblies in a steady and smooth manner and hoped that the political parties in Pakistan could work together to form a new government after the polls.

"We noted that general elections in Pakistan were held in a generally steady and smooth manner, and we offer our congratulations," Mao Ning said during her regular briefing which resumed here after a 10-day pause in the wake of the Chinese New Year and Spring Festival holidays.

"As a close and friendly neighbour, China fully respects the choices of Pakistani people and sincerely hopes that relevant

parties of Pakistan will work together to hold the political solidarity and social stability after the elections," she added.

The spokesperson said that China and Pakistan were all-weather strategic cooperative partners and China hoped to work with Pakistan to build on the traditional friendship, deepen practical cooperation in various areas and accelerate the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era for the benefit of the peoples of the two countries. In response to a question about the delay in forming a government, she said that the Chinese side noted that the Pakistan election was generally steady and smooth and China respected the choice of Pakistani people.

## Caretaker govt ensured equal treatment to all political parties: Solangi

### Urges patience as probe continues into ex-commissioner's rigging allegations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday said that the caretaker government had strived to ensure equal treatment to all political parties.

Addressing the Senate House Business Advisory Committee, he said that the caretaker government's primary task was to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections in the country, which required the cooperation of all political parties.

The caretaker administration endeavoured to foster close coordination with all stakeholders in that regard, he added. Murtaza Solangi extended his gratitude to the Senate chairman and senators for their steadfast support to the caretaker government.

Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani and members of the House Business Advisory Committee commended Solangi for his role during the Senate sessions.

The Senate chairman praised the minister for his important contribution to smooth functioning of the Upper House of Parliament.

The senators hailed the minister for responding to questions in detail during

the question hour sessions.

Meanwhile Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday said a high-level investigation committee was constituted to investigate the allegations leveled by former Commissioner Rawalpindi Liaquat Ali Chatta regarding rigging in the general election.

Talking to media persons after attending the meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting, he urged patience as the legal process was currently underway.

The people should have trust in institutions and the judicial process, he added.

He remarked that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was currently investigating the allegations of rigging. The minister stressed the significance of waiting for the results of the ongoing legal proceedings.

The caretaker government, he said, had fulfilled its responsibility for conducting elections in free, fair and peaceful manner.

Responding to a query, he explained that once the Election Commission released the final list of successful candidates, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs would forward a sum-

mary to the concerned for convening the new session of the National Assembly.

Subsequently, a request would be made to the President to summon the session of the National Assembly, he added. Earlier, during a briefing to the Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting, chaired by Senator Fauzia Arshad, the minister stressed the importance of boosting PTV's presence on social media platforms to enhance viewership.

He noted that PTV had started sharing its top-quality programs on social media, recognizing the significant audience engagement on these platforms. Solangi underscored the necessity of improving the marketing of PTV products on social media. The minister explained that the responsibility for appointing heads of certain institutions rested with the elected government.

Due to the lengthy selection process, it was impractical to accomplish this task during the tenure of a caretaker government, he said, adding that therefore, it was preferable for the new parliament and government, upon assuming office, to exercise their authority in making these appointments.



DUBAI: Ambassador, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy to the UAE in a group photo with Pakistani exhibitors during the Gulf Food Exhibition at Pakistan Pavilion, World Trade Centre.

## Caretaker CM directs to...

Continued from page 1 facilities at some 1200 hospitals located in all over the country including Balochistan.

As it is the first programme of its nature, so the common men don't know about its benefits much, he pointed out.

The caretaker Chief Minister observed that although some issues are being faced in the programme at administrative level, however, we are confident that there would be improvement in it in future after removing obstacles.

He also believed that the people would benefit from the programme speedily.

He noted with contentment that a total of 28,185 patients have so far benefited from the Health Card Programme during last three months.

In Quetta, the highest number of cardiac patients benefited from the facility, he added.

The Chief Minister on the occasion directed to open official assignment accounts for payments to the Insurance company, NADRA and the hospitals which are on panel of the Programme so as to ensure timely payment to them and continue the provision of quality medical services to the patients.

Meanwhile, during the briefing, it was informed that most of the patients approached the private hospital in Hub area and benefitted from the programme in a big way.

It was also informed that digital supervision and monitoring system has been established for bringing transparency in Health Card Programme.

## Senate adopts resolution advising HEC to align MPhil, PhD synopsis with Islamic teachings

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate on Monday unanimously passed a resolution advising the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to align the MPhil and PhD synopsis with the teachings of Islam based on logic, reason and science.

Senator Mohammad Abdul Qadir from Balochistan tabled the resolution in the 335th session of the Senate.

Reading out the motion loud before the House, he clarified that the word syllabus in the motion referred to synopsis and topics for research.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi did not oppose the motion.

The resolution stated: "Acknowledging the fact that Quran is an universal book which is relevant for all times and all places and is a source of eternal guidance for humanity and provides not just a way of life but serves as a book of syllabus for human life.

"Realizing the fact that this Holy Book helps man to come out of darkness and move into realm of light and that modern research, science and technology are derived from this universal source of human guidance.

"Noting that the Western nations are acknowledging the fact that the mysteries of the universe can be revealed through the guidance of the Holy Quran. Therefore, it is in-

cumbent upon every Muslim to read and reflect on the message of the Holy Quran and follow the teachings of the Holy Qur'an in their practical lives.

"Noting that the wisdom of the Holy Quran paves the way for a scientific revolution in the fields of medicine, artificial intelligence, robotics, space research and other areas.

"Observing with a serious concern that MPhil and PhD programmes of various varieties are confined to imparting conservative knowledge of Islam and history. Realizing the need that MPhil and PhD programmes in Islamic studies should be aligned with modern thinking originating from the Holy Quran.

"The Senate of Pakistan, therefore, resolves that all universities of Pakistan should revise their MPhil and PhD programmes and align them with the requirements of the modern times which are truly based on research, critical thinking, scientific approach and practical application of Qur'anic knowledge.

"The Senate of Pakistan also recommends to the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan to develop guidelines for all the universities of Pakistan to update the syllabus of their MPhil and PhD programmes and align it with modern scientific requirements."

## Easypaisa empowers users with 'Savings Pocket' for financial independence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Easypaisa, Pakistan's leading digital financial services platform, introduces its latest breakthrough offering, the 'Savings Pocket'.

This revolutionary feature is not just about saving funds; rather it aims to provide users financial freedom through secure goal-based savings and streamlined financial management, eliminating the need for conventional, cumbersome methods said a news release issued here on Monday.

Easypaisa's unique product offering challenges the outdated norms that force users to resort to unconventional methods for keeping their money safe. 'Savings Pocket' embodies Easypaisa's commitment to financial inclusivity and empowerment, providing a practical solution that aligns with modern

lifestyles.

The 'Savings Pocket' is not just about saving; it's about empowering users, especially women. A fundamental question is asked through this offering, i.e., why must dupattas and handbags be used as a safe for women's money? Why can't they use pockets? With 'Savings Pocket', women can take control of their finances directly from their phones through the Easypaisa App, eliminating the need for external storage solutions.

This innovative feature embodies financial inclusivity by addressing the unique financial needs of women, offering them autonomy, security, and convenience. Users can set savings goals and track their progress effortlessly, empowering them to achieve their financial aspirations.

With easy access and early withdrawal options, 'Savings Pocket' provides users with complete control over their savings, ensuring flexibility and accessibility.

Commenting on the launch, Farhan Hassan, Head of Easypaisa Wallet Business, said, "Our newly launched 'Savings Pocket' embodies our commitment to empowering users to make informed financial decisions. This unique feature is revolutionary in the savings world, enabling users to make flexible goal-based savings aligned with their priorities."

Rifaf Qadri, Head of Marketing & Communications added, "Today's woman demands more than outdated norms. Our campaign is unique as it challenges the norms and stands against outdated practices that limit financial freedom.

## 19th Cholistan desert jeep rally 2024 set to commence today

ISLAMABAD (INP): The annual 19th Cholistan jeep rally will be held from Feb 20 to 25, 2024 at the renowned historical location, Dravidian Fort, in which vehicles from all over the country will participate.

Bahawalpur Deputy Commissioner talking to the pvt news channel said that more than 100 competitors were expected to participate in the jeep rally from all over the country, adding, that a camel race, dances, cultural night, fireworks and exhibition would also be part of the five-day festivities of the jeep rally.

The 19th International Cholistan Desert Rally is not just a thrilling sporting event but it is a platform to spotlight the culture, civilization, and historical richness of South Punjab.

With the challenging terrain covering 500 km route, the rally features various vehicle categories and drivers eager to take on the desert adventure, he added.

## US, Chinese diplomats calls...

Continued from page 1 in Pakistan.

Within 24 hours of the Chinese ambassador's meeting, American ambassador Donald Bloom also met with Shahbaz Sharif.

In the meeting, it was assured to provide all possible support for the situation arising after the election and the challenges faced by the newly formed government.

The American ambassador also assured to play a role in the negotiations

between the government of Pakistan and the financial institutions.

The American ambassador said that Washington wants full cooperation from the newly formed government in Pakistan.

During the meeting with Shahbaz Sharif, the US ambassador appreciated the role of Pakistan in the stability and peace of the region. He assured that the United States will urge Pakistan's neighboring countries to play their role as well.



LAHORE: Quetta Gladiators' team players celebrates after Lahore Qalandars Sahibzada Farhan dismissals during Pakistan Super League (PSL) Twenty20 cricket match between Lahore Qalandars and Quetta Gladiators at the Gaddafi Cricket Stadium, in Provincial Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani presiding over a Senate House Business Advisory Committee meeting at Parliament House.

## Wani seeks independent probe into mass rape incidents in occupied Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prominent Hurriyat leader and Vice Chairman Jammu Kashmir National Front (JKNF) has demanded an independent and international probe into mass-rape incidents committed by the Indian occupation forces in the Indian-held territory of Jammu Kashmir.

In a statement issued here on Monday, Wani said that the occupation forces deployed in the restive region have been involved in heinous crimes.

Use and abuse of power, harassment and humiliation and sexual abuse, he said, were among the dirtiest war tactics the Indian army has been using to suppress Kashmiris' legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination.

He said that being a vulnerable segment of society, the Kashmiri women have been the worst victims of Indian belligerence.

Referring to the dreadful incident of

Kunan and Poshpora mass rape, the Hurriyat leader said that the horrific incident was a big blot on the face of Indian democracy and the state that has been using rape as a weapon of war against Kashmiris.

Highlighting the pain and agony of the rape victims, he said that it was disgusting to see that the Indian rulers and their henchmen in the territory have shamelessly tried to cover up and conceal the facts to save the bloody culprits

who were directly involved in this beastly act. "The brutality Kashmiri women were subjected to on the dreadful night of 23 February 1991 finds no place in human history", he said, adding that despite the passage of 33 years, justice continues to elude the victims.

Urging world human rights organizations to play their role, Wani said it was high time that culprits involved in this gruesome act should be held accountable.

## Alleged audio leaks case Bushra, son of Saqib Nisar: Court issues notice to PBC for assistance

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) while expressing resentment over non appearance of government officers during the hearing of the case against alleged audio leaks of Bushra Bibi, wife of PTI founder and Najam Saqib son of former Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Saqib Nisar has issued notices to Pakistan Bar Council for court's assistance.

Justice Babar Sattar remarked that as to why the arrest warrants of these officers be not issued. How these people settled on their own that they cannot

appear in the court. He gave these remarks during hearing of the case Monday.

The court ordered to summon medical reports of director generals of FIA and IB on next hearing.

Asif Bashir Chaudhry, senior journalist appeared in the court on behalf of RIUJ.

Senior government officers did not appear in the court despite court orders in audio leaks case.

The counsel for PTA appeared in the court during the hearing of the case. He told he would file

affidavit in two days.

Justice Babar Sattar inquired from PTA counsel where is chairman PTA? Should we issue warrant. We had ordered why he has not come.

Justice Babar Sattar further said who is from PEMRA.

Counsel for PEMRA appeared in the court. Justice Babar Sattar inquired where is DG FIA.

The state counsel replied DG FIA is ill, therefore, he could not appear. Additional Director General Waqar ud Din appeared in his place.

## IHC seeks report about audio recording procedure

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday directed the telecom operators to submit a report on the procedure of audio recordings.

IHC's Justice Babar Sattar, who heard the audio-leak case involving Najmus Saqib and Bushra Bibi, also sought a report from media representatives to explain the mechanism of airing unverified audios.

During the course of hearing, Justice Babar expressed displeasure over the absence of senior government officials, including the PTA chairman,

PEMRA chairman, FIA director generals and others despite court orders.

He observed that how the officials had themselves decided not to appear before the court, and why the court should not issue their arrest warrants for non-compliance of its directions.

Justice Babar Sattar further directed for the submission of medical reports of the ailing government officials on the next date of hearing.

Subsequently, the court adjourned the hearing for two weeks.



ISLAMABAD: Professor Dr. Abd-ur-Rashed presenting his book to Prime Minister Azad, Jammu Kashmir Choudhary Anwar-ul-Haq.

## Excise deptt provides civic facilities at Fatima Jinnah Park

ISLAMABAD (APP): Under ICT doorstep initiative, the Excise department is providing civic facilities to residents of federal capital to get their vehicle registration as well as access of various essential services at Fatima Jinnah Park (Bolan Gate) on Monday.

On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, the excise staff would be stationed at the park's parking lot from 3.00 to 5.00 pm, and the citizens hailing from nearby areas of Fatima Jinnah Park

Bolan Gate F-9 can get civic facilities through a dedicated van, ICT Spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabassum said.

He said that whether you need a fuel permit for domestic or commercial use, or looking to register your motor vehicle seamlessly, the on-ground service will ensure a swift and straightforward process.

This initiative aims to streamline processes and provide ease to the public regarding vehicle registration, transfer, and token tax procedures, he added.

## Senate passes IIU bill 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate on Monday passed a bill of the International Islamic University, (Amendment) bill-2023, with a majority vote after a clause-by-clause reading of the bill.

The bill moved by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, was aimed at ensuring faculty representation in the decision-making process of the university. The amendment was needed as unlike other universities, the IIU Islamabad currently lacked this fundamental requirement. The legislation recognized the importance of teachers in the decision-making process of public sector universities.

## APHC warns of regional implications against delay in Kashmir solution

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has emphasized the need to understand the Kashmir conflict through its historical context.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the APHC spokesman in a statement issued in Srinagar criticized India's current approach, stating:

"Instead of taking measures to resolve the long-pending issue in its historical context, India and its Hindutva BJP government are attempting to impose their solution through

force on the oppressed and caged people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir."

The statement warned against ignoring the fact, saying: "This arrogance and persistent denial cannot stand scrutiny for long and Delhi must come to terms with the writing on the wall."

The APHC spokesperson highlighted the regional impact of the unresolved conflict, stating: "A delay in the resolution of the long-running dispute has held hostage the people of the entire South Asia region."

## EC issues notice to Ijaz ul Haq

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has issued notice to Ijaz ul Haq, successful candidate from NA -163 Bahawalnagar during hearing of the election petition.

The court adjourned the hearing of the case till February 27.

A two members bench of EC comprising member KP Ikram Ullah and member Balochistan Muhammad Shah Jatoti heard the election petition Monday.

Shaukat Basra, the candidate who lost the election brought with him the Holy Quran. He said he swears on the Holy Quran he had won the election.

Member KP said you should not swear on the Holy Quran. There is separate place for it.

Shaukat Basra said he swears RO did not call him while compiling result. You issued notification of Ijaz ul Haq before the decision of the case. Ask Ijaz ul Haq to swear on the Holy Quran I will withdraw the case. The EC while issuing notice to Ijaz ul Haq adjourned the hearing till February 27.

## Call for action to build fair, rights-based, equitable & ecologically just world

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr Shafiqat Munir on Monday signed the Civil Society statement on thematic assembly on economic inequality and justice calling for action to build a fair, rights-based, equitable and ecologically just world at the closing of 5-day World Social Forum in Nepali capital Kathmandu.

Thousands of people representing various civil society organizations signed a civil society statement on thematic assembly on economic inequality and justice. The Assembly was organized at the World Social Forum by Oxfam, Fight Inequality Alliance, Asia Feminist Coalition, ActionAid, LDC Watch, South Asia Alliance for poverty eradication, and Asia Center. The joint statement was issued by Mustafa Talpur, head of advocacy for Oxfam Asia, a news release said.

The statement said: We need to lose our fear, for them to lose their

power—is a challenge posed by us as we conclude the World Social Forum 2024. The power imbalance that fosters systematic and structural inequalities and the compounding crises that comes along with it, drives us to lose our fear to stand up and speak up against all forms of injustices. It must be understood as a systemic design that leads to gross violations of human rights for a vast majority of the global population. The statement further narrated: The wealth of billionaires built on the material exploitation of workers who struggle to access basic services, appears to have grown twice as much wealth as the rest of the world even during the time of a global health crisis, where most of the people struggled to make ends meet. This highlights that we need to redistribute power, put the people at the heart of just, equal and sustainable world we want. The CSO statement said: At a time when survival and recovery become a privilege for most of us, the richest 1% have continued to remodel economic systems.



Senator Hidayatullah Khan, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works Presiding over a meeting of the Committee at Parliament House, Islamabad.

## FGEHA launched 12 housing, apartment projects since 2001

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) Captain (retired) Muhammad Zafar Iqbal on Monday informed the committee that the housing authority had launched 12 housing and apartment projects from 2001 to 2023, under which an amount of Rs. 56 billion had been collected so far. During a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Housing and Works held here under the chairmanship of Haji Hidayatullah Khan, the DG clarified that allocations had been made from those candidates who qualified for the relevant schemes. However, he said, the Thallian Housing Scheme has been discontinued due to land-related issues, and those who were allocated the plots, would be accommodated in the upcoming schemes according to the established criteria. The chairman of the body while raising concerns over delay in the projects asked investigation into this matter. Additionally, the chairperson requested the information regarding the

financial and tangible advantages associated with the allotted plots. The officials from the Ministry of Housing and Works clarified that the delay in the projects stemmed from technical issues. One of the reason for the postponement of the two-day auction of class-III commercial plots in sector G-13/G-14 and the fuel station plot in the Mauve Area is that a writ petition was filed by Quaid-e-Azam University (Q.A.U.), claiming a share in the sale proceeds from the auction of commercial plots in G-14/4 and the Mauve Area.

DG Zafar Iqbal further explained that they were compliant with the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) and were persistent in expediting the auction before Ramazan, but they were given two options either to dispose of this case or to give sufficient time to the university. It was reported that G-14/1 and G-14/2 and G-14/3 are partially completed with an approved project cost of Rs. 6127.90 million for G-14/1 and Rs. 1499.43 million for G-14/2 and G-14/3.

## Capital Police hosts session on Policing and Journalism

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Police organized a session focusing on Policing and Journalism at Central Police Office Islamabad, a public relations officer said.

He said that, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, crime reporters from renowned media organizations, and senior police officers were present on the occasion.

During the session, the journalists raised issues, and recommendations for further improvements in measures taken by Islamabad Capital Police for the convenience of the citizens were presented.

Moreover, different aspects of Islamabad Capital Police's daily operations

and various dimensions of public communication and publicity were also discussed.

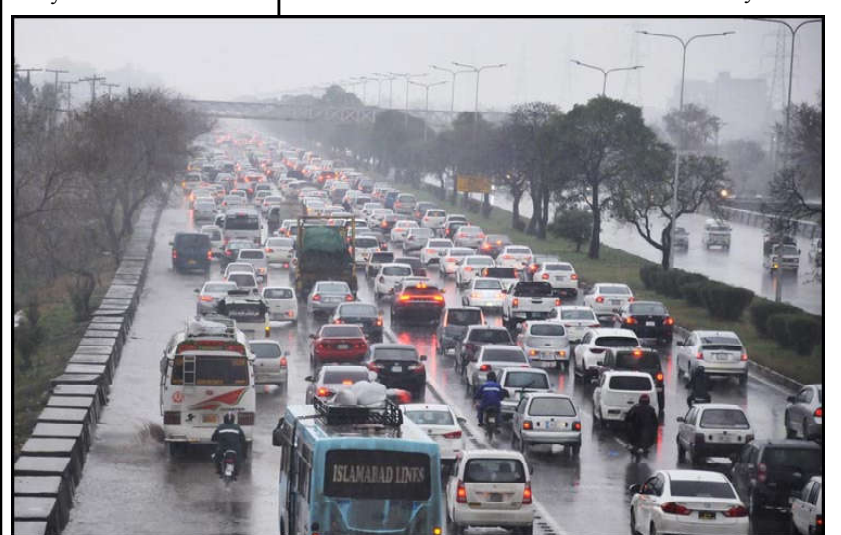
Addressing the session, ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan highlighted the crucial role that the field of journalism plays in societal improvement. He emphasized that Islamabad Capital Police continues its efforts to maintain regular interaction with journalists, aiming to disseminate timely and fact-based news.

He stressed the importance of news being based on truth, especially when related to the police, to prevent the spread of baseless and fake news.

ICCP Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan further stated that the establishment of a Public Relations Branch within Islamabad Capital

Police whose basic values are timely and factual news aimed to maintain the best coordination with journalists and promptly convey accurate information to the public. He urged journalists to include the police's perspective whenever publishing news related to police, ensuring that citizens can avoid baseless and false reports. He further said that we have always disseminated news based on facts and operating within a structured framework. He also acknowledged the vital role journalists play in police operations against criminal elements.

Addressing the journalists, he said that the Islamabad Capital Police is impossible without your help and support in the Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jam at Islamabad Expressway during rain that experienced in the Federal Capital.

## AIOU to hold Karachi convocation on March 3

ISLAMABAD (APP): The convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University (Sindh Chapter) will be held on March 3, 2024, at AIOU Regional Campus in Karachi. This convocation is exclusively for registered students from Sindh province, said a press release on Monday.

The graduates will be conferred with degrees and gold medals. Many distinguished guests, including vice chancellors of various universities, rectors, renowned journalists and eminent social personalities will attend the convocation.

Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has said that 2024 marks the golden jubilee year of AIOU. To celebrate this milestone, the university has planned a grand celebration, which includes holding convocation ceremonies to honour its graduates.

## Kashmiris enduring repression for past seven decades in pursuit of freedom

ISLAMABAD (APP): For over seven decades, Kashmiris have endured ongoing repression in pursuit of their relentless struggle for justice and freedom for their homeland, occupied Jammu and Kashmir, from India's tyrannical clutches.

According to Kashmir Media Service, since India's deployment of troops in Srinagar in October 1947, the territory has been marred by turmoil and suffering, with the Modi regime intensifying its crackdown on dissent, particularly after August 2019 when New Delhi unilaterally revoked its special status. Under Modi, Kashmiris face systemic human rights violations and discrimination, echoing the apartheid policies of the past. The people of IIOJK are subjected to brutal repression at the hands of Indian forces, with the re-

gime breaking all records of committing atrocities against civilians.

Despite the systematic violation of their rights, Kashmiris remained steadfast in their resistance, refusing to surrender to Indian military might. For them, there is no option but to continue the struggle for their inherent rights and freedom. Daily life in IIOJK is marked by oppression and bloodshed, with Kashmiris bearing the brunt of the Modi government's repressive measures. The international community's silence on the matter only emboldens the Indian government to intensify its repression further, exacerbating the suffering of Kashmiris. The resolution of the Kashmir dispute in line with internationally accepted norms of justice remains the only viable solution to end the bloodshed and restore peace.



ISLAMABAD: People stand under the Bus Stop Shelter waiting to stop rain at Express way.

## IFA discards 2000 liters sub standard milk

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to safeguard the health of Islamabad's residents, Food Safety Teams (FSTs) have discarded 2000 liters of substandard and adulterated milk.

Talking to APP, a food authority official said that a food safety team signaled to stop a milk-carrying vehicle at Islamabad Expressway which was coming from Chiniot, Punjab. During the inspection, the team found sub-standard milk of 2000 liters and discarded it.

He said that the action has been taken on the directions of the Director of Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) and FSTs are working tirelessly to ensure the provision of safe and healthy food to citizens of the Capital.

## Another spell of heavy rain, snowfall to hit country from 25 Feb: Met official

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Meteorologist at Pakistan Meteorological Department Dr Sardar Sarfaraz on Monday said that a fresh spell of rain, hailstorms and snow is expected across the country from Feb 25 where Karachi city and Balochistan province will also witness light showers along with thunderstorms.

Talking to a Private news channel, he said that good rains, besides snowfall in the northern areas, are expected in the country from the next week under the influence of westerly waves.

The chilly embrace of winter tightened its hold on various parts of the coun-



## Equipping students with IT, AI crying need of hour: Governor

MULTAN (APP): Governor of Punjab, Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman has said that equipping students with Information Technology (IT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the dire need of the hour.

Addressing a convocation of a private institute here on Monday, he stated in the modern era, acquiring knowledge of modern sciences and arts is essential for progress and success. He informed that hard work and consistency play a crucial role in the journey of progress.

Instead of reacting to false and misleading information on social media, ensure a research-based approach, the governor advised the students adding that reacting against corruption

should be based on real data and facts from international organizations.

Rehman noted that destruction and violent protests were extremely detrimental to the country. He said that determining those who merely talk against corruption and those who take practical actions was imperative.

The governor said success in education is possible through collaboration with the private sector. Honesty and high moral values are the keys to success in practical life, he maintained.

Vice Chancellors (VCs) of public and private universities besides parents and graduating students were in attendance.



**KARACHI:** Pakistani and foreign religious students take their annual exams sitting on the floor of the Jamia Binoria Islamic seminary, in Provincial Capital

## First Lady advocates floral art therapy

KARACHI (APP): First Lady Samina Arif Alvi Monday emphasized that floral art transcended mere hobby status, asserting its therapeutic benefits for mental well-being.

Speaking as the chief guest at an award ceremony for the Floral Art Society of Pakistan (FASP), celebrating their triumphs in the Bloom Oman competition in Muscat, Oman, she highlighted the stress-relieving and mood-enhancing qualities of gardening and floral cultivation.

also engage younger generations in health-promoting activities.

Recognizing the FASP's remarkable achievement of securing 11 awards for Pakistan in the Bloom Oman competition, she praised their contributions to elevating the country's standing.

Samina Arif Alvi urged attendees to raise awareness about early breast cancer detection, a cause she has championed, leading to a notable reduction in related mortality rates over the past five years. Further, she called for advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities and mental health, emphasizing the importance of inclusive awareness efforts.

Concluding the event, the first lady distributed awards and certificates of appreciation to FASP members, recognizing their invaluable contributions to Pakistan's success in the floral art competition Bloom Oman.

Addressing the gathering, the first lady underscored the collective responsibility to nurture both environment and mental health, noting that a significant portion of the country's population grappled with mental health challenges, with many unable to seek professional help.

She advocated for the regular organization of floral art events to not only beautify surroundings but



**ABBOTTABAD:** Rescue officials trying to remove a vehicle stuck in snow covered area after the heavy snowfall of winter season, which more decreases the temperature below in minus degree Celsius, at Nathiagali area in Abbottabad.

## Third Markhor hunted in Chitral under Trophy Hunting programme

PESHAWAR (APP): An American Hunter, Robertson Neil Hall has hunted down a Markhor in Gahirat Gol game reserve in district, Chitral registering 3<sup>rd</sup> hunt of current season as part of trophy hunting after paying US dollars 125000 around Rs 34, 875,000 (34.875 million).

The eight years old wild male goat had long spiraling horns of around 38 inches and was hunted in Gahirat Gol game reserve.

Under the Trophy Hunting programme, four permits are sold annually through auction for hunting of markhors, three in Chitral and one in Kohistan district.

Earlier two other hunts of markhor had been carried out by foreign hunters in Chitral during current season as part of Trophy Hunting programme launched with the objective of conservation of these rare wild goats.

Talking to APP, Divisional Forest Officer Wildlife, Farooq Nabi informed that the annual

revenue through sale of Markhor Trophy Hunting was witnessing increase by each passing year.

For the first time when the scheme was launched in 1990 the hunting permits were sold at price of US dollar 15000 and later gradually the amount increased as foreign hunters kept on coming to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"Once Markhor was critically endangered wild specie in Pakistan, but due to proper conservation efforts based on monetary gains through sale of hunting permits to foreign hunters, the country has now largest population of the animal," he apprised.

Under the scheme a sense of ownership is being inculcated among communities as 80 percent of revenue generated is spent on development schemes in respective areas of hunting through mutual understanding of local elders. Twenty percent of the revenue generated goes into national kitty.

President Gahirat Conservancy Chitral, Faizur Rehman.



**PESHAWAR:** A delegation of District Bar Association Charsada meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

## Ghafoor Baig says: Complaints of federal employees swiftly addressed

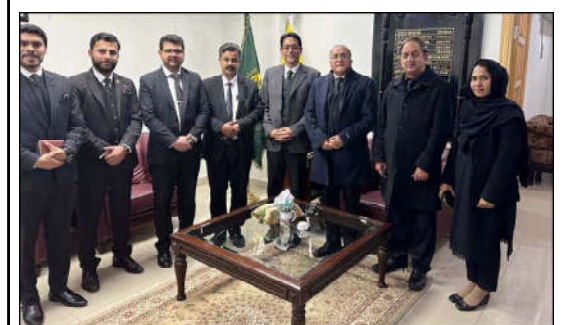
PESHAWAR (APP): In-charge Federal Ombudsman Regional Office Abbottabad, Abdul Ghafoor Baig on Monday said the complaints of federal employees related to misadministration are being addressed on a swift basis and no negligence towards this end is tolerated.

He said to make the general people abreast of the effectiveness and importance of the office of Federal Ombudsman, open katcheries are being held and advertisements through print and electronic media are released.

He said to facilitate the public, the process of lodging complaints has been simplified and only through an App the complainants forward their applications through an automated online system.

He said the Federal Ombudsman office.

Abdul Ghafoor Baig further said within the ambit of law, the Federal Ombudsman Office not only addresses the complaints on an urgent basis but arrange meetings with the authorized officers of the Federal Government for the implementation of its decisions.



**MIRPUR:** Chief Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Saeed Akram Khan and the judges of the Supreme Court are meeting the bar officials under the leadership of the newly elected President District Bar Association Chaudhry Shakeeluz Zaman.

## CM inaugurates upgraded blocks of Services Hospital

Independent Report LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi's unwavering commitment to serving humanity has transformed Services Hospital into a state-of-the-art facility within a remarkable span of just 4 and a half months.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday inaugurated the upgraded surgical, medical, and administrative blocks of Services Hospital, where he inspected the modernized wards and expressed satisfaction over the provision of contemporary

medical equipment and beds. He also visited nursing counters and doctors' rooms, directing the swift operationalization of all operation theaters and emphasizing the importance of regular cleanliness management in the upgraded blocks.

The CM also inaugurated a digital data storage system for patient records, a significant step towards modernizing healthcare services. He commended the high quality of the hospital's upgradation. Secretary Communication and Works provided a detailed

overview of the upgradation work, while Secretary Health highlighted the enhanced treatment facilities in the upgraded blocks.

Mohsin Naqvi urged the completion of the new lab and diagnostic center at Services Hospital, giving specific instructions to the Principal of SIMS (Services Institute of Medical Sciences) in this regard. Talking to the media after the inauguration, Mohsin Naqvi recalled his visit to Services Hospital six months ago, stating his shock at the dire state of the facility at that time,

remarking that he wouldn't even send an enemy there for treatment. He praised the rapid transformation of Services Hospital into a state-of-the-art facility within 4 and a half months. The ongoing upgradation covers an area of 3 lakh 11 thousand square feet, including the addition of 24 new, state-of-the-art operation theaters, in the 1600-bed hospital.

Mohsin Naqvi applauded the hard work of Provincial Minister Mansoor Qadir, Secretary Communication and Works, and the Health Department.



**LAHORE:** Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi inspecting the Newly Installed Beds after inauguration of upgraded Surgical Block, Medical Block and Admin Block at Services Hospital.

## Child falls to death in water tank

PESHAWAR (APP): A three-year-old child was killed after falling into a water tank in Jamrud tehsil of Khyber district on Monday. Police said the incident occurred in Bakarabad area of Jamrud where a three-year-old child, named Hayan, son of Amir fell into a water tank during play.

The area people retrieved the child from the water tank and shifted him to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Jamrud. Doctors at the hospital did their best to save the child however, the child breathed his last at the hospital.

## Provincial Ombudsman inaugurates district office Sanghar

HYDERABAD (APP): The Provincial Ombudsman Sindh Aijaz Ali Khan has said that to provide quick and inexpensive justice to the people in government departments, the offices of the Ombudsman have been established in every district so that complaints can be redressed immediately. He expressed these views while addressing a gathering held here after inaugurating the Regional Office District Sanghar. He further said that the public should register their complaints with the district

ombudsman with a simple application on blank paper, and the district office will address the grievances of the public by summoning the concerned officers. He stated that for this purpose, we have a mechanism under which the performance of the district officers is also evaluated from time to time, so that the problems of the people can be solved.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Regional Director Ombudsman Sanghar, Fazal Muhammad Sheikh said that Sanghar district consists of vast land.

## 686,711 students access PITB's Higher Education Portal

LAHORE (APP): The Higher Education Portal (HEP), developed by PITB for the Higher Education Department, is a centralized platform enabling public colleges in Punjab to have daily reporting of essential data.

This centralized platform serves as a pivotal tool, empowering public colleges across Punjab to streamline their administrative processes through daily reporting of essential data. Currently, 825 public colleges across Punjab having 686,711 students are using HEP.

The Higher Education

Portal encompasses comprehensive features, including the collation of basic student profiles, detailed program information, and in-depth college profiles and facilities. This unified and centralized system facilitates seamless data reporting, fostering enhanced efficiency and transparency in higher education administration throughout the province.

In this regard, PITB Chairman Faisal Yousuf stated, "HEP signifies a significant stride towards modernizing and digitizing the higher education.

## Cheques worth Rs 770,000 distributed among 63 deserving people

SIALKOT (APP): District Baitul Mal Committee distributed cheques of relief funds among the deserving people.

Chairman District Baitul Mal Committee Chaudhry Shakeel Ahmed told that the cheques worth Rs 770,000 have been distributed to 63 deserving people on behalf of District Baitul Mal Committee. He said that the District Baitul Mal Committee is ensuring the fair distribution of funds among the deserving people on merit and efforts are being made to provide assistance as much as possible within the available fund.

## Director Information chairs Divisional accreditation card committee meeting

HYDERABAD (APP): The Chairman divisional accreditation committee and Director Information Irshad Ali Chandio presided over a meeting of accreditation committee at Shahbaz Hall, Shahbaz Building on Monday.

Meeting decided that after every three months meeting would be held to review the process of accreditation cards issued and other matters.

Meeting also decided that suspicious data submitted for accreditation card would be issued after the verification by police.

The meeting reviewed in detail the list of accreditation cards issued

last year while journalists transferred from one department to another were asked to submit documents attested by their concerned department while unnecessary accreditation cards were cancelled and the next issuance was barred. The Director Information said that application forms for accreditation cards were being issued therefore all journalists should submit their data so that accreditation cards could be issued to them. The accreditation committee assured that every possible cooperation would be extended to all District Information officers.

## 4 passengers offloaded at Faisalabad Airport

FAISALABAD (APP): FIA Immigration officials have offloaded four air passengers at Faisalabad Airport due to human trafficking. FIA spokesman said here on Monday that four people namely Azhar Ali, Abdul Qadeer, Aun Sahil and Sumair were travelling to Libya illegally through Flight No.FZ-392 via Saudi Arabia. The FIA immigration officials offloaded these passengers at Faisalabad Airport and shifted them to Anti Human Trafficking Circle for further investigation and arrest of their travel agent, he added.

## Gandapur says: Party leadership to decide joining of political party for formation of KP govt

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf backed independent candidate and nominee of the party for the office of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur on Monday said that the party leadership would decide about joining any political party for the formation of the government in the province.

Talking to media here outside Peshawar High Court (PHC) he said a legal team was looking into matters related to joining any political party,

however, the final decision would be taken by the party chairman.

Gandapur said that after coming to power, he would take measures to make the province financially and economically self-sufficient, adding that restoration of the Sehat Card, provision of soft loans to youth for businesses and legal struggle for a due share of the province under net hydel profit and National Finance Commission (NFC) award.



**KARACHI:** View of site after a fire broken out incident at a candle manufacturing factory as the fire brigade officials are busy in extinguishing fire and rescue operation, located on Korangi Ibrahim Hyderi area in Karachi.

## MoU signed to make Pakistan food self-sufficient

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Monday signed between Green Corporate Initiative and Organic Pakistan to Revitalize Agriculture to ensure food sovereignty and environmental sustainability in Pakistan.

The Green Corporate Initiative (GCI) and Organic Pakistan (OP) have officially inked MoU to spearhead a transformative journey towards smart and sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation, and urban farming practices to make Pakistan food self-sufficient.

The agreement signed for ensuring Pakistan to move from food import and dependency to a self-sufficient food exporting nation.

The partnership is also aimed to improve the status of the farmers by

bringing them into the mainstream economic development, particularly the agriculture policy debate.

The MoU, signed at the Green Corporate Initiative Pvt. Limited's head office, establishes a robust framework for collaboration between Green Corporate Initiative and Organic Pakistan, with a shared vision to make Pakistan food self-sufficient.

Through strategic partnerships, knowledge exchange, and innovation-centric initiatives, both organizations aim to foster resilience, sustainability, and inclusivity within the agricultural sector.

Commenting on the MoU, Shahid Nazeer, Chief Executive Officer, Corporate Green Initiative said, "This partnership marks a significant milestone in our collective efforts to drive smart

sustainable development and environmental stewardship in Pakistan. By combining our expertise, resources, and networks, we are poised to create lasting impact and empower communities across the country."

Nadeem Iqbal, Chief Executive Officer, Organic Pakistan, said, "We are excited to embark on this journey of collaboration with the Green Corporate Initiative. Together, we aim to harness the transformative power of agriculture to address pressing challenges and build a more resilient and prosperous future for Pakistan. Our ultimate aim is to empower "the Kisan of Pakistan, and make him/her the custodian of Pakistan's prosperity."

Green Corporate Initiative (GCI) is a strategic initiative, dedicated to ensuring food security.



SIALKOT: President Chamber of commerce Abdul Ghafoor Malik presenting a shield to Dr. Rudiger Lotz, Consul General at SCCI.

## SBP says: Current Account Deficit declines by 71% to \$1.09 bln in 7 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Current Account Deficit (CAD) has significantly slid down by 71.2 percent to \$1.093 billion during the first seven months of the current fiscal year as compared to the deficit of \$3.796 billion during the same period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP reported Monday).

"Current account balance (CAB) showed a deficit of \$269 million in Jan 2024. Cumulatively, CAB improved significantly to a deficit of \$1.1 billion in Jul-Jan FY24 compared to \$ 3.8 billion in Jul-Jan FY23," SBP posted on the social media website X (formerly Twitter). On a year-on-year basis, the CAD witnessed a deficit of \$269 million in

January 2024 compared to a deficit of \$167 million in January 2023.

According to the latest SBP figures, the merchandise trade deficit during July-January (2023-24) was recorded at \$11,783 million as compared to the deficit of \$17,032 million in July-January (2022-23).

Likewise, the services' trade deficit was recorded at \$1,720 million during FY2023-24 compared to the deficit of \$233 million during the corresponding period of last year.

The overall trade deficit in goods and services was recorded at \$13,503 million during the current fiscal year compared to the deficit of \$17,264 million.



LAHORE: People are busy buying secondhand toys at a Landa bazaar in Provincial Capital.

## Pakistan, Malaysia discuss bilateral ties, regional situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador in Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee on Monday met with Malaysia's newly appointed Ambassador to Baku Ahmad Kamrizamil and discussed with him bilateral relations and the regional situation.

During the meeting, they happily recalled common friends from the respective diplomatic fraternities, Pakistan's

embassy in Azerbaijan posted on X.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's High Commissioner in Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri met with Chief Executive Officer of Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) Michael Bailey and Trade Adviser Sally Chandler.

The two sides agreed to enhance bilateral trade cooperation.

## Political stability must to revive economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned economists on Monday emphasized the need for political stability to revive the economy in the country.

Talking to Pakistan Television, a well-known economic expert Dr. Muhammad Ayub Mehar said there is a need to achieve high growth rate and development to achieve prosperity in Pakistan.

He said that a stable government could address the challenges in a proper manner. Mehar said the

upcoming budget, the IMF agreement, fiscal deficit and inflation are the concerns which must be the focus of the new government.

Financial expert, Dr. Saqlain Sher said that new government should evolve a strategy to reduce interest rate to stimulate business growth and investment in this country.

Afroz Merchant, a capital market expert, highlighted the significance of economic reforms including industrial development and privatization.

## PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 586 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 586.79 points, a positive change of 0.98 percent, closing at 60,459.75 points against 59,872.96 points the previous trading day.

A total of 261,799,826 shares valuing Rs 9,907 billion were traded during the day as compared to 314,247,768 shares valuing Rs12,243 billion the last day. Some 330 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 170 of them recorded gains and 139 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 21 remained unchanged. The three top trading companies were PIAC(A) with 21,406,500 shares at Rs 11.06 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 20,034,698 shares at Rs 1.23 per share, and Pak Refinery with 15,164,705 shares at Rs 25.33 per share. Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 373.35 per share price.

## Gold rates increase by Rs 1,100

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 1,100 and was sold at Rs 214,300 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs 213,200 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 943 to Rs 183,728 from Rs 182,785 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 168,417 from Rs 167,553, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained stagnant at Rs 2,550 and Rs 2,186.21 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$8 to \$2,042 from \$2,034, the Association reported.

## To ensure food security Agri scientists for collaborated efforts on climate resilient, high-yielding varieties

FAISALABAD (APP): Agricultural scientists have stressed the need for collaborated efforts and enhanced work on climate resilient, high yielding and fortified varieties in order to ensure food and nutrition security amid the challenges of changing climate, ever-increasing population and productivity. They were



DUBAI: Ambassador, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy to the UAE while talking to a Pakistani exhibitor during the Gulf Food Exhibition at Pakistan Pavilion, World Trade Centre.

## SECP says: 2,651 new companies incorporated in January

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has registered 2,651 new companies in January 2024, showing an increase of 10 percent compared to the corresponding period last year.

The total number of registered companies now stands at 212,108. Total capitalization (paid-up capital) with regard to newly incorporated companies is Rs5.2 billion, said a news release.

In January, around 58 percent of companies were registered as private limited

companies, 38 percent as single member companies, and 4 percent as public unlisted companies, not-for-profit associations, trade organizations, limited liability partnerships, and foreign companies.

Five foreign companies also registered their place of business in Pakistan. Around 138 foreign applicants were registered from overseas through eServices. Almost 99.85 percent of companies were registered online. The information technology sector took the lead with regards to incorporation with 356

companies, trading with 319, real estate development and construction, and services with 277 each, tourism with 145, education with 116, food and beverages with 94, corporate agricultural farming with 93, e-commerce with 72, engineering with 65, chemical with 61, power generation with 58, marketing & advertisement, and textile with 55 each.

Furthermore, pharmaceutical, mining & quarrying with 53 each, healthcare with 48, fuel and energy with 45.

## FCCI proposes separate ministry to produce skilled human resources

FAISALABAD (APP): Engineer Ahmad Hassan, former Vice President and Convener FCCI (Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry) Standing Committee on R&D, has proposed a separate and dedicated ministry to produce highly skilled human resources which could be exported to other countries to almost double the existing foreign remittances.

Addressing a meeting of the standing committee, he said that our current exports are only \$20bn while remittances are \$30bn but still there is a gap of \$20-25bn.

He said, "We must focus on exporting highly skilled manpower to overcome this trade gap."

The economy is facing multiple challenges and fundamental administrative changes are needed to resolve the issues. We are exporting unskilled and semiskilled workers which are sending \$30bn remittances. The proposed ministry may be tasked with identifying the specific needs of each potential country and produce human resources in that particular area."

He further said that exports are dwindling due to global meltdown and internal instability, hence we must focus on enhancing foreign remittances by exporting a major chunk of our highly trained manpower. "It is the easiest way to balance the trade deficit".

## POL import bill shrinks by 12.06% in 7 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of the overall petroleum group contracted by 12.06 percent during the first seven months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of the last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The total imports of the petroleum group during July-January (2023-24) stood at \$ 9,332.322 million against the imports of \$ 10,611.727 million during the same period of last year Among petroleum commodities, the import of petroleum products declined by 25.94 percent, from \$ 4,889.799 million last year to \$ 3,621.420

million during the period under review year whereas petroleum crude dipped by 3.96 percent from \$ 3,100.481 million to \$ 2,977.671 million.

However, the imports of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) increased by 4.82 percent from \$ 2,192.489 million last year to \$ 2,298.144 million while the import of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) went up by 1.47 per cent in the first seven months and stood at \$434.991 million as compared to \$428.687 in the corresponding period in 2022-23. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the petroleum group imports witnessed an increase of 0.03 percent.



FAISALABAD: A street vendor is selling Jujube (Bair) on his pushcart along a road in the city.

## CDNS attains Rs 1030b targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has attained a target of Rs 1030 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to February, 19.

The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Monday.

He said this was a Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22.

"The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the current financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said.

Given the current market trend in the

country, the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added.

The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced.

"At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added.

Replying to a question, he said the CDNS had collected an investment of Rs 55 billion by January 9, 2023-24, through Islamic investment bonds.

The official added that the directorate had set a target of Rs 75 billion for the new financial year 2023-24 for Islamic finance bonds.



LAHORE: A blacksmith is busy at his workplace cutting large pieces of iron and making molds.

## Railways finalize plan to procure 230 passengers coaches

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways is finalizing a plan to procure 230 passenger coaches and 820 High Capacity Wagons under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) aiming help to improve the speed of the trains and ensure adherence to fixed timings.

"Out of the total, around 46 Completely-Built-Up (CUB) passenger coaches have been procured up till now while the remaining 184 would be manufactured in the country and the coaches would be able to travel at the speed of 160km/h," said an official in the Ministry of Railways.

He said Pakistan Railways is putting maximum efforts to complete rehabilitation and reconstruction work on the railway track along with improving the speed of the locomotives to carry passengers to their respective destinations on

time. The infrastructure, including the track and signaling system from Karachi to Peshawar, Main Line-I (ML-I), and doubling of track from Lahore to Peshawar (462.20 Km) was also being revamped, he added.

The official noted that the length of the track was 1,726 kilometers and the department has planned to improve speed up to 160 kilometers per hour in the project of up-gradation of ML-I under the China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He said the rolling stock being procured under this project would be capable of running at a speed of 160 km/h whereas the department had a dedicated fleet of 55 diesel-electric locomotives of 4000-4500 HP for freight operation to cater maximum haulage at high speed.



LAHORE: Women are busy buying secondhand curtains at a Landa bazaar in Provincial Capital.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships, Maersk Pelepas, Haj Mohammad, Visayas, Weco Madeleine and IVS Atsugi scheduled to load/offload Containers, Cement, Rice, Palm oil and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile two more Container ships, MSC Spring III and X-Press Mekong also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours.

Ninth ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, two ships, Maersk Pelepas and X-Press Mekong are expected to sail on today afternoon.

## Consul General, German Consulate Karachi visited SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Consul General, German Consulate Karachi Dr. Rudiger Lotz visited Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) along with First Secretary German Embassy Islamabad Janine Rohwer and CEO of German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce Oliver Oehms to interact with the business community of Sialkot. President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik and Vice President (VP) SCCI Amer Majeed Sheikh warmly welcomed the distinguished guests.

During the meeting held here at SCCI Auditorium, President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik in his welcome address mentioned that Pakistan and Germany had always enjoyed warm and friendly relations since the

establishment of diplomatic ties in 1951. Pakistan was one of the first Asian countries to establish relations with the Federal Republic of Germany. President SCCI said that the year 2024 marks the 73rd Anniversary of our diplomatic relations based on shared values of democracy, respect for human rights, cultural and economic liberalism. "We greatly value our relations with Germany; and are keen to strengthen multi-dimensional and mutually beneficial cooperation."

He said that the Pakistan acknowledges and appreciates the role of Germany in the extension of the GSP+ status. The GSP+ status emerged as a cornerstone in fostering trade ties between the European Union and Pakistan. Since its inception in 2014, Pakistan had witnessed a remarkable increase of 108% in its exports to the European Union.

## Gaza Health Ministry says Over 29,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel-Hamas war

**Monitoring Desk**  
RAFAH: More than 29,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, the territory's Health Ministry said Monday, marking another grim milestone in the deadliest round of violence in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to continue the offensive until "total victory" against Hamas, raising fears that troops will soon move into the southernmost town of Rafah on the Egyptian border, where over half of Gaza's 2.3 million people have sought refuge from fighting elsewhere.

The United States, Israel's top ally, says it is still working with mediators Egypt and Qatar to try to broker another cease-fire and hostage release agreement. But those efforts appear to have stalled in recent days, and Netanyahu angered Qatar, which has hosted Hamas leaders, by calling on it to pressure the militant group.



Former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra arrives at his family compound following his release.

## Netanyahu could surprise Israelis with Hamas deal next week

TEL AVIV (INP): Israel has sent negotiators for truce talks in Cairo as requested by U.S. President Joe Biden but they did not go back for further talks because Hamas' demands were "delusional," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Saturday.

On the other hand, as per unverified online reports, Benjamin Netanyahu could surprise Israelis with a Hamas deal for the release of hostages in the next week.

## Famine becomes latest threat in Gaza's north

**Monitoring Desk**  
GAZA STRIP: Like many in northern Gaza, Shadi Jenina has resorted to desperate measures to stave off hunger for his five children — grinding up animal feed into flour.

## Iraqi armed groups dial down U.S. attacks on request of Iran commander

BAGHDAD (Internews): A visit by the commander of Iran's elite Quds Force to Baghdad has led to a pause in attacks on U.S. troops by Iran-aligned groups in Iraq, multiple Iranian and Iraqi sources told, saying it was a sign Tehran wants to prevent a broader conflict.

While one faction did not initially agree to Qaani's request, most others did. The next day, elite Iran-backed group Kataib Hezbollah announced it was suspending attacks.



A farmer sleeps behind a tractor during a protest to demand minimum crop prices, near the Haryana-Punjab state border at Shambhu in Patiala district about 200 kilometres (125 miles) north of New Delhi.

## Spanish voters go to polls in close-run Galicia election

MADRID (Internews): Voters went to the polls in Spain's northwest region of Galicia on Sunday in a close-run race where polls have suggested the opposition conservative People's Party (PP) could lose an absolute majority that it has held for 15 years. The PP have ruled the region for all but four of the past 35 years and their leader, Alberto Nunez Feijoo, is a former Galician regional government chief.



Volunteers distribute rations of lentil soup to displaced Palestinians in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

## US threatens to veto new Gaza ceasefire resolution

WASHINGTON (Online): The United States Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield warned that if the Algerian proposed resolution calling for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza were to come up for a vote at the UN Security Council as drafted, it would not be adopted by Washington.

"Over the last week, President Biden has had multiple calls with Prime Minister Netanyahu, as well as the leaders of Egypt and Qatar, to push this deal forward. Though gaps remain, the key elements are on the table," the ambassador said.

## Landslide buries houses Nuristan, many killed

**Monitoring Desk**  
ISTANBUL: At least five bodies were retrieved from mud after a landslide buried houses in eastern Afghanistan, local officials said on Monday.

## UN special envoys in Doha to discuss future of Afghanistan

DOHA (Online): In less than a year the second UN gathering with national and regional envoys to Afghanistan are set to meet in Doha on Sunday (today), however, there is still uncertainty about whether Taliban leaders would attend it or not.

administration's participation in the convention is still unknown on the eve of the gathering in gas-rich Qatar, which provided a home to the Taliban during years of peace negotiations with the US.

## UN likely to vote on Gaza ceasefire

WASHINGTON (Online): The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) will meet on Tuesday to demand an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza.



Police secure the area around the building of a shipping company following a shooting and while a police operation is underway in the suburb of Glyfada, in Athens, Greece.

## Australian authorities say more Sydney schools tainted with asbestos

SYDNEY (Internews): An asbestos contamination in Sydney widened on Sunday, with authorities saying the toxic material had been detected in more schools, as a weeks-long effort continued to remove it from mulch used in public places.

Protection Authority (EPA) said 34 city sites had now returned positive for bonded asbestos.

## David Cameron to visit Falkland Islands in UK foreign minister's first South Atlantic tour

LONDON (Internews): British Foreign Minister David Cameron will visit the Falkland Islands as part of his first South Atlantic and South American tour since assuming his current role, the foreign office said on Sunday.

## 17th anniversary of Samjhauta Express tragedy: victims still await justice

DELHI (INP): The Samjhauta Express tragedy marks its 17th anniversary today, yet justice remains impossible for the victims.

Delhi and Lahore, was engulfed in flames near Panipat.

## Indian police officer killed in Chhattisgarh

RAIPUR (INP): An Indian police officer of Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) was killed in disturbed Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled state, Chhattisgarh, in India.

## ICJ to hold hearings on Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories

HAGUE (Online): International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague will open a week of hearings on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories today.

against Israel for its alleged violations in the ongoing war.

## Don't let Israel attack Rafah, Irish foreign minister warns EU

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRUSSELS: The European Union "must do everything possible" to pressure the Israeli government into not attacking Rafah, Irish Foreign Minister Micheál Martin said on Monday in Brussels.

port they have in the world" should they attack.

## South Korea PM asks doctors not to quit over planned medical student increase

SEOUL (Internews): South Korea's prime minister pleaded on Sunday with doctors not to take people's lives hostage, a day before scores of trainee doctors are expected to quit to protest a plan to increase medical school admissions and the number of physicians.

in healthcare, the damage will fall on the public.

## Gael Garcia Bernal explores mind vs body in Berlinale sci-fi 'Another End'

BERLIN (Internews): If it were possible to temporarily bring back the consciousness of a loved one who died, albeit in another person's body, to say goodbye one last time, would you do it?

again has joy in his life - but that joy is limited under Aeterna's strict rules on how long a consciousness can inhabit a host.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the 3rd edition of Hosting Business Net 2024, a platform to promote financial inclusion and digital transformation, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## President for financial inclusion of weaker segments of society through digital transformation

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday called for enhancing the inclusion of deprived sections of society, especially women and persons with disabilities, in the mainstream economy through digital transformation of the financial sector for socio-economic development.

The president was addressing the third edition of Hosting Business Net 2024, a platform to promote financial inclusion and digital transformation, and recognize the contributions of companies working in the sector.

The ceremony was attended by businessmen and diplomatic community members, the President Secretariat Press Wing said in a news release.

The president said that the Pakistani people were a vibrant nation, and the country, blessed with abundant natural resources, needed to invest in their intellectual development and capacity building.

He also highlighted that Pakistan could not progress without the inclusion of 26.2 million out-of-school children in the education system.

Educating such a large portion of the population would require thousands of new schools and additional resources, he observed, adding, "If left unaddressed, Pakistan would export raw labour without any value-addition."

The president cited the example of China which had lifted millions of its people out of poverty by investing in their education and health.

He said that financial inclusion was not possible without political inclusion of the people.

He opined that technology should be utilized for internet voting (i-voting) and Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

The president also hailed millions of young voters who had expressed their confidence in the democratic system.

He highlighted the need for setting priorities, making good decisions and efficiently utilizing human resources for progress of the country.

President Alvi said that the low tax-to-GDP ratio was a perennial problem in Pakistan, adding that overcoming that issue would help reduce its reliance on foreign loans.

He said that banks were offering business loans for women on easy terms and conditions, however, there was a lack of awareness about micro-credit facilities for women.

He urged the banks to enhance their outreach by introducing cashless banking in far-flung areas through customized products and services.

CEO of Transforming Hub Iftikhar Hussain highlighted that BizNet was an ecosystem that had brought together the best minds by promoting increased collaboration, commitment and innovation.

He underlined the pivotal role played by the banking sector in adopting the latest financial solutions paving the way for user-friendly banking transactions.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO of Airlinks Communication Muzaffar Piracha apprised the audience that digitization of the economy was the first step towards financial inclusion which was not possible without advancements in the mobile industry.

## Pakistan's policy endeavours on track to achieve disaster resilience against floods: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday told the Senate that the country's policy endeavours keeping in view its growing vulnerability due to climate catastrophes were on track to achieve disaster resilience against floods.

Responding to a motion tabled by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Senator Mohammad Humayun Mohmand to discuss the pressing issue of water resources, floods and water mismanagement in Pakistan, especially in the wake of the devastating floods in 2022 and in 2010, the minister provided a brief overview of the country's response to floods through policy interventions.

He said that after three years deliberations post 2010 floods, the Ministry of Water Resources had finalized the National Flood Protection Plan-IV, which was approved by the Council of Common Interests (CCI) on May 2, 2017.

However, all the four provinces including Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, after the enactment of Model River Act 2016, were instructed to change and implement the law according to their requirements, he added.

"The Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces have implemented the law whereas it is approval in the other provinces is in different stages," the minister said.

Solangi noted that under the National Plan for Flood Telemetry Programme, some 707 telemetry stations would be established on different small and big rivers across the country. The project concept of PC-I had been made, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) had assured its assistance for developing 45 stations, he added.

The Punjab and Sindh provinces, he said, continued to work rapidly on expansion and innovation of all their barrages, whereas the work had been completed in Punjab and progress on Sukkur and Guddu barrages in Sindh was underway.

## ECP committee kicks off probe into Liaquat Chattha's allegations

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) high-level investigation committee on Monday initiated its inquiry into the allegations raised against the former commissioner of Rawalpindi, Liaquat Ali Chattha.

Sources privy to the matter said that the committee has taken the initiative by reaching out to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) to acquire the transcript of Liaquat Ali Chattha's recent press conference.

On the other hand, six district returning officers (ROs) from Rawalpindi Division have already furnished their written statements, categorically refuting the allegations leveled by the former commissioner.

Furthermore, the committee plans to extend its scrutiny to encompass statements from ROs across 13 constituencies of the National Assembly and 26 constituencies of the provincial assembly within the Rawalpindi Division.

The inquiry stems from a series of startling events, notably former commissioner Liaquat Ali Chattha's resignation on Saturday, citing election irregularities.

Addressing the media at Pindi Cricket Stadium, Chattha expressed remorse over his actions, acknowledging wrongdoing and advocating for accountability. "I have done injustice in Rawalpindi Division; I should be punished for it, along with others involved," he stated solemnly.

Chattha's resignation, coupled with his candid admission of guilt, has sparked a ripple effect across the political landscape. He recounted the pressures he faced, including social media scrutiny and the expectations of overseas Pakistanis, which led him to contemplate suicide.

However, he chose to confront the truth publicly, resigning from his post and vowing to face the consequences.

## Abdullah inaugurates Dittu Children Ward Civil Hospital Quetta

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan on Monday inaugurated Dittu Children's Ward Civil Hospital Quetta with the support of MNCH program after the completion of its renovation works.

On this occasion, Medical Superintendent (MS) Civil Hospital Quetta Dr Ishaq Panizi, Head of Department of Paediatrics Associate Professor Dr Saima, Provincial Coordinator MNCH Dr Gul Sabin Azam Ghorizi, DMS Dr Garmukh Das, DMS Dr Zubair Jan Bugti, Post Graduate Doctors, Medical Officers, Finance Officer MNCH Kameel Ahmed Qambrani, IT Incharge Sikandar Zaib and other assistants were also present.

Secretary Health Abdullah Khan, also inspected the renovated wards, emergency room, ICU and nursery of various departments of Dittu Children's Ward.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that health problems of the public would be addressed by providing better medical facilities at Dittu Children's Ward. He said the Children's ward would be made ideal medical center of the province, particularly for the treatment of children's diseases.

## Four persons killed, nine injured due to rains

PESHAWAR (APP): Four persons were killed and nine were reported injured due to rains, said the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Monday.

Two houses were destroyed completely while two were partially damaged.

In a statement, Director General PDMA Muhammad Qaiser Khan said that all kinds of emergency services are being provided and all the district administrations were informed about the spell of rain.

## Rs 35.6 bln program being launched to eradicate fatal diseases: Health Minister

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr Nadeem Jan on Monday said that a mega project worth Rs35.6 billion was being launched to eradicate fatal diseases including sugar, HIV Aids and hepatitis in the country.

He said that a Rs six billion program has been prepared for the control of sugar disease besides projects were being launched for the eradication of AIDs HIV.

He was addressing a function after inaugurating a modern labour room at the Basic Health Unit (BHU) Kotkay in Charsadda district.

The minister said that providing the best healthcare facilities to patients at their doorsteps was the top priority of the government.

He said that basic health units are being strengthened in terms of medical staff, equipment and medicines.

The minister said the promise of rehabilitation of the flood-affected BHU has been fulfilled and termed the cooperation of the World Health Organization for rehabilitation of the BHU as highly praiseworthy.

Nadeem Jan said that people of the area would now get quality treatment and medicine facilities at their doorsteps.

The minister said responsibilities rest on the shoulders of officials of the health department to ensure the best use of the BHU for the betterment of the people.

He said that timely availability of the staff and provision of better healthcare facilities was the prime responsibility of the health department.

"If the performance of BHUs is good then there will be minimum load on big hospitals and precious lives would be saved" he said.

He said that a mega project worth Rs35.6 billion was being launched in Pakistan to eradicate fatal diseases including sugar, HIV AIDs and hepatitis besides help its patients.



DUBAI: Ambassador, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy to the UAE inaugurates the Pakistan Pavilion during Gulf Food Exhibition at World Trade Centre.

## Ambassador Tirmizi inaugurates Pakistan Pavilion at World Trade Center Dubai

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to United Arab Emirates Faisal Niaz Tirmizi Monday inaugurated the Pakistan Pavilion at the World Trade Center Dubai.

On this occasion, he visited various stalls and had detailed discussions with the Pakistani exhibitors.

According to the Press Counselor of Pakistan in Dubai, the Pakistani ambassador to the UAE also spoke to media after inaugurating and visiting the pavilion set up by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP).

Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi said that almost a hundred Pakistani companies associated with the food industry have gathered here, which is a welcome sign.

He said that Pakistan's exports especially rice and meat have increased significantly compared to last year.

Expressing pleasure over his interaction with the organizers and representatives of TDAP, he said that Pakistan is the third largest country in terms of milk production in the world adding that Pakistan, for the first time has entered the market of Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia.

He said that he was very happy to see that Pakistani dairy producers are participating in Gulfood in large numbers.

The ambassador said Pakistan's economic development was directly linked to the country's exports. He said Pakistani businessmen and growers are backbone of the country's economy and their focus should be on increasing exports.



QUETTA: Security officials are standing high alert to avoid untoward incident as security has been high alert due to protest of four-party alliance against alleged rigging in General Election 2024, outside DC Office in Quetta.

## Tributes paid to Iqra Ilmi Markaz Chaman in education sector

Independent Report CHAMAN: Rich tributes have been paid to the famous educational institution of Chaman Iqra Ilmi Markaz on the meritorious services in education sector.

In a message on eve of launch of new year's admission campaign, the prominent educationist and Patron-in-Chief of the Iqra Ilmi Markaz Chaman, Chaudhary Muhammad Tahir paid rich tributes to the institution on educational services in Chaman.

He said that all necessary steps have been taken to educate the children in the area. The children are studying in best environment, he said.

He also highly praised the Director of Ilmi Markaz Chaman and senior journalist, Syed Sardar Muhammad Khondoi for the great initiative.

Similarly, the legal adviser and prominent lawyer Syed Musawar Shah Agha and central president of Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges, Sabir Rehman Bangash also praised Iqra Ilmi Markaz and said that we are proud of it.

## LHC dismisses petition seeking removal PTI from list of political parties

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has dismissed the petition seeking removal of PTI from the list of political parties.

The petition seeking removal of PTI from list of political parties came up for hearing before single bench of LHC led by Justice Baqar Ali Najafi Monday.

The petitioner Afaq Ahmad advocate while making chairman Election Commission (EC) and secretary EC respondents took the plea EC has declared PTI intra party election illegal. Election symbol has been withdrawn from PTI. No office bearer of the party is there and no party in the name of PTI exists in EC. Therefore, court should order to remove PTI from list of political parties besides declaring PTI elected senators as independent senators.

The court dismissed the petition declaring it non maintainable.

## Cheng Xizhong says: Pakistan's fair, smooth general elections fully reflect will of people

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan's recent general elections for the national and provincial assemblies were held in a fair, smooth, secure and successful and fully reflected the will of the people, Cheng Xizhong, Visiting Professor of South-west University of Political Science and Law said on Monday.

"This general election in Pakistan may be summarized in four words: fair, smooth, secure and successful. In particular, Pakistani security forces have successfully thwarted attempts by the regional power to disrupt this general election," he said in a statement.

He said that the general election held in Pakistan fully reflected the will of the people.

Now, some external forces accused the Pakistani general election of misappropriation and unfairness, which was completely groundless, he said, adding,

this was interference in Pakistan's internal affairs and did not comply with the principle of the United Nations Charter.

Prof Cheng remarked that the Pakistani people had great hopes for post-election political stability, economic development and improvement in people's livelihoods.

He said main political parties in Pakistan were all very mature and China fully believed that they would put the interests of the people above everything else, adding all political parties, whether in power or opposition, they would unite and work together for a better Pakistan.

He opined that the street movement of any political party was detrimental to the fundamental interests of the Pakistani people.

As an iron brother, China hoping to see a secure, stable, developing and prosperous Pakistan, he added.

## Govt's formation: PPP deteriorating PML-N's credibility: Rana

LAHORE (INP) Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Rana Sanaullah has alleged that regarding formation of the government, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was deteriorating the credibility of his party while improving its own reputation.

In a statement issued here on Monday, he slammed the statement Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari about government formation.

Rana Sanaullah said that the Pakistan Peoples Party was joining the coalition government, but there was a strong opinion among them that the government should not be taken.

He said that even if the PPP comes under any compulsion in formation of government, it will not be sincere and will not give us the required support.

The PML-N leader said that we were ready to give any sacrifice for national interest, but under such circumstances our sacrifice will be lost.

Rana Sanaullah further said that the party leadership was taking notice of Bilawal's statements.



QUETTA: Inspector General National Highways and Motorway Police Salman Chaudhry addressing a Press conference.

## Senate passes "The Pharmacy Amendment Bill, 2023"

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate convened on Monday and passed The Pharmacy (Amendment) Bill, 2023, clause-by-clause to enhance and standardize pharmacy education across the country, aiming to cultivate professionally skilled human resources.

Senator Mushaq Ahmed introduced the bill, which aimed to grant recognition to qualified pharmacists and foster opportunities for postgraduate specialized diploma programs to enhance their skills.

Additionally, it seeks to curb and prohibit unchecked and substandard pharmacy education programs through robust recognition procedures and prohibitions.

The prevailing pharmacy Act was promulgated in 1967 in a time when the country was deficient of relevant qualified professional human resources.

Couples of universities were awarding degree in Pharmacy i.e, university of the Punjab and university of Karachi, whereas now there are almost 100 institutes conducting Pharmacy Degree Courses and more than 200 institutes imparting education in Pharmacy Technician programs.

There is dire need of drastic amendments to live decades old pharmacy act.

The existing Pharmacy Act provides for registration of Pharmacists persons other than those not holding a relevant qualification in Pharmacy.

While internationally health professions are being segregated in different categories of healthcare service delivery levels and updated to meet the challenges of modern medical and healthcare services deliveries thereof with appropriate professional recognitions.

To meet the requirements of legally qualified and professionally competent human resources in the health care sector both inland and to the international market, this professional segregation through amendments in the existing act is unavoidable.

## SC rejects bail plea of accused in drug case as withdrawn

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has dismissed bail plea of an accused arrested in drug case as withdrawn.

A two members bench of SC presided over by Justice Sardar Tariq Masood took up the case for hearing Monday.

Justice Tariq Masood remarked when the accused is arrested then detailed search is conducted. Recovery of pistol and heroin are two separate matters. Police was becoming wise. The drugs were recovered from the body of accused and not from vehicle. The counsel for petitioner said fake case was made and his client was nominated therein. In first case pistol was recovered and in second case drugs were got recovered after one hour. The accused is in jail since three and half months.

Justice Sardar Tariq Masood inquired is not it injustice that children take heroin. These children are found lying along side road after taking heroin.

The counsel for the petitioner said I withdraw my petition.

The court dismissed the petition as withdrawn.

The accused Imtiaz Ahmad resorted to SC against rejection of bail plea in high court.



QUETTA: Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan addressing participants of IMNCI training.