

# Independent

Member APNS &amp; CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vt XXV No 189, Shaban 17, 1445 AH Wednesday February 28, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs.15

62 newly elected MPAs likely to take oath:

## First session of 12th Balochistan Assembly to be held today

Governor nominates MPA-elect Zamarak Khan Achakzai as Presiding Officer for today's session

**Independent Report** Governor Secretariat the other day.

Quetta: The first session of 12th Balochistan Assembly is scheduled to be held today (Wednesday) at the Assembly's Hall here.

The newly elected MPA from PB-50, Killa Abdullah, Mr. Zamarak Khan Achakzai would administer the oath to the newly elected members of the assembly at maiden session of the newly formed assembly.

The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has nominated Zamarak Khan Achakzai as the Presiding Officer for taking oath from the newly elected members of assembly, as per the notification issued here by the

In case of absence of Mr. Achakzai, MPA-elect, Ms. Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani would administer oath to the newly elected members of assembly.

As many as 62 members of assembly are likely to take oath in the today's session.

It may be mentioned here that the Balochistan's provincial assembly had come into being under a Presidential Order on 30th March, 1970, after dissolution of one unit and declaring Balochistan as a separate province. The first election of Balochistan Provincial Assembly was held

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar addressing participants of a ceremony of Pakistan Universities Debating Championship 2023-24 organized by Higher Education Commission at BUITEMS

## Governor emphasizes on providing necessary facilities to youth for polishing their hidden potential

**Independent Report** here on Tuesday.

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that youth are our precious asset and as such there is a dire need to provide necessary facilities and opportunities to youth so that they are able to polish their hidden potential.

The Governor was addressing the Balochistan Public Sector Universities Debating Championship 2024 organized by the Higher Education Commission at the main auditorium of Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS)

Continued on page 2



KARACHI: Governor Sindh, Kamran Khan Tessori administering the oath to the Newly-elected Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah.

## PTI founder, Bushra Bibi indicted in 190m pounds financial scandal reference

RAWALPINDI (Online): Judge Nasir Javed Rana of Accountability Court (AC) Islamabad has indicted PTI founder and his wife Bushra Bibi in 190 million pounds financial scandal reference.

The accused while pleading not guilty have rejected the charges.

Upon it court has summoned 5 witnesses of NAB on March 6 for regular trial of reference.

Both of the accused, their lawyers Suleman Saifdar, Zahir Abbas Chaudhry and Usman Gill and NAB Deputy Prosecutor General (DPG) were present in the court during the hearing of the case.

The court read out charge sheet to the accused.

The court inquired from the accused you are being indicted. You should tell if you are involved in this case or not.

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki addressing staff of CM Secretariat during a farewell meeting

## Domki holds farewell meeting with CM Sectt: officers and staff

**Independent Report**

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki held farewell meeting with the officers, staff and security personnel at the Chief Minister's secretariat on Tuesday.

During the course of meeting, caretaker Chief Minister appreciated the services of officers and other staffers of the CM secretariat during the duration of interim government.

He also distributed shields and commendation certificates among the officers of CM secretariat.

## Murad Ali Shah sworn in as Sindh CM

KARACHI (APP): The newly elected Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday took oath of the office at the Governor House.

Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori administered the oath to him as the 38th Chief Minister in an impressive ceremony.

Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhattu Zardari, outgoing Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar, Chief Secretary Fakhr-e-Alam, provincial secretaries, PPP leaders and dignitaries attended the ceremony.

Murad Ali Shah got 112 votes of the Sindh Assembly members in the election for chief minister on Monday.

This is the third time he has become the chief minister. Earlier, he remained the Sindh chief executive from July 30, 2016 to May 28, 2016, and August 18, 2018 to August 17, 2023.

## Pakistan Army shoots down Indian spy quadcopter

RAWALPINDI (INP): Pakistan Army has shot down Indian spying quadcopter that intruded into country's airspace along the Line of Control.



Pakistani forces at 12:55 pm on Sunday last shot down an Indian Army quadcopter that was spying in the area near LoC, says in media reports.

It is pertinent to mention that the remains of the quadcopter were found yesterday.

An insignia of the Indian Army can be seen in the pictures which confirms that the quadcopter belongs to the Indian Army.

It should be remembered that on this day in 2019, the Pakistan Air Force also shot down Indian warplanes that violated Pakistani airspace in Operation Swift Retort.

## 5th anniversary of 'Operation Swift Retort': Pakistan resolved to safeguard its sovereignty, regional security: PM

Armed forces vow to respond to any aggression against the country

ISLAMABAD (APP): One of the Indian pilots was captured by Pakistan, but was later handed over as a gesture of peace.

The prime minister said that the Pakistani armed forces had proved their operational superiority falsifying the Indian claims.

"No one should have doubt that Pakistan is a peace-loving country that was determined to protect its sovereignty as well as the regional security," he remarked.

The prime minister reiterated the resolve that Pakistan would forcefully

respond to any aggression against it.

INP adds: On the fifth anniversary of 'Operation Swift Retort', Pakistan's armed forces have vowed to respond to any aggression against the people of Pakistan, the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity with "full might and without any hesitation".

On February 27, 2019, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) had shot down two Indian planes that had violated Pakistani airspace. One of the Indian pilots was captured by Pakistan, but

Continued on page 2



GWADAR: View of stagnant rain water after flash flood caused by heavy downpour of winter season, in Gwadar.

## Rain wreaks havoc in Gwadar, inundates entire coastal town

Residents forced to leave their houses as urban flooding brings life to halt in Gwadar, with streets, shops completely submerged; Caretaker CM grieved over flood situation in Gwadar, directs to take prompt action

**Independent Report**

GWADAR: Heavy rains wreaked havoc in Balochistan's coastal city of Gwadar on Tuesday, bringing life to a halt as water completely submerged roads, streets and houses, disrupting the power transmission system after over 15 hours of downpour. A rain-producing system entered the country through Balochistan on February 25, under which parts of the province and upper areas were expected to receive heavy downpours and windstorms from today.

The rainwater entered houses and shops, driving people out of their shelters. Videos showed the entire coastal town heavily inundated with rainwater gushing down on the roads and vehicles making their way through knee-deep water.

Meanwhile the caretaker Chief Minister

Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki expressed sorrow over the situation caused due to heavy rains in Gwadar and adjoining areas. He also expressed grief over the damages caused due to flood situation in the port city. In view of the critical situation, Chief Minister directed to the concerned authorities to take prompt measures to provide relief to dwellers.

The Chief Minister said that the continuous rain created extraordinary situation in Gwadar.

He mentioned that the PDMA and district administration are busy in the rescue activities. However, hardships are being faced in carrying out relief activities because the link roads are inundated in the rain water.

The Chief Minister said that necessary directives have been issued to the district administration to provide clean drinking water on emergent basis.



On job training of Royal Saudi Land Forces with Pakistan Army concludes in Multan.

## President Alvi to face dual constitution violation charges, says Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhattu Zardari on Tuesday asserted President Arif Alvi will face dual constitution violation charges after his retirement.

Talking to media men outside the Supreme Court after hearing of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's presidential reference, Bilawal Bhattu Zardari said President Arif Alvi is 'violating' the constitution of Pakistan by denying summoning the NA session for the swearing-in of the new lawmakers.

It's a constitutional requirement to summon NA session by February 29, Bilawal said and added the president is denying discharging his duties.

The PPP leader said they will replace Arif Ali as

president after the swearing-in of the new house and he will face dual constitution violation cases including one of dissolving the assembly despite VONC motion and another of denying calling the session of the lower house of the parliament.

Criticising the PTI founder, Bilawal Bhattu said the man who is incarcerated in Adiala Jail is not ready to learn from his mistakes. "PPP too made mistakes but one has to learn from it."

He urged everyone to exercise their power in their respective constitutional domain and underlined the need for respecting each other despite political differences, as this is the only way forward to steer the country out of crises.

## Pakistan, Saudi Arabia agree to further enhance defence ties



RAWALPINDI (APP): Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force called on General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili, Chief of the General Staff, Saudi Armed Forces and His Royal Highness Lieutenant General Turki Bin Bandar bin Abdul Aziz, Commander of the Royal Saudi Air Forces, during his visit to Saudi Arabia.

Meetings were focused upon further promoting Pak-Saudi defence ties, particularly between the two Air Forces through joint military exercises and technological collaboration.

During the visit, the Air Chief was awarded King Abdul Aziz Badge of Honor of the Excellent Class by Chief of the General Staff, Saudi Armed Forces.

## Political leaders' support for reconciliation has greater impact in fostering peace: Info Minister

Govt, international institutions, grassroots organizations contributing uniquely for peace promotion

ISLAMABAD (Online): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi has said political leaders' support for reconciliation and mutual respect has greater impact in fostering peace in the society.



He was addressing the Peace-FLIX International Conference in Islamabad Tuesday.

Murtaza Solangi said political parties shoulder immense responsibility in the pursuit of peace.

He also commended the role of National Counter-Terrorism Authority and other organization in combating the scourge of terrorism and extremism.

He added that national and international think-tanks as well as peace organizations have conducted invaluable research and facilitated dialogue to comprehend the new dynamics of peace and conflict. The Minister said preservation of societal peace assumes paramount significance at a time when Pakistan is facing economic, political, environmental and other challenges.

Murtaza Solangi further said the media, being an agent of change, has a greater role in challenging extremist ideologies and championing inclusivity as well as amplifying voices of moderation and facilitating dialogue in the society.

Continued on page 2

## Training of Royal Saudi Land Forces with Pak Army concludes

RAWALPINDI (Online): Closing Ceremony of "On Job Training of Royal Saudi Land Forces with Pakistan Army" was held at Multan.

The training was conducted from 15 January to 26 February 2024 with a view to foster joint employment and benefiting from each other's experiences, while further consolidating longstanding fraternal relations between Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Commander Multan Corps witnessed the exercise as Chief Guest. The Chief Guest expressed satisfaction over mutual understanding and the training standards achieved.





QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting of Provincial Selection Board

## ECP merges SIC reserve seats petitions, defers hearing until today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) combined all petitions related to minority and women reserve seats of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) on Tuesday and postponed the hearing until Wednesday.

A four-member panel, headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja and including members Nisar Ahmed Durrani, Shah Muhammad Jatoti, Babar Hassan Bharwana, and Justice @ Ikram Ullah Khan heard the petition.

Barrister Farough Naseem represented Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) leader Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui.

Barrister Ali Zafar represented the Sunni Ittehad

Council, stating they were there to secure their allocated seat.

Azam Nazir Tarar from Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Farooq H. Naik from Pakistan People's Party (PPP) asserted that they were representing their respective political parties. They emphasized that it is up to the commission to determine whether the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) can secure reserve seat or not.

Barrister Ali Zafar emphasized that his party's reserved seat cannot be claimed by anyone else, highlighting that the SIC has already submitted a petition to the ECP for the allocation of reserved seats.

Barrister Gohar urged the bench to allocate re-

served seats to the SIC.

The Chief Election Commissioner mentioned that the Election Commission has scheduled the applications for a hearing, and asked Ali Zafar, if he is a party to all of these cases Azam Nazir Tarar countered by asking how independent members affiliated with the Sunni Ittehad Council, which failed to win even a single seat, could be granted reserve seats.

He argued that these members, originating from a party rejected by the electorate, did not initially apply for reserved seats. Furthermore, given that the Sunni Ittehad Council is not recognized as a parliamentary party, he questioned their entitlement to reserved seats.

## JUI to follow truth instead of occupying ministries: Fazlur Rehman

PESHAWAR (INP) - Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that they have not learnt to surrender and announced to follow the path of truth instead of occupying ministries.

The JUI Chief while addressing the participants of the Majlis-e-Shura meeting said that the JUI was defeated. The first constitution, he asserted, was made in 1973 in which there are many services of the elders.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that since 1973, not a single piece of

legislation has been passed in accordance with the Islamic spirit. They always thought of the development of the country. JUI would neither support nationalism nor sectarianism.

The head of JUI said that there is no prejudice against anyone in our attitudes, when they issued fatwas of blasphemy on each other, Jamiat condemned this move as wrong. He added that on a daily basis, they were told that their lives were in danger, and they wanted to act according to the constitution and law.

## Dozen dead after bus falls into deep ravine in Khanpur

KHANPUR (Online): A passenger bus fell into a ravine in Sarbrot area of Haripur, as a result of which 12 people died and 15 people were injured.

According to media reports, the accident took place in Tehsil Khanpur, the rescue official said that there is a possibility of an increase in the number of deaths due to the accident, children and women were also on board the bus that suffered the accident.

Police say that the passenger bus was going from Haripur to Rawalpindi.

## SP martyred; two key terrorists killed in Mardan operation

PESHAWAR (APP): Superintendent of Police (SP) Ijaz Khan was martyred while three other officials, including a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), sustained injuries during an encounter with terrorists in Mardan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday.

The encounter took place in Zara Mata area of Mardan where law enforcement agencies were engaged in a fierce exchange of fire with terrorists, leading to the martyrdom of SP Ijaz Khan. The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) spokesman confirmed the incident, saying that the brave SP fell victim to the terrorists' indiscriminate firing.

The terrorists' gunfire inflicted severe wounds on the law enforcement personnel, necessitating immediate medical assistance. The injured officials, including DSP Naseem Khan, police officials Mansoor and Saleem were rushed to the hospital in police vans.

During the operation police forces retaliated against the terrorists, resulting in the neutralization of two wanted militants. The CTD spokesman disclosed that the operation was intelligence-driven, targeting terrorists in the Katlang area of Mardan.

Among the notable successes of the operation was the elimination of the notorious terrorist Mohsin Qadir, causing a significant blow to the terrorist networks operating in the region.

Meanwhile, the funeral prayer for the martyred SP Ijaz Khan was solemnly offered at the Police Lines Mardan, with District Police Officer (DPO) Mardan and other dignitaries from the law enforcement fraternity in attendance.

The police top brass paid tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of SP Ijaz Khan, underscoring the resilience of law enforcement personnel in the line of duty.

## Senate witnesses presentation of reports from 25 committees

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate witnessed the presentation of 25 Standing Committee reports on Tuesday.

The standing committees included the report of the Committee on a Bill further to amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 [The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024], the report of the Committee on a Bill further to amend the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance, 2002 [The Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking (Amendment) Bill, 2024], the report of the Committee on a Bill further to amend the National Database and Registration Authority Ordinance, 2002 [The National Database and Registration Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2024], the report of the Committee on a Bill further to amend the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999 [The National Accountability (Amendment) Bill, 2023], the report of the Committee on a Bill further to amend the Constitution [The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2022], the present report of the Committee on a Bill further to amend the Constitution [The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2023], the report of the Committee on a Bill further to amend the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999 [The National Accountability (Amendment) Bill, 2023], the report of the Committee on the subject matter of Starred Question No. 94, asked by Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi regarding whether the Government established institutes for imparting training to the teachers, the report of the Committee on the subject matter of Starred Question No. 103, asked by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed on 5th January 2024, regarding the number of students studying in "A" and "O" levels under the Cambridge system in Pakistan at present indicating also the number of students appeared in "A" and "O" level examinations during the period from 2018 to 2021 with a year-wise breakup.



QUETTA: Pashtunkhwa Students Organization (PSO) Zonal Organizer, Saifullah Khan addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

## ECP dismisses Karachi election petitions, advises seeking remedy from tribunal

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) dismissed the election petitions challenging the results of three Karachi constituencies on Tuesday, directing the applicants to seek remedy from the relevant election tribunal instead.

An ECP bench dismissed Zahoore Uddin's election petition for NA 237, Karachi, and directed him to submit a petition to the relevant election tribunal for redress.

Similarly, the fate of Muhammad Yasir's application for NA 239, Karachi, and Khuram Sher Zaman's for NA 241, Karachi, was similar, as the commission directed them to file petitions in the election tribunal for remedy.

In all three mentioned constituencies, candidates from the Pakistan Peoples Party secured victory in the elections. Barrister Shabbir Shah appeared on behalf of the winning PPP candidates before the commission.

## Railways face only six minor accidents in last four months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has beefed up precautionary measures to reduce passenger train accidents and only six minor accidents with no causality took place on the entire railway network in the country during the last four months.

"Only two train accidents have taken place in September, no accident happened in October and four train accidents occurred in November due to effective steps of the department," an official in the Ministry told APP.

The drastic decrease in accidents has been witnessed due to the efforts being undertaken to reduce trespassing at unmanned level crossings and unauthorized locations, he added.

"Our staff is continuously monitoring the railway tracks across the country and conducting thorough inspection of the

trains as the safety of the passengers is the top priority of the department," he said.

The official said the department was taking several steps to improve the Railway services including the issues related to tracking maintenance that was given top priority.

He said that the punctuality of trains was improved and all the trains were being monitored, reviewed, and rectified while to facilitate the passengers, a mobile application "Pak rail live" has also been launched for real-time tracking of trains.

To a question, he said that first aid posts were established in Assistant Station Masters offices and Police Help Line Centres at all Railway Stations where paramedical staff/staff trained in first aid was available along with first aid box/emergency kits round the clock.

He said the first aid box/emergency kits were available with In-charge Guards in all running trains who were trained in first aid and provided first aid to ill passengers.

The official said that Pakistan Railways was also set to introduce the 'Train Driver Assistant System' (TDAS) to help train drivers a clear view of the railway tracks up to an impressive distance of 700 meters.

"The technology aims to enhance the safety and efficiency of train operations during adverse weather conditions, particularly in the presence of dense smog and fog."

The system, he said the TDAS is set to revolutionize the way trains navigate through foggy landscapes. It promised not only to avert potential accidents but also to facilitate smooth rail travel when visibility is severely compromised.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor BUTEMS Prof. Dr. Khalid Hafeez meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

## Pakistan resolved to safeguard... Continued from page 1

armed forces over the Indian side," the ISPR said.

"The steadfastness and competence of Pakistan's armed forces were acknowledged by military experts and analysts throughout the world, effectively debunking frivolous Indian claims which could not stand to factual scrutiny," it said. "As a state committed to peace, we shall continue to emphasise the importance of peaceful coexistence with our neighbours. Any aggression against the people of Pakistan, our sovereignty and territorial integrity, will however be responded immediately, with full might and without any hesitation. Every single time," the ISPR statement concluded.

## First session... Continued from page 1

on 17th December, 1970 with 21 members in its fold, comprising of 20 general seats and one reserved for women.

First session of the Balochistan Assembly comprising of 21 members was held on 2nd May, 1972 at the Historic Shahi Jirga Hall (Town Hall), Quetta. Mr. Muhammad Khan Barozai and Molvi Shams-ud-Din were elected as Speaker and Deputy Speaker, respectively. Sardar Attaullah Mengal served as the first House Leader and Mr. Ghous Bakhsh Raisani as the Leader of Opposition. Balochistan Provincial Assembly has witnessed Eleven (11) General Elections since then, growing in size to its present membership of 65 with the ratio of 51 General, 11 women and 3 minority seats.

## Governor emphasizes Continued from page 1

sports and other healthy activities in the society.

The Governor said that a healthy society can be formed by promoting physical activities.

He said that the extra-curricular activities have been declared compulsory in all civilized societies just to create creative minds and increase creative consciousness. Malik Abdul Wali Kakar noted with contentment that major part of Pakistan's population comprises youth. However, it is also very important to provide opportunities for livelihood and save their future, adding he stressed.

He exhorted students to make habit of calligraphy, painting, music and book reading in their life.

In the end, Governor distributed commemorative shields and certificates among the organizers and participants of the debating championship.

## Political leaders' support for... Continued from page 1

He also appreciated the role of US Embassy in Islamabad for initiating measures for sustainable peace and conflict prevention in the Pakistani society.

APP adds: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Tuesday that the Government of Pakistan, international institutions and grassroots organizations had been contributing uniquely for promoting peace, tolerance, and harmony in the country.

Delivering his speech on "Policymaking and peace process in Pakistan" at the opening session of PeaceFLIX international conference and awards ceremony, he said in the intricate tapestry of Pakistan's landscape, the pursuit of peace had transcended individual endeavors; it had become a shared responsibility.

"We stand witness to the collective efforts of various entities that are shaping the bedrock of peace within our nation," he maintained.

"As our nation crosses the complex realms of economics, politics, and environmental concerns, the preservation of societal peace assumes paramount significance," the minister added.

Solangi said that national and international think-tanks, as well as peace organizations, had conducted invaluable research and facilitated dialogues to comprehend the nuanced dynamics of peace and conflict.

## Political leaders' support for... Continued from page 1

He said that their endeavors extended supporting initiatives countering violent extremism, managing conflicts, and fostering a deeper understanding of conflict prevention and resolution.

He opined that media houses and journalists served as potent agents of change, challenging extremist ideologies and championing inclusivity.

"Their pivotal role in amplifying voices of moderation and facilitating dialogue across cultural divides is instrumental in forging connections between disparate groups," he remarked.

The minister said that in the pursuit of peace, political parties had to shoulder immense responsibility as their backing for reconciliation and mutual respect underscored the profound impact of politics in fostering peace.

He said that National Counter Terrorism Authority (NCTA) stood as a cornerstone institution, coordinating nationwide counter-terrorism efforts.

"The authority's commitment to combating extremism and preserving security demonstrates a steadfast dedication to safeguarding Pakistani citizens from threats posed by militant groups," the minister said.

He said that expanding the realm of peace-builders, initiatives by the US Embassy Islamabad for sustainable peace and conflict prevention in Pakistani society were commendable.

Similarly, the East-West Center, bridging the gap between the East and West, contributed significantly to

## Political leaders' support for... Continued from page 1

peace and tolerance in Pakistani society, Solangi added.

He pointed out that these organizations had catalyzed transformation within vulnerable communities in Pakistan, particularly in rural areas.

The minister said that the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), a Pakistani think tank, significantly contributed to strengthening democracy, good governance, and peace in the country.

He said that another prominent Pakistani think tank, the Jinnah Institute, had conducted crucial policy research, strategic analysis, and public opinion polling related to peace and security.

Similarly, the Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) had promoted transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in peace-building efforts, reinforcing the collective commitment to a harmonious society, he added.

The minister said in the realm of peace-building in Pakistan, various organizations, including government bodies, civil society organizations and research institutions, had actively implemented policies and programmes aimed at promoting peace, tolerance, and harmony in the country.

He said that the government institutions such as the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Human Rights had spearheaded initiatives like the National Action Plan (NAP) to counter terrorism and extremism.

KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister, Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar inspects the farewell guard of honour during ceremony held at CM House in Karachi.



## PTI founder, Bushra Bibi indicted... Continued from page 1

raise objections in the process of indictment. Therefore, these documents be provided during court's time. We will come back after 7 days because former chairman PTI has said he wants to run the case speedily. Therefore, we have filed application for providing the documents again.

The lawyers said if the court wants to indict then this thing be also brought on record that about 50 documents are not readable and even then indictment is being made.

NAB DPG requested the court to indict the accused and took the plea all the record will be provided to the lawyers of accused while recording the statements of the witnesses.

The former chairman PTI came to rostrum and said we don't want delay in this case. NAB was in

hurry before May 8 and now we want punishment be expedited.

The court inquired Khan Sahb tells us first if the check up of your teeth has been carried out or not.

Former chairman PTI replied the check up has not been carried out so far. Jail administration had said the doctor will come up on Sunday and now jail administration is saying doctor will come on next Sunday.

The court while accepting plea of PTI founder for provision of general physician and dentist for medical and teeth check up adjourned hearing of the case till March 6.

Barrister Umair Niazi spokesperson of former chairman PTI while talking to media men outside jail said PTI will stage peaceful protest on March 2 against polls rigging on the call of PTI founder. The other parties will also participate in protest.



QUETTA: Workers of Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) are busy in picking up garbage with heavy machinery during the rains of winter season, in Quetta.



## U.S. Ambassador speaks at International Conference on Combating Trafficking

ISLAMABAD (Online): U.S. Ambassador, Donald Blome addressed at the International Conference on Combating Trafficking and Bonded Labor of Women and Girls in Pakistan on Tuesday.

He said Human trafficking is an appalling and pervasive crime.

It deprives millions worldwide of their dignity and freedom. It is a global crisis that touches every country, including Pakistan and the United States.

"It is a real honor to inaugurate this important conference and I am particularly pleased by the involvement of PUAN (Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network). I find members of our alumni network almost everywhere I go in Pakistan and doing all kinds of important work. And I am always proud when I see it" he said.

By its nature, the crime of human trafficking

is often hidden from view. While the real numbers are hard to confirm, an estimated 27.6 million people around the world are victims of human trafficking, including millions of women and children. Beyond the harm to individual victims, trafficking-in-persons also undermines national security, distorts markets, enriches transnational criminals and terrorists, and is an affront to our universal values.

These statistics are alarming – but we need to go beyond the numbers and understand the experiences of survivors and engaging with those who are actively fighting against this transnational crime.

We will hear today from Ansa Noreen – one of the two American experts joining us today – herself a trafficking survivor. Her story could have ended in tragedy.

However, through the coordinated efforts of stakeholders like you, she was eventually freed, and she stands before you today as a tireless advocate for trafficking victims.

We are also going to hear from Joseph Salvarria, a retired Special Agent from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. He has more than 20 years of criminal investigative experience focused on human trafficking and human smuggling.

Salvarria will share his expertise on the efficacy and necessity of stakeholder collaboration in addressing this transnational crime.

In the United States, we follow the widely used "3P" paradigm – prosecution, protection, and prevention – and I am glad to see that it is universalized here as well – to combat human trafficking worldwide.



ISLAMABAD: Spanish Ambassador to Pakistan Jose Antonio de Ory posing for a group photograph along with artists during different artists painting exhibition titled "Chaharbagh" at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.

## Parliamentary representation key for reserved seats allocation: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Azam Nazir Tarar, leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), on Tuesday said that only political parties with representation in the Parliament could qualify for the allocation of reserved minority and women seats.

Talking to media outside Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Azam Nazir Tarar pointed out that Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), without winning any seats or participating in the election, is now demanding reserved seats.

The political parties that have secured seats in the parliament are entitled to reserve seat allocations. He further said that

legal standpoint regarding reserved seats is evident and only parties with parliamentary seats will be granted reserved seats. He said that SIC didn't make PML-N party in its petition about reserved seats, while other political parties filed petitions with the Election Commission. The Commission, he said merged all the petitions concerning allocation of minority and women reserve seats.

The PML-N leader pointed out that there is a lot of discussion on the delay in allocating reserved seats, and same individuals have also asked the Election Commission to postpone the case. Ali Zafar has re-

quested more time from the EC to submit a reply by tomorrow. He further said that legal position on reserved seats is clear, and the parties which have won seats in the parliament will get reserved seats.

Speaking on the occasion, PML-N leader Atta Tarar criticized the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI), for hastily joining the Sunni Unity Council, in an attempt to secure specific seats, which goes against the Constitution.

He said that PTI's actions have led to their own downfall, as according to the Constitution and Law, holding intra-party elections could have avoided in this situation.



ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor ISRA University giving gold medal to a student during 5th Convocation 2024 of ISRA University, in the Federal Capital.

## Pakistani students to visit Japan under JENESYS Program

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: On the invitation by the Government of Japan, a group of eight Pakistani undergraduate students (four from Islamabad and three from Karachi) will be visiting Japan from March 5 to 12, 2024 under the JENESYS (Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths) program. A total of 49 youths have been invited from the SAARC countries to participate in this program which is being held under the theme of Environment. JENESYS is a youth exchange program between Japan and the Asia Pacific region launched by the Japanese Government which aims at promoting mutual trust and understanding among the peoples of Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. With focus on the theme of environment, the invites from the SAARC countries during their stay in Japan will be provided opportunities to learn and deepen further their understanding of Japan's economy, society, history, politics, and diplomatic relations, and also experience Japan's diverse culture through lectures and visits.

The Embassy of Japan held today a pre-departure

orientation session for the visiting youth to give them useful information before their departure for Japan.

While interacting with the students on the occasion, Mr. Kazumasa Takane, Counsellor / Head of Public Affairs, advised them to make optimum use of this opportunity about Japan during this short period as this may become a life changing experience for them. "Since my arrival in Pakistan last year, I have had the opportunity to meet many young people in Pakistan and have found them very energetic, talented and keen to learn about Japan and its culture. He hoped that youth from Pakistan and Japan can play the role of a bridge for further promoting mutual understanding and friendly relations between the two countries.

The Government of Japan invites every year several groups of undergraduate/graduate students from SAARC countries to participate in this short term invitation. The program is expected not only to promote capacity building but also to develop mutual understanding among youths of Japan and that of SAARC countries.



ISLAMABAD: Kazumasa Takane, Counsellor/Head of Public Affairs, in a group photo with the students at the orientation ceremony held today at the Embassy of Japan.

## IIUI, FOSPAH organize seminar on women's property rights, protection

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Office of Students' Advisor of the International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI), in collaboration with the Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for protection against harassment of women at workplace (FOSPAH), arranged an awareness seminar on women's property rights and protection against harassment at workplace on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Federal Ombudsperson for protection against harassment of women at the workplace, Fauzia Viqar said that these are high times when contri-

bution of working women must be increased to stabilize the country's economy. She mentioned that a number of the females face problems at workplace that needs to be addressed on immediate basis. Calling upon the educated females, she said, it is their responsibility to explore about their property rights and raise voice on their prerogatives that are legitimate and to ensure the implementation of laws related to harassment, it is important that affected people should raise their voices against this nuisance.

## IHC to announce decision of contempt of court case against DC on Friday

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) will announce decision of contempt of court case against Deputy Commissioner Islamabad on Friday.

IHC has withdrawn second show cause notice issued to DC Islamabad due to his absence from court in contempt of court case.

The court however rejected his plea for exemption from attendance in the court.

The miscellaneous petition of DC Islamabad came up for hearing before Justice Babar Sattar of IHC Tuesday.

DC Islamabad appeared in the court along with his counsel Raja Rizwan Abbas.

The court while accepting the plea for withdrawing show cause notice dismissed DC Islamabad plea for exemption from attendance in the court.

IHC said in its order decision is reserved which will be announced on Friday. The court said in its order the presence of the accused on the day of decision is must. The exemption plea is dismissed. Only two to three days are left, you can go abroad doubtlessly after Friday. The decision regarding contempt of court case will be announced on March 01.

## AIOU Rawalpindi shifted to main campus

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Regional Director Rawalpindi, Nasreen Akhtar Mirza Tuesday announced that the regional campus has been shifted to the University's Main Campus, Sector H-8, Islamabad.

She thanked AIOU Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Nasir Mehmood and Director General Regional Services Dr Malik Tauqeer Ahmed Khan for taking this initiative to lead in providing more facilities for students, teachers and regional staff, said a press release issued here.

Nasreen Mirza said the problems of the students related to the regional office as well as the various departments in the main campus will be easily handled and resolved on a priority basis.

"Students will be able to get access to other departments including admission, examination and syllabus department," she added.

## DC directs ACs, magistrates for complete supervision of polio teams

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Tuesday directed the Assistant Commissioners (ACs) and magistrates to actively supervise the polio teams across various subdivisions of the federal capital.

Talking to APP, the spokesman of ICT, Dr Abdullah Tabassum said that like other parts of the country, an anti-polio drive is being continued in Islamabad vaccinating children under the age of five years which commenced on February 26 and will continue till March 3.

In the inaugural phase of the campaign, the Assistant Commissioner City conducted on-site visits in the subdivision to evaluate progress and implementation strategies. This included assessments of micro-plans and target coverage, ensuring that every aspect of the vaccination effort was meticulously executed.

On the occasion, the Assistant Commissioner issued directives to the campaign teams and emphasized the importance of comprehensive coverage, particularly in areas with high rates of resistance and denial cases.

## Crackdown against illegal petrol filling stations launched

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Magistrate Secretariat on Tuesday raided at different areas in the Secretariat Sub-Division to curb the illegal activities and uphold the consumer rights.

According to the spokesman of ICT, Dr Abdullah Tabassum, the inspection was aimed at to ensure compliance with price regulations set by OGRA and maintaining accurate measuring instruments. During the inspections, he found two petrol pumps which selling petrol illegally, arresting their owners besides also sealing the pumps.



ISLAMABAD: A view of traffic stalled at the Constitution Avenue due to VVIP movement during PSL cricketer arriving at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.

## Islamabad achieves 'Zero Out-of-School Children' campaign targets

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Institute of Education on Tuesday launched a report on its campaign "Zero Out-of-School Children (ZOOSC)" in Islamabad in collaboration with JICA and the Ministry of Education and Professional Training, successfully achieving its targets.

Under this campaign, more than 70,941 children have been enrolled in schools in Islamabad, bringing the number of out-of-school children in the capital to zero.

Federal Secretary for Education Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry was the chief guest at the report launching ceremony.

Director General of Pakistan Institute of Education Dr Muhammad Shahid Sarwar, Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University Dr Nasir Mehmood, JICA represen-

tatives, and representatives of other NGOs were also present at the ceremony.

Secretary Education said the successes achieved have been documented and would help serve as a guide for the provinces in the future. He appreciated the field workers of the partner organizations working with the Ministry of Education for their fast-paced work.

He said that Islamabad was brought forward as a model and that there were many challenges at the start of the campaign as educational facilities are not equal. If any work is to be fast-tracked, the field team has a key role to play. It is difficult to achieve such good results when there are different stakeholders, he added.

Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry said that 49% of the 70,000 out-of-school

children brought to schools are girls. Two transgender schools have been opened and added that the children working in workshops and shops also have dreams, we have tried to make their dreams come true.

He said that an 18-month professional development program has been started which also includes NCHD and others, this is a journey that has been started together, and I am sure that the teachers and field workers will continue to work with the same spirit.

He said that the 11,000 children identified out of school are being brought to school through private schools.

Director General Pakistan Institute of Education Dr. Muhammad Shahid Sarwar said that Secretary Education Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry gave us a target of bringing 50,000 children to schools within two months. Under his leadership, PIE and all departments responded, we identified 81,000 out-of-school children and managed to bring 70,000 children back to schools.

He said on the instructions of the Secretary Education, we documented this campaign. A regular research report has been prepared, and no additional expenses were incurred on it.

## Solangi says: FEB&GIF clears educational-stipend claims within 45 days

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi informed the Senate on Tuesday that the claims related to the educational stipends were cleared by the Federal Employees Benevolent and Group Insurance Funds (FEB&GIF) within 45 days.

Responding to a question during the question hour in the Senate, he said that on average, 35,000 to 40,000 claims per annum were being received by the FEB&GIF for educational stipends from federal government employees.

He said that as of De-

ember 2023 and January 2024, around 4,997 claims were pending for the processing. The main reasons for this delay were twofold, he said adding first, the seasonal nature of claims, as the period from August to March was the peak time for receiving educational stipend claims due to examination results being declared from SSC to Masters during this period.

Secondly, the minister said, the shortage of staff was another factor contributing to the pendency of claims, as there were currently 94 employees working against the sanctioned strength of 127 posts in FEB&GIF.



ISLAMABAD: Children are enjoying swing at Japanese Park in the Federal Capital.

## APHC urges resolution of Kashmir dispute for lasting South Asian peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has stressed that permanent peace in South Asia hinges upon the resolution and just settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

According to Kashmir Media Service, APHC Spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas, in a statement issued in Srinagar, expressed hope that the UN Secretary-General, along with the world community, would urge India to halt its policy of military might, human rights violations, illegal detentions, and aggression against the defenseless people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Expressing satisfaction with Pakistan's role in countering India's political and military maneuvers, the spokesman criticized New Delhi's repeated betrayals, which have escalated tensions in South Asia, nearing a nuclear collision.

Condemning the ongo-

ing cordon and search operations and the arrest of seven youths by Indian troops and police personnel during house raids in Kulgam and Bandipora areas, the spokesman underscored that such actions cannot deter the people of IIOJK from their just struggle for self-determination, which will persist until achieving complete success.

## SC stops CDA from cutting trees till next hearing

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has stopped CDA from cutting trees in F-9 park Islamabad till next hearing.

The SC issued this order during the hearing of suo motu notice regarding cutting of trees by CDA in F-9 Park Islamabad.

SC issued notice to CDA, Wild life board and government on Tuesday.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa remarked nation is feeling intense need for trees and CDA is cutting trees in F-9 park.

He gave these remarks during the hearing of the case.

Registrar SC presented note regarding trees chopping to judges committee. A 3-member judges committee took notice of it declaring the matter of basic rights.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by CJP Qazi Faez Isa took up the case for hearing. The court appointed president and secretary of Press Association of SC as commission.

President Aqeel Afzal and secretary Imran Wasim have been directed to visit the park and present report.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people submitting visa forms for Korea at Manpower office.

## Phulgran police, homicide unit police teams arrested murderer

ISLAMABAD (APP): special investigation team was constituted.

The police teams utilized all available resources used technical and scientific methods and arrested the accused, namely Ali Khan and recovered murder tool 30 bore pistol from his possession, while further investigation is underway.

ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan directed all senior officials to an effective crackdown against the accused involved in criminal activities and to ensure the safety of lives and property of citizens on a priority basis. He said that the Islamabad Capital Police adopts a zero-tolerance policy against violence, including injustices and crimes.

He further said after receiving the application, the Phulgran police team registered an FIR no. 46/24. Following this incident, a



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

Wednesday February 28, 2024

## New funds

Pakistan plans to seek a new loan of \$6bn from the IMF under its Extended Fund Facility for a period of three years, Bloomberg reported last week, citing unnamed officials. Discussions with the lender on the new facility are expected to begin in March or April, following the completion of the last review of the ongoing nine-month \$3bn Stand-by Arrangement. The latter arrangement with the IMF, which is due to end soon, had helped the country avert default last summer. However, Pakistan's other creditors — multilateral, bilateral, and commercial included — have thus far been reluctant to help the nation shore up its shrinking foreign exchange reserves and improve its external sector outlook, in spite of the present IMF programme. Their reluctance is evident from the fact that only \$6.3bn in foreign loans, or 35.75pc of the annual budgeted target of \$17.6bn, in the first seven months of the present fiscal year to January, has materialised. But it was not unexpected as foreign creditors are waiting for a larger and longer arrangement between Islamabad and the Fund for medium- to long-term reform policy clarity under the elected government. Two of the three top global rating agencies, Moody's and Fitch, recently cautioned that a larger IMF package is crucial to Pakistan's longer-term economic stability and to unlock other foreign inflows to cover the country's annual financing gap of \$22-25bn for some years.

An IMF spokesperson recently said the Fund was ready, if requested, to support the post-election government through a new arrangement to address Pakistan's financing challenges. It, nevertheless, remains unclear if the authorities have started doing their homework towards a quicker conclusion of the deal — billed as being tougher than the current one — with the global lender. The government was compelled to agree to a slew of measures to cut public expenditure, impose additional taxes on corporates and salaried individuals, hike borrowing costs, increase energy rates, etc, to meet IMF goals under the ongoing loan. Coupled with the unannounced import control to curb the dollar outflow, these measures have caused the economy to contract and kept price inflation up, making matters even more difficult for struggling low-middle-income households.

It is also not apparent how far the incoming minority set-up will be ready to go to secure the IMF funds. But it is as clear as day that it would not have much room to manoeuvre while dealing with the lender of last resort, given the nation's vulnerable external position and its need for securing financing from its multilateral and bilateral partners to stabilise and grow the economy and avoid defaulting on its mounting debt. It is also clear that the new government will have no choice but to make difficult and unpopular decisions, no matter what the political costs.

Arifa Noor

The election is over, government formation underway and the uncertainty of who will govern is coming to an end. But unlike a short Hollywood film, our crisis is not about to end.

In fact, this is a long Bollywood film where one dramatic moment comes midway (interval), allowing for a smoke, a trip to the restroom and some food before the drama resumes. The fear is that the second half will be as suspenseful as the first, with little signs of a happily ever after.

Indeed, on the ground in Pakistan, the indications so far are of further friction and confrontation. This will manifest itself between the provinces, putting pressure on the federation as well as among various political actors. The country's western part is the most critical here.

Take Balochistan, for instance, where the confrontation between the province and centre has been brewing for long and recently culminated in the spectacular welcome given to Mahrang Baluch on her return from the dharna in

Islamabad. The welcome was a sign of how the ordinary Baloch viewed the manner in which the protesters, primarily women, had been 'greeted' in Islamabad.

And if this sense of alienation weren't enough, the election added fuel to the fire. The results have angered most nationalist parties, which still believed in taking part in the political process. They are now protesting — for example, the National Party, Balochistan National Party and the Hazara Democratic Party.

How the new government will address the issues is unclear, especially as there is little debate or concern for the enormity of the problem. Even if the protests fizzle out, the province has been in conflict with the centre since 2006 and the crisis-ridden polity doesn't even have the bandwidth to deal with it. If it had, some of the names circulating for chief ministership would not have come up.

In KP, the confrontation, once again, is multi-layered. The TPP's presence here remains the biggest challenge for the armed

forces and government. While attacks have come down of late, it's not clear if the trend will sustain in the coming days. Just the re-emergence of the group has added to people's anger. Second, the centre has a fractious relationship with the most popular organisations in the province — the PTM, a popular peace movement, and the PTI, which dominates the electoral landscape and will form the government. Chances are this government will also be in confrontation with the centre.

The PTI, by nominating Ali Amin Gandapur, who is alleged to have been involved in the May 9 events and is considered hawkish, has shown it is not going to blink first. The other side also appears to be in no mood to bring the temperatures down. Since Gandapur's nomination, fresh arrest warrants have been issued for him; the party's legal troubles including the battles over recounts and notification, are not going its way either.

Last, the manner in which police from Punjab were sent to KP to arrest

Aslam Iqbal also indicates a continuation of hostility. It appears as if the confrontation with KP is set to grow, not just in terms of the people and the centre but also Peshawar and Islamabad. But along with this larger faultiness, is the one within each party which will affect stability as well as governance.

Despite the PTI's strong electoral performance, the party continues to face legal and political challenges. In addition, their decision to form the government in KP and join the assemblies means there will be friction within on whether to cooperate with the centre and establishment or continue with hostilities, especially if there is no olive branch from the other side.

This is not limited to Imran Khan and his views. The party is not short on either approach. Consider the mid-tempered Barrister Gohar and Sher Afzal Marwat. And in addition, those who are not given a fair hearing or feel the party is not getting relief will be tempted to throw caution to the winds. Unfortunately, people such

as Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Salman Akram Raja, who could have provided a calming effect are out of the system for the time being.

However, this internal jostling is not limited to the PTI. The PML-N is not in a much better place. It may have won the government in Islamabad and Lahore but at great cost — its domination of central Punjab is under threat. The PTI has parked itself on GT Road in a manner that no party has been able to in recent years. And it is to push back against the PTI that PML-N was very keen to take control of Punjab again, agreeing to the poisoned chalice that is the federal government.

Now, however, the two parts of the PML-N government will be forced to work at cross purposes. The one in Punjab will want to spend money to regain its political capital, while the centre will be trying to control the fiscal deficit and spending by the provinces. In this latter task, Islamabad will have to try to not just stop Punjab but also its ally in Sindh and its rival in KP

from spending money. However, in Punjab, the challenge will be the greatest, as it may add to the tensions within the ruling family.

Indeed, the economy will continue to be the biggest variable in our politics for the short- and mid-term and will cause the greatest pressure on the system and some of the faultiness identified.

In the coming days, Islamabad and the provinces will be confronted with the decision of continuing to raise utility prices and existing taxes (which so far is the easiest of the 'difficult' decisions governments take) to making efforts to broaden the tax base and carry out privatisation.

The first, by increasing the burden on the people, will antagonise citizens in general, while considerations to impose new taxes on either the retail sector, agriculture, or property will strain relationships within parties, within allies and between the civilians and others. The second half of this desi film will not be easy viewing. -- Courtesy Dawn

# Faultiness, old and new

## Costs of calcification

Mosharruf Zaidi

If you don't understand something you cannot change it. Pakistanis are constantly bombarded with news that prompts a sense of utter helplessness and a feeling that state and society are failing.

The incident in Ichhra, the deliberate suspension of the election results reporting system on the evening of February 8, counterterrorism and counter-radicalism, macro-economic stability, routine immunization, literacy, financial inclusion — you name it: it's either breaking or broken. The systems, processes, mechanisms and institutions that Pakistanis need are not working. This sense of doom is not unfounded.

Among the many downsides of having a calcified decision-making elite — one that is completely cocooned from ordinariness or normalcy — is that decision-making is unlikely to reflect a granular awareness or understanding of what the folks in Pindi love to call 'ground realities'.

Pakistani decision-making has another additional layer of disability

(well, it has many). Decision-makers in the political realm are all in their seventies (except former president Zardari, who is a sprightly 68). The young Imran Khan is 71. The former prime minister Sharif brothers are 74 and 72 respectively. Senior judges are all in their late fifties and early sixties. Senior bureaucrats are largely the same as senior generals — in their mid to late fifties. The overwhelming number of these roles are held by men.

When this decision-making core of the country is confronted with the same information that all of us are, their understandable reaction is to look back at when the country was less dysfunctional and more capable. For most of today's decision-makers, this memory winds back to the late 1990s (or, in the case of General Musharraf romantics, the early 2000s).

So far so good — in the sense that all of this is understandable. But it starts getting tricky right about now.

In 1998, former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif was the chief minister of Punjab. Back then, when there was a problem in

Lahore, he used to rely on four key assistant commissioners to solve it. All four of those civil servants went on to become very effective and well-regarded civil servants. In 1998, then-chief minister Sharif would literally press a button, and within minutes, instructions would flow from him to one of his key assistant commissioners, and then onward to the relevant executor of instructions. If the problem was outside Lahore, the pathway would be slightly different; it would go through two or three deputy secretaries who managed his office, but the effect was largely the same. Almost instant responsiveness.

In 1998, Lahore had a population of about five million. Pakistan had a population of 130 million back then. Today, Pakistan has almost doubled in size (up to 240 million), and Lahore has almost tripled (at nearly 15 million). So the obvious, linear solution — let's say for whoever is running Punjab and interested in fixing Lahore's problems — might be to triple the number of assistant commissioners for Lahore.

This is a silly solution

(for reasons I will delineate below), but ironically, even the most simplistic solutions have not been tried. Pakistan's civil service cadres have grown since 1998, but their rate of growth, especially in urban areas and especially in highly sensitive domains (like district administration, policing, and local intelligence) has been dramatically lower than population growth.

The problem here (and the problem the PML-N and PPP have been facing for over a decade now, and the problem these parties faced on February 8) is that a dramatic increase in population is not a linear proposition. Pakistan did not grow from 130 million to 240 million by just adding a bunch of numbers. Lahore didn't triple in 'size' or complexity — it tripled in terms of the number of people breathing, the number of people defecating, the number of people getting married (and divorced), and the number of people trying to get from one place to another.

For a major vector or indicator, the size of Lahore tripled, but this means that the cumulative effect of a tripling of the population of Lahore is that a high num-

ber of things happening has essentially tripled — not just the one thing (of people being born). This means that the network effect of a doubling (countrywide) or tripling (in Lahore) of the population is not a tripling of everything on the board but a much larger quantum of change.

Lahore is a good example of what has happened to Pakistan because, in addition to population or demography, it also manifests the other major and obvious change that has occurred in the country: urbanization. Large swaths of what used to be treated as rural are still treated as rural or at a minimum, 'non-urban'. But large swaths of Lahore and the cities around Lahore are in fact urban centers — and in many ways, Lahore has begun to signify the clustering nature of urban growth — so that Lahore is at the heart of a rapidly emerging cluster of urban centers. It is, despite lacking many facets of what a megalopolis is, a supercity. A supercity run with a system designed for a small town.

People like me have celebrated those one-offs — in the moment, and across

time and space — because even on-off delivery has become so rare and distinctive. But make no mistake, double-digit inflation each month, a mob wanting to lynch a woman in Ichhra, climate-induced rural-to-urban migration, contaminated water, uncertain and vulnerable food supply chains, global lows in labour force participation rates, global highs in illiteracy, and in cross-class, cross-sectional malnutrition — these are not problems that can be tackled in a system that celebrates one-off public administration wins.

Pakistan's decision-making elite has neither the language, nor the people, nor the fundamental awareness of the interconnectedness and mutually reinforcing nature of the problems Pakistanis contend with every day. An expectation of reform from a decision-making elite that is not even aware of what problems need solving and why reform is necessary is to live in a fool's paradise. The tragedy is this is no paradise. May Allah protect and guide Pakistan's decision-makers. -- Courtesy TheNews

## Flawed climate policy

Ajaz Ahmed

Notwithstanding Pakistan's marginal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions and the country's greater vulnerability to climate change-driven natural disasters, policymakers seem preoccupied with climate mitigation, ie, GHG emission reduction. COP28 refreshed the resolve of countries to achieve the Nationally Determined Contributions; however, the NDC's focus in Pakistan is on climate mitigation. For example, the NDC document has ambitious but impractical aspirations relating to climate mitigation and cost estimates. However, it hardly makes a strong case for climate change adaptation.

In fact, most policy documents on climate change are silent on the expected returns on investment in climate adaptation and their direct and indirect benefits. While focusing on GHG emission reductions is important, Pakistan's current climate policy takes a lopsided view of climate change. Policymakers and planners must understand that what is needed is investment in climate change adaptation, which could protect against the impact of natural disasters driven by climate change.

A poor country's resource-constrained government may invest billions in critical basic infrastructure like roads, schools, and water supply. But one bout of monsoon flooding knocks down what took decades to build. Such damage aggravates the vulnerability of affected communities by impeding their access to resources and services, and results in delayed recovery.

Conversely, access

to basic services improves adaptive capacity and builds community resilience, whereas investing in climate adaptation can protect key infrastructure, resulting in mitigating loss and damage and helping avoid the cost of rebuilding. The relinquished resources in terms of avoided cost could be used for high-impact investments in areas such as human resource development.

Investing in climate adaptation is also critical to preventing the aggravation of existing socioeconomic challenges such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, gender disparity, and food insecurity. These challenges often get worse when a natural disaster hits, as the masses are pushed into poverty and hunger. However, climate resilience can save human lives in addition to reducing the economic cost of natural disasters, which cannot be achieved through focusing simply on emission reduction.

Over a third of Pakistan's population is involved in the agriculture sector, which is directly exposed to climate change-driven natural disasters, resulting in serious implications for food security and livelihood of the low-skilled rural population. The 2023 FAO report on the state of food security and nutrition says that over half of Pakistan's population suffers from moderate to severe food insecurity. This underscores the need to protect the agriculture sector against a worse food crisis.

Climate change's impact on agriculture also has serious repercussions for industry through its linkages with the sector, which uses agricultural output as an input. This affects industrial output and thereby the overall performance of the

economy. Moreover, the risk also means adverse impacts for aligned businesses such as seeds, agrochemicals, rented machinery, etc.

It is important to highlight that Pakistan has a relatively big informal economy which provides livelihood to a large fraction of low-skilled workers, who mostly comprise poor rural migrants. Climate change-driven natural disasters often destroy small businesses establishments such as roadside cafes or food stalls, resulting in the masses slipping into poverty and unemployment. One remedy is to climate-proof these small businesses. This can be helpful in the recovery and building of resilience of the domestic economy. It might require only simple actions such as training and information about climate change and extreme weather events.

Lastly, the implementation of climate adaptation has diverse possibilities from the investment point of view. For example, there are several low-cost climate-adaptation options, which could be taken up by households and local communities with minimal institutional support. The use of nature-based adaptation options for temperature and flood management, farmers' capacity development, and timely communication of disaster information are just a few examples. However, implementing climate mitigation is generally high cost and can only be financed by an institution.

It has a minimal potential for climate risk mitigation in the short run. Thus, investing in climate adaptation not only makes economic sense but is, with the more prudent use of scarce resources, also a high-value investment. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Israel's partner

Touqir Hussain

No US policy shames its professed 'value-based foreign policy' as much as its Israel policy. Washington has been effectively sitting on the sidelines in contempt of world public opinion while some 30,000 civilians, mainly women and children, have been slaughtered in Gaza.

Seventy-five years of massive US military aid and financial assistance has been the bedrock of Israel's national power. America's absolute political support, especially its wilful advocacy at the UN, has shielded Israel from punishment for its wrongs, inciting more offences and more US support. Why should the US not be considered complicit in Israel's inhumanity in Gaza?

We are mistaken if we attribute Washington's iron-clad support simply to the work of the Israel lobby (AIPAC). Israel is embedded in America's body politic, where its influence is pervasive and deep-rooted. Granted Washington needs a reliable ally to look after its strategic and economic interests in the Middle East. But over the decades, a bevy of high-profile Israel sympathisers in the think tank community, media and financial world have exaggerated Israel's value as an ally and its vulnerability in the region, to make a case for the policy of endless US support and the risks of putting pressure on Israel.

Not just the executive branch but Congress as well has been over-committed to Israel as pressures of public opinion, largely formed by Israel sympathisers and their Christian right ally, and the lure of campaign funding, orchestrated by AIPAC, have hypnotised American politicians. Policy and politics have

aligned to enhance American support for Israel and diminish Washington's leverage. It is complete confidence in this support that has incited Israel's intransigence.

The blanket US protection and sympathy thus given have enabled Israel to violate Palestinian rights for its unrestrained expansionist policies — without any political cost. Acclaimed Harvard professor Stephen Walt summarised this well in his article 'America is a Root Cause of Israel and Palestine's Latest War' in Foreign Policy.

The Gaza conflict has brought little change to the US position. Joe Biden, known to be the most pro-Israel president ever, has no empathy for the Palestinians. He is taking a minimalist approach by focusing only on the humanitarian issue, and even here, he is not putting enough pressure on Israel. He is fighting a tough election where he is under siege on many fronts: immigration, economy and perceived weakness in meeting foreign policy challenges.

In this fraught environment, the last thing Biden wants is to alienate the majority of voters by pressuring Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu will not yield to pressure anyway, hoping it will cause Biden to lose the Muslim vote in key swing states, and thus lose to Trump, his preferred choice. He may prolong the war till the elections.

To escape the dilemma of whether or not to put pressure on Israel, Biden is seeking Saudi help to hold out the promise of normalisation with Israel to get Netanyahu's support for the two-state solution. The Saudis are not going to oblige without an irrevocable process

of establishing a Palestinian home. And Netanyahu is not interested in normalisation. He has added the tragic events of Oct 7 to Israel's long list of alibis to deny the Palestinians their rights and to resume his expansionist policies with a vengeance.

Moves in Congress by progressive politicians in the Democratic Party to attach conditions to aid to Israel in the Foreign Affairs Act will not succeed. Even if it does, such conditions can always be waived by the president. Only the threat of unilateral US action will work. That won't happen, not in an election year.

America does not realise how much influence it would have had in the region and the larger Muslim world had it not appended itself to Israeli expansionism. Washington's ability to shape and influence events in the region is now challenged by China, menaced by Iran, rivalled by India and hindered by Saudi Arabia. On many issues, America is walking alone.

Both the US and Israel are locked in policies that are not only morally bankrupt but also go against their respective national interests. The Palestinian future depends on a change of policies within the US and Israel. It will be a different America and Israel where this change takes place. In America, policies have to recover the moral purpose the US always claimed but rarely measured up to. In Israel, as the Haaretz editor-in-chief said in a recent article in Foreign Affairs, "Israelis cannot expect stability if they continue to ignore the Palestinians and reject their aspirations, their story, and even their presence". -- Courtesy Dawn



## Nawab of Bahawalpur benefactor of Pakistan, rendered invaluable services for the country: Baligh

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman attended the unveiling ceremony of the portrait of Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Abbasi, Nawab of Bahawalpur, in recognition of his services at King Edward Medical University today as a special guest. The guest of honour Commissioner Bahawalpur Dr. Ehtesham, Vice Chancellor King Edward Medical University Prof. Mahmood Ayaz, Pro Vice Chancellor KEMU, Prof. Ijaz Hussain, Chief Executive Officer Mayo Hospital Prof. Ahsan Nauman, Prof. Saira Afzal, Prof. Muhammad Moeen and a large number of faculty members were present in the ceremony. After unveiling the

portrait of the Nawab of Bahawalpur, the Punjab Governor while addressing a ceremony said that the Nawab of Bahawalpur was the benefactor of Pakistan and he rendered invaluable services for the country especially in the fields of health and education. Governor Punjab said that Nawab of Bahawalpur also played a very important role in the establishment of Pakistan. He added that Nawab of Bahawalpur established Bahawalpur House and Mosque in Aitchison College. He further stated that after the Maharaja of Patiala, Nawab of Bahawalpur contributed the most in the construction of King Edward's Patiala Block. He said that Nawab of Bahawalpur's inclusion of Bahawalpur in Pakistan

was a great decision. He said that there are many examples of Nawab of Bahawalpur in subcontinent and Punjab in the fields of education, health and public welfare. He said that it has always been a matter of pride for him to come to King Edward Medical University. He further said he made very first visit to King Edward Medical University as Chancellor. He stated that this institution has the oldest and most prominent position in medical education and research. Governor Punjab said that his grandfather was also a graduate of this institution. He further said that Dr. Maqbool Ahmed is an example for the alumni of King Edward Medical University.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman unveiling the portrait of Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Abbasi, Nawab of Bahawalpur, in recognition of his services at King Edward Medical University.

## NAB distributes cheques of Rs 1.67 bln among Pak Arab Housing victims

LAHORE (APP): National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Lahore, in a ceremony held on Tuesday, distributed cheques worth Rs 1.67 billion to the affectees of the Pak Arab Housing scandal. NAB Deputy Chairman Sohail Nasir and Director General Lahore Amjad Majeed Olakh were the chief guests of the ceremony. Lahore Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) Director General Sohail Zafar Chattha, Secretary Mines and Minerals and senior officers of NAB and hundreds of affectees attended the ceremony. Addressing the ceremony, Sohail Nasir, Deputy Chairman NAB, highlighted that the bureau's primary objective is to serve the nation and the country. He

emphasized that common people are beneficiaries of NAB policies, enabling them to recover their plundered money. He mentioned that NAB Lahore is actively recovering looted funds from 2,226 affectees of the Pak Arab Housing scandal. He added that the case, which surfaced in 2018, is nearing its conclusion due to the swift measures taken by the bureau. Sohail Nasir announced that in cases of complaints against bureaucrats, NAB would refrain from directly summoning them to its bureau. Instead, an independent complaint cell has been established under the supervision of the Chief Secretary at the Civil Secretariat to address such concerns in a fair and impartial manner. He added provision of cordial business atmosphere to the business community of the country is the top priority.



RAWALPINDI: Volunteers of Pakistan Sweet Home organized blood donation camp at Murree Road People Donating Blood for thalassemia patients.

## 37 dams constructed, designs of seven projects completed in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): To avert floods and waste of rainy water, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government constructed 37 small and medium dams while 24 are being built in different rivers and water channels while designs of seven dams completed in the province. The Directorate of Small Dams of the Irrigation Department's spokesman told APP on Tuesday that 37 small and medium dams were constructed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including 15 operated by the provincial government and 11 supervised by WAPDA. Similarly, 19 dams were constructed in merged districts having 0.1377 million-acre cultivated (CCA) and 0.3414 Acres Feet (AF) water storage capacity. He said 24 small

dams with accumulative water storage capacity of 75,008 AF having 49,523 acres CCA were being built in different districts of KP under the Federal government's PSDP program. Besides completion of Pezu dam in Lakki Marwat, Khattak Bandhan dam in Kohat, and Makh Banda dam in Karak by the federal government, he said Ichar and Manchura dams at Mansehra, Chashma Akora Khel dam in Karak, Sarozai dam in Hangu, Sanam dam in Lower Dir, Bada dam and Ulta dam in Swabi were also constructed jointly by the federal and provincial governments. Similarly, seven medium dams including Bara dam in Khyber, Tank Zam in Tank, Shiekh Haider Zam.

## Shopkeeper looted in day light

**By Adeel Ahmed**  
SHIKARPUR: One Kiryana merchant was looted in most rushy area of Dakhan on Tuesday. According to reports that some group of two motorcyclists intercepted the one kiryana merchant shop at Bus Stand Dakhan and deprived the shopkeeper Muhammad Bachal Hujan from cash about rupees 02 lac on gun point and easy managed their good step while gearing up their motorcycle easily without any fear of Law enforcement Agencies. No FIR was registered till late evening. Further police investigation into the matter is in process, Dakhan police added.

## Court awards death sentence in murder case

RAWALPINDI (APP): A district and sessions Court on Tuesday awarded death sentence to an accused in a murder case. According to a Police spokesman, the accused Muhammad Nasser had killed the victim Wahid Sajjad over a minor dispute. After recording witnesses from both sides, the court also imposed a fine of Rs 800,000 on the convict. A case was registered against the convict at the Taxila Police Station in 2022.

## DHA accident: ATC extends judicial remand of teenage driver

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday extended judicial remand of Afnan, an underage driver involved in a car accident that resulted in the tragic death of six family members in Defence, for another 13 days. Earlier, the police produced the accused before ATC Judge Arshad Javed and requested to extend his judicial remand. The police submitted that the challan (Charge-Sheet) was in final stage of the preparations and it would be filed soon after removing prosecution's objections. At this, the court extended the judicial remand of the teenage driver for another 13 days and ordered for producing him on March 11. Defence C police had registered a case against Afnan which revolves around charges of recklessly crashing his high-speed car into another vehicle.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (Retd) Syed Arshad Hussain during a farewell meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

## Public confidence increasing on Wafaqi Mohtasib: Qureshi

**Independent Report**  
FAISALABAD: Number of complaints filed with the office of Federal Ombudsman has recorded a phenomenal increase due to the confidence of people enjoyed by this institution, said Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, Federal Ombudsman.

Addressing a meeting in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) here on Tuesday, he said that during last year the federal ombudsman office resolved 194,000 complaints in addition to submitting 27 recommendations to provide free justice at doorsteps of the masses. He said that 150,000

Wafaqi Mohtasib was receiving only 20,000 complaints while its number has now jumped to 194,000 and it is expected to cross the limit of 2 to 2.5 lacs within the next year. These complaints are positively resolved within 60 days while the percentage of resolved complaints is 99.9%, he added. He said that 9 million expatriates are sending precious foreign exchange of \$ 30 bn per annum and efforts have been made to solve their problems on top priority basis. He said that 150,000

complaints are also included in the total complaints resolved by this office. Appeals against the decisions of the federal ombudsman could be lodged with the President of Pakistan but its percentage is hardly 0.4%, he added. He said that article 34 is being exploited to resolve the complaints which could not fall within the purview of the federal ombudsman. "In this connection Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanism has been evolved", he said and added that the consent of both parties is imperative for this system.

## Money laundering case: LHC issues bailable arrest warrants of Moonis Elahi's wife

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday issued bailable arrest warrants of Tehreem Elahi, the wife of former federal minister Moonis Elahi, and co-accused, Saira Anwar, over non-appearance in a petition for their bail cancellation in money laundering case. The division bench, headed by Justice Shehram Sarwar Chaudhry, heard the petition filed by prosecution for bail cancellation of Rasikh Elahi, Tehreem Elahi and other accused in money laundering case. The bench adjourned further hearing till March 18. The prosecution had approached for bail cancellation of the accused, stating that the trial court awarded bail in violation of law. It pleaded with the court to cancel the bail granted to the accused. A sessions court had granted bail to Rasikh Elahi, Tehreem Elahi and other accused in a case registered by the Federal investigation Agency (FIA).

## Outgoing caretaker CM presented guard of honour

KARACHI (APP): The Outgoing Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar was presented a guard of honour here at the Chief Minister House on Tuesday. The Guard of Honour, which is part of the farewell ceremony was attended by the Sindh Chief Secretary Dr. Fakhre Alam, Provincial Secretaries, Additional IGP Karachi and other senior officers. The Caretaker Chief Minister received the salute by the active police cops. The Caretaker CM Baqar thanked all of the officers and staff of CM.



FAISALABAD: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi is inaugurating project of Sylani Welfare Center's Computer Lab main Markaz Lal Mills Chowk.

## Punjab Ombudsman provides relief to 53 petitioners

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab Ombudsman Major @ Azam Suleman Khan had cleared the outstanding dues of the 53 petitioners to provide relief to the civil employees and citizens of the province. According to the details, on the orders of the Ombudsman Punjab Major @ Azam Suleman Khan, Punjab Government Servants had created the Valant Fund Board comprising the Secretary Punjab Workers Welfare Board, Secretary Labor and Human Resources

Department Punjab, Welfare Fund Board, District Monitoring Officer Education and Punjab Social Protection Authority in various districts. More than 758,000 rupees had been provided to 53 petitioners whose cases including educational scholarships, farewell grants, death grants, monthly grants and marriage grants were pending due to various reasons for long. Educational grants worth Rs. 852,000 were also provided to the 22 citizens.

## ANF seizes over one ton drugs in seven operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover over one ton drugs and arrested nine accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 1 kg Ice drug and 766 grams heroin were recovered from the possession of a passenger going to Bahrain at Faisalabad Airport. 969 grams Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Doha at Peshawar Airport. In the third operation, 192 kg hashish was recovered from an accused netted near Burhan Interchange.



HYDERABAD: Activists of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) are holding protest demonstration against alleged rigging in General Election 2024, at Hyderabad press club.

## Speakers seek state, society role in keeping youngsters from drug addiction

DIR LOWER (APP): Vice Chancellor University of Malakand (UoM), Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad has said that our young generation is exposed to a variety of dangerous drugs and it is the collective responsibility of the state and society to play their role to get rid of the menace of the drug addiction. He was addressing a seminar on "The Changing Landscape of Drug Abuse in Pakistan: Exploring Recent Trends & Challenges Faced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" here at UoM on Tuesday. He said that the younger generation, which makes up more than 60%

of the population, has the potential to actually turn Pakistan into a wealthy country provided they are equipped with contemporary information. Guest speaker Prof Dr Johar Ali, Dean of Social Sciences University of Peshawar informed participants of the seminar that there are seven million drug addicts in the country. Every year, about 250,000 people die in Pakistan because of drug-related issues. Prof Dr Johar Ali added that the increasing number of addicts is a huge burden on the fragile healthcare system of the country.



PESHAWAR: Traffic warden making driving licenses through DL-Van for journalists in front of Press Club.

## Nominated CM Gandapur assures to resolve issues in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Elected parliamentarians from Peshawar met with nominated Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Tuesday to discuss development projects and election irregularities. The delegation, led by PTI district president and newly elected member of the National Assembly Arbab Sher Ali, discussed allegations of blatant irregularities in one National Assembly seat and eight Provincial

Assembly seats in Peshawar and demanded a judicial inquiry against the Returning Officers involved in apparent malpractices. The delegation informed the nominated Chief Minister about various issues in Peshawar and developmental projects. Ali Amin Gandapur assured the delegation of resolving all issues of Peshawar on a top priority basis.

## PFA all set to launch 'Eat Safe; Healthy Kids drive'

LAHORE: As per the vision of Chief Minister Punjab, the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) is all set to launch the 'Eat Safe; Healthy Kids Campaign' in private and public schools of Punjab from March 1. PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid said that the campaign aims to educate school-going children about making nutritious food choices right from childhood. The PFA team consisting of expert nutritionists will also give guidance on it to teachers and parents. He said that PFA will launch this campaign from the National Nutrition Month of March across the districts of the Punjab province step by step. He said that the authority will encourage children to eat healthy food through painting, drawing and

storytelling. Moreover, PFA will also target school-going children for their medical screening and nutrition training. He said that the teams will conduct medical tests of children and employees regarding body mass index, weight, skeletal muscle mass and height free of cost. He further said teachers and parents will also be trained to eat healthy and nutritious food daily for the good health of children. Muhammad Asim said that promoting a healthy lifestyle is the top priority of the Punjab Food Authority. He said that PFA will ensure the availability of nutritious food everywhere from street food to school canteens for children. "If today's children are healthy, tomorrow's future will be bright," he said.



HARIPUR: People rescue victims of a passenger bus accident at a road, as a passenger bus fell into a ravine in Sarbrot area of Haripur, more than 12 people died and 15 people were injured.

## Polio drops administered to 316,357 children

FAISALABAD (APP): Polio vaccine drops were administered to 316,357 children during first day of weeklong anti-polio drive in Faisalabad. After chairing a meeting of District Polio Eradication Committee, Deputy Commissioner Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh said here on Tuesday that polio teams are active across the district and they are paying door-to-door visit to vaccinate maximum number of children up to the age of five years. He said that anti polio campaign would continue up to Sunday (March 03, 2024) and 316,357 children

were vaccinated against polio on first day whereas the polio teams would try their optimum best to surpass the set target of the weeklong drive. He said that performance of polio teams would be reviewed on daily basis at Tehsil level so that desired results of the drive could be achieved. He said that monitoring officers were also active in the field whereas assistant commissioners were also directed to recheck implementation on micro-plan of campaign so that no child could be left without vaccination.



## CPEC new phase focuses on industrial cooperation, agriculture: Ambassador

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan and China have decided to start a new phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with a lot of focus on industrial cooperation, agriculture, mining and energy.

Last year marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative.

"Having drawn from the excellent progress that was made during the first 10 years of this corridor, both China and Pakistan have decided to start the new phase with a lot of focus on industrial cooperation and agriculture, as well as mining and energy, (with) a renewed focus on renewable energy," he told China Daily.

Beyond that, in the

second phase of CPEC, the two elements of high-quality development and the sustainable nature of the projects will get sharper focus, he said.

"Going forward, we are very excited to start the next phase, building on the very good progress that has been made," Hashmi said. "We have all the ingredients in place", including good-quality infrastructure, he said.

"These are areas which we also find alignment with, so both Pakistan and China agreed to pursue the next phase along these lines," Hashmi said.

Hailing China's global vision, he said the global visions proposed by China, including the Belt and Road Initiative and the concept of building a

community with a shared future for mankind, underscore Beijing's goal of universal prosperity and sharing high-quality development with the rest of the world.

They "demonstrate the notion of win-win that President Xi Jinping has emphasized for a long time", he added.

Hashmi noted that at the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in October, Xi announced an eight-point agenda in relation to the Belt and Road Initiative and that the global community lauds the program as it advances "innovation in development, livelihoods, open economy, (and) compliance with internationally accepted standards when building new projects".



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkmenistan H.E. Atadjan Movlamov called on Interim Federal Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali.

## PCJCCI advocates for Karachi coastal project under CPEC to boost Pakistan's economy

LAHORE (APP): The inclusion of Karachi Coastal Comprehensive Development Zone (KCCDZ) project in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will boost Pakistan's economy and enhance industrial and development cooperation between Pakistan and China, covering a total area of about 930 hectares, of which 640 hectares are reclaimed, the environment-friendly KCCDZ envisages four new berths for the Karachi Port Trust (KPT).

Pakistan-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki expressed these views in a think-tank session held here at PCJCCI Secretariat on Tuesday.

Ghurki said that mega

project, being built with an expected investment of USD 3.5 billion, would also house a state-of-the-art fishing port, with a world-class fisheries export processing zone to boost the country's trade potential. The project, he added, would also build up the confidence of global investors towards the country and its entire ecosystem for providing and offering a lucrative environment to set up businesses and gain profits. Furthermore, it has the potential to boost industrial cooperation between Pakistan and China due to its proximity with Karachi, the financial hub of Pakistan.

PCJCCI Senior Vice President Fang Yulong termed the project a game-changer for Pakistan; the coastal development

project would bring Karachi at par with developed port cities of the world. The project would present opportunities for investors and also help clean up marine habitats for fishermen and develop 20,000 low-income housing units.

He asserted that KCCDZ is the first of its kind under the CPEC, which reflects the commitment of Pakistan and China to forge high-quality cooperation to improve people's livelihoods.

"It will take Pakistan's economy to the next level of prosperity by attracting foreign direct investment, generating employment and revenue, boosting exports and promoting regional and global connectivity," he observed.

## Sunova Solar to revolutionize Pak's energy landscape via cutting-edge solar products

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Sunova Solar, a global leader in renewable energy solutions, set the stage for a paradigm shift in the country's energy sector with the introduction of cutting-edge Tier-1 Solar products in a momentous event held in Lahore, Pakistan.

The groundbreaking unveiling showcased Sunova Solar's commitment to driving innovation and shaping a

dazzled with anticipation. Attendees were captivated by the unveiling of two incredible modules boasting power ranges of up to 590 W and an astonishing 705 W respectively. These cutting-edge modules aren't just about raw power – they represent a leap forward in sustainability with their double-glass, bifacial design. Imagine harnessing the power of sunlight not only from above but also from below,



sustainable future for Pakistan's energy needs. Over 260 esteemed guests, including industry luminaries like Mr. Tauseef, former chairman of NEPRA, and the visionary Usama Khalid Malik, Director of Strategic Projects, gathered to witness the unveiling of Sunova Solar's groundbreaking innovations. Under the guiding light of Vincent Zhou, the dynamic CEO of Sunova Solar, the event

thanks to ingenious light reflection technology! But the excitement didn't stop there. Sunova Solar also introduced a game-changing bifacial 615 W module, engineered to perfection with its sleek rectangle cells, delivering unparalleled power generation performance. With Pakistan's burgeoning market for renewable energy solutions, Sunova Solar's offerings couldn't have come at a better time.

## OGDCL earns Rs123.296 bln profit in first half of FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on Tuesday announced the financial results for the first half of the current fiscal year ended on December 31, 2023 (July-December), posting a profit of Rs123.296 billion.

"Net sales revenue clocked at Rs.235.375 billion translating to Profit after tax of Rs123.296 billion and earnings per share of Rs28.67," the OGDCL said in a news release.

The company's Board of Directors (BoD) announced the first interim cash dividend to shareholders at the rate of Rs2.50 per share. "This is in addition to the interim dividend already paid @ Rs.1.60 per share i.e. 16 percent to its shareholders."

The company said

the dividend would be paid to the shareholders whose names will appear in the Register of Members on March 11, 2024.

During the period under review, OGDCL paid Rs35.019 billion on account of Taxation. On the exploration and development side company recorded significant enhancement in seismic efforts and drilling activities.

The Share Transfer Books of the Company will be closed from March 12 to 14 (both days inclusive). Transfers received at the CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block "B", S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi 74400 at the close of business on March 11, 2024, will be treated in time for the purpose of above entitlement to the transferees.



FAISALABAD: Acting President FCCI Dr Sajjad Arshad is presenting FCCI shield to Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi during his visit to Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI).

## Karachi Gateway Terminal Businessmen shocked at three-fold increase in charges: Saquib

**Independent Report**  
KARACHI: Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, has apprised that the business, industry and trade community is in the state of shock and disbelief at three-fold increase in container terminal charges since Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited (KGTL) has taken over the management of container terminal at Karachi Port's East Wharf. Previously, charges were PKR. 150 per metric ton and they have been raised to PKR. 480 per metric ton, he added.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, strongly demanded that KGTL should rationalize their rates with immediate effect; and, any future raise should be announced 2-3 months in advance. Additionally, they should not operate in a vacuum in a consultation-less manner.

It is pertinent that Mr. Khurram Aziz Khan, CEO of Karachi Gateway Terminal Limited (KGTL), visited FPCCI Head Office in Karachi to interact and get feedback of the business community over their services and charges at Karachi Port.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon stressed that shipping lines and container terminals need to be brought under a strong and effective regulatory authority to put an end to exploitation of importers and exporters at their hands. Trade is the backbone of any economy and traders cannot be left at the mercy of container terminals, he added. Mr. Asif Sakhi, VP FPCCI, categorically maintained that FPCCI is keeping all options and forums at its disposal as the apex body to resolve the issues.

## Energy Minister, Turkmenistan ambassador discuss progress of TAPI

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Energy, Muhammad Ali, and Ambassador of Turkmenistan, Atadjan Movlamov, on Tuesday discussed the progress of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) project.

During the meeting, both sides expressed satisfaction with the progress of the project, said a news release.

The minister said that Pakistan was focusing on piped gas and considers it crucial to meet the energy needs of the country.

The ambassador also expressed resolve to continue the engagement on the project. The meeting discussed avenues of cooperation in the energy sector between both the countries.

## Awareness session on "Benefits of Edible Oil Fortification" held

FAISALABAD (APP): An awareness session titled "Benefits of Edible Oil Fortification, Vitamin A and D deficiency in Pakistan, use of Open and Unrefined Oil and its adverse effects on health" was organized in collaboration with Nutrition International and Punjab Food Authority, here on Tuesday.

The program was attended by representatives of edible oil mills, biscuit manufacturing companies, hotels and marquettes.

Zonal Manager Food Fortification Program Mohammad Irfan explained about the fortification program and adverse effects of loose or unrefined oil.

He said that more than half of the women and children population in Pakistan are facing deficiency in micronutrients.

The deficiencies of iron, vitamins A and D are on the top, he added. He said that fortification is simple but practical method to meet the nutrition elements in the food. It makes the presence of vitamins and minerals possible at a minimum cost.

He said that Punjab Food Authority is utilizing all its resources to ensure food safety and fortification of edible oil.

He said that sale of loose and unrefined oil is prohibited as it causes various deadly diseases.

## Rupee sheds 07 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Tuesday weakened by 07 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.27 against the previous day's closing of Rs 279.20.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.3 and Rs 282.2, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 87 paise to close at Rs 303.18 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.31, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs185, whereas an increase of 54 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound.

## LCCI demands withdrawal of power tariff hike

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Tuesday urged the government to withdraw the recent hike in electricity tariff as the industry especially export-oriented unit are unable to afford hike in the price of their basic input for production.

The LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt said in a media statement here that National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has jacked up the power tariff by Rs. 7.05 per unit on account of fuel charges adjustment (FCA).

They said that repeated hike in power tariff is hitting exports and local businesses, while the majority of businessmen have been sent electricity bills many times more than their monthly income. Electricity is the main input for the industries, if its tariff is not lowered, the manufacturing sector will be destroyed completely thus turning the country into mere a trading place, they remarked.

The LCCI office-bearers mentioned that power tariff in Pakistan is already high compared to other regional countries and Pakistani products will altogether be out of competition in the international market.

## PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 86 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 86.83 points, a negative change of 0.14 percent, closing at 63,219.10 points against 63,305.93 points the previous trading day.

A total of 409,962,895 shares valuing Rs 14.675 billion were traded during the day as compared to 452,868,834 shares valuing Rs16.491 billion the last day.

Some 355 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 111 of them recorded gains and 223 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 21 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were B.O.Punjab with 47,571,335 shares at Rs 6.27 per share.



Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, is presenting the commemorative shield to Mr. Khurram Aziz Khan, CEO KGTL. Mr. Asif Inam & Mr. Asif Sakhi, VPs FPCCI; Mr. Shakil Ahmed Dhingra, former VP FPCCI and other prominent business personalities were also present on the occasion.

## Jordan keens to expand trade relations with Pakistan: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jordanian Ambassador Dr Maen Khreasat on Tuesday said that his country was keen to expand its trade ties with Pakistan through enhanced bilateral cooperation across various economic sectors, which would be mutually beneficial for both countries.

Talking to the business community at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, he said that Jordan and Pakistan could cooperate in many areas, including tourism, information technology (IT), sports, vocational training for youth, agriculture and others.

There was a good potential for cooperation between the women entrepreneurs of both countries to achieve mutual profits, he added.

Dr Maen Khreasat said that the bilateral trade volume of around \$50 million between Jordan and Pakistan was much less

than the actual potential.

The two countries, he stressed, should establish direct air links to promote strong connectivity between their private sectors to explore all untapped areas of bilateral business and investment cooperation.

The envoy said that Pakistani investors could invest in the real estate sector of Jordan and assured that he would cooperate in developing business linkages between the private sectors of both countries to increase bilateral trade and economic relations.

Speaking on the occasion, ICCI Vice President Engineer Azhar ul Islam Zafar said that Pakistan and Jordan enjoyed cordial relations that should be transformed into growing trade and economic relations to achieve mutual benefits for their economies.

He said that Pakistan produced many quality products.

## LESCO detects 57,806 power pilferers in 167 days

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 57,806 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) in 167 day of grand anti-power theft campaign.

The LESCO spokesman told media here Tuesday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves, out of which 53,333 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations, while 17,666 accused have been arrested. The LESCO has so far charged a total of 76,659,409 detection units worth Rs 2,934,186,637 to all the power pilferers. Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer.

## PIEDMC briefs French Consul on investment opportunities in Punjab

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Consul of France, Andre de Busey has visited Punjab Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (PIEDMC), and was briefed by its top management about the foreign investment, business opportunities and the facilities being provided to industrialists in Punjab.

The company's spokesman told media here Tuesday that PIEDMC Chairman Javed Iqbal welcomed the visiting dignitary and the company's Chief

Executive Officer (CEO) Ali Muazzam Syed gave a detailed briefing about the facilities and one-window services being provided in the industrial zones under the PIEDMC.

On this occasion, the Chairman invited the French companies to invest in the PIEDMC-administered industrial zones to get the best facilities. Javed Iqbal said, "There are vast opportunities to do export-based business in Pakistan especially in Punjab. The PIEDMC is providing the best facilities to domestic and foreign industrialists."



MULTAN: Vendor displaying tomato bags for bidding at Vegetable Market.

## UAF Gur Mela attracts large number of locals

FAISALABAD (APP): A large number of locals thronged the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) when it kicked off Gur and Cultural Mela to highlight different colors of rural life, dishes of Gur (Jaggery) and traditional foods in addition to providing entertainment and recreational facilities to the masses here on Tuesday.

Senior Tutor Office UAF in collaboration with Agri Tourism Club and Pak-US Alumni Network North Punjab Chapter organized

the event at the UAF Agri Heritage Museum.

UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan inaugurated the Mela with progressive farmer Mushtaq Minhas, Engineer Jawed Salim Qureshi, Dr Najma Afzal, Director Research Dr Jafar Jaskani, Senior Tutor Dr Shoukat Ali, Director Farms Dr Shahid Ibne Zamir, Dr Umair Gull, Dr Fahad Rasool, Dr Irfan Afzal, Dr Nadeem Akbar, Dr Naveed, Urfah Ben Tahir, and others were also present on the occasion.



LAHORE: Visitors take keen interest at stalls during Clothes Exhibition in connection of the 1st Business Plan Competition 2024 organized by Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design, held at Johar Town in Lahore.



# Declare Israel's occupation illegal, Arab states urge ICJ

**Monitoring Desk**  
THE HAGUE: Arab states urged international judges on Monday to rule the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories illegal and Turkiye described the occupation as "the real obstacle to peace" on the final day of hearings in a case examining its legal status.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has been hearing arguments from more than 50 states following a request by the UN General Assembly in 2022 to issue a non-binding opinion on the legal consequences of the Israeli occupation.

On the sixth and last day of hearings, Turkiye's Deputy Foreign Minister Ahmet Yildiz told judges the occupation was the root cause of conflict in the region.

"The unfolding situation after October 7 proves once again that, without addressing the root cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there can be no peace in the region," he said, describing the occupation of Palestinian territories as "the real obstacle to peace" and urging the judges to declare it illegal.

Israel, which is not taking part in the hearings, has said the court's involvement could be harmful to achieving a negotiated settlement, calling the questions posed to the court prejudicial. Palestinian factions have also come under international pressure to end their own divisions over their response to Israel's occupation, the war in Gaza and what political system might follow it.

Earlier on Monday, the Arab League's secretary general Ahmed Aboul Gheit described the occupation as "an affront to international justice" in a statement read out by a representative.

The League called upon the ICJ, also known as the World Court, to "confirm the illegality of this occupation and unambiguously rule on the legal consequences for all parties, especially those who turn a blind eye, facilitate, assist, or participate in any way in perpetuating this illegal situation".

Last week, Palestinian representatives asked the judges to declare Israel's occupation of their territory illegal and said the court's opinion could help reach a two-state solution to decades of Israeli-Palestinian conflict that has now devastated Gaza.



Director general of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala addresses delegates during a session on fisheries subsidies during the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi.

## Sweden clears last hurdle as Hungary okays Nato accession

**Monitoring Desk**  
B U D A P E S T / S T O C K H O L M : Hungary's parliament approved Sweden's Nato accession on Monday, clearing the last hurdle before the historic step by the Nordic country whose neutrality lasted through two world wars and the simmering conflict of the Cold War.

Hungary's vote ended months of delays to complete Sweden's security policy shift and followed a visit by Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson on Friday during which the two countries signed an arms deal.

"Today is a historic day," Kristersson said on X. "Sweden stands ready to shoulder its responsibility for Euro-Atlantic security." Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government has faced pressure from Nato allies to fall in line and seal Sweden's accession to the alliance.

Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg immediately welcomed Hungary's move. "Sweden's membership will make us all stronger and safer," he said on X. Stockholm abandoned its non-alignment policy for greater safety within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

## Jordan air-drops aid into Gaza

**Monitoring Desk**  
AMMAN: The Jordanian army on Monday said it had carried out a series of humanitarian aid drops of food and other supplies into the besieged Gaza Strip, one of them by a French army plane.

Jordanian forces made "four air drops carrying aid for the people of Gaza", under the directive of Jordanian King Abdullah II, a statement said.

The operation came on the same day that two human rights groups accused Israel of further limiting humanitarian aid into Gaza — where the UN has warned of famine — despite an order from the UN's top court.

## New Zealand set to scrap world-first tobacco ban

**Monitoring Desk**  
W E L L I N G T O N (Internews): New Zealand will repeal on Tuesday a world-first law banning tobacco sales for future generations, the government said, even while researchers and campaigners warned of the risk that people could die as a result.

Set to take effect from July, the toughest anti-tobacco rules in the world would have banned sales to those born after Jan. 1, 2009, cut nicotine content in smoked tobacco products.

## Russian court jails veteran activist Oleg Orlov for 2.5 years

**Monitoring Desk**  
M O S C O W : A Russian court on Tuesday sentenced top human rights campaigner Oleg Orlov to two and a half years in jail for denouncing Russia's assault on Ukraine.

The 70-year-old, a key figure of the Nobel Prize-winning Memorial group, is the latest target of Kremlin repression, which has intensified since the of-

fensive in Ukraine.

"The court has determined Orlov's guilt and orders a sentence of two years and six months [...] in a general regime penal colony," the judge said.

Orlov was accused of discrediting the Russian army in a column written for the French online publication Mediapart, and fined in October after a first trial.



AID is being dropped by a Jordanian military aircraft over Rafah, southern Gaza Strip.

## France's Macron does not rule out Europeans sending troops to Ukraine

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS (Internews): French President Emmanuel Macron opened the door on Monday to European nations sending troops to Ukraine, although he cautioned that there was no consensus at this stage as allies agreed to ramp up efforts to deliver more munitions to Kyiv.

Some 20 European leaders gathered in Paris on Monday to send Russian President Vladimir Putin a message of European resolve on Ukraine and counter the Kremlin's narrative that Russia is bound to win a war now in its third year.

There is no consensus at this stage to send troops on the ground," Macron told reporters. "Nothing should be excluded. We will do everything that we must so that Russia does not win."

A White House official said that the United States had no plans to send troops to fight in Ukraine and that there were also no plans to send NATO troops to fight in Ukraine.

Macron invited his European counterparts to the Elysee palace for a hastily arranged meeting to discuss how to ramp up ammunition supplies to Ukraine amid what his advisers say is an escalation in Russian aggression over the past few weeks.

After initial successes in pushing back the Russian army, Ukraine has suffered setbacks on eastern battlefields, with its generals complaining of shortages of arms and soldiers. Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, who has opposed military aid to Ukraine, said several NATO and EU members were considering sending soldiers to Ukraine on a bilateral basis.

## Japan's new births fall to record low in 2023 as demographic woes deepen

**Monitoring Desk**  
T O K Y O (Internews): The number of babies born in Japan fell for an eighth straight year to a fresh record low in 2023, preliminary government data showed on Tuesday, underscoring the daunting task the country faces in trying to stem depopulation.

The number of births fell 5.1% from a year earlier to 758,631, while the number of marriages slid 5.9% to 489,281 the first time in 90 years the number fell below 500,000 foreboding a further decline in the population as out-of-wedlock births are rare in Japan. Asked about the latest data, Japan's top government spokesperson said the government will take "unprecedented steps" to cope with the declining birthrate, such as expanding childcare and promoting wage hikes for younger workers. "The declining birthrate is in a critical situation," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters.

## Navalny team says prisoner swap was close before his death

**Monitoring Desk**  
WARSAW: Allies of late Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny said on Monday that a deal to free him as part of a prisoner swap had nearly been reached when he died in prison.

The 47-year-old Kremlin critic died on Feb 16 in an Arctic prison after spending more than three years behind bars, prompting outrage and condemnation from Western leaders and his supporters.

Russian President Vladimir Putin "was offered to exchange FSB officer and killer Vadim Krasikov, who is serving time for murder in Berlin, for two American citizens and Alexei Navalny," ally Maria Pevchikh said.

"I have received confirmation that negotiations were underway and were at

the final stage" after two years of talks between Moscow, Washington and Berlin, she added.

"Navalny was supposed to be released in the coming days," she added. Asked about the claims during a regular briefing, the German government spokesperson declined to comment, as did the German foreign minister.

Krasikov is serving a life sentence in Germany for the 2019 killing of former separatist commander Zelimkhan Khangoshvili in a Berlin park, which German authorities say was ordered by Russian intelligence services.

Washington has accused Moscow of arresting American citizens on baseless charges to use them as bargaining chips to secure the release of Russians convicted abroad.

## 2m animals die as extreme cold hits Mongolia

**Monitoring Desk**  
B A Y A N M U N K H S U M : More than two million animals have died in Mongolia so far this winter, a government official said on Monday, as the country endures extreme cold and snow.

The landlocked country is no stranger to severe weather from December to March, when temperatures plummet as low as minus 50 degrees Celsius (minus 58 Fahrenheit) in some areas.

But this winter has been more severe than usual, with lower than normal temperatures and very heavy snowfall, the United Nations said in a recent report. As of Monday, 2.1 million head of livestock had died from starvation and exhaustion, Ganlutga Bat-saikhan of the country's agriculture ministry said.



A police officer puts handcuffs on Oleg Orlov, the 70-year-old human rights campaigner and co-chair of the Nobel Prize winning Memorial group, after Orlov was sentenced to two and a half years in jail on charges of repeatedly "discrediting" the Russian army, in Moscow.

## European farmers' protests press ministers to act

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRUSSELS: Farmers on Monday blocked a border crossing between Poland and Germany, throwing bottles at police in Brussels and gathered in Madrid to demand action on cheap supermarket prices and what they say is unfair competition from abroad.

Agricultural ministers from across the European Union pledged to do more to cut red tape and help farmers as they convened in Brussels to discuss the crisis in the sector after weeks of angry protests.

The 27-nation EU has already weakened some parts of its flagship Green Deal environmental

policies, removing a goal to cut farming emissions from its 2040 climate roadmap. But farmers are demanding more.

"We're here again in Brussels today as farmers because the European Union is not listening to our demands. Our demands are for fair revenue," said Morgan Ody, general coordinator of farming organisation La Via Campesina.

"We produce the food and we don't make a living. Why is that? Because of free trade agreements. Because of deregulation. Because the prices are below the cost of production. So we demand the EU to move on this."

## Indian runaway train takes 70-km journey

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Indian Railways said on Monday it had ordered an investigation after a runaway freight train loaded with gravel travelled 70 kilometres (43 miles) without a driver.

Around 50 carriages set off solo, careering from the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir to Punjab, before being brought to a halt by wooden blocks placed on the tracks on Sunday.

"We have ordered an inquiry," Northern Railways spokesman Deepak Kumar said, adding that no one was hurt in the incident.

The train, running at 100 kilometres per hour, was captured in a video that went viral on social media.

The incident happened after the train stopped at a railway station in Jammu for a crew change, local media reports said. But it began moving down a slope after the driver and his assistant got off. All road crossings on the route were closed to prevent accidents.

The incident is the latest to hit India's creaking rail network, which carries millions of passengers each day.

However, India has invested huge sums of money to upgrade the network with modern stations and electronic signalling systems.

## BJP govt under fire for targeting Muslim teachers in Rajasthan

**Monitoring Desk**  
JAIPUR (INP): The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Rajasthan state in India is facing criticism for its actions against Muslim teachers, further fueling religious tensions in the state's educational institutions.

The BJP government's Education Minister Madan Dilwar has suspended two Muslim teachers and initiated disciplinary action against another in Kota district.

The move comes in the wake of allegations and claims made by a Hindutva commu-

nal organization, Sarva Hindu Samaj, alleging coercion of students, forced religious rituals, and association with banned groups like the Popular Front of India (PFI). The memorandum submitted by Sarva Hindu Samaj also claimed a case of alleged abduction involving a Hindu girl, pointing to administrative lapses in maintaining school records and ensuring student safety.

The Hindutva minded Chief District Education Officer without any verification issued orders to suspend teachers Firoz Khan and Mirza Mujahid.

## WTO braces for battles on fisheries, agriculture in UAE talks

**Monitoring Desk**  
ABU DHABI: The world's trade ministers are set for tough negotiations on Tuesday at a World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Abu Dhabi, with fisheries and agriculture taking centre stage.

The closed talks will take place on the second day of the WTO's 13th ministerial conference which is scheduled to run until Thursday but could go into over-time amid divisions.

There is little hope for major breakthroughs with WTO rules requiring full consensus among all 164 member states.

But progress could be made on a new global agreement on fisheries subsidies.

After a 2022 deal which banned subsidies contributing to illegal, undeclared and unregulated

fishing, the WTO hopes to conclude a second package focusing on subsidies which fuel overcapacity and over-fishing.

"We're close. It's doable for sure," said a diplomatic source.

"The final push needs a little bit of compromise, a little bit of political will," the source told AFP on condition of anonymity, calling a potential agreement a "very good outcome".

The 2022 agreement has yet to take effect as not enough countries have ratified it.

But it was seen as a major achievement, marking just the second accord concluded by the WTO's full membership since the global trade body was created in 1995, and the first focused on environmental protection.

## Biden says Israel is ready to pause Gaza fighting; Hamas says deal not done yet

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI (Internews): Israel is ready to halt its Gaza attacks for the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in a ceasefire that could be signed as soon as next week, Joe Biden said, though Hamas officials said the U.S. president's remarks were premature as it studies a truce offer.

Biden's comments, recorded on Monday and broadcast after midnight on Tuesday, come as negotiators try to hammer out the first extended truce deal in a war that has obliterated the Gaza Strip since October last year.

Ramadan is coming up, and there's been an agreement by the Israelis that they would not engage in activities during Ramadan, as well, in order to give us time to get all the hostages out," Biden said.

Earlier on Monday, Biden said he hoped a ceasefire agreement would be hammered out by Monday,

March 4. Ramadan is expected to begin on March 10. "My national security adviser tells me that they're close. They're close. They're not done yet. My hope is by next Monday we'll have a ceasefire," Biden said.

Hamas is reviewing a proposal agreed at a meeting in Paris last week between Israel, the United States and mediators from Egypt and Qatar, the most serious push for a ceasefire since the last truce collapsed after a week in November. Two senior Hamas officials said Biden's remarks suggesting the agreement had already been reached in principle were premature.

There were "still big gaps to be bridged", one Hamas official said. "The primary and main issues of the ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces are not clearly stated, which delays reaching an agreement."

## Thai opposition figure will fight 'tooth and nail' for party's survival

**Monitoring Desk**  
BANGKOK (Internews): Thailand's opposition leader and former prime ministerial hopeful said on Tuesday his Move Forward Party will "fight tooth and nail" for its future amid legal threats that could see the pro-reform group dissolved and its leaders banned from politics.

With a platform appealing to young and urban voters, the party is seen to threaten Thailand's status quo, colliding with the interests of powerful conservatives and the royalist military that blocked its bid to form a government last year.

Pita Limjaroenrat, who led the party to an election victory last May on an anti-establishment platform but was unable to form a government, said it could be the bridge to create a new political consensus.

"Instead of looking at us as a choice of the people and the enemy of the parliament, use us as a bridge," he said in an interview.

However, the party could be disbanded and its

leaders banned from politics after the Constitutional Court last month said their plan to change a law on insulating the monarchy undermined the crown, paving the way for legal complaints.

"We'll fight tooth and nail to make sure that this worst-case scenario doesn't happen," Pita said.

The party's liberal agenda targets issues and institutions long seen as untouchable, with plans to tackle business monopolies, end army conscription and keep the military out of politics.

Its boldest aim, which led to its current legal woes, is to change the royal insult law or article 112 of the criminal code, used to charge hundreds of people with insulting the monarchy, an offence that carries jail terms of up to 15 years.

Move Forward's predecessor, Future Forward, had championed similar policies and was disbanded in 2020 for violating campaign funding rules.

## Google steps up Microsoft criticism, warns of rival's monopoly in cloud

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRUSSELS (Internews): Alphabet's (GOOGL.O), opens new tab Google Cloud on Monday ramped up its criticism of Microsoft's cloud computing practices, saying its rival is seeking a monopoly that would harm the development of emerging technologies such as generative artificial intelligence.

Microsoft and Amazon (AMZN.O), opens new tab have recently attracted scrutiny in Britain, the European Union and the United States over their market power in cloud computing.

Google trails a distant third behind the two leaders. Microsoft's collaboration with ChatGPT creator OpenAI has also ratcheted up the concerns.

"We worry about Microsoft wanting to flex their decade-long practices where they had a lot of monopoly on the on-premise software before and now they are trying to push that into cloud now," Google Cloud Vice President Amit Zavery said in an interview.

"So they are creating

this whole walled garden, which is completely controlled and owned by Microsoft, and customers who want to do any of this stuff, you have to go to Microsoft only," he said.

"If Microsoft cloud doesn't remain open, we will have issues and long-term problems, even in next generation technologies like AI as well, because Microsoft is forcing customers to go to Azure in many ways," Zavery said, referring to Microsoft's cloud computing platform. He urged antitrust regulators to act. "I think regulators need to provide some kind of guidance as well as maybe regulations which prevent the way Microsoft is building the Azure cloud business, not allow your on-premise monopoly to bring it into the cloud monopoly," Zavery said. Microsoft dismissed that argument. "As the latest independent data shows, competition between cloud hyperscalers remains healthy."



BRUSSELS: A tractor discharges hay onto police officers during a protest called by farmers' organisations against the European Union's agricultural policies.



## Begins issuing nomination papers Presidential elections mandatory within 30 days after general polls: ECP

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday said that it is mandatory to hold the presidential elections within 30 days after the general elections, citing Article 41(4) of the Constitution.

Following the conduct of the general elections 2024 and its preliminary results, the electoral watchdog has started preparations for the presidential elections and the first session of all assemblies under constitutional bindings.

"The election commission will issue the schedule of the presidential election and public notice on March 1," the ECP said in a statement. "According to the Constitution, one day will be given to submit the nomination papers."

The election commission further said that the nomination papers can be submitted by any presiding officer by 12pm on March 2. "All the presidential can-

didates can get the nomination papers from the ECP secretariat in Islamabad or any provincial election commissioner," it noted.

The electoral watchdog also cited Articles 91 and 130 of the Constitution which stated that the National Assembly shall meet on the 21st day following the general elections.

The ECP said all the assemblies will be formed by February 29, paving the way for the presidential election. The statement came a day after National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf summoned the maiden sitting of lower house of Parliament on Feb 29 as President Arif Alvi refused to summon the session on account of an 'incomplete house'.

APP adds: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday began issuing nomination papers to candidates for the presidential election.

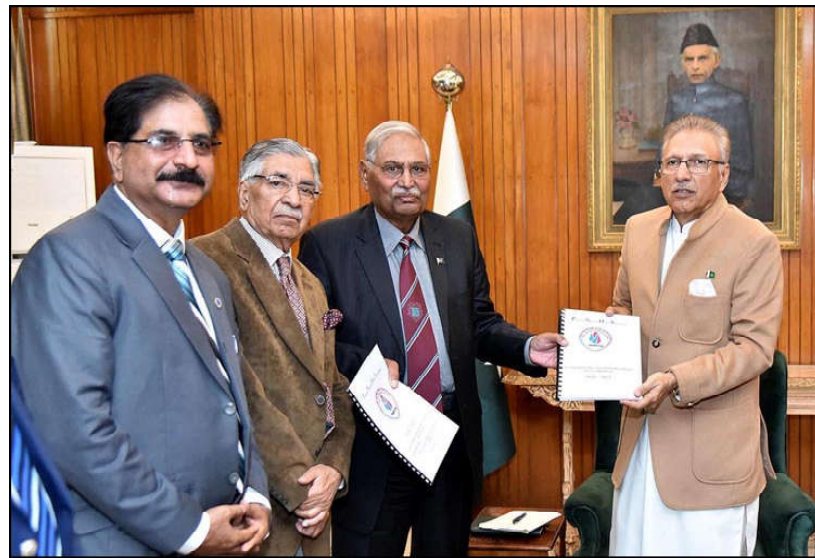
According to an ECP

spokesperson, the candidates can submit their nomination papers at the Election Commission Secretariat in Islamabad, as well as the offices of provincial election commissioners in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa till 12 noon pm on March 2. The spokesperson said that the schedule and public notice for the presidential elections would be issued on March 1.

For any details, individuals could contact the ECP at telephone number 051-9219335, she added.

Quoting Article 41 (4) of the Constitution, the spokesperson emphasized that the presidential election must be conducted within 30 days of the general elections.

She added that according to Articles 91 and 130 of the Constitution, the first session of all assemblies was mandatory within 21 days of the general elections.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAHA) presenting a report on the activities and accomplishments of PANAHA to President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## President emphasizes early prevention of diseases to avoid expensive treatment

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday said that adoption of preventive measures against various diseases was prerequisite to ward off treatment which was expensive in Pakistan and such habits would also help reduce burden on the health system.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAHA) that called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr to present a report on the activities and accomplish-

ments of the organization, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. The president stressed upon creating awareness among the masses about the significance of preventive measures against non-communicable diseases and heart diseases.

He also underscored the need about the role of media, local population, mosques and non government organizations to create such awareness, besides utilization of different latest platforms to spread

awareness messages. PANAHA President Major General (ret'd) Masud Ur Rehman Kiani briefed the president about the role of the organization and public awareness campaigns including holding of walks, seminars, lectures and training sessions.

He said that they were creating awareness among the people about healthy activities and lifestyle. President Alvi appreciated PANAHA for its contributions in the health sector.

## CM Domki applauds services of Shahid Afridi in social sector

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has applauded the services of renowned cricketer and former skipper Shahid Afridi for guidance of younger generation and social sector in the province.

The caretaker Chief Minister was speaking to Shahid Afridi who called on him here at the Chief Minister's secretariat here on Tuesday. During the course of meeting, the matters about promotion of sports and assistance of the poor people in social sectors

were discussed. Mir Ali Mardan Domki praised services of Shahid Afridi for the cause of sports especially cricket besides in social sector. He said that youth of the province are second to none in potential in sports and other public service.

He said that if the talented youth of the province are provided better opportunities and positive direction, they may perform very well in sports and other sectors. Shahid Afridi on the occasion expressed his resolve to expand circle of social services further in Balochistan.

## ECP allows voter lists' modification till bye-polls schedule announcement

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) declared on Tuesday that electoral rolls would remain open for modifications until the announcement of the bye-election schedule.

An ECP spokesperson, in a statement, urged the individuals seeking to transfer their votes or desire correction in the voter list, to submit forms 21, 22, or 23 to the district election commissioner or registration officer in their particular area.

## Caretaker CM inaugurates newly built cabinet Hall in CM secretariat

Independent Report QUETTA: The Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki inaugurated the newly built cabinet hall in the Chief Minister's secretariat on Tuesday.

The Secretary Communications and Works (C&W) Qambar Dashti and other concerned high ups briefed the caretaker Chief Minister about the newly constructed building and cabinet hall.

Speaking on the occasion, caretaker Chief Minister said that CM secretariat is an important administrative office of the province.

The addition of new constructions in the CM secretariat would be helpful in performing administrative affairs, he maintained.

The caretaker Chief Minister also inspected different sections of the cabinet hall and its building.

## Two Holy Mosques- places of worship not arenas for politicking: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Tuesday urged the intending Hajj pilgrims to follow the codal formalities of Saudi Arabia in letter and spirit during the sacred journey.

Talking to the media, he emphasized that the Two Holy Mosques were the places of worship and

not arenas for political expression or displays of nationalism.

"Raising slogans, flags, or engaging in any other irrelevant activity is not allowed at the Two Mosques," he proclaimed.

Ashrafi said that situated in Makkah and Madina - the heart of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Two Holy Mosques were revered by millions of Muslims as the holiest sites.



QUETTA: Renowned cricketer Shahid Afridi meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki at Quetta airport.

## Tech-based vision a must to transform Gwadar into energy hub: Experts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The experts at a policy dialogue have said that Gwadar may be made an energy hub, but it is only possible through a technology-based development, vision and a community-centric social development approach.

The policy dialogue titled: 'Gwadar as an Energy Hub of Pakistan: Pathways for Sustainable Development', was organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) under its Network for Clean Energy Transition (NCET) here.

In his opening remarks, SDPI Executive Director, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri said the discourse on a unique subject like Gwadar as an energy hub was pertinent and crucial at a time when the new government is about to take office.

He further said the development of Gwadar as a port and a modern city has co-benefits that need to be identified. "Due to COVID-19 and unavoidable geopolitical circumstances, Gwadar has not been made functional at its

full scale. It is still dependent on electricity imported from Iran whereas to make export zone functional will require more energy," he maintained.

Since, the global community has demanded to make three-fold increase in renewable energy (RE) share by 2030 at the COP-28, Pakistan is looking for renewable energy support from China as an excellent candidate for solar and offshore wind energy potential, he said.

Gwadar has the potential to become mix of all traditional and renewable energy generation projects, Dr. Suleri said, adding that working on this end holistically, particularly its consumption aspects, an efficient utilization and best use of infrastructure should be worked out through discourse. Nagham Chaudhry, the former advisor and Strategic Analyst, said that keeping in view the recent developments in the Indian Ocean Region and global geopolitical landscape, it is important for the country to embrace a change of mindset.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki inaugurating newly constructed Cabinet Hall at Chief Minister Secretariat.

## Operation Swift Retort showcases Pakistan's military strength, commitment to peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): The memory of the humiliating defeat suffered by the Hindutva led India and its air force at the hands of the Pakistan Air Force remains vivid in the minds of the Indian bigtry rulers, even as five years have passed since the incident took place on February 27, 2019.

A report released by the Kashmir Media Service on the occasion highlighted that on February 27, 2019, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, influenced by the Hindutva ideology, initiated a cowardly attack in Balakot. Within 24 hours, Pakistan Air Force executed 'Operation Swift Retort,' compelling Modi to face defeat.

'Operation Swift Retort' was launched as a befitting response to the misadventures of the fascist Modi regime, whose air force violated Pakistan's

airspace on the night of February 26, 2019, targeting Balakot.

The myth of India's conventional military superiority was shattered by the Pakistan Air Force, which downed two Indian Air Force aircraft in a dogfight and captured an Indian pilot, Abhinandan, alive. Pakistan's victory in the brief air combat continues to haunt India.

The confusion caused by 'Operation Swift Retort' led to the Indian Air Force mistakenly shooting down its helicopter, resulting in casualties, including the pilot. This incident sent a clear message to India - "Don't mess with Pakistan."

The operation thwarted India's aspirations to establish itself as a dominant military force in the region while showcasing the firm resolve, capacity, and capability of the

Pakistan Air Force in countering India's aggressive intentions.

On February 26, 2019, the Indian Air Force conducted an aerial strike near Balakot, targeting a religious seminary that India claimed was a militant camp, alleging the killing of more than 300 terrorists. However, Pakistan and several international observers refuted the claim, citing no casualties and missed targets by the bombs. Moreover, the Indian government failed to provide substantial evidence of the Balakot strikes.

The Indian opposition, particularly the Congress, has raised doubts about the Balakot surgical strikes proclaimed by the BJP government. Rahul Gandhi and Navjot Singh Sidhu demanded validation and an accurate count of the casualties resulting from the strike.



QUETTA: Brig. Adnan Ahmed of Anti Narcotics meeting with acting Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan Prof. Dr. Zainab

## All set to hold 'Sibi Mela' from March 6-8

QUETTA (APP): District Administration had finalized all the arrangements to organize a three-day annual historical and cultural festival of Sibi from March 6 to 8 to put the local culture at display, in addition to rare and exotic species of animals.

A high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Sibi Dr. Khudai Rahim reviewed the preparations and arrangements of Sibi Mela 2024, said a news release.

In the meeting, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Ali Asghar Magsi, SSP Inayatullah Bangulzai, District Education Officer Abdul Waasy Kakar, Chief Officer Municipal Committee Muhibullah Baloch, Executive Engineer PHE Shahzad Farrukh Baloch, Deputy Director Livestock Dr. Farooq Luni and head all others departments participated.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Sibi Dr. Khudai Rahim said that the annual traditional and historical Sibi Mela 2024 will be held with great zeal. He directed the offic-

ers of all relevant departments, especially the Department of Livestock, Department of Agriculture and Education to complete the preparations for the celebrations of the Sibi Mela and make sure that there was no disturbance in the preparations for the festival.

He said that this time the musical program will be held in the stadium instead of the Jirga Hall so that the public do not face any problem. A large number of people not only from all over the province but also from other parts of the country would participate in it, he added.

The Sibi Mela is an attractive opportunity to review the performance in the fields of agriculture, livestock and move it forward with new determination, he said.

The DC said apart from livestock exhibition and sale and purchase, agricultural and industrial exhibitions are also organized on the occasion, he said adding through this festival, people also get opportunities for the best recreational activities.

## PPP to join Punjab cabinet in 2nd phase

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is poised to join the Punjab provincial cabinet in its second phase, according to sources close to the development. This move comes after negotiations between the PPP and the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PML-N).

The sources indicate that the PPP is likely to receive three ministries in the provincial cabinet, which will be offered after the Punjab budget is finalized. Negotiations are currently underway between the two parties to finalize the specific ministries and potential candidates.

## 7 killed in accident

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least seven passengers were killed and several badly injured in a traffic accident in Khoi Bagra, area of Rawalpindi on Tuesday.

The rescue officials said that the passenger bus fell into a deep trench due to overspeeding, a private news channel reported.

Seven people died on the spot while several passengers including men and women sustained injuries. The rescue team and the locals shifted the dead bodies and injured to the hospital.

## Commissioner Makran visits different rain hit areas in Kech district

Independent Report QUETTA: The Commissioner Makran Division visited different areas affected due to rains in Kech district on Tuesday.

Also accompanied with him were the Deputy Director of PDMA, Rehan Dashti and officers of different other departments. The Commissioner Makran visited Nasirabad, Nodaz and Tagranabad and

other areas. He also monitored the repair and rehabilitation of affected roads and bridges. Later, he visited Nahaing bridge located on the Nahaing river.

The Commissioner on the occasion directed to concerned high ups to repair the approach of Nahaing bridge immediately and thus restore traffic there.

## Provincial Selection Board meets; recommends promotion of Govt officers

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Selection Board met with Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan in the chair here on Tuesday.

The meeting took up the cases of promotion of officers of different provincial government departments.

During the course of meeting, it was recommended to promote officers of BSS and BCS of Services and General Administration Department serving in Grade 20.

It was recommended to promote Grade

20 officers in Grade 21.

The meeting also considered cases of promotion of different grades of Agriculture, Colleges and Higher Education, Schools, Forests, Food, Irrigation, Communication and Works, Sports, Science and Information Technology and other departments.

It was recommended to promote officers of Grade 19 in Grade 20, Grade 18 in Grade 19 and officers of Grade 17 in Grade 18.

## Ahsan Iqbal says: Pakistan wins war against terrorism with support of entire nation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said that Pakistan has won a big war against terrorism with support of Pakistan armed forces, law enforcement agencies, security and other civil institutions.

Addressing at the International Peace Conference, the former minister said that economic development could not be achieved without peace and stability in this region.

He added that lasting peace could only be established by promoting tolerance and harmony among each other.

He said, we will have to endorse partnership and mutual respect in politics to put the country on path of speedy progress and prosperity. Ahsan Iqbal said that attitude of hatred lead to extremism, adding that ending backwardness, intolerance and lawlessness, was essential for peace in the country.

Commenting on Pakistan's sacrifices in war against terrorism, he said, the Pakistan armed forces, security agencies, police and member of every society, had rendered matchless sacrifices to wipe out terrorism from this country.



QUETTA: Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezi inquiring about health of a patient at Sheikh Muhammad Zayed bin Al-Nahyan Hospital.

## National Youth Conference on Skills Development and Entrepreneurship held

Independent Report TURBAT: The "National Youth Conference on Skills Development and Entrepreneurship" was organized by the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Turbat (UoT) in the video conference room of UoT. Students from departments of Management Sciences, Commerce, and Economics participated in the conference.

In his address, Prof. Dr. Jan Muhammad, Vice Chancellor of UoT, emphasized the importance of skills and talents in today's competitive and evolving market. He stated that the University of Turbat has achieved significant successes over time, and now boasting a robust IT infrastructure and highly qualified faculty members. Underlining the critical role of skills development and entrepreneurship to lead a prosperous life, the Vice

Chancellor encouraged the students to establish their businesses and companies instead of searching for a government job after they graduated from the University. He reiterated the university's commitment to support and guide their students to become job providers instead of job seekers. VC commended the organizers and resource persons for their efforts in conducting an event on harnessing the potential of students in shaping their future through skill development and entrepreneurial ventures. In his opening remarks, Dr. Waseem Barkat, Dean, Faculty of Business and Economics highlighted the objectives of the conference, noting the increasing saturation of the job market and the necessity of equipping students with the required skills for success in this contemporary evolving time.