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Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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In yet another conviction

## Imran and Bushra Bibi handed 7-year jail sentences in Iddat case

Senior Civil Judge Qudratullah declares nikah anti-Shariah, fines both Rs500,000 each; Verdict caps tough week for PTI chief who was convicted in cipher and Toshakhana cases earlier

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): A trial court on Saturday handed seven-year sentences, each, to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the "un-Islamic nikah" case at the Adiala jail today.

The couple, who were present at the court during sentencing, have also been fined Rs500,000 each — for which the failure to pay provisions additional four months of incarceration.

The verdict was pronounced by senior civil judge Qudratullah today, a day after the hearing of the case was conducted inside the jail premises for 14 hours a day earlier.

The court had reserved its decision after the arguments were completed yesterday.

The judge issued the court's verdict in the case pertaining to the plea filed by Bushra Bibi's ex-husband Khawar Maneka against what he refers to as an un-Islamic and illegal nikah with the former prime minister.

Four witnesses in the case gave the statements, which

were later cross-examined during the proceedings, while Khan and Bushra Bibi also recorded their statements under section 342.

Bushra Bibi, who was placed under house arrest at her residence in Banigala following its status declared as a sub-jail, was presented before the court during today's proceedings at Adiala jail. Imran, who remains incarcerated at the facility, and the couple's lawyers were also present at the time of the verdict announcement.

Khan-Bushra relation wrecks of 'fraud'

In its 51-page detailed verdict, the court maintained that the record proves that both of the accused, Khan and Bushra, were in relation before the 2018 "fraudulent" nikah.

"[The] PTI founder and Bushra [Bibi] did not deny meeting [during] the sit-in. In their statement, [accused] admitted to having contact, but denied any illicit relationship," the court said while recalling the applicant's allegation regarding Khan's intrusion into his former spouse's

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar witnesses signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Authority of Karachi Port Trust, Pakistan and Abu Dhabi Ports Group, UAE



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Murtaza Solangi, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting addressing a press conference along with Special Secretary ECP, DG Political Finance, Spokesperson MoFA, EDG External Publicity Wing and PIO,

## CM directs to start relief activities & restoration of link roads & services in rain & snow hit areas

**Independent Report**

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardaan Khan Domki has directed to the concerned authorities to start relief activities and restoration of the link roads and municipal services in the rain and snowfall hit areas of the province.

The caretaker Chief Minister has also directed to make the monitoring room of provincial disaster management Authority (PDMA) functioning round the clock.

In addition to this, he particularly directed to all the Commissioners to complete preparations for the emergent situation according to the weather conditions in all districts of their respective divisions.

He directed to the Administrator of Quetta Municipal Corporation to take prompt steps for sanitation

and draining out the rain water from Quetta city.

Moreover, the caretaker Chief Minister also called for carrying out immediate operation for restoration of the link roads removing the snow from there particularly in Ziarat, Kan Mehtarzai, Kozak top and other areas.

Similarly, steps should be taken for shifting the passengers stranded on the Makran coastal highway, Sami Kor, Turbat and other affected roads to safer places, adding he directed further.

In this regard, the Chief Minister asked the PDMA to start rescue operation at the earliest. While the civic agencies should play their effective role cleanliness and for draining out the sewerage and rain water in the urban areas, Mr Domki directed to the Secretary Local Government.



THARPARKAR: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addresses to his supporters during public gathering meeting as a part of Election Campaign in connection of the General Election 2024

## People of Tharparkar stand with PPP, says Bilawal Bhutto

THARPARKAR (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said on Saturday the people of Tharparkar had proven that they stood with his party ahead of general elections 2024.

Addressing an election rally in Chachro tehsil of Tharparkar, the former foreign minister said his relation with public was not political but it based on love.

He said the mission of his party was to end poverty, inflation and unemployment. "The taxes of the hardworking people of Pakistan should be spent on them, not in subsidising the lives and businesses of the elite or in funding defunct

federal ministries," he said. He asked the people to vote for his party in the Feb 8 polls in order to make a government that will work for public.

Taking a jibe at Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme, he said the former premier claimed that he had initiated the Thar Coal project. "If he had started this project, he would have come here to hold a rally," he remarked.

Bilawal Bhutto said the project was launched by the PPP to extend economic benefits to local people. He announced that train service will be started from Thar to Karachi if his party is voted to power on Feb 8.

## Power tariff scaled up by Rs 4.56 per unit

ISLAMABAD (Online): Government has once again dropped electricity bombshell on people by scaling up power tariff by Rs 4.56 per unit.

NEPRA has issued its detailed decision and as per this decision care taker government has enhanced power tariff by Rs 4.56 per unit.

According to NEPRA, the increase in power tariff has been made under the head of fuel cost adjustment for the month of December.

The increased tariff will be applicable for one month only.

It has been said in the notification that additional financial burden of Rs 39.80 billion will be shifted to consumers.

The enhanced tariff will not apply to consumers of K-Electric and life line consumers.

According to authorities the consumers will have to make additional payments through the electricity bill for the month of February.

It is pertinent to mention here cost of electricity was increased Rs 4.13 per unit under the head of monthly adjustment for November.

## Solangi says All set for free and fair polls, there is no political victimisation

ISLAMABAD (APP):

The Federal Minister of Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi, said on Saturday that all arrangements had been finalized for conducting peaceful, fair, free, and transparent elections in Pakistan on February 8.

Briefing the foreign observers and media persons in Pakistan to monitor and cover the February 8 elections, he said that in Pakistan, which is now the fifth largest democracy in the world, elections are only

four days away.

Flanked by officials of the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Ministry of Interior, and the Election Commission of Pakistan, he said that now Pakistan is the fifth largest democracy in the world.

He said that elections were being held for the National Assembly (NA) of Pakistan and the provincial assemblies of four provinces, including Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, and

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GUJRANWALA: Quaid PML-N Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif addressing a public meeting

## Will not rest until Pakistan becomes stable: Nawaz

GUJRANWALA (INP):

PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif reiterated on Saturday that he would not rest until Pakistan regained the lost ground in all spheres.

Speaking to an election gathering in the PML-N stronghold, an excited Nawaz took a dig at the PTI by saying that they considered youth on their side by creating chaos on social media. "But the fact is that those sitting in front of me are the real youth — country's asset," he said.

These youngsters, he said, respected their elders. "My heart throbs for these young people," he said while promising jobs to them.

He recalled that CPEC projects were signed with Pakistan and there was \$60 billion investment in the country.

Citing Transparency International's recent re-

port, Nawaz boasted that it claimed that there was the least corruption when he was in power.

Not only that, he said, the prices of bread, sugar, fuel and electricity were far less than they cost today.

The former premier said the PML-N government rid the people of loadshedding, the dollar strength against rupee was quite low and the country witnessed 6pc growth rate. "We bade goodbye to the IMF which vouchsafed for Pakistan's progress at that time," he said.

He recalled that CPEC projects were signed with Pakistan and there was \$60 billion investment in the country.

## Chairman PkMAP states: Pak passing thru critical time; all stakeholders ought to struggle for real democracy, supremacy of law

By Sardar Khondai CHAMAN: The Chairman Pashtoonkhaw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) Mehmood Khan Achakzai has stated that Pakistan is passing through critical time, what requires from all stakeholders to sit together and decide how to bring real democracy and ensure supremacy of law in the country.

The Chairman PkMAP was addressing the event in which a large number of people announced to join the party under leadership of Noor Muhammad Noorzai in Chaman on Saturday.

Mehmood Khan Achakzai criticized the government for keeping mum on the protest dharna being staged in Chaman for last 110 days.

Expressing concern over the silence and care-



lessness of the rulers for not paying attention to the dharna which completed 110 days, the Chairman PkMAP said that the people of Chaman are not making any unfair demand, rather they are asking for

the opportunity to earn livelihood for their children.

He warned the rulers not to force the people of Chaman to lodge strong protest and restore the Chaman border on the previous terms immediately.

## Pak, UAE enjoy deep brotherly ties: PM Kakar

Expresses satisfaction over the growth of exchanges, interaction and cooperation between Pak, UAE businesses

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday said that Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates enjoyed strong brotherly ties which were being further strengthened with time.

He said Pakistan highly valued the UAE's firm support to its economic and investment sectors.

The prime minister was talking to UAE Minister for Foreign Trade Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi who called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The caretaker prime minister said that during his

recent visit to the UAE, both the countries had signed MoUs which would open a new era of economic cooperation between the two countries.

"The UAE is a home to 1.8 million Pakistanis who are playing a role in the progress, prosperity and economic development of both brotherly countries," the press release quoted the prime minister as saying.

He also conveyed his good wishes to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

During the meeting, Caretaker Minister for Maritime Affairs Shahid Ashraf Tarrar, UAE ambassador in Pakistan and other relevant senior officials were also present.

The UAE minister ex-

pressed satisfaction over the growth of exchanges, interaction and cooperation between Pak, UAE businesses

could be further strengthened.

Prime Minister Kakar assured the government's support for bringing traders and chambers of commerce and industry of the two countries closer.

He also conveyed his good wishes to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

During the meeting, Caretaker Minister for Maritime Affairs Shahid Ashraf Tarrar, UAE ambassador in Pakistan and other relevant senior officials were also present.

The UAE minister ex-

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## Information ministry launches media helpline for elections' coverage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Saturday said the information ministry had launched an exclusive helpline for local and international media to cover the general election scheduled for February 8.

"Ministry of Information and Broadcasting launched 'Media Helpline-MoIB' mediahelpline.moi.gov.pk," said the minister in a post on X formerly Twitter. According to him, it was a dedicated online platform exclusively developed for local and international journalists and media persons to cover the General Election of Pakistan 2024.

## Jaffar Express restored after four days' suspension

QUETTA: The Jaffar Express was restored on Saturday after remaining suspended for four days from Quetta railway station.

The Jaffar Express left Quetta for Peshawar cantonment at its scheduled time. Moreover, the Bolan Mail is scheduled to leave for Karachi today (Sunday) at its scheduled time. It may be mentioned here that the train service remained suspended from Quetta for four days owing to the security situation in Mach.

However, the Pakistan Railways decided to restore the train service from Saturday.

## QESCO announces not to observe power load shedding from Feb 7-9

QUETTA: The Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) has announced that the power load shedding would not be observed during the general elections from February 7-9. According to an official statement issued here the other day, the QESCO has made arrangements for supply of electricity for three days.

## Jan Achakzai maintains: Seven more bodies found during area sensitization in & around Mach city

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial for Information Minister, Jan Achakzai, announced a significant development in the ongoing investigation of an incident in Mach, Balochistan.

According to an official statement issued here on Saturday, seven additional bodies of terrorists have been found during area sensitization in and around Mach City, adding to the Twelve (including one suicidal bomber without body)

previously recovered. This brings the confirmed death toll to 19 out of 24 individuals previously identified as killed in terrorist activity.

One unidentified body remains. Authorities (ie CTD) are collaborating with NADRA to determine its identity.

Four bodies have already been released to families who reluctantly confirmed their affiliation with the banned Organization.



ISLAMABAD: Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Honourable Judge, SCP, and Mr. Hayat Ali Shah, DG, FJA, sitting on the stage in a certificate awarding ceremony at the Federal Judicial Academy

## Section 144 imposed in Quetta ahead of general elections

QUETTA (INP): The Interior Ministry of Balochistan has imposed Section 144 in Quetta for next two days over the 'security situation' ahead of general elections 2024.

As per details, the Balochistan government has banned the display of arms, and pillion riding, (commonly known as double sawari). Pakistan has witnessed a surge in terrorist activities, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan, since the outlawed militant group Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

It is pertinent to mention here that at least six people were killed and 13 others sustained injuries in three violent incidents in Balochistan's Sibi, Quetta

and Chaman and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district within span of a day.

The wave of violence began in Sibi when four people were killed and five others sustained injuries in a blast that occurred at Jinnah Road Sibi near political party's rally on Tuesday. The police said that the explosive material was installed in a motorcycle which led to explosion. The law enforcers have cordoned off the area and called bomb disposal squad. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) declared ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

According to ECP sources, out of the total 90,675 polling stations 46,065 have been declared as 'sensitive' or 'most sensitive' across the country.





**KARACHI:** Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister, Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar addresses during the inauguration ceremony of the 28th Chest Pain Unit of NICVD, at Sindh High Court Bar Association

## Ubaid Shah five-for helps Pakistan seal U-19 WC semis berth in thriller

### Sports Desk

**BENONI:** Pakistan clinched the last semi-final berth at the Under-19 World Cup by beating Bangladesh by five runs in a low-scoring thriller on Saturday. India will now face South Africa in the first semi-final on February 6 while Pakistan will play Australia on February 8, in Benoni.

Bangladesh's dreams of an Under-19 World Cup encore in South Africa - they won the title here in 2020 - came crashing down in the most heartbreaking fashion in Benoni.

Pakistan's hero was Ubaid Shah, the younger brother of pace sensation Naseem Shah. Bowling with fire, intensity and raw pace that hustled

Bangladesh's batting lineup on a hot and dry day, Ubaid finished with figures of 5 for 44 as Pakistan sensationally defended 155 to win by five runs.

But until 30 minutes prior to the dramatic ending, Ubaid was left wondering if he'd dropped the cup. With Bangladesh needing 37 with four wickets in hand, Ubaid put down an absolute sitter at fine leg to relieve Mohammad Shihad James, Bangladesh's last recognised batter for 24. However, Ubaid bounced back to dismiss him in the very next over with a superb lifter that James nicked to the wicketkeeper to trigger wild celebrations.

Rohanat Doullah Borson, who earlier in the

day picked up 4 for 24 to restrict Pakistan to a chaseable total, then came up with an impressive unbeaten 21 to take Bangladesh within touching distance, before Mohammad Zeeshan sent Pakistan into delirium with the final wicket of Maruf Mridha.

Pakistan had done the unthinkable, clinching a game from the clutches of defeat in a manner reminiscent of their run to a famous title win in the 2006 final against India at the R Premadasa Stadium. That day it was Anwar Ali who swung India's famed top order out in defense of a modest 109. On Saturday, Ubaid was firmly front and centre of an inspired defence.

Their victory in the end may have been dramatic, but Pakistan were lackadaisical for large parts. Five batters got into double figures, but none carried on getting more than Arafat Mihnas' 34 lower down the order. By then, they had been tottering at 89 for 6 and looked like they'd be bowled out well inside 40 overs. As it turned out, they just about managed to cross that mark.

Along with pacer Borson, offspinner Sheikh Paveez Jibon contributed a four-wicket haul in a superb spell of guile and control. As it turned out, these two heroic efforts however were second-best on a heartbreaking evening for Bangladesh.

## AJK PM appeals people to highlight Modi regime's atrocities

**MUZAFFARABAD (APP):** The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Ch. Anwarul Haque while terming Kashmiri expatriates the ambassadors of Kashmiri people appealed them to highlight the atrocities of Modi regime in their respective countries, unleashed on Kashmiri people.

He said this while talking to the founder chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir movement of right to self-determination international (JKMRS) Raja Najabat Hussain on Saturday.

He said that he himself will visit to Europe and Britain to organize Kashmiri expatriates

abroad to unveil the real face of Modi Hindutva regime before the international community.

The chairman of (JKMRS) Raja Najabat on the occasion invited to AJK PM to visit Britain and Europe to highlight the Kashmir dispute and Indian tyranny in OIK and said that all segments of the society of Kashmiri expatriates including the office bears of JKMRs, social, political, Religious organizations, parliamentarians, Councilors and Kashmir friendly organizations will organize rallies, seminars and conferences to highlight indigenous Kashmiri freedom and gross human rights

## PTI founder, Sh. Rasheed summoned in May 9 violence case

**RAWALPINDI (INP):** Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed and Sheikh Rashid Shafiq have been summoned in May 9 violence case on February 6.

As per details, former Punjab Assembly deputy speaker Wasiq Qayyum Abbasi, Sadaqat Ali Abbasi and Umar Tanvir recorded 154 statement and became witnesses against PTI founder and Sheikh Rasheed in May 9 case. They stated that the May 9 violence was carried out on the directions of Imran Khan and AML chief Sheikh Rasheed.

The PTI-backed candidate from NA-53 Ajmal Sabir also recorded statement in May 9 case, revealing that Sheikh Rasheed called a meeting at his resi-

dence Lal Haveli on May 6 and planned the May 9 violence.

Earlier, Police arrested former interior minister and Awami Muslim League chief Sheikh Rasheed following the cancellation of bail in May 9 riots case. Rasheed is accused of planning vandalism and attack on a sensitive installation on May 9, following the arrest of the former prime minister. Violent clashes were broken out across Pakistan after former prime minister Imran Khan was arrested on May 9, 2023. The protests were held in remote and major cities as the party workers were agitated due to their chairman's arrest, with Balochistan, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad summoning the armed forces to ensure law and order.



**QUETTA:** Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) Administrator, Jabbar Baloch inspecting the different areas during his visit

## Imran and Bushra Bibi handed...

*Continued from page 1*

private life by way of interrelations related to peeri mureedi (spiritual guidance).

The statement of the accused proves that they used to visit each others' houses, the court added while recalling Maneka's statement on oath wherein he had alleged that the PTI founder and the former first lady used to have hours-long meetings during the sit-in.

"The question arises whether they [Khan and Bushra] didn't know if meeting in private is allowed in religion or not?"

"Islam emphasises the significance of [meeting] with a mehram or na mehram," the detailed verdict stressed.

On the issue of the nikah solemnised on January 1, 2018, the court termed the marriage as fraud that reflects dishonesty.

"[The] PTI founder and Bushra married illegally on January 1, 2018," the verdict read, adding that the latter's nikah was solemnised before the 90-day iddat period as she was divorced on November 14, 2017. On the issue of the defence's reliance on the apex court judgment regarding the 39-day iddat period, the court underscored that the apex court's ruling does not mean that every iddat is bound by the said precedent.

## Pak, UAE ...

*Continued from page 1*

pressed the resolve to further strengthen trade ties with Pakistan.

Meanwhile Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday expressed his satisfaction over the growth of exchanges, interaction and cooperation between businesses in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

The prime minister witnessed the signing of an agreement between The Authority of Karachi Port Trust Pakistan and Abu Dhabi Ports Group, UAE.

The agreement is a commercial understanding for the Outsourcing of Operations of Bulk and General Cargo Terminal at seven (7) Berths of East Wharf Karachi Port, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Caretaker Minister for Communication, Railways and Maritime Affairs Shahid Ashraf Tarar along with other high officials from Pakistani side and UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade Dr. Thani Bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Ambassador of UAE to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi along with other high officials from the UAE side were present in the ceremony.

The agreement aims to strengthen the bilateral relations in the marine and logistic sectors of Pakistan and UAE.

## ECP completes all arrangements for general elections

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** The Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has completed all arrangements for general elections being held on Thursday.

The Election Commission has established ninety thousand six hundred seventy-five polling stations in all four provinces and over one hundred and twenty million registered voters will cast their vote for National Assembly and four Provincial Assemblies, Radio Pakistan reported.

Of these, forty-one thousand four hundred and three are combined polling stations while twenty-five thousand three hundred twenty are for male and twenty-three thousand nine hundred fifty-two for women voters.

A total of 5,121 candidates are in the race for the National Assembly seats. These include 4,807 male, 312 female and two transgenders.

The elections will be held on two hundred and sixty-six general seats of the National Assembly and five hundred and ninety-three general seats of four provincial assemblies.

## Dignity kits distributed among women by SRSO

### From Our Correspondent

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



According to details, with the financial assistance of UNHCR Pakistan, Sindh Rural Support Organization-SRSO arranged a program at village Moriani and after formal assessment distributed the dignity Kits amongst the women of that village.

Speaking on the Muhammad Panjal the DM of SRSO depicted that not only this but under this project SRSO had trained 20 women for Beautification Course of Beauty Parlour and sewing Course to 20 women and also distributed multiple kits amongst them.

SRSO would continue its positive efforts to promote the women by empowering them through multiple aspects including technical support and capacity building trainings.

### Government of Pakistan

#### PKCERT (Pakistan Cyber Emergency Response Team)

#### INVITATION TO BIDS

1. PKCERT invites sealed bids from the firms/ companies registered with Income Tax, Sales Tax Departments and who are on FBR's Active Taxpayer's List (ATL) for Procurement of Security Operations Center (SOC) Solution to PKCERT, Pakistan.

2. Bidding documents containing detailed terms and conditions, method of procurement, etc may be obtained from the Office of the undersigned on payment of Rs.1000/- (One Thousand only) non-refundable.

3. The bids, prepared in accordance with instructions in the bidding documents, along with Bid Security amounting to Rs 1 Million (1,000,000) in the shape of Bank draft/ Pay order drawn in favor of Project Director PKCERT, may reach Office of the undersigned by February 29, 2024 at 10:00 hours. Technical bids will be opened on the same day at 10:30 hours in the presence of representatives of the bidders.

4. As per PPRA Rules 33(1), 2004, National CERT, Government of Pakistan, has the right to reject any or all bids/ proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid/ proposal.

PID (I) No.4660/23

Project Director  
National Telecommunications and Information Technology Security Board (NTISB)  
1st Floor, Cabinet Division, Islamabad  
Tel: 051-9103564, 051-9103543

## Islamabad United unveils replacement for Tom Curran in PSL Season 9

**ISLAMABAD (INP):** As anticipation builds for the ninth edition of Pakistan's premier cricket extravaganza, the Pakistan Super League (PSL), Islamabad United has announced a thrilling addition to their squad. The team has revealed that UAE batsman Mohammad Wasim will replace English fast bowler Tom Curran, who is unavailable for the entire season.

The decision to bring in Mohammad Wasim was made after careful consideration, recognizing his strong and consistent batting performances, especially his stellar form in recent leagues. Wasim's inclusion adds depth to Islamabad United's lineup as they aim for success in the upcoming season.

In addition to this strategic replacement, Islamabad United has made other noteworthy acquisitions in the supplementary draft, including West Indies fast bowler Obaid McCoy and promising Pakistani batsman Haider Ali.

Renowned for being one of the top teams in PSL, Islamabad United boasts a formidable squad for the forthcoming season.



**ISLAMABAD:** India's Ramkumar Ramanathan, shakes hand with Pakistan's Aisam-ul-Haq on the end of their Davis Cup World Group I play-off tennis match, in the Federal Capital.

## All set for free and fair...

*Continued from page 1*

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

He said that some elements had been spreading rumors in the recent past about the elections, citing the severity of the weather, the law and order situation, or some other issues.

"Full security arrangements have been made at the polling stations, and the government will ensure peaceful and transparent elections on February 8," he added.

"Police would be in the first tier, Rangers and Frontier Constabulary would perform duty in the second tier, while the third tier of security would be with the Pakistan Army as a quick response force."

He said media in Pakistan enjoyed full freedom and everyone had the right to express opinion and criticize the government.

The minister said that the total number of voters in Pakistan was 12,85,85,760, out of which 69263704 were male voters and 5,93,22,056 were female voters.

To a question, he said that law and order and terrorism were not new issues in Pakistan, as it has been battling the scourge of terrorism for the past few decades. He recalled that the 2008 and 2013 elections were conducted under the shadow of security threats.

He said, "Since 2021, with the change of guard in Kabul, terrorist groups of various hues and colors

having safe sanctuaries in a neighboring country have become more active. He said that Pakistan was taking action against terrorists and that peaceful elections would be ensured at all costs."

"Our battle-hardened security forces are fully prepared for the elections," Murtaza Solangi maintained.

Responding to a question, he said that the economic initiatives taken during the caretaker government were in the background of the Special Investment Facilitation Council to attract investment.

He said that various economic agreements have been signed with friendly countries under the SIFC.

The minister said that the caretaker government took important steps to improve the economy. He said when the caretakers came to power in August last year, the dollar was not available in the open market for even 350 to 400 rupees, but due to steps taken by the present dispensation, now the rupee is stabilized and the economy is in a far better position.

He said, "92 international observers from different countries will cover the elections. He said that observers belonged to the European Union, Commonwealth, Russian Federation, Japan, South Africa, Malaysia, Zimbabwe, the Netherlands, Hungary,

Sweden, Azerbaijan, and Germany."

In response to a question about the allegations of victimization of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders and party workers, he said that these allegations were baseless and absurd.

Solangi said that some PTI activists were arrested, but they were detained in connection with their involvement in May 9 incidents or other criminal acts.

The minister said the PTI leadership was free to criticize the government and the court's verdicts. Moreover, they have other legal options, including knocking on the doors of courts, including the superior judiciary.

He recalled the moment he was appointed as the Pakistan national team's skipper. "It was the emotional moment when I was named as the captain."



**ABBOTTABAD:** People are busy in remove stuck vehicle during the heavy snowfall, which more decreases the temperature below in minus degree Celsius, at Galyat in Abbottabad



## Kashmir Solidarity Day to be observed on Monday to support Kashmiris' just cause

ISLAMABAD (APP): The entire nation will observe Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 (Monday) with a renewed commitment to support the just struggle of Kashmiris for their inalienable right to self-determination, as enshrined in the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The people and the government of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir observe Solidarity Day every year not only to renew their love and affection with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) but also to reiterate their commitment and dedication to the liberation of occupied Kashmir from Indian subjugation.

People from different walks of life, including doctors, lawyers, social activists, students, and others, will hold rallies and demonstrations, forming human chains across the country to infuse new spirits in the Kashmiris, who have been

fighting for their freedom.

All Pakistani missions abroad will organize seminars and photo exhibitions to draw the world's attention towards the worst form of subjugation and human rights violations committed by India in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The national media, both electronic and print, will air special programs and print special supplements to highlight the significance of Kashmir Solidarity Day and the decades-long struggle of Kashmiri people against the illegal Indian occupation. Banners highlighting the plight of innocent Kashmiris have been put on display across the country, including airports, railway stations, and national highways.

Observance of this day is also aimed at highlighting the long-standing unsettled dispute of Jammu and Kashmir internationally and apprising the people of occupied Kashmir that they are not alone in this hour of trial and tur-

moil, as the people of Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir are wholeheartedly with them.

The hearts of the people of Pakistan and Kashmir beat in unison and Pakistan will continue full moral, political, and diplomatic support to the people of Indian-occupied Jammu & Kashmir in their just and principled struggle for freedom until it reaches its logical end.

For more than seven decades, it has been a battle of hope against overwhelming odds, courage against fear, and sacrifice against tyranny. But through all of it, the Kashmiri people have persisted and stood firm in the face of the continuing Indian campaign of brutalization, which has used every inhuman tactic and draconian law to perpetuate the illegal occupation in IIOJK. India has kept a major part of the internationally acknowledged disputed Himalayan Jammu Kashmir state in her illegal and forced occupation since October 27, 1947.



ISLAMABAD: District Judiciary Judges in a group photo with Hon'ble Mr. Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail at the Federal Judicial Academy

## Solangi terms plantation of trees as national, moral duty

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Saturday termed plantation as a national and moral duty as trees were very important for human life and they play a significant role in environmental protection.

Formally inaugurating the tree planting campaign in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MOIB) he said it was the duty of all human beings to keep the environment green.

"Along with planting trees and saplings, steps are also necessary to protect them," Murtaza Solangi remarked.

The cooperation of the AIMS Education System and Private Schools Association in the plantation drive was a commendable initiative, he added.

It should be noted that the saplings for the plantation campaign had been gifted to the Ministry of Information by the Private Schools Association, which will be planted in various offices of the Ministry of

Information including the PTV headquarters.

The event was attended by MD PTV Mubasher Tauqeer Shah, senior officials of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Director of the AIMS Education System and General Secretary of the Private Schools Association Abdul Waheed Khan and a large number of students.

The minister of information formally started the plantation campaign by planting saplings in the lawn of PTV headquarters.

## ECP concludes training for 1.49 million election staff ahead of 2024 polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has completed the training of approximately 1.49 million election staff to ensure the smooth execution of the upcoming general elections in 2024.

In a statement, the ECP spokesman said that the training sessions guaranteed the capability of all election personnel to carry out their responsibilities proficiently and professionally in the upcoming general elections of 2024.

According to the spokesperson of the commission, a total of 27,676 sessions were conducted over 87 days in remote areas nationwide, involving 3,821 master trainers to train election staff comprehensively.

The sequence of training sessions commenced on November 19, 2023, concluding on the evening of February 3, 2024. Participants in these sessions

comprised 144 District Returning Officers (DROs), 859 Returning Officers (ROs), and polling staff.

A total of 7,663 two-day training sessions were held, involving 191,526 trained polling staff, including both Presiding Officers and Senior Assistant Presiding Officers (APOs).

Additionally, 19,630 training sessions were carried out for 785,060 Assistant Presiding Officers (APOs) and Polling Officers (DMOs) were appointed at the regional level to oversee election activities according to Section 234 of the Election Act, 2017. Adequate training was also provided for Monitoring Officers (MOs).



Dr. Tariq Mehmood Khan, Principal Information Officer addressing a seminar organized by Press Information Department in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day in Islamabad.

## PUC, PML-N hold negotiations ahead of elections: Sources

ISLAMABAD (APP): In light of the upcoming elections, negotiations are underway between the Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

According to credible sources, the PUC may extend its support to candidates from the PML-N. With over 80 constituencies in Punjab, the PUC wields considerable influence through its strong voter

base. Leaders from both the PUC and PML-N are set to announce decisions in a crucial press conference on Sunday.

The PUC chairman and other leaders have reaffirmed their support for candidates from the PML-N and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) in some constituencies, including in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



ISLAMABAD: People are sitting around fire keep warm themselves during cold weather in the Federal Capital.

## APHC calls for probe by UNHRC into genocide of Kashmiri people in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has expressed serious concern over the use of military force against Kashmiri people who are peacefully engaged in an indigenous movement for the right to self-determination. According to Kashmir Media Service, this right is guaranteed by the United Nations Security Council and endorsed by India through commitments made before the international community.

In a statement issued in Srinagar, the APHC spokesperson termed the Kashmiri resistance movement legitimate and democratic in all respects. The spokesperson dismissed Indian rhetoric about Kashmir as baseless, pointing out that millions of people have participated in anti-India rallies, demanding their inalienable right to self-determination.

The APHC praised the stand and sacrifices of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, including the jailed Hurriyat leadership.

The statement emphasized that despite Indian suppression and repression, the Kashmiri people are determined to bring their ongoing demand for the right to self-determination to its logical conclusion.

The spokesperson asserted that the freedom-loving people of Kashmir have consistently rejected Indian illegal occupation since 1947. He highlighted the ruthless killings, extrajudicial killings in fake encounters, and detentions that have left the innocent people of Kashmir vulnerable in terms of their lives, honor, and dignity.

The spokesperson called for a probe by the United Nations Human Rights Council into the genocide of the people of Kashmir, violations of international laws by the Hindutva BJP-led Indian government in August 2019, ongoing cordon and search operations, house raids, and the challenging situation at the hands of Indian occupation forces.

## Islamabad capital police ensure foolproof security arrangements

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Police is constantly engaged to ensure effective security arrangements at parliament lodges and the National Assembly in the High Security Zone.

The high security zone encompasses pivotal government and private establishments, diplomatic missions, and other vital assets, necessitating an unwavering focus on their safeguarding.

Senior officers have directed the personnel on duty to uphold the highest standards of diligence and professionalism, cultivating a positive rapport with citizens. A fervent appeal is made to the citizens to promptly report any perceived suspicious activity or individuals to the helpline "Pukar-15."

Anti state statements: FIA summons Aleema on Feb 6

ISLAMABAD (Online): FIA has issued another call up notice to Aleema Khan sister of PTI founder.

FIA Counter Terrorism Wing (CTW) has summoned Aleema Khan at 11 a.m on February 06 for investigation. Aleema Khan has been directed to appear at 11 am on February 6 in CTW headquarters Islamabad. Notice has been issued under 160 CRPC in connection with inquiry No 24/4. The notice contains allegations of fomenting hate material through electronic and print media and creating fissure between people and army through criminal conspiracy. In case of her non appearance it will be considered she has nothing to say in her defence.



ISLAMABAD: A view of banners displayed in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day at Constitution Avenue, in the Federal Capital.

## FDE revokes ministry's order, stirring debate on hierarchy & rules of business

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) nullified the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training's (MOFE&PT) order to reinstate Dr. Samia Dogar to her former position as Director, Federal College of Education (FCE).

Mr. Majid Umer, an associate professor at FCE, has been directed to look after the administrative matters of FCE as a principal.

Earlier, the MOFE&PT had issued the reinstatement order of Dr. Samia Dogar on December 12, 2023, following a directive from the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment. However, after 48 days, the FDE, an attached/subordinate department of MOFE&PT, took the unprecedented step of cancelling the reinstatement orders, raising eyebrows and concerns among the educational community. Critics argue that such a move challenges the established hierarchy within government offices, as the FDE is an

attached department of the MOFE&PT.

It is pertinent to mention here that Dr. Samia Dogar, a Professor of BPS-20 position, had previously been removed from the directorship of FCE and the administrative control of FCE was abruptly transferred to the FDE on March 1, 2023.

Dr Samia was attached to Islamabad Model College for Girls, G-10/4, allegedly as a form of punishment, further complicated the situation, leading to a violation of seniority lists and recruitment rules specific to the FCE.

The Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment issued a directive to MOFE&PT, directing the immediate reinstatement of Professor Dr. Samia Dogar to her previous position. This decision followed an appeal filed by Dr. Samia against Waseem Ajmal Chaudhary, Secretary of MOFE&PT, under Section 6 of the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010.



ISLAMABAD: Candidate of Jimmat-e-Islami Muhammad Kashif from NA-47 talking to people during his visit to Bara Kohu Bazaar.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushal Hussein Mullick, addressing during a seminar on Kashmir Solidarity Day, in the Federal Capital.

## Pakistan's support applauded by JKYML chairman for boosting Kashmiris morale

ISLAMABAD (APP): JKYML Chairman Imtiaz Reeshi, on Saturday, expressed gratitude to Pakistan for its steadfast support on February 5, foreseeing a morale boost for Kashmiris who resisted India's unjust rule and occupation. In a statement, Reeshi of Jammu and Kashmir Young Men's League (JKYML), acknowledged the unwavering nationwide support for freedom-seeking Kashmiris facing Indian oppression and harsh colonialism. The steadfast backing will lift the morale of Kashmiris involved in a sacred resistance against India's illegitimate rule and occupation, uplifting their spirits.

He said that the show of empathy and solidarity and the statement at the highest level of the state left no doubt whatever about the resolve and continua-

tion of Pakistan's political, diplomatic and moral support to the fettered people of Kashmir for their freedom from the Indian yoke.

He said that he had nothing but praise and gratitude for the Pakistani brethren and the state and wanted to thank every single Pakistani for his/her show of interminable and unconditional support to his subjugated nation.

He said the candid and bold statements from the President, Prime Minister and the army chief were inspirational reflecting the state's historical and principled stand on the issue and should clear the confusion created by the enemies of Kashmir and Pakistan.

Zahid Ashraf, party Vice Chairman and Hurriyat leader also expressed his gratitude to the great state and people of Pakistan for

observing the Kashmir Solidarity Day with such zeal and devotion. In a statement issued he said that Pakistan and Kashmir were two inseparable entities and, Allah willing, backed by Pakistan Kashmiri should one day achieve freedom and fulfil its dream of becoming a part of Pakistan.

He further said that the state wide unanimity and reiteration of the support and commitment to the cause of Kashmiris' freedom was highly commendable as it not only showed that Pakistani state and nation were united on this core national issue but also made it plain and clear to all, particularly the occupier that Pakistan would never abandon its stand on Kashmir or ditch their Kashmiri brethren who were engaged in an epic struggle for freedom.

## Death anniversary of iconic actor Khayyam observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Today marks the 13th death anniversary of Khayyam Sarhadi, a versatile artist recognized for his contributions to film, radio, TV, and stage.

Khayyam Sarhadi was born in 1948 in the family of a renowned film director of his time but he was passionate about becoming a director and actor. His father sent him to Greece to complete acting directing and production courses.

After returning to Pakistan, he joined Radio and later producer Yawar Hayat introduced him on PTV.

His journey in the entertainment industry, marked by memorable performances, is fondly remembered by millions of fans.

He worked in many dramas on PTV including "Waris", "Raiza Raiza", "Mann Chalay Ka Soda", "Dehleez", "Lazawal" and "Sooraj Kay Saath Saath".

His versatility as an actor was evident in his performances across different mediums. Today, on the 13th anniversary of his passing, fans and the industry alike remember Khayyam Sarhadi.



ISLAMABAD: Needy people are eating free food in a Langar Khana at Peshawar Morr sector G-9 in the Federal Capital.

## 25 outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 25 outlaws including 10 professional beggars from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered drugs and weapons from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Aabpara police team arrested three accused namely Kashif Masih, Ahsan Ali and Ibrar Mansha and recovered 520 gram heroin and 15 liters of alcohol from their possession. The Secretariat police

team arrested an accused namely Siraj Khan and recovered 187 gram heroin from his possession.

Likewise, the Karachi Company police team arrested two accused namely Muhammad Saeed and Adnan and recovered 30 liters of alcohol from their possession.

The Sumbal police team arrested an accused namely Muhammad Mumtaz and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession.

Similarly, the Industrial Area police team arrested an accused namely Shahzad Ali and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession. The Shams Colony police team arrested two accused namely Naimat Khan and Muhammad Sultan and recovered 670 gram hashish and fake currency from their possession.



# Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Sunday February 04, 2024

## 'Tricky minds'

The cipher case judgement, released on Thursday, offers interesting insights into a case conducted in jail and largely away from public view.

The extraordinary fervour with which this trial had been pursued by the state had been well-established ever since the special court conducting it was rebuked twice by the Islamabad High Court over serious irregularities in the proceedings.

Despite a third chance, however, the court was widely criticised for having fallen well short of what would be considered a clean and fair trial.

The judgement now makes clear that former prime minister Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi were punished not just for their alleged wrongs but also for what the presiding judge described as their "tricky minds" and "tricky acts".

There is extensive justification in the judgement for why the defendants were denied some of their trial rights — a matter that had caused much controversy when case hearings were abruptly concluded on Monday.

The judgement blames the defendants for trying to prolong the proceedings and claims they refused to defend themselves. The judge reasons they did so in order to weaken the court's verdict so it would be struck down in appeal.

In doing so, the entire burden of the irregularities reported in the conduct of the case seems to have been shifted onto the defendants. Importantly, the biggest 'crime' the two have been punished for seems insufficiently substantiated.

The court finds the two guilty of "compromising the security of the state and the communications methods used by Pakistan's foreign missions". However, the Foreign Office has affirmed this week that its communication systems have been audited and are safe and protected. If so, what exactly are the two guilty of?

Furthermore, the question of whether it is the prime minister's prerogative to make public any privileged information has not been addressed. Instead, the perceived harm to Pakistan's relations with the US and foreign lenders due to the decision to go public with the cipher's contents seems to have been given much more precedence than the fact that this decision was made by Pakistan's chief executive at the time.

There is no doubt that Mr Khan and Mr Qureshi massively overstepped by deciding to use a diplomatic matter as a political shield. The fact that Mr Khan misplaced his copy of the cipher is also a grave concern.

However, neither of these, on its own, seems like reason enough to justify punishing two senior decision-makers so harshly. Pakistan's weak international standing is a result of years of bad policies and irresponsible actions.

Without a doubt, the cipher stunt worsened Pakistan's ties with a major trading partner and global power. However, it is not the sole reason for our soured diplomatic ties with the US.

Asad Baig

Phones rang in the state of New Hampshire ahead of primary elections. Joe Biden's voice was heard over the line. "We know the value of voting Democrats. It's important that you save your vote for the November election," the voice said.

"Voting this Tuesday only enables the Republicans in their quest to elect Donald Trump again. Your vote makes a difference in November, not this Tuesday." Between 5,000 and 25,000 calls were made. The Biden administration never initiated any of those calls, and the voice was a deepfake — generated through artificial intelligence (AI) and mastered to sound like President Biden.

"These messages appear to be an unlawful attempt to disrupt the New Hampshire presidential primary election and to suppress New Hampshire voters," said the state attorney general's office in response to the "robocalls".

These robocalls used caller ID spoofing, a technique which alters the caller ID to show a different phone number, hiding the

actual source of the call. In this case, the robocall appeared to have come from a number associated with Kathy Sullivan, chairperson of the New Hampshire Democratic Party, an affiliate of the Democratic Party.

This example is part of a broader trend where AI-generated content was used to mislead voters during election periods. In Bangladesh, feeds of 'international' news channels were created using AI ahead of elections.

In these fabricated news segments, AI-generated anchors falsely reported significant events, including allegations of US involvement in funding riots and violence in Bangladesh. Previously, disinformation from external sources in the US presidential elections of 2016 aimed at influencing voter behaviour caught many off guard. Similar trends are observed globally. The challenge then is to find effective means to counteract political disinformation.

While imposing stringent laws or criminalising disinformation are pegged as solutions, such measures could inadvertently criminalise free speech and be used to suppress legiti-

mate discourse. Therefore, the answer to combating disinformation isn't as straightforward as 'enacting a law against fake news', or erecting a 'national firewall'. It requires a careful balance between regulation and the preservation of free expression.

An effective strategy in countering political disinformation is the 'inoculation' approach, a topic I've extensively covered in a previous op-ed. This method involves preemptively exposing the public to a weakened form of misinformation, thereby enabling them to better recognise and resist deceptive information.

Another proven strategy in combating disinformation is the consistent publication of fact-checks by reputable media organisations. This approach helps to identify and correct misinformation, fostering an informed public. It also enhances the credibility and reliability of media sources, making them trusted authorities in discerning truth from falsehood. However, this approach has challenges.

Monitoring social media platforms for

disinformation is an uphill task due to the enormous volume of content. Even with a substantial team, addressing the flood of disinformation items for fact-checking is daunting. Selecting just a few pieces from thousands that circulate daily for verification, while ensuring timely publication of fact-checks, is challenging. This is compounded by financial constraints faced by newsrooms in recent years, which caused massive layoffs and pay cuts, making the allocation of sufficient human and technical resources for this task even more difficult.

Additionally, the financial viability of many fact-checking organisations remains a concern. A significant number of these outlets struggle with sustaining operations due to funding challenges. Many of them operate without a robust sustainability plan, often relying on partnerships through various third-party fact-checking programmes funded by tech companies, or operating on a grant basis around landmark events. This lack of a stable financial model and the resultant limitations

pose a risk to their mid-to long-term viability.

For third-party fact-checkers working with tech companies, a significant concern is the potential conflict of interest. The relationship between traditional media and information literacy (MIL) initiatives and conventional fact-checking based on post-bunking, highlights a substantial gap.

While tech platforms might support MIL and traditional fact-checking, their willingness to fund in-depth investigations into organised disinformation campaigns, especially those that might scrutinise the role of tech companies themselves, including the lack of effective regulation of hate speech against vulnerable groups, is less certain. Comprehensive investigations into the sources and beneficiaries of disinformation, such as those conducted into the disinformation in the US presidential elections of 2016, are crucial but may not always receive support from the said platforms.

To effectively combat disinformation, it is crucial to strengthen credible newsrooms, the long-standing

gatekeepers of information, rather than creating parallel structures with little to no transparency in ownership. This means making the publication of fact-checks a sustainable venture for credible newsrooms, enhancing their web traffic, and consequently, revenue.

There are several strategies to achieve this. Drawing from my recent experience with a newsroom that is profiting from publishing fact-checks, a combination of leveraging Cunningham's Law, effective Search Engine Optimisation, and smart social media tactics can be significantly impactful. This approach is also vital in redirecting web traffic to credible news sources, thereby countering the dominance of big tech companies over Pakistan's digital advertising revenue. It is also crucial for diverse entities, from independent digital-first media start-ups to third-party fact-checkers, to engage and grow in this space. Although there may be some concerns with the latter, their contributions are nonetheless vital, as they can reach and correct misinformation for thousands, if not more, daily.

Tariq Khosa

These are difficult, frightening times. In the words of Martha Beck (The Way of Integrity, 2021), "A value system built on avarice, ambition, and oppression shows up in unprincipled leaders, corrupt groups, and then entire national cultures."

Unfortunately, Pakistan has lost its way of integrity. The current caretaker regime is complicit in punishing dissent and criminalising opposition, jailing and torturing people. Democracy is ominously passing through dark days on the eve of the national polls. Are we going through a 'democratic recession' as Larry Diamond, a Stanford professor puts it: "There is a spirit of the times, and it is not a democratic one."

In my last piece in this paper on Jan 8, I had pinned hopes on two chiefs for ensuring that the national polls on Feb 8 will be free and fair. One honourable chief ensured that a major political party continued to be dismantled by another chief

heading the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The party symbol verdict by a Supreme Court bench was widely criticised as denying a level playing field to one of the major mainstream political parties. The principle of fair play was seen as having been grossly violated. After watching the intense and grueling display of verbal onslaught in the apex court over a weekend, I was willing to bet that the party in question would not be denied its ballot symbol and may well be directed to hold fresh intra-party polls in accordance with their own constitution. The decision led to a burst of dismay followed by a ripple of woe.

The conduct of another chief is beyond any doubt fraught with double standards. The former bureaucrat, heading the ECP, is living up to his reputation of actively promoting a partisan political agenda. Crude ways have been adopted to literally disenfranchise a huge chunk of the electorate by denying their preferred candidates

a level playing field.

The electoral watchdog is blatantly ignoring what the current chiefs of police are involved in: massive transgressions in violating the basic human rights of citizens. The rallies of the targeted party are disrupted, their workers arrested, the privacy of their homes violated with impunity. There is no one to check such acts of persecution. The courts are helpless as their lawful commands are disregarded with contempt.

As a former police chief, my head hangs in shame at seeing some police commanders stoop so low to please the 'invisible forces' of the deep state. They lack the courage to say no to the illegal manoeuvres of political engineering. They see their role only as serving the powers that be.

Meanwhile, there has been a report in a daily paper quoting the army chief at a function where he is said to have interacted with students from various universities in the public and private sector. He was reported to have said that people should

carefully choose their representatives and asked whether political parties should be permitted to break the country and if people should have to wait till the end of the five-year term.

At the same event, the youth were reportedly told that it was not possible to govern virtually, as "it must be performed on the ground" and that decisions should not be based on what is displayed on mobile screens, an apparent reference to social media.

This news item reported him as saying that the army paid the most taxes in the country, with half its budget going to the government in taxes, and that no other army anywhere was functioning on such a low budget. The remarks, it was reported by the paper, also centred on Pakistan's financial prospects with \$10 trillion worth of reserves in the shape of mines, minerals, and earth metals, in contrast to \$128 billion in foreign debt. It was pointed out, according to the report, that the military-run Green Pakistan Initiative

would end the country's reliance on imported food and make it self-sustaining.

Many questions have arisen following this event. One of the foremost on the minds of some observers has been whether a public political discourse was needed by the head of an 'apolitical' institution on the eve of national polls, while some have also asked whether the message for the youth was to not be led astray by social media and Western influence on our culture.

With the challenges to security and territorial integrity on the rise, perhaps remarks that can be construed as political reflections are best left to those within political circles.

The real issues facing the nation are: the elite capture indicative in the widening gap between the rich and poor; stagflation and economic deprivation; lack of security and justice; corruption in public institutions; unaccountable intelligence agencies; poor governance; inadequate health

and education facilities; and above all, lack of inclusive democratic practices.

In the current environment of spin and cynicism, the choice given to the people is simple: keep your head down and survive, or raise your head and challenge the atrocities and suffer the consequences. The response must be a principled one: it should be refusal to be part of an immoral, devious regime and a commitment to bring a change through ballot, by being brave enough to reach the polling stations on Feb 8 and casting their votes. Then it would be the test of those who will count the votes. Will they defy the choice of the electorate or become part of a shameful legacy of yet another rigged election?

We should not forget a perennial truth: that the potential tools of democracy are integrity, public trust and transparency. As Margaret Mead famously said, thoughtful and committed citizens can change the world. "Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

## Circular economy

Ajaz Ahmed

A circular economy is a model of economy which focuses on the reuse and regeneration of materials or products to ensure environmentally friendly and sustainable production and consumption. The central idea of this economic system is to keep products and materials in circulation and increase their life cycle as much as possible through reuse, repair, refurbishing, composting, and recycling to avoid waste and promote regeneration. Hence, the circular economy seeks to productively use the products again after the end of their life, thereby creating further value and sending off the traditional linear economic model.

In other words, a circular economy is based on a systems-level approach such that industrial processes and economic activities are designed to be restorative or regenerative, seeking to maintain the highest value of resources while also minimising waste through alternative designs and production and consumption approaches. The redesigning of materials and products entails less resource intensity and the use of waste as a resource to manufacture new materials and products. Thus, the circular economy incorporates the full impacts of materials and waste in a transformative manner which ensures inclusiveness and equity.

This circular economy model incentivises the reuse of products to minimise the extraction of new resources which is critical to tackling climate change, biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution. While the circular

economy model is very important for the efficient use of resources and living within the safe limits of planetary boundaries, ie, the limits beyond which the environment may not be able to sustain itself, the progress is unsatisfactory, to say the least.

Recently, the Circular Economy Foundation released the Circularity Gap Report 2024, showing that global circularity has declined despite the fact that the theme of circular economy has gained a lot of traction in the mainstream. The report claims that while awareness and interest in circularity has increased, more and more resources are being extracted from the pool of natural resources, and the proportion of reuse and use of secondary materials is decreasing. The report claims that globally, the increase in the quantity of materials extracted and used has massively gone up. For example, more than half a trillion tonnes of materials were extracted and used in the past six years alone, which is roughly equal to the total use in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Unfortunately, the global community is not committed to or serious about the conservation of natural resources and a stable future climate, and this is stressful, to put it mildly. The recent COP28 in Dubai was a similar spectacle where several pledges were made without concrete plans of action — speeches and goals are not being translated into much-needed actions and measurable impacts. The limited progress on the circular economy means a risk to global resources and planetary boundaries, which results in violation of the key tenets of the circular economy: reduced use of

material for a long time, prioritising use of regenerative materials, and recycling and refurbishing at end-of-life.

Then accelerated consumption and production no longer warrant human well-being, while material extraction and a neglect of the conservation of the natural environment result in more socioeconomic disparities, creating conditions for political and social instability. This is because of the flawed development model where economic growth is fuelled by unsustainable consumption and production approaches. Hence, the global economy must adopt principles of circularity to achieve sustainable development and a resilient future, one that safeguards the real well-being of existing and future generations.

As for the solutions, economic development must consider socially just and environmentally sound approaches. This necessitates a change in the rules of the game which starts with the design and implementation of context-specific policies that minimise the carbon and ecological footprint and ensure environmental sustainability and a climate-resilient future.

There are countless problems and constraints; but, starting small in the right direction would not hurt anyone. However, the transition to a circular economy is not a choice as the global economy is changing and so is the structure of different economic sectors as the Earth system is unable to sustain the linear economy of the past, which contributed to climate change, biodiversity loss, and mountains of waste, and was beyond the carrying capacity of Earth.

## Yemen's stand

Muhammad Mohsin Masood

History and memory are at the very root of our collective thought and actions as a society. The events of history and the trauma and memory stemming from that history live on, intermingling through various stages of progress and continuing to shape not only the future but also the psychology of nations. History in that sense is ever-becoming, undefined, shapeless. Nevertheless, it can provide a definite link between a specific set of people and events.

One such link is evident in the recent bombing of Yemen by the US and the UK. The Western allies took this step because, in their view, an "illegitimate" and "terrorist" government — one that does not trail behind the oil-laden fumes of the Middle Eastern parade — had disrupted international shipping, and was threatening the 'international community'. But if you ask the Houthis (the de facto rulers of Yemen) they will tell you that their preventing Israeli ships or those bringing goods to Israel from passing through the Bab al-Mandeb strait is an act of service to the 'international community' — whose soul bears the wounds and scars of Palestinian suffering.

The Bab al-Mandeb strait is one of those places where geography and history coalesce. It is a narrow channel of water — about 26 kilometres wide — that separates Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula from Djibouti on the Horn of Africa. This is the crucial entry point into the Red Sea from where a majority of international shipping passes to the Suez Canal. The historical port of Aden sits

right next to this narrow body of water.

The geography of this area has allowed the Houthis to hold captive international shipping since it is at this point where large cargo ships and tankers are at their most vulnerable after passing through Suez. It is also this geography which led the British to advance their imperialistic ambition in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when they took control of Aden and most of southern Yemen. This is not the first time that British or Western interests in that area have been threatened.

From 1839 until 1967, the British were the colonial occupiers of south Yemen. The port of Aden oversaw the vital link to India. It is here that the British played the game of colonisation and native subjugation. Now that its 'illegitimate child' state follows in its footsteps, they have reverted, in true imperial style, to bombarding its former colony.

History has unmasked the genocidal past of the champions of the 'international community', whose knee-jerk reaction was nothing more than muscle memory — for the Yemenis have previously been bombed, terrorised, brutalised and harassed by a colonial power. The British in their attempt to stop an indigenous liberation movement in Yemen, resorted to brutal tactics to suppress the local population especially in Aden and in the Crater region of southern Yemen. Lt-Col Colin Mitchell ('Mad Mitch') of the Argyll Battalion imposed the 'Argyll law' in Yemen, which included the mass butchering of innocent civilians to terrorise the population. The imperialist British compared the killing of Yemenis to

hunting birds for sport. Israel now sees the genocide of men, women and children in much the same way — of those they deem as less than human.

It is the history of that earlier colonisation and genocidal force that has led the Yemenis — the poorest nation in the region, ravaged by a decade-long civil war, faced with famine and disease — to take a moral stand against the Western-backed Israeli genocide to their north. For the Yemenis, it is the moral and religious duty they owe to the Palestinians.

Even after the bombing, thousands gathered in Sana'a, chanting with one voice 'We do not care! Make it a World War!'. While the Houthis may have internal benefits in angling for such a foreign policy, the outpouring of the mass public behind this sentiment shows that the scars of history can become signs of empathy and strength. Yemenis are living that history and forming it anew by taking a stand against Israel.

The Yemenis are aided, legally, by South Africa — there too the history of apartheid has been the impetus to take action. The memory of trauma can lead to collective moral action. When the chips are down, what matters is how, in our collective spirit, we read our history. Does it compel us to stand, even if alone, or does it terrify us to cower behind power? For a nation born of the flames of colonial history, our answer has been disappointing. Collectively we have failed in our tribute to the Palestinians even on the basis of Islam — a moral force steeped in a glorious past. But Yemen, unlike us, pays homage to its history.



## Education is path of progress: Governor KP

*Stresses students to focus on research, play role for country's development*

PESHAWAR (APP): The youth should enlighten the name of the country and nation in the world with their education and research and always prepare themselves for competition, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said while addressing the first annual convocation 2024 of NCS University System Peshawar here on Saturday. The Governor distributed a total of 160 degrees besides awarded 16 gold medals to those students who got distinction in their respective faculties. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said that education is the path of development and the name of the end of ignorance. Educated youth have to play an important role in the development and prosperity of the country. "Don't let it go to waste, difficulties are a part of life, struggle and quest should never end, putting knowledge and skills to use, you have to move forward with hard work and honesty in practical life," the Governor said. Qazi Amjad CEO, Sajid Inam Secretary Higher Education Regulation Authority, Pro Vice Chancellor KMU Professor Rubina Naz, Dr. Bakht Sarwar Chairman Board of Governors, Registrar, Faculty members, members of the Senate and Syndicate, including students and parents, were present in the ceremony. The Governor distributed degrees to 160 students who completed Doctor of Physical Therapy, Bachelor of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences in the session 2023 and awarded gold medals to 16 students who achieved prominent positions in the field of education. In the ceremony, Director Campus NCS University Aamir Waleed welcomed the governor and other guests and presented the annual performance report of the institution to the governor. Addressing the ceremony.



PESHAWAR: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali addressing NCS University System Annual Convocation 2024.



SAHIWAL: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi inaugurates Surgical Tower at Teaching Hospital Sahiwal.

## Naqvi opens Metro Bus Saskath Road Station, Gymkhana, e-library

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the Metro Bus Saskath Road Station, Gymkhana and Allama Iqbal e-Library in Rawalpindi on Saturday. The Saskath Road Metro Station was badly damaged during an arson being committed in the 9th May incidents. On the direction of CM, repair and renovation of the station has been undertaken, said a handout issued here. Mohsin Naqvi visited the Saskath Road Metro Station and conversed with the staff members present at the ticket counter. CM while appreciating rehabilitation work of the Metro station apprised that 10 thousand citizens commute on the Metro Bus service from the Saskath Road station daily. The station has been reopened for the passengers after undertaking its repair and renovation work at the cost of rupees 100 million. The repair and renovation work of the Metro station has been completed in 45 days. Electric control panels, main power supply, new lights and fans have been installed at the Metro station. Mohsin Naqvi reviewed facilities being provided in the Rawalpindi Gymkhana and played snooker as well. Provincial Ministers, Chief Secretary, Chairman P&D and Secretaries also played snooker and table tennis. CM lauded the quality of construction work and provision of facilities at the Gymkhana and revealed that not a single penny of the Punjab government has been spent in its construction. Library and restaurant facility is also available besides provision of all sports courts. He visited the upgraded Allama Iqbal e-Library at Liaquat Bagh and communicated with the students who came for reading in the library.

## CM Sindh inaugurates 'Chest Pain Unit' at Sindh High Court Bar

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice Maqbool Baqar has said that due to easy access to emergency care and quick response, the Chest Pain Units entertained over 1.2 million people in seven years and saved over 30,000 lives. Due to success and appreciation, the demand has grown, and we are planning more units in different areas of Karachi and other parts of the province. This he said just after inaugurating the 28th Chest Pain Unit of NICVD at Sindh High Court Bar Association, Karachi. The program was attended by Chief Justice of Sindh High Court Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, other judges of Sindh High Court, Minister Law Omar Soomro, Secretary Health Dr Mansoor Rajput, Executive Director of NICVD Dr Tahir Saghir, office bearers of the High Court bar and leading lawyers and doctors. He said that it was our collective journey towards improved healthcare. "The establishment of a new Chest Pain Unit (CPU) at the Sindh High Court is not just a momentous occasion but also it is a testament to our unwavering commitment to the health and well-being of the people of Sindh, he said and added we have gathered here not only to mark the opening of this unit but to celebrate the strides we have taken in expanding access to quality cardiac care across Sindh Province. Cardiovascular diseases continue to be a significant health challenge globally, and Pakistan is no exception, the CM said and added that initiatives like these Chest Pain Units play a pivotal role in addressing this challenge by providing timely and efficient care to those experiencing chest pains, often a critical indicator of heart-related issues.



LAHORE: Chief Information Commissioner Syed Mehmoob Qadir Shah presenting annual report 2022-23 to Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur-Rehman.

## Sindh's heavy bike rally took off for tourism promotion

KARACHI (APP): Interim Sindh Minister for Tourism, Environment, and Climate Change and Coastal Development Arshad Wali Muhammad emphasized on Saturday the eco-friendly nature of such events, applauding their positive impact on the youth. In the inauguration ceremony of Sindh's heavy bike rally, he called on the youth to engage in activities that foster a love for adventure while contributing to environmental awareness, according to a private news channel. Expressing delight, Arshad Wali Muhammad commended the spirit and passion of the rally participants. "I am delighted to witness the spirit and passion of the participants in this exciting heavy bike rally. These events not only showcase the beauty of our land but also provide an excellent platform for our youth to engage in healthy and environmentally conscious activities," remarked Arshad Wali Muhammad. The chief guest extended gratitude to participating biker groups and sponsors, including the Sindh Development Tourism Department, DHA City, Vital Tea, Taj Petroleum, and Thar Foundation. The Heavy Bike Rally commenced from Mazar-e-Quaid, setting the stage for an exciting journey through Sindh's key destinations. The rally includes visits to Bhambor Fort, Thatta, Badin, Nokot, Mithi, Nagarparkar, and Rampur Dam. The Heavy Bike Rally was not just an adventure for participants but also a strategic move to boost Sindh's tourism sector. By showcasing the cultural heritage and natural beauty of the region, the initiative aims to attract visitors and promote tourism.



HYDERABAD: A large number of eyes patients sitting in the tent waiting for eye operation during free eye camp organized by Hyderabad Host Lions Club at Police Line Ground.

## Sindh Police holds high level meeting on security preparations for election

KARACHI (APP): Under the leadership of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, a comprehensive review meeting was convened on Saturday to assess the security arrangements for the upcoming General Election 2024 and to evaluate the current law and order situation. The meeting, held at the Central Police Office Karachi, saw the participation of Additional IGP Karachi, DIGPs, and other senior officers. Addressing the attendees, IGP Sindh Riffat Mukhtar Raja highlighted the heightened public enthusiasm surrounding the election and emphasized that the Sindh Police's actions in maintaining law and order are pivotal to fulfilling public expectations. IGP Riffat Mukhtar Raja stressed the need for enhanced and fool-proof security arrangements across all ranges, districts, and zones, underscored by the active cooperation and support of the public. Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of stringent implementation of the security plan, prioritizing crime analysis, and ensuring timely and robust responses to thwart nefarious intentions. IGP Sindh reiterated the significance of extraordinary security measures to counter anti-peace elements and urged for increased vigilance, timely detection of suspicious activities, and citizen cooperation through awareness campaigns. Moreover, he called for diligent security deployment at sensitive installations and key public and private buildings throughout the province.

## Minister spotlights initiatives taken for depts' development

LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Minister for Transport, Local Government, Livestock and Mines & Minerals Ibrahim Hasan Murad underscored the impactful initiatives implemented across various departments during his one-year tenure. At a press briefing here on Saturday, he recounted the caretaker government's exemplary performance and mentioned the introduction of a task management system in the local government department and a notable increase in revenue through cattle market auctions, rising from Rs 3.5 billion to Rs 5.7 billion. The revenue of local government department has also been increased from Rs 10 billion in term of property tax digitisation, he added. More than 200,000 tons of waste was removed in "Safai Nisf Man" campaign focused on Clean and Green Punjab. Over 1,500 transparent transfers and posting were approved in the LG department, he claimed. While highlighting initiatives taken in the mines and minerals department, he said that Rs 2.17 billion has been increased in non-tax revenue of the department, adding that Geographical Indication (GI) of rock salt as pink rock salt is the biggest achievement of the mines department. Roadmap to generate Rs 150 billion revenue has been developed which would be taken forward by the next government.



LAHORE: Visitors viewing the displayed staff during Painting, Sculpture, Ceramic and Calligraphy Exhibition organized by Arts and Craft Forum at PILAC Gaddafi Stadium.

## PHP apprehends 567 POs across province in January

MULTAN (APP): The Punjab Highway Patrol (PHP) have issued over two lack E-challans over violation of traffic rules on roads across the province during the past month of January. According to the PHP monthly performance report data issued here, police have arrested 567 Proclaimed Offenders (POs) and court absconders including 27 A category and 524 B category in Punjab province. PHP also checked 1.91 million people and 2.22 million vehicles on roads through E-police post App. PHP also recovered 552 stolen vehicles including 87 cars, 426 motorcycles and 39 other vehicles. Likewise, legal action was taken against 768 vehicles for using gas cylinders in public transport. The challans were issued to 1,25,641 overloaded vehicles over violation of approved Excel Load Management to secure highways across the province. Assistance and guidance were provided to 8025 passengers facing difficulties during the journey. As many as 38 missing children were reunited with their parents and 10689 driving licences were issued to citizens.

## Chan says: PPP believes in politics of public welfare

SARGODHA (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) candidate for NA-82 Nadeem Afzal Chan on Saturday said his party believed in the politics of public welfare and prosperity of Pakistan. Addressing a meeting of party workers at the party office, he said the people were the real master of the country and that was why the party had the agenda based on their welfare. He urged people to reject all political elements in the upcoming general elections who were doing politics of victimization and egoism. He said economic prosperity could be achieved by financially empowering farmers, labourers and the underprivileged. Chan said if people voted the PPP to power, the government in its five-year tenure would double the salaries of employees and wages of labourers, and take steps to increase the farmers' income twofold. He reiterated that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Shaheed and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had sacrificed their lives but never compromised on the rights of the masses and democratic principles.

## Bail plea of Sanam: Court seeks arguments from prosecution

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore has sought arguments from prosecution on the bail plea of Sanam Javed in siege and arson case. Judge Muhammad Navid Iqbal of ATC took up for hearing bail plea of Sanam Javed in the case of siege and arson registered against her in police station Shadman. Counsel for Sanam Javed while giving arguments said police arrested Sanam Javed in one after one case. This shows ill intent of police. During the hearing the prosecution sought time for arguments. The court while accepting this plea adjourned the hearing of the case till February 6.



LAHORE: Provincial Caretaker Minister Transport Ibrahim Hasan Murad addressing a press conference at a local hotel.

## Violent demonstrations: Court adjourns hearing of Sheikh bail plea till Feb 6

RAWALPINDI (Online): Judge Malik Ijaz Asif of Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) No 1 Rawalpindi has adjourned the hearing of Sheikh Rashid bail plea till February 6 without proceedings in a case registered against him in police station New Town under the charges of damage to state properties, attacks on police, siege and arson and violent demonstrations against arrest of PTI founder. The hearing has been adjourned till February 6. The hearing of bail plea of Sheikh Rashid will take place in Adiala Jail. Sardar Shehbaz Khan counsel for Sheikh Rashid appeared in the court. Prosecution raised objections on the bail application of Sheikh Rashid, former decisions, court's orders and copies of former orders of high court were not attached. Upon the hearing of the case was adjourned till February 6. It is pertinent to mention here Police had arrested Sheikh Rashid on February 16 from court room in case registered against him with reference to May 9 incidents following the dismissal of his interim bail. New Town police had registered case against him on May 10 on the report of sub inspector Tariq Javed. The charges said that the role of Sheikh Rashid remained very uncivilized with reference to law and order situation on the occasion of May 9 incident.

## Chief Khateeb for action against use of e-cigarettes, vaping

PESHAWAR (APP): In a move that challenges the tobacco industry's harm reduction narrative, Chief Khateeb of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Maulana Tayab Qureshi, has issued a powerful call to action against the use of e-cigarettes and vaping, highlighting their dangers and addictive nature. Tayab Qureshi, who is also the Khateeb of the historic Masjid Mahabat Khan and Mohattam of the influential Madrassa Jama Ashrifia, has reached out to all district Khateeb and prayer leaders across the province, urging them to educate their communities about the harms of nicotine-laden products, said a press release issued here on Saturday. This initiative comes in the wake of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's recent interim ban on the sale of e-cigarettes and vapes to individuals below the age of 21 and within 50 meters of educational institutions, as per Section 144 for 2 months. This unprecedented measure underscores the province's commitment to safeguarding the health and well-being of its youth and educational environments. Tayab Qureshi's letter to the District Khateeb and prayer leaders not only endorses this ban but also emphasizes the need for widespread awareness about the adverse effects of e-cigarettes, vapes, and other harmful substances like nicotine, tobacco.

## ANF recovers 31 kg drugs in six operations; arrests four

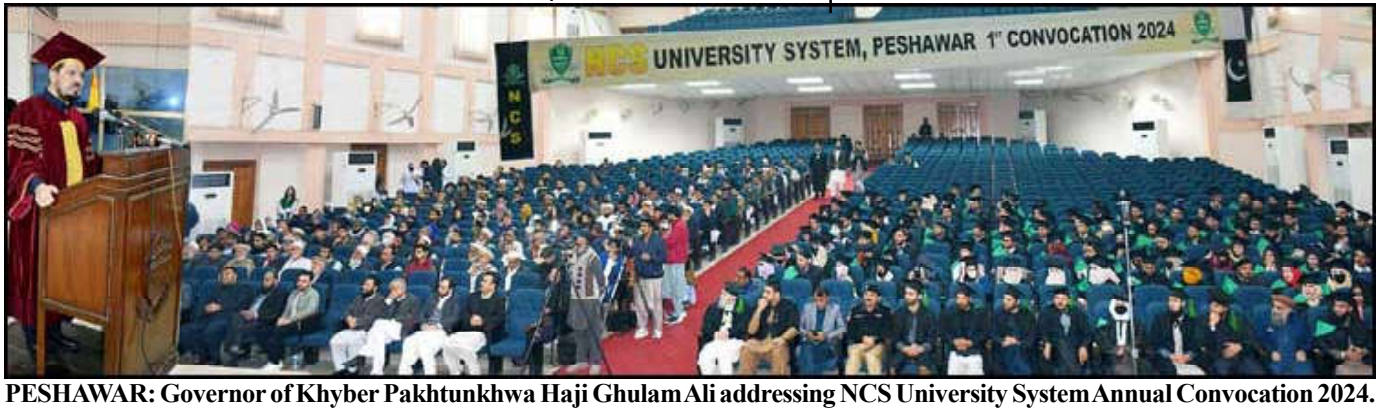
RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover 31 kg drugs and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday. He informed that 51 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from a Sharjah-bound passenger arrested at Peshawar Airport. 200 grams heroin and 65 grams CBD oil were recovered from a parcel at a courier office in Rawalpindi. 16 grams of weed was recovered from a parcel, sent from England at Shahrah-e-Faisal Karachi Courier Office while 24 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused Netted near M-4 Interchange Faisalabad. 4 kg of hashish was recovered from an accused arrested near Turki Toll Plaza, Suhawa and 4 kg hashish was recovered from an accused near Kamra Road, Attock.

## Trailer driver killed, son injured by robbers

FAISALABAD (APP): A trailer driver was shot dead while his son was seriously injured over resistance during a robbery in the area of Nishatabad. A police spokesman said here on Saturday that Irshad, son of Khuda Bukhsh, and his son, Shehzad, had parked their trailer near Hafiz Kanda, Randhawa Chowk Bypass, Sargodha Road. In the meanwhile, robbers arrived and tried to steal the trailer's batteries. However, when Irshad and his son resisted, they opened fire at them. As a result, Irshad, 45, received serious injuries and died on the spot whereas Rescue 1122 shifted his son, Shehzad, 20, to Allied Hospital-1 in a critical condition.

## Six persons of family hurt in road mishap

MULTAN (APP): At least six persons including a minor kid and four women sustained injuries due to a collision between loader rickshaw and tractor trolley near 17 Kassi Vehari road here on Saturday. According to Rescue officials, a loader rickshaw carrying passengers was going on its way when a speeding tractor-trolley hit it near 17 Kassi Vehari Road. As a result, six persons including kids and women sustained injuries. Upon receiving the information, Rescue teams rushed to the spot and shifted them.



PESHAWAR: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali addressing NCS University System Annual Convocation 2024.



## Fu Shuai says: Green Pakistan project designed to maximize agricultural productivity

BEIJING (APP): The Green Pakistan Million Acre Smart Farm project incorporates advanced equipment, innovative techniques and intelligent water management systems, all designed to maximize agricultural productivity while minimizing environmental impact," said Fu Shuai Vice GM of Dayu Irrigation International Department.

Speaking on the occasion of the delivery ceremony of first shipment of equipment for the project, he said, "Green Pakistan Initiative, launched last year aims to transform the agricultural landscape. We are dedicated to participating in this groundbreaking endeavor and contributing our expertise."

The delivery ceremony was also attended by Zaem, President of the exclusive distributor in Pakistan.

The first shipment of equipment for the Green Pakistan Million Acre Smart Farm Project was dispatched from China to Pakistan marking a significant milestone in the country's agricultural development, local media reported.

This collaborative initiative, led by China's Dayu Irrigation Group and local partners, aims to revolutionize farming practices and contribute to the implementation of the Green Pakistan Initiative.

Dayu Irrigation Group aims to integrate intelligent irrigation control systems into

Pakistan's farming as part of the Green Pakistan Million Acre Smart Farm Project.

By monitoring crop growth and optimizing water and fertilizer application, this system seeks to enhance yield, improve crop quality, and reduce labor costs for farmers.

The successful shipment of the initial equipment batch signifies the beginning of a transformative journey for Pakistan's agricultural sector.

Through unwavering Pak-China partnerships, the Green Pakistan Initiative is poised to usher in a new era of sustainable agriculture, benefiting farmers, rural communities and the nation as a whole.



RAWALPINDI : Group photo of Advisor Iftikhar Khan Senior Vice President Saqib Fayyaz Magu along with Provincial Commerce Minister SM Tanveer at the end of the function organized by FPCCI.

## National foodpreneur program launches officially marking a culinary milestone

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Foodpreneur Program is a collaboration between National Foods Ltd and MasterClass Pakistan, designed to empower individuals passionate about culinary arts to excel in the food industry.

The National Foodpreneur Program was officially launched in Karachi, Pakistan. The event, held at the MasterClass facility, brought together the talented students, the project team, and the esteemed leadership of National Foods. This convergence of culinary passion and industry expertise marked the beginning of a transformative program designed to empower aspiring chefs. The launch event saw the vibrant

gathering of the first cohort of 21 students, each with a shared passion for the culinary arts, creating an atmosphere charged with excitement and anticipation.

The National Foodpreneur Program aims to empower individuals to become successful entrepreneurs in the food industry or secure employment in the culinary field by providing a well-rounded education, training, and certification. On the occasion, Zahid Majeed the Chairman of National Foods Limited said "Empowering dreams is at the heart of our mission. The National Foodpreneur Program is not just about culinary education; it's about giving individuals the tools to turn their passion into a life changing experience."

## Experts working on SCO development bank's draft: Pakistani official

BEIJING (APP): The upcoming elections in Pakistan do not affect its interaction with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) or other international organizations. The SCO works with states, regardless of the government in power, said Director General SCO at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Altamash Wazir Khan.

Regarding the SCO development bank, Khan said that experts were currently working on the drafts and it may take some time but progress was being made. "The idea is not just about constructing a building, but also about creating an entire financial system which takes time for it to be realized" he added.

Khan also shared with the Global Times the efforts of the de-escalation of tensions between Pakistan and Iran and the

Iranian Foreign Minister's recent visit to Pakistan.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian recently visited Pakistan, when both sides announced the establishment of a high-level consultative mechanism to oversee the progress in various areas of cooperation between the two countries, including counter-terrorism, Xinhua reported.

Khan made the above remarks during a recent meeting between coordinators of the SCO member countries and media representatives in Beijing. The Election Commission of Pakistan had previously announced that February 8 would be the official date for the general elections in the country, read a Xinhua report. The Pakistani coordinator emphasized that the election results will not influence Pakistan's relations with the SCO.

## China's internet sector sees steady growth in 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): China's internet sector registered steady growth in business revenue and profits last year, according to data from the China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Major internet companies and related services companies saw their combined business revenue rise 6.8 percent year on year to total 1.75 trillion yuan (about 246.46 billion U.S. dollars) in 2023, the data showed, China. Org reported.

Their cumulative profits came in at 129.5 billion yuan, up 0.5 percent year on year.

Major internet companies and related services companies refer to those which have annual business revenues of at least 20 million yuan.

## WASA recovers Rs.280 million from defaulters in January

FAISALABAD (APP): Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) Managing Director Amir Aziz said that teams have recovered Rs280 million from defaulters in January.

In a statement on Saturday, he said that the revenue directorate of WASA was fully active in the field to increase revenue of the agency by taking strict action against chronic defaulters.

He said that the recovery teams had recovered Rs.238.3 million from defaulters during December 2023. However, during January 2024, the teams surpassed the target and succeeded in recovering Rs.280 million under various heads including Rs.267.2 million under the billing head.

He said that the performance report of recovery teams was being checked on a daily basis. The teams are also authorized to cut off water supply and sewerage connections of consumers.



President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Bakhtawari presenting shield to Chairman CDA Captain (Retd) Anwar-ul-Haq during his visit to ICCI office.

## CDA Chairman assures to address issues of business community

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Captain Anwar ul Haq said on Saturday that CDA would take all possible measures to address key issues to facilitate the business community for business development.

He said that efforts are underway to develop transparent and financially viable systems in CDA to better serve the citizens and the business community.

He said that CDA is working on an automated parking system to address the parking issue in markets and the Islamabad Citizen Club would soon be made operational.

He said this while talking to a delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of

Commerce and Industry (ICCI) during his visit to the CDA Head Office led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President.

Anwar said that the CDA is ready to hand over public toilets and filtration plants to ICCI for their maintenance and operation on mutually agreed terms.

He said that CDA is also ready to hand over its hospital to ICCI for maintenance and operation after its upgrade.

He said that CDA is considering outsourcing the water supply and waste management systems to make them hassle-free services for the citizens.

He said that CDA is digitizing the land record to facilitate the business community and the citizens.

## Eighteen Reveals Centro II and Pavilion 15 at exclusive sales event

ISLAMABAD (INP): Eighteen proudly announces the launch of Centro II, Pakistan's premier business center, and Pavilion 15, a sanctuary of luxury apartments offering panoramic views of the Twin Cities' most scenic golf course.

An exclusive sales event held to redefine the very essence of commercial excellence and upscale living.

Following the tremendous success of Centro, Centro II is a top-tier commercial building and the core of dynamic business activity, forging a new era of corporate success. Simultaneously, Pavilion 15 introduces a new dimension of luxury living with its captivating views of the picturesque

golf course. Pavilion 15 offers the perfect blend of sophistication and tranquility.

CEO of EIGHTEEN Tarek Hamdy, the visionary behind these groundbreaking projects, states, "Centro II is not just an address. It's a statement of ambition and achievement - a dynamic hub for businesses to thrive. Pavilion 15, on the other hand, is a testament to our commitment to crafting living spaces that transcend expectations and elevate lifestyles."

The exclusive launch promises an immersive experience for potential buyers, allowing them to explore the intricacies of Centro II's cutting-edge design and Pavilion 15's magnificent living spaces.



LAHORE: Women wearing traditional Kashmiri caps during Jashn-e-Sarma at Al-Hamra hall, in the Provincial Capital.

## SECP publishes Consultation Paper on adoption of AAOIFs

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has published a consultation paper to seek comments and feedback of stakeholders on implementation of a new strategy for adoption of AAOIFI's Shariah, accounting, auditing and governance standards.

The proposed new strategy aims to enhance the adoption of Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) standards by introducing a more comprehensive and interactive approach, with a phased implementation of all standards to ensure effective compliance. By considering the maturity level of industry and practical difficulties in adopting all standards at once, the proposed strategy suggests a staggered approach to implementation. Presently, only 7 Shariah standards have been adopted,

whereas the adoption of 10 more Shariah standards is in process. However, the existing approach, which includes picking standards based on necessity, produces an inadequate framework since many significant and consequential features offered in accounting, auditing, governance, and other Shariah-related standards may be missed out. Therefore, a new strategy has been envisaged emphasizing comprehensiveness, integration, interaction, feedback, and preparedness for global and domestic Islamic finance growth. All of AAOIFI's standards shall be adopted as non-binding guidelines, and institutions will be encouraged to voluntarily adopt them while conducting Islamic financial transactions. After a period of general sensitization, compliance will shift to a "comply or explain" approach with penal action.

## U.S. stocks end higher after strong nonfarm payrolls

NEW YORK (Xinhua/APP): U.S. stocks gained ground on Friday, as a blowout January employment report boosted confidence in the U.S. economy.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 134.58 points, or 0.35 percent, to 38,654.42. The S&P 500 added 52.42 points, or 1.07 percent, to 4,958.61, registering an all-time closing high. The Nasdaq Composite Index increased 267.31 points, or 1.74 percent, to 15,628.95.

Six of the 11 primary S&P 500 sectors ended in green, with communication services and consumer discretionary leading the gainers by adding 4.69 percent and 2.49 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, utilities and real estate led the laggards by dropping 1.81 percent and 1.26 percent, respectively.

Nonfarm payrolls expanded by 353,000 for the month, much better than the Dow Jones estimate for 185,000, the Labor Department.

## IMF chief says global economy shows positive momentum, warns of risks

WASHINGTON (Xinhua/APP): Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), said Thursday that although the IMF raised the global growth forecast, there's still a need "to be mindful of risks."

At a media roundtable at IMF headquarters in Washington D.C. on Thursday, the IMF chief said that with conflicts still going on between Russia and Ukraine, and Israel and Hamas, the complex geopolitical situation still brings uncertainties to the

global economic outlook.

The IMF upgraded the global growth forecast to 3.1 percent in 2024, 0.2 percentage point higher than the projection in October 2023, Georgieva said.

On the shipping disruptions in the Middle East, the IMF chief said that in January, cargo passing to the Suez Canal dropped by 43 percent from a year earlier, dealing a blow to the economy of relevant economies.

On the monetary policy, the IMF chief mentioned the risk of premature loosening as well as the risk of

maintaining higher interest rates for an extended period. For the United States, the risk of keeping interest rates higher for longer than necessary is not just a risk for the U.S. economy, but for the global economy, she said.

"When other countries especially many emerging market economies that have brought inflation down to target already move to lower interest rates, if the U.S. continues to be higher, that could impact exchange rates and it can impact other countries in a somewhat negative way," Georgieva said.

## Brazil's industrial output inches up 0.2 pct in 2023

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

In December 2023, industrial output advanced by 1.1 percent from a month earlier, marking the fifth consecutive month of growth. Positive results in the sector in 2023 were driven by extractive industries, coke, oil derivatives, biofuel products, and food products. Within the major economic categories, semi-durable and non-durable consumer goods showed the most dynamism, growing by 2.1 percent, while durable consumer goods were up by 1.2 percent. The capital goods segment reflected the only negative rate of the indicator, logging a loss of 11.1 percent in 2023.



RAWALPINDI : Anjuman Tajran Ghala Mandi Haji Muhammad Asif Akram presents a bouquet to Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi at the inauguration of the Business Facilitation Center.

## Over 8.3m cotton bales reach ginneries across Pakistan till Jan 31

MULTAN (APP): Seed cotton (Phutti), equivalent to over 8.3 million, or exactly 83,49,553 bales, has reached ginning factories across the country till January 31.

According to a fortnightly report of the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) released on Saturday, over 8.3 million, or 83,08,790 bales, have undergone the ginning process, i.e., converted into bales. Cotton arrivals in Punjab were recorded at over 4.2 million, or 42,38,434 bales.

Sindh generated over 4.1 million, or 41,11,119

bales. The textile sector bought 76,84,117 bales, while exporters purchased 2,92,726 bales, and Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) didn't buy during the cotton season 2023-24.

Sanghar district of Sindh was topped with a cotton arrival figure of 16,94,691 bales, followed by Bahawalnagar district of Punjab with 11,47,870 bales.

A total of 151 ginning factories were operational in the country.

Exactly 3,72,710 cotton bales of unsold stock were available in ginning factories.

## LESCO detects 407 power pilferers in 24 hours

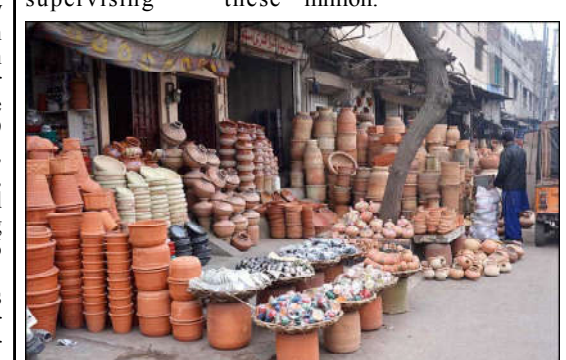
LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 407 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) on the 147<sup>th</sup> day of grand anti-power theft campaign.

The LESCO spokesman told media here Saturday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves, out of which 173 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations, while 07 accused have been arrested.

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 (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these

operations. The LESCO chief vowed that the operations would continue until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the LESCO officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice.

On the 147<sup>th</sup> consecutive day of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, large commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were also disconnected and charged with detection units. Among the seized connections 12 were commercial, 01 agricultural and 394 domestic, and all these connections were disconnected and charged with a total of 329,875 units as detection bill amounting to Rs 11.346 million.



MULTAN: Shopkeepers displaying clay-made pots to attract customers in front of their shop.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor is preparing Kinnow juice for customer at his roadside workplace in the Federal Capital.



## Iran will 'respond firmly' to US attack: President Raisi

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN/BEIRUT: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi issued a stern warning on Friday against any possible attack by the United States in retaliation for a strike that killed three American troops in Jordan.

The warning came as Israeli strikes killed three fighters, including an official of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, in Syria.

"We have said many times that we will not be the initiator of any war, but if a country, a cruel force wants to bully, the Islamic Republic of Iran will respond firmly," Raisi said during a visit to a Gulf naval base operated by the Revolutionary Guards.

Iran's "military power is not and is not a threat to any country," but a source of security that countries in the region can rely on

and trust, he said as he toured the base in Bandar Abbas. "Today, the enemy has no ability to do anything against us; because they know that our forces are powerful and capable."

The death of the American soldiers in a drone strike at a base in Jordan on Sunday marked the first US military losses to hostile fire in the region since the Gaza conflict on October 7.

Meanwhile, three pro-Iran fighters were killed in Israeli strikes south of Damascus on Friday, a war monitor said, with Iranian media reporting an adviser from the Revolutionary Guards was among the dead.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said "three members of pro-Iran groups, including an Iranian and an Iraqi" were killed in "Israeli air

strikes".

Media reported on Thursday that the United States had approved plans for multi-day strikes in Iraq and Syria against multiple targets, including Iranian personnel and facilities in those countries.

"We will not start any war, but if anyone wants to bully us they will receive a strong response," Raisi said in a televised speech.

"Before, when they (the Americans) wanted to talk to us, they said the military option is on the table. Now they say they have no intention of a conflict with Iran," Raisi said.

"The Islamic Republic's military power in the region is not and never has been a threat to any country. Rather, it ensures security that the countries of the region can rely on and trust," Raisi added.



**GAZA STRIP:** A displaced Palestinian boy rides his cycle in Khan Yunis, on Friday. Several residents of the conflict-hit territory wear hazmat suits, which are left over from the coronavirus pandemic, as protection from cold weather.

## Gazans fear Israeli assault on last refuge

**Monitoring Desk**  
GAZACITY: Israeli forces shelled the outskirts of the last refuge on the southern edge of the Gaza Strip on Friday, where the displaced, penned against the border fence in their hundreds of thousands, said they feared a new assault with nowhere left to flee.

More than half of Gaza's 2.3 million residents are now homeless and crammed into Rafah. Tens of thousands more have arrived in recent days, carrying belongings in their arms and pulling children on

carts, since Israeli forces launched one of the biggest assaults last week to capture Khan Yunis, the main southern city, just to the north of Rafah.

If the Israeli tanks keep coming, "we will be left with two choices: stay and die or climb the walls into Egypt", said Emad, 55, a businessman reached on a mobile phone chat app.

"Most of Gaza's population are in Rafah. If the tanks storm in, it will be a massacre like never before during this war."

## Sentence halved for Malaysia's ex-PM Najib

**Monitoring Desk**  
KUALA LUMPUR: Former Malaysian premier Najib Razak, who was convicted of graft over the multibillion-dollar 1MDB scandal, could be released by 2028 after his jail sentence was halved, prompting uproar from critics who called on the government to explain the decision.

The pardons board, chaired by Malaysia's king, said on Friday it made the decision this week after reviewing an application for a royal pardon by Najib, who began serving a 12-year jail term.

## North Korea's Kim Jong Un inspects shipyard: KCNA

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected a shipyard and underscored the importance of a strong naval force in "war preparations", state media KCNA said on Friday.

Kim's visit is being made public after North Korea tested its new submarine-launched cruise missiles (SLCM) on Sunday, firing an upgraded missile for the second time in a week and accelerating its navy's nuclear armament, according to state media.

"Strengthening naval force is the most important issue in pushing ahead with war preparations".

## Russian officials find flaws in election paperwork of anti-war candidate - TASS

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russia's election commission has found irregularities in the list of signatures that anti-war candidate Boris Nadezhdin submitted to back his bid to run against Vladimir Putin in an upcoming election, the TASS news agency said on Friday.

Nobody expects Nadezhdin, 60, to win if he is allowed to run, given Putin's long dominance and control of the state. But Nadezhdin has become the preferred candidate of some Russians who oppose Moscow's war in Ukraine, something it calls a special military operation.

Nadezhdin needs the Central Election Commission to approve signatures he submitted on Wednesday from more than 100,000 supporters across Russia in order to get his name on the ballot for the March 15-17 election.

The electoral commission met on Friday and its deputy chairman, Nikolai Bulayev, said some of the supporter lists submitted by candidates contained the names of dead people.

Bulayev said that when officials detected the names of dozens of "people who are no longer on this earth".



French soldiers secure the area after a man with a knife wounded several people at the Gare de Lyon rail station in Paris, France.

## India begins to flex its naval power as competition with China grows

**Monitoring Desk**  
SRINAGAR: For decades, India has focused its defense policy on its land borders with rivals Pakistan and China. Now, as its global ambitions expand, it is beginning to flex its naval power in international waters, including anti-piracy patrols and a widely publicized deployment close to the Red Sea to help protect ships from attacks during Israel's war with Hamas.

India sent three guided missile destroyers and reconnaissance aircraft in November when Yemen-based Houthi rebels began targeting ships in solidarity with Hamas, causing disruptions in a key trading route that handles about 12% of global trade.

The deployment highlights the country as a "proactive contributor" to international maritime stability, said Vice Adm. Anil Kumar Chawla, who retired in 2021 as head of India's

southern naval command.

"We are not doing it only out of altruism. Unless you are a maritime power you can never aspire to be a global power," Chawla said. India, already a regional power, is positioning itself "as a global player today, an upcoming global power," he said.

India is widely publicizing the deployments, signaling its desire to assume a wider responsibility in maritime security to the world and its growing maritime ambitions to regional rival China.

"It is a message to China that, look, we can deploy such a large force here. This is our backyard. Though we don't own it, but we are probably the most capable and responsible resident naval power," Chawla said.

The Indian navy has helped at least four ships, three of which were attacked by Houthi.

## Main candidates in Senegal's presidential election

**Monitoring Desk**  
DAKAR: Senegal heads to the polls on Feb 25 to choose a successor to President Macky Sall who is not seeking a third term.

For the first time in the West African nation's history, the incumbent is not on the ballot. His hand-picked successor, Prime Minister Amadou Ba, is among 20 candidates cleared by Senegal's constitutional council to run.

To avoid a runoff, a candidate must secure over 50% of the vote. Campaigning starts on Feb 4.

A former economy and foreign minister, Ba, 62, was named prime minister in September 2022. He ran the taxation directorate before launching his political career. Sall handpicked Ba as the ruling Bemo Bokk Yakar (BBY) coalition's candidate after a party-wide consultation process. Sall said at the time that Ba would be a unifying figure.

But analysts say there are divisions within BBY, which lost key cities in the 2022 local elections and a number of seats in the 2023 legislative election.

## 'Open warfare': Philippines' Marcos-Duterte alliance crumbles

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: The alliance between Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr and his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte disintegrated this week when they accused each other of using drugs - a rift that could threaten Marcos's reform agenda and risk fuelling instability.

The alliance between two of the Philippines' most influential families that swept Marcos and Duterte's daughter, Sara, into power in 2022, was always expected to collapse, but analysts are surprised by how soon the gloves have come off.

"This is a point of no return," said Jean Encinas-Franco, a political science professor at the University of the Philippines, pointing to the ferocity of the exchanges between the two families.

Sebastian Duterte, the

former president's son and mayor of Davao city, has called on Marcos to resign over flawed policies such as his pro-US foreign policy, which he said "endangers the lives of innocent Filipinos".

"The opportunistic political alliance was not meant to last," said Temario Rivera, chairman of the Center for People Empowerment in Governance think-tank.

"The break seems to be taking place rather early." Marcos was quick to play down the tensions, saying on Tuesday that the coalition was intact. "It is still working," he said, adding he was keeping Sara Duterte as education minister.

Marcos's office did not respond to a request for comment. There was no immediate response from the Dutertes.

## Greece promises extra aid for farmers

**Monitoring Desk**  
ATHENS: The Greek government promised help with energy costs for farmers on Friday, including a one-year extension of a tax rebate for agricultural diesel, hoping to calm protests by farmers who are also seeking fast compensation for losses in flooding.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis told parliament the diesel measure would cost the state 82 million euros (\$89.31 million) in 2024 and announced additional steps to help farmers.

"Things will improve for our farmers... and solving their problems is at the heart of our government's priorities," he said.

Farmers have been setting up blockades in central and northern Greece, echoing protests by farmers in other parts of Europe.



Climate activist Greta Thunberg walks outside Westminster Magistrates' Court in London, Britain.

## Dozens injured in massive fire in Kenyan capital after gas explosion

**Monitoring Desk**  
NAIROBI: Around 300 people have been injured in a massive fire caused by a gas explosion in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, the Kenyan Red Cross said on Friday.

"The concerted actions of various response units have resulted in the successful evacuation of 271 individuals to different health facilities in Nairobi," the Kenya Red Cross said on social media platform X, adding that an additional 27 people were treated on site.

The fire broke out on Thursday night in the Embakasi neighborhood southeast of the capital, government spokesman Isaac Maigua Mwaura said on X.

"One Lorry (truck) of an unknown registration number that was loaded with gas exploded, igniting a huge ball of fire that spread widely," he said. "Consequently, the inferno further damaged several vehicles and commercial properties, including many small and medium sized businesses."

## Krishna Janmabhoomi case: No relief to Muslim side, puja to go on

**Monitoring Desk**  
ALLAHABAD (INP): The Muslim side has knocked the Supreme Court challenging the Allahabad High Court order allowing the advocate commissioner to survey at disputed site. The Allahabad High Court on Thursday allowed a plea to appoint a court-monitored advocate commissioner to survey the disputed site.

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## Hanoi flights halted as city faces worsening air pollution

**Monitoring Desk**  
HANOI: All flights to and from the international airport in Vietnam's capital Hanoi have been delayed or diverted to other cities on Friday due to heavy fog and worsening air pollution, said an airport official.

Air Visual, an independent online air quality index monitor, said Hanoi's levels of hazardous small particles known as PM2.5 in the air were at an extreme high of 257 micrograms per cubic metre early on Friday.

## Thai opposition hit by fresh legal challenge as activists seek life bans

**Monitoring Desk**  
BANGKOK (Internews): Activists in Thailand filed a petition on Friday seeking life bans for dozens of lawmakers of the Move Forward party, the latest in a series of moves to stifle a popular opposition that tried to review a tough law against insulting the monarchy.

Complaints were submitted to the anti-graft commission to ban 44 Move Forward politicians for life, alleging serious breaches of ethics in backing a once unthinkable plan to amend one of the world's strictest lese majeste laws.

The Constitutional Court on Wednesday ruled Move Forward must aban-

don its proposal to review article 112 of the criminal code, which carries jail terms of up to 15 years, saying it seriously undermined the monarchy.

Thailand's constitution enshrines the king in a position of "revered worship" and royalists regard the palace as sacrosanct.

"These actions are a legacy of sins," petitioner Sonthiya Sawadee said of Move Forward's plan.

"They have not given up on amending article 112, meaning that they are still intent on overthrowing the democratic regime of government with the king as the head of state."

## Armenia can no longer rely on Russia for military and defence needs - PM Pashinyan

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW (Internews): Armenia can no longer rely on Russia as its main defence and military partner because Moscow has repeatedly let it down so Yerevan must think about forging closer ties with the United States and France, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said.

Armenia, a former Soviet republic bordered by Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey, has long relied on Russia as a big power ally and hosts a Russian military base in Gyumri, about 90 km (55 miles) northwest of the capital, and other facilities.

But Pashinyan, a former journalist who came to power in 2018 after a wave of street protests which he casts as a revolution, has angered the Kremlin by questioning the foundations of the alliance.

"We need to under-

stand who we can really maintain military-technical and defence relations with," Pashinyan told Armenian Public Radio when asked about reform of Armenia's armed forces.

"Previously, this problem was simple because there was no such question and there was no difficulty in creating a concept. Previously, 95-97% of our defence relations were with the Russian Federation. Now this cannot be for both objective and subjective reasons," he said.

Pashinyan said Armenia should think about what security ties it should build with the United States, France, India and Georgia.

He questioned whether Armenia should remain a member of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO).

## US will resume Peace Corps program in Palau as it moves to counter Chinese influence in Indo-Pacific

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The United States will resume a long-suspended Peace Corps program in the North Pacific Island of Palau as the Biden administration continues moves to counter growing Chinese influence in the region.

The Peace Corps said Friday that it would start sending volunteers back to the island in 2025 following an agreement reached between the agency's director and the president of Palau.

"Volunteers will live and work side-by-side with community partners to improve childhood literacy and math and science skills, along with teaching English as a foreign language," Peace Corps director Carol Spahn said in a statement.

Palau's resident, Surangel Whippas, said the return of the Peace Corps reflects the strong relationship between his nation and the United States. He said

prior Peace Corps members had become "an integral part of our national family," and he extended his gratitude to them and to a program he said "has enriched our country in countless ways."

"To those Peace Corps members preparing to come and contribute to Palau," Whippas said, "welcome home."

The Peace Corps programs in Palau and in the Federated States of Micronesia began in 1966 but were shut down in 2014 after more than 4,400 volunteers had served there.

Since then, as China has made successful inroads in the Pacific, successive U.S. administrations have sought to improve relations with the island nations, including by opening or reopening several embassies and renegotiating cooperation agreements known as compacts of free association last year with Palau, Micronesia.

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BANGKOK: Activists in Thailand filed a petition on Friday seeking life bans for dozens of lawmakers of the Move Forward party, the latest in a series of moves to stifle a popular opposition that tried to review a tough law against insulting the monarchy.

Complaints were submitted to the anti-graft commission to ban 44 Move Forward politicians for life, alleging serious breaches of ethics in backing a once unthinkable plan to amend one of the world's strictest lese majeste laws.

The Constitutional Court on Wednesday ruled Move Forward must abandon its proposal to review article 112 of the criminal code, which carries jail terms of up to 15 years, saying it seriously undermined the monarchy.

Thailand's constitution enshrines the king in a position of "revered worship" and royalists regard

the palace as sacrosanct.

"These actions are a legacy of sins," petitioner Sonthiya Sawadee said of Move Forward's plan.

"They have not given up on amending article 112, meaning that they are still intent on overthrowing the democratic regime of government with the king as the head of state."

Move Forward won last year's election on a wave of youth and urban support for a progressive platform that included undoing business monopolies and curbing the military's entrenched political influence. But its taboo-breaking bid to amend article 112 outraged conservatives and saw it blocked, opens new tab from forming a government by lawmakers appointed by the royalist military. Despite being in the opposition, Move Forward is the biggest party in parliament, with an anti-establishment agenda that is colliding with interests of powerful conservatives.

## 600-year-old mosque razed in South Delhi's Mehrauli locality without prior notice

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI (INP): A 600-year-old mosque in the Mehrauli neighbourhood of South Delhi was demolished in an operation carried out by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA).

The mosque's Imam, Zakir Hussain, said the demolition operation was surreptitiously carried out without any prior notice. Pieces of debris were meticulously removed to conceal the demolition from the public eye, he added.

The Imam claimed that DDA officials, accompanied by a significant police presence, not only demolished the mosque but forcefully confiscated phones, preventing any documentation of the incident.

This shocking event unfolded amidst a broader demolition drive by the DDA and the Forest Department in the Sanjay Van area. Temples, dargahs, and graveyards faced the bulldozer in the name of clearing illegal encroachments.

The mosque's demolition starkly contradicts previous assurances given by the DDA to the Delhi High Court, pledging not to demolish any mosque, waqf, or legally owned Waqf property in the Mehrauli Archaeological Park.

Citizens have taken to social media to decry what they perceive as an unconstitutional act, drawing parallels with other instances of selective demolitions targeting properties owned by Muslims. The incident has ignited concerns over the protection of religious freedom and cultural heritage.

People from both Hindu and Muslim communities are expressing their displeasure, emphasising the emotional and religious significance attached to the historic Masjid Akhoni. The incident calls for a thorough and impartial investigation into the circumstances surrounding the mosque's demolition. It raises pressing questions about the protection of religious structures in the region.



Worshippers of Yemanja, the African-inspired Umbanda goddess of motherhood and fertility, pay tribute in Montevideo, Uruguay.





ISLAMABAD: A view of banners displayed on a bridge at Islamabad Expressway in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day, in the Federal Capital.

### Kashmir Solidarity Day: Testament of Pak unwavering commitment to resolution of Kashmir disputes: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Principal Information Officer (PIO), Press Information Department, Dr Tariq Mehmood Khan said that United Nations resolutions were very clear that Kashmiris will be given the right to self-determination through a free and transparent plebiscite to decide about their future.

In his welcome address at a seminar organized by the Press Information Department titled "Kashmir Solidarity Day" to be observed on February 5, Dr Tariq Mehmood Khan said that since August 2019 fascist Modi regime of India

had increased atrocities on hapless Kashmiris. He said it was the responsibility of Pakistan and Kashmiris to expose the real face of India at the global level. He said that today's event was jointly organized by Kashmiri media and the Press Information Department.

He thanked Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Malik for sparing time for this event.

Mushaal Mullick has said that Pakistan will continue to extend its unwavering political, moral and dip-

lomatic support for the just struggle of the people of Jammu and Kashmir in determining their destiny through the right of self-determination.

Principal Information Officer Dr. Tariq Mehmood Khan and members and representatives of All Kashmir Newspapers Association (AKNA) also addressed on the occasion.

DG Information Service Academy Arshad Munir, DG PID Amreen Gul, President AKNA Amjad Choudhary and members of civil society and other media associations also attended the seminar.



LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister Allama Tahir Ashrafi talking to the media at Jamia Islamia Manzoor Cantt.

### Takes aim at PTI founder Maryam says 'virus' plagued Pakistan for five years

GUJRANWALA (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Maryam Nawaz took a swipe at the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Saturday, stating that the viral disease that plagued Pakistan for the past five years was first driven away by the residents of Gujranwala.

"It ran away because it was scared of you," Maryam declared in her address to a charged gathering of PML-N workers and supporters, referring to the regime of the PTI founder.

The PML-N leader said that the address by the

former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif which she believes proved to be a game-changer had taken place in Gujranwala.

Galvanising the massive crowd before her, Maryam remarked that the PML-N aimed to secure all 20 seats from Gujranwala with the support of the public.

She criticised the PTI founder, stating that an individual had made empty promises of generating 10 million jobs. She added that if a similar promise were made by Nawaz Sharif, she was confident that he would indeed create jobs for the unemployed.



PESHAWAR: Workers of the Election Commission Office sorting ballot boxes to be sent to polling stations for the upcoming General Elections-2024 at office of the Election Commission, Kohat Road.

### PTI to challenge Nikah case verdict, says Barrister Gohar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said on Saturday the allegations hurled at the PTI founder and his wife in the Nikah case were highly unethical. He said the decision was expected. "I told the judge that such a decision was not expected from you as it's a frivolous case," he said.

He said the cleric claimed that Aun Chaudhry brought him here. He said the judge had yet to sign the verdict. All of it was being done illegally and unethically, he added.

"Law stipulates that the judge seeks signature of the convicts and hands over a copy of the verdict," he said.

Gohar said the PTI

founder was unlike other politicians. "It's for the first time in history that the intra-party elections of just one party were scrutinised. All possible efforts are being made to oust us from elections and this fact is as clear as day," he bemoaned.

He said the PTI wanted to move court against the decision and "we hope to get justice in the case." He said the event mentioned during the course of case proceedings was meant for prayers, not Nikah, he said.

He said the PTI founder had conveyed a message to workers that they should remain peaceful and the only deal he would enter into would be related to country's prosperity.

## Alvi upholds dismissal from service penalty upon woman harasser

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has upheld the penalty of "dismissal from service" imposed upon a bank manager after he was found guilty of the charges of sexually harassing a female colleague at workplace.

The president rejected the representation filed by Muhammad Munir Akhtar (the accused), a former employee of the Askari Bank Ltd (ABL), against the decision of the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (FOSPAH).

He said that the incidents narrated in the complaint against the accused, when juxtaposed with the

evidence, established the guilt of the accused for the charges of harassment, the President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release on Saturday. The president, in his decision, observed that the accused had admitted the allegations about calls, text messages, and denial to hand over her ATM card to the complainant deliberately. He said that the accused had admitted that he called and sent messages to the complainant and did not give her ATM card due to the reasons best known to him despite the fact that he was required to hand it over to the complainant. "Facts admitted need not be proved", he added.

As per details, a female

employee of ABL (the complainant) had filed a harassment complaint under section 8 of the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 against the accused within the departmental hierarchy of ABL stating that she was harassed by the branch staff of the ABL, Hassanabdal.

According to her, the accused Muhammad Munir Akhtar, Bank Manager along with his friend had made it difficult for her to work in the branch by creating an offensive workplace environment.

She alleged that the accused had forced her to go with his friend and after she was transferred to another

branch, when she went to collect her card from the Hassanabdal branch, she was verbally abused by the accused and he refused to hand over her ATM card.

The Departmental Harassment Committee probed into her allegations and, after inquiry, concluded that the accused was involved in harassment and was accordingly dismissed from service. The accused filed an appeal with FOSPAH, which was dismissed, after which, he filed a representation with the president. President Alvi wrote that workplace harassment could have very serious consequences for the women who experience it as a harassed woman risked losing her job.

### Ashrafi calls for world action on Kashmir, Palestine issues

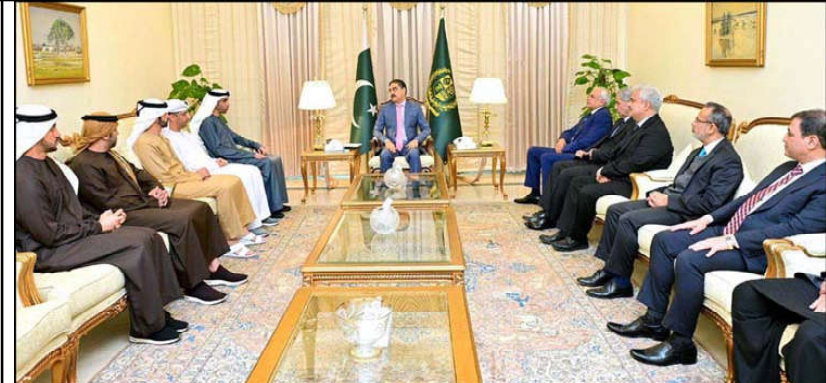
LAHORE (APP): Special Representative to the Prime Minister for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi called for the observance of Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5, not only in Pakistan but also throughout Muslim countries, highlighting a strong and assertive approach towards this cause.

Emphasizing the significance of addressing the Kashmir and Palestine issues according to the will of their people, he urged human rights organizations to spotlight the longstanding concerns on February 5. Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, he emphasized

that severe human rights violations in Kashmir and Palestine posed a significant threat to world peace.

Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC), called on world powers and the United Nations to intervene and prevent India and Israel from perpetrating acts that threaten humanity. He affirmed that Kashmiris had never accepted Indian occupation and would continue their peaceful struggle for freedom.

He asserted that Pakistan, its government, and the Kashmiri people would persist in their diplomatic and moral support for the oppressed.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the United Arab Emirates H.E. Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

### Sherpao says: QWP to bring reforms in health, edu, agri sectors

PESHAWAR (APP): Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Saturday said that if voted to power, his party would bring reforms in health, education and agriculture sectors.

He was addressing separate election related gatherings in Shabqadar tehsil in Charsadda.

He said the voters must not listen to catchy slogans as these were meant to deceive them, advising them to check the track record of the candidates before casting their ballots.

"We have a proven record of serving the electorate and will never let down our people," he maintained.

### 9 persons stranded in flood water near Turbat rescued by Pak Army & PDMA

Independent Report QUETTA: As many as nine persons who were stranded in the flood water near Turbat were rescued by the

der with the PDMA. According to an official handout issued here on Saturday, the rescue operation was initiated with as-



Pak Army and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Saturday.

According to the reports reaching here those rescued by the rescue teams were stranded for last several hours in Turbat.

The Pak Army jawans took part in the rescue operation shoulder to shoulder

sistance of the Pak Army jawans for rescuing the people stranded in the flood water in Makran Division on special directives of the caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki.

The Chief Minister expressed satisfaction over the timely and prompt action taken by the Pak Army and PDMA teams.

### Pak, Belarus celebrate 30 years of relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Belarus on Saturday celebrated thirty years of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Foreign Minister Jaail Abbas Jilani exchanged messages of heartfelt felicitations with Belarusian Foreign Minister, Sergei Aleinik. The respective ambassadors in Islamabad and Minsk called on the Foreign Ministers and presented the congratulatory messages.

tion of 2015. This relationship has continued to grow with frequent high-level exchanges and robust collaboration in economic, industrial and agriculture sectors.

In his message to Foreign Minister Aleinik, Foreign Minister Jilani appreciated the positive trajectory of bilateral relations over the last thirty years. He expressed the commitment of the Government of Pakistan for even deeper mutually beneficial partnership with Belarus.

Pakistan-Belarus bilateral relations are characterized by mutual respect and trust and constructive dialogue based on the Islamabad Declaration of Pakistan-Belarus Partnership and the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.

As a testament to mutually beneficial relationship, Pakistan and Belarus have also concluded a Visa Abolishment Agreement for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders.



QUETTA: Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan offering Dua after inaugurating Balochistan Institute of Psychiatry OPD Complex.

### China funds three projects in Turbat for education and health

TURBAT (INP): Funded by the Chinese government, three significant initiatives in education and health were unveiled in Turbat, the historical capital of Makran and the second-largest city in Balochistan.

Commissioner Makran, Saeed Ahmed Umrani, officially inaugurated three projects under the Government of Balochistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday.

Wahid, the Principal of Government Girls Model High School in Turbat, Director of Education Abdul Ghafoor Dashti, and various staff members expressed their gratitude towards the Chinese government. They emphasized that the people of Turbat would always remember the support in the education sector.

The first initiative, valued at Rs 5 million, includes providing solar panels and computer systems to the Government Girls Model High School in Turbat.

A library equipped with solar panels and a computer lab was also established at Turbat University, alongside the construction of parking sheds for school buses and vehicles.

At the event, Zumurd

In the second initiative, Commissioner Makran Saeed Ahmed Umrani visited the Law faculty of the University of Turbat, unveiling a new solar system and computer lab for law students, funded by a Rs 5 million grant from the Chinese government.

The third project focuses on the ICU of the civil hospital in Turbat. With a Rs 4 million grant, the ICU has been upgraded with digital beds and essential medical facilities.



QUETTA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) and Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) Leaders, Maulana Abdul Wahid Siddiqui, Syed Sharaf Agha, Fareed Panzai and others addressing a joint Press conference, at Quetta Press Club.

### Disgruntled PML-N leader Ayesha Rajab Baloch joins IPP

LAHORE (INP) - Disgruntled PML-N leader Ayesha Rajab Baloch has formally joined the Isteekam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP).

According to reports, Baloch announced joining the IPP during a crucial meeting with its chief Jahangir Khan Tareen on Saturday.

Tareen welcomed Baloch to the party fold by putting the customary party flag around her shoulders.

### May 9 related cases Wasiq Qayyum, Abbasi become approvers against PTI founder, Sheikh Rashid

RAWALPINDI (Online): Former speaker Punjab Assembly (PA), Wasiq Qayyum, former MNA Sadaqat Abbasi and Umar Tanvir Butt have become approvers in May 9 related cases against PTI founder and Sheikh Rashid.

Sadaqat Abbasi, Wasiq Qayyum and Umar Tanvir Butt recorded their statements under 154.

According to police sources Col (Retd) Ajmal Sabir, PTI backed candidate for National Assembly (NA) from NA-53 has become approver against

Sheikh Rashid in May 9 cases. Ajmal Sabir has said in his statement recorded to police that Sheikh Rashid had convened meeting on May 6 in Lall Haveli where planning was made for May 9. Anti Terrorism Court summoned PTI founder, Sheikh Rashid and Sheikh Rashid Rafique on February 6. These three approvers gave statement in the court that May 9 planning was made at the behest of Sheikh Rashid, Raja Basharat, Sheikh Rashid Rafique, Ijaz Khan Jazi, Rashid Hafiz and PTI founder.



QUETTA: Awami National Party (ANP) and Peoples Party (PPP) Leaders, Khair Muhammad Tareen, Sardar Rasheed Nasir, Jabbar Khilji and others addressing a joint press conference, at Quetta Press Club.

### Elections postponed in four constituencies after candidates' demise

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has postponed the elections in four constituencies of the national and provincial assemblies, citing the unfortunate deaths of the candidates.

Delayed elections impact one national constituency and the remaining provincial ones in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, specifically NA-8 Bajaur, PK-22 Bajaur, PK-91 Kohat, and PP-266.

Additionally, elections for NA-91, Kohat-II, were postponed following the passing of Asmat Ullah Khan.

Following the demise of Israr Hussain, son of Talib Hussain and a candidate for the Punjab Assembly constituency PP-266 (Rahim Yar Khan XII), the ECP has postponed the elections in that particular constituency.

The ECP spokesman states that, exercising the powers granted to the relevant Returning Officers (ROs) under Section 73 of the Election Act, 2017, the proceedings of the general election in the mentioned constituencies have been abruptly concluded.

Independent candidate Rehaz Zeb Khan, running for National Assembly constituency NA-08 and provincial assembly constituency PK-22 in Bajaur-IV, was assassinated, leading the ECP to cancel elections.

### Renowned lawyer Rasheed Razvi passes away

KARACHI (INP): Renowned lawyer Rasheed A Razvi, known for his profound legal expertise and contributions to the legal community, has passed away.

Razvi's legacy in the field of law spans decades, marked by his dedication to upholding justice and championing legal principles.

Rasheed A. Razvi was receiving medical care at a private hospital in Clifton. The funeral prayers for the prominent lawyer will take place tomorrow.