

# Independent

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## SC dismisses plea seeking 50% vote requirement for electoral victory

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has rejected a constitutional petition seeking to declare elections null and void if a candidate scores less than 50% of the total votes for any house of parliament. The petition was heard by the Constitutional Bench headed by Justice Amin Ud Din Khan, and was ultimately dismissed with a fine of Rs.20,000 on the petitioner. Other members of the bench included Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A Malik, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan. The court questioned the petitioner, Mr. Muhammad Akram, on the constitutional basis for such a declaration, pointing out that the current system declares a candidate victorious based on the maximum number of votes received, regardless of whether they reach

50% or not. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar asked under which article of the Constitution the Supreme Court could declare a candidate unsuccessful for receiving less than 50% of the total vote. Justice Ayesha Malik also inquired about which articles of the Constitution would be violated if a candidate with the maximum votes, but less than 50%, was declared successful.

The Court emphasized that the current system is lawful, and if the petitioner desires a change in the law, he should approach the parliament for new legislation. Justice Musarrat Hilali noted that every citizen has the right to vote, but the Supreme Court cannot compel eligible voters to participate in polling.

In a surprising turn, the petitioner admitted not casting his vote in the previous general elections when questioned by Justice Jamal Mandokhail.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receiving a briefing from the Ministry of Finance regarding the country's economy and the meeting with the IMF delegation.

## PM satisfies with economic stability, investment boom

**National progress is only possible when everyone fulfils their due responsibility; Tax evaders, abettors won't be left unpunished; Directs relevant authorities to expedite action against tax evaders**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that country's economy was on path to stability and due to steps taken in this regard, stock market was showing brisk business.

He said that foreign investment was a reflection of confidence in the government's policies.

The prime minister received a briefing from the Ministry of Finance regarding the country's economy and the meeting with the IMF delegation, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister was briefed on the economic indicators and the current situation of inflation. The meeting was also briefed on the steps taken against tax evasion and those facilitating such theft.

The prime minister stressed that public relief should be accorded priority on all other steps and they were taking all possible measures to fulfill public promises.

He also expressed satisfaction over the sliding down of the inflation rate to 7 percent from 38

percent and said the interest rate was lowered from 22 percent to 15 percent which would spur business activities and create jobs opportunities in the country.

The meeting was attended by ministers including Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Dr Mussadik Malik, Ali Pervaiz Malik, PM's coordinator Rana Ahsan Afzal and relevant senior officials.

Prime Minister Sharif further observed that due to surge in exports and record remittances, the country's foreign reserves had increased.

He also praised Punjab chief minister and the provincial government for reforms in the agriculture sector.

The prime minister directed for accelerating actions against tax defaulters, and reiterated to bring the tax evaders and their facilitators to book.

"The country's economy can progress well when all the stakeholders meet their responsibilities. All sectors should pay taxes to play their role in the national progress," a press release quoted the prime minister as saying.

## Section 144 imposed in Islamabad amid PTI's Nov 24 'final protest call'

**Ban imposed on all public gatherings of five or more people, processions, rallies and demonstrations in capital**

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad administration on Monday imposed Section 144 for two months ahead of the potential Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) protest in the capital.

According to a notification issued by Additional District Magistrate Usman Ashraf, the ban has been placed on all public gatherings of five or more people, processions, rallies and demonstrations.

The authorities said the decision has been taken in view of law and order situation, citing concerns about potential unlawful assemblies, disruption of public order and the current security environment.

The order specifically mentions concerns about planned religious and other demonstrations in the federal capital, said the notification.

The ban prohibits gatherings in all public places within Islamabad's revenue limits, encompassing the area defined as the Red Zone which includes key government buildings, diplomatic missions and other sensitive locations.

The order states that even after the two-month period expires, any ongoing investigations, legal proceedings or penalties related to violations of the ban will continue.

The development comes in light of the Imran Khan-founded party's planned nationwide demonstration on November 24.

The former prime minister had called on his supporters to march to Islamabad, stressing that the party's entire leadership will be part of the protest.



ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) delegation led by Senior Director Mr. Tariq H. Niazi. ADB's Country Director Ms. Emma Fan and her team in Pakistan also attended the meeting.

## Finance Minister lauds ADB's financial assistance to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) led by Senior Director, Tariq H. Niazi called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at the Finance Division on Monday.

The meeting was also attended by ADB's Country Director, Ms. Emma Fan and her team in Pakistan, according to press release issued by finance ministry.

Tariq H. Niazi briefed the Minister on ADB's public sector management

and governance initiatives aimed at ensuring stronger macro-fiscal management and effective governance with improved policy framework and institutional capacities in the Bank's developing member countries.

Tariq Niazi said the ADB had quite a substantial pipeline for Pakistan with significant projects planned for economic reforms and socio-economic development, particularly policy and administration reforms, digitalization of FBR, private-public partnerships, climate

## Seven policemen abducted by armed assailants in Bannu

BANU (Agencies): Seven policemen have been abducted by unidentified armed men from the Ahmedzai sub-division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Bannu district, District Police Officer (DPO) Ziauddin confirmed.

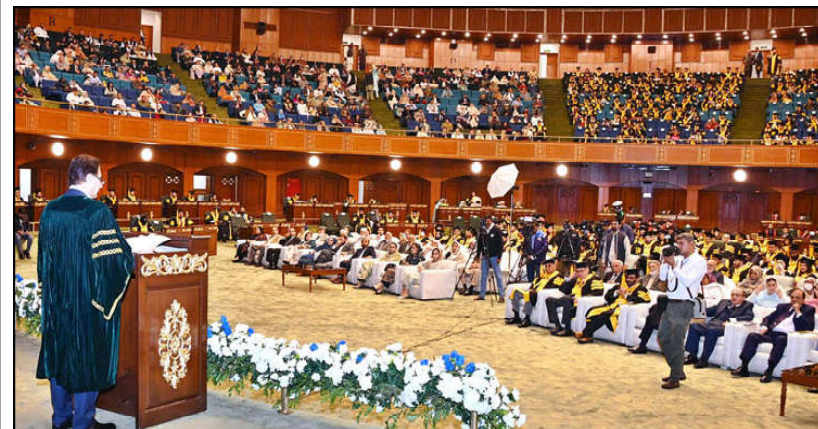
The armed assailants seized control of the Rochoa checkpoint and took the police personnel hostage. DPO Ziauddin said that a search operation has been launched in the area, with authorities cordoning off the location to apprehend the kidnappers.

The abduction occurred shortly after the Maghrib prayer when a group of armed men stormed the checkpoint and took the officers, including their weapons, to an undisclosed location.

The abducted policemen have been identified as Saleem, Aqal Rehman, Mewah Jan, Roshan, Abdul Malik, Neematullah, and Shad Muhammad.

## Apex Committee meeting postponed

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Apex Committee meeting on the National Action Plan (NAP) against terrorism, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has been postponed.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly addressing the participants at 57th convocation of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan at Jinnah Convention Center.

## Ayaz commends CPSP's commitment to strengthen Pakistan's healthcare system

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Monday said that Parliament is committed to enhance country's healthcare sector, while emphasizing the pivotal role of young doctors in transforming the health care system.

While delivering key note address at the 57th Convocation of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP) here, he highlighted the dedication, compassion, and hard work of young doctors as essential to advancing healthcare in the country.

"Patients often sacrifice everything for their treatment in hospitals. In such times, kind words and a smile from senior doctors offer them a new sense of life," the Speaker remarked.

The convocation was attended by Punjab Health Advisor Major General (Retd) Azhar Kiani, former caretaker Health Minister Punjab Dr. Jamal Nasir, CPSP President Dr. Mohammad Shoaib Shafi, distinguished doctors, graduating students, and their families from across the country.

Ayaz Sadiq described the graduating doctors as essential for the nation's healthcare system. He lauded CPSP as one of Pakistan's premier institutions which is renowned not only nationally but also internationally for its immense contributions to

medical education and training. Addressing the young doctors, NA Speaker urged them to extend their responsibilities beyond medical treatment and foster ethical, and honest relationships with their patients.

He pointed out critical challenges such as improving maternal and child healthcare and delivering medical services in rural areas, underscoring that these issues cannot be resolved without the commitment and expertise of young medical professionals.

While mentioning the CPSP's six decades of service, he commended its role in maintaining high standards in postgraduate medical education.

## Romina Khurshid urges nations to prioritize investment in greening education to boost climate action

BAKU (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam emphasised that transforming educational systems to empower students and inspire communities to take meaningful actions for a greener and more sustainable world is crucial for building climate-resilient societies.

"Education is the cornerstone of sustainable development and climate action for resilient and environmentally-sustainable society," said the PM's climate aide while addressing as a keynote speaker here on Monday at a high-level event 'Acting on Commitments - Ministerial Discussion on Green Education

and Planning for the Future', organised by Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) in collaboration with Cambridge University on the sidelines of COP29 global Climate Summit.

"By greening our education systems, we are equipping the next generation with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to address climate change and build a resilient future", she said.

She said that as a nation highly vulnerable to climate change, Pakistan recognises the transformative power of education in addressing climate challenges.

## KP CM writes letter to PM for summoning meeting of CCI

PESHAWAR (Online): Chief Minister (CM) KP Ali Amin Gandapur has written letter to Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif to summon meeting of Council of Common Interest (CCI).

According to copy of letter received by media KP CM said in the letter it is incumbent to hold meeting of CCI after every 90 days as per article 154 of the constitution. But this constitutional obligation is not being met after January 2024.

It was said in the letter that meeting of CCI is must for bolstering cooperation between federal units, resolution of key issues, peace in the country, harmony and socio-economic development of the country.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal inaugurates the USAID Development Journey Exhibition in Islamabad, celebrating decades of US Pakistan collaboration in infrastructure and development.

## Ahsan seeks stronger US-Pak ties across key sectors

**Minister highlights opportunity for both nations to revitalise relationship in light of new US administration**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday highlighted the importance of addressing global challenges such as climate change, energy sustainability and food security while discussing future cooperation between Pakistan and the United States.

Addressing an event organized by USAID to mark the longstanding US infrastructure development support to Pakistan, he called for collaborative research in renewable energy,

sustainable agriculture, and modern infrastructure to build a more resilient future.

He also stressed the need for engaging the vibrant Pakistani diaspora in the United States to strengthen cultural, academic and economic ties between the two countries, a news release said.

"Pakistan, with its strategic location at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, is a natural partner for the United States in promoting regional connectivity and economic integration," Ahsan Iqbal said.

## Commander CTF-150 holds key leadership engagement with DG Operations Sri Lanka Navy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Commodore Asim Sohail Malik of Pakistan Navy, Commander Combined Task Force (CTF-150),

held a virtual key leadership engagement with Rear Admiral Buddhika Liyanagamage, Director General Operations of Sri Lanka Navy.

The meeting focused on reinforcing objectives of Combined Maritime Forces and exploring avenues of cooperation with Sri Lanka Navy in support of CTF-150 mission to counter illicit maritime activities at sea, said a news release issued by Directorate General Public Relations (Pakistan Navy).

During the meeting, Commodore Asim Sohail Malik apprised the Admiral on the operational activities of 13th PN led CTF-150 mission and underscored importance of collaborative approach to combat threats posed by non-state Actors.



BAKU: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam photographed along with panel speakers at a high-level event 'Acting on Commitments - Ministerial Discussion on Green Education and Planning for the Future', organised by Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) in collaboration with Cambridge University.



laborative approach to combat threats posed by non-state Actors. Potential participation of Sri Lanka Navy assets in CTF-150 was also agreed by both sides as CMF collaboration with littoral states is vital to disrupt narcotics trafficking and other illicit activities in North Arabian Sea.

Commander CTF 150 also highlighted Pakistan Navy's commitment to maritime peace and stability in the region and re-iterated support for upcoming command of CTF-154 by Sri Lanka Navy team.

During the meeting senior national representatives from Pakistan and Sri Lanka at CMF and key officials from Sri Lanka Navy were also in attendance, further underscoring the strong bilateral commitment to regional maritime security.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### When medicine fails

Who would have thought that the medicine that was developed to cure disease would one day be overpowered by the very microorganisms it was supposed to target?

Medical science may have progressed with lightning speed over the decades, but has now hit a significant roadblock in the form of antimicrobial resistance. From Nov 18 to Nov 24 — World Antimicrobial Awareness Week — countries will be reminded of this grim reality, as thousands of people worldwide continue to die because their sickness is not responding to antibiotic treatment. This should be especially alarming for a country like Pakistan, where the consumption of antibiotics is the third highest in the world. There are no checks on the intake of these drugs, thanks to a general lack of awareness and a lax attitude on the part of doctors, pharmacies and patients. Doctors often recommend antibiotics to patients without even diagnosing their illness; pharmacies readily sell them over the counter, and those consuming them resort to their improper use.

Under these and other circumstances, pathogens develop resistance. Indeed, when in a country like the US, with its high-quality healthcare, almost one-third of antibiotic prescriptions are not needed, one can expect worse in Pakistan, where regulations and international best practices are routinely overlooked.

The situation is nothing less than a medical emergency: between now and 2050, medical experts expect antibiotic resistance to kill 40m people worldwide. A disproportionate number is likely to be from the developing countries where healthcare is poor and disease-rife — a situation that is compounded by high levels of illiteracy and lack of education. Against this backdrop, it would indeed be a miracle if this year's theme for WAAW — 'Educate. Advocate. Act now' — is taken seriously by our authorities — not simply for health reasons but also to reduce the huge economic burden caused by longer hospital stays, more expensive, often inaccessible, therapy, and loss of work hours.

A coordinated strategy is needed at a national scale to reduce the microbial danger. But, in the meantime, health authorities can step up disease-reducing measures such as carrying out frequent vaccination campaigns, ensuring cleanliness in neighbourhoods and public places, and keeping a vigilant eye on hospitals — the hotbeds of infection.

As recommended by the WHO, they would do well to promote antimicrobial stewardship to train doctors in judiciously prescribing and administering antibiotics. Besides, affordable lab tests can lead to more accurate diagnoses for patients who are otherwise deterred by high costs. Nothing, of course, can take the place of greater awareness among the public itself. But the state has to lead the way by recognising the health challenge and taking steps where it can.

### Sick sector

Zarrar Khuhro

You've almost certainly heard of Multan's Nishtar hospital; as south Punjab's largest public sector hospital, it is visited by thousands of patients every year. Even if you're not familiar with the hospital, you will almost certainly have heard of an incident that took place in 2022, when a video went viral showing several corpses in various stages of decomposition left to rot on the roof of the hospital.

Some reports claimed that there were 200 to 500 bodies (in reality there were four), and there was furious speculation that these belonged to missing persons allegedly being disposed of with the collusion of hospital authorities. The truth, when it emerged, was less sensational and — in keeping with Pakistani realities — much more predictable.

The bodies were of the unclaimed and unidentified dead and were meant to be stored in special rooms. Instead, hospital staff had, in violation of SOPs, simply dumped them on the roof under the open sky. This was inhuman, shouted the government of the day, while pledging heads would roll. Investigative committees were constituted in classic Pakistani tradition. And in keeping with that tradition, nothing really happened. And now in 2024, the hospital is once again in the news, and once again for all the wrong reasons.

Following the death of a kidney patient, who undertook regular dialysis at the hospital, from HIV-related complications, it emerged that the three dialysis machines reserved for HIV patients had, in fact, been used for the dialysis of kidney patients who were free of the deadly blood-borne virus. The result? At least 30 kidney

patients now have HIV, as reported in Asif Chaudhry's comprehensive story in this paper last week.

By Oct 26, the hospital knew what had transpired, but reportedly tried — again in keeping with tradition — to hush it up. It only came out with the news once a person had died. Worse, when the news spread and patients went and got HIV tests at the hospital, reportedly the results turned out negative. When they went and had the same tests conducted at a private lab, they tested positive. From this, we can only conclude that either the hospital labs are ineffective or falsifying results. For those familiar with how Pakistan's health system operates, neither possibility is implausible.

For those unfamiliar with the way dialysis is conducted, allow me to explain in light of my own experience as a person with a family member who regularly underwent this treatment: the patient is tested constantly; prior to every session, a comprehensive blood screening is conducted to make sure that the patient does not suffer from a disease, such as hepatitis C, that could contaminate the machines. It appears that this screening was either not conducted, or else conducted in such an unprofessional way that the results would count for nothing.

In addition, patients with renal failure or impaired kidney function are sometimes tested several times a week to make sure that their creatinine and urea levels are in control.

Now, consider this: while the hospital apparently learned of this disaster in October, we have no way of knowing how long this contamination had been in play or how many people have

been infected beyond the 30 that have been reported. Those hapless patients would then have gone on to have regular blood tests and procedures which means that the circle of infection would have likely spread beyond themselves, not to mention that many of these would have gone on to expose others, such as spouses or sexual partners, etc to HIV, meaning that the spread may be exponential. Only now is the hospital attempting to track down those who may have been infected, but it's already too late.

In 2016, the exact same thing took place at Larkana's Chandka Medical College hospital, where over 50 dialysis patients were infected with HIV. This only came to light when many patients who had undergone dialysis there later sought treatment at SIUT (which follows protocols to the letter), where the virus was detected. As with Nishtar, proper dialysis procedures had not been followed.

And of course, we all (should) remember what happened in Ratodero in 2019, when a local doctor who catered to low-income segments was accused of having inadvertently infected 282 adults and children with HIV through negligence and the unsanitary reuse of syringes and blood transfusion equipment. (The doctor himself was reportedly an HIV patient, having contracted the virus through a blood transfusion after a car accident.) Reporters who covered this story say that while he was certainly at fault, he was also used as a scapegoat to cover for what is in fact a systemic breakdown, as many of the patients he saw may have already been infected elsewhere.

Our healthcare sector itself is sick, and no amount of committees is going to heal it. — Courtesy Dawn

### Asking questions

Neda Mulji

Recently, a student of Grade 8 asked a few questions in a rapid sequence during a science lesson. Her mind was reeling and one question led to another. The questions were met, as they inevitably are, with suspicion, and the teacher retaliated with 'don't act too smart'. That rebuttal is flawed at many levels. Firstly, aren't students being sent to school to become smart? Isn't the purpose of all learning geared towards asking questions relentlessly to engage with content on a deeper level?

Unfortunately, our schools have always laid more emphasis on discipline and compliance than relentless learning. Any behaviour that breaks the flow of the teacher's talk time is met with rebuke. It's almost as if the teachers are racing against the clock to re-gurgitate what they know in each chapter of the textbook being taught.

Students cannot be involved in learning in depth, nor can they learn to answer questions if they don't ask. Questions don't arise in a vacuum; they are the result of a thinking mind. Fostering a culture where questions are encouraged and appreciated helps instil a love for learning in students. It teaches them that curiosity is a strength and that questions demonstrate critical thinking.

This mindset is particularly crucial in primary and secondary classrooms, where students are still shaping their view of the world and belief systems and, at this stage, it is important for adults to value their self-expression as they learn to think, express and share ideas.

Besides, questions in class, and indeed

later on in professional life, provide valuable feedback reflecting understanding as well as gaps in knowledge. They also encourage collaboration, help students develop a voice and gain confidence in their abilities. Questions can create a vibrant learning environment, albeit noisy and chaotic. Chaos is often misunderstood in our culture as a lack of discipline, even though the sparks of intelligence and revelation often take root in chaos.

Educators who fear too many questions in class are often vying for control, hoping that they can orchestrate an environment where the teacher remains the main character in the movie. If students are to dev-e-lop the confidence to ask, explore and un-lock their potential, they need a safe, non-

judgemental environment where the quality and frequency of questions is not controlled. In an ideal world, students would not hesitate to ask or answer questions.

There is much literature and work being done on the foundational skills of learners in early years. Yet, the power of engaging them through questions is underrated. One of the fundamental ways that children develop communication skills is to practise relaying their thoughts, and the transformation to active learning comes from being involved, engaged and motivated.

When questions are unwelcome, it not only stifles curiosity, it discourages creative thinking and out-of-the-box solutions and negatively affects students' self-esteem as they lose their ability to express themselves and start relying on another authority to simply 'transfer'

content that they are expected to learn and reproduce.

Fast forward a few years — when these learners engage with technology, they will no longer have the skill to conduct research on their own using their digital literacy skills. Their engagement with AI, for example, rests on asking the right questions, using relevant prompts and leading their own learning. A large part of research prompts has to do with framing the right questions. When they no longer have the skills to engage with technology, the tools of learning become redundant in real-world experiences.

Reading and comprehension skills are re-quired in all subjects, at all educational levels. Whilst teachers give questions to be answered by students, few take the time out to flip the formula and ask students to come up with questions based on what they read. The quality of the questions students come up with is a quick assessment method signalling which students have read and understood the content.

Asking questions, whether relevant or not, helps students learn decision-making, challenges their thinking and clarifies their thoughts. It also prepares them for a world where they will have to engage in conversations on topics they know little about and will need to ask questions to learn how to develop their understanding. The best scientists in history have engaged in problem-solving by asking hypothetical questions. How are we to produce problem solvers if students are only taught to learn content they receive and are not equipped to build on it through interrogation and original thought? — Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Finance minister reviews progress on financing for priority sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday held a virtual meeting with the Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and Chairman Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA) and their teams to discuss progress on financing for the priority sectors.

The minister appreciated the work done by PBA and SBP for coming up with substantial initiatives and taking measures for implementing the more tangible initiatives, said a news release. He urged that initiatives with short term and immediate impact be given priority and their implementation time frame be compressed for finalizing them by end December and hopefully rolling them out from early next year.

The minister also assured full support for

arranging necessary consultations between PBA/SBP and the stakeholder ministries, adding the Finance Division would also host a meeting of all relevant stakeholders to hear their viewpoints, and help forge a consensus on the proposed initiatives.

Chairman PBA apprised the minister on various initiatives planned by PBA for building an inclusive and sustainable financial ecosystem.

He proposed that electronic warehouse receipt finance, SME index, corporate farming financing, venture capital fund for fintechs, revival of agri cooperatives and establishment of financial data exchange could be some of the potential initiatives to create a long-term impact towards a sustainable financial ecosystem.

He also proposed initiatives such as fan

financing, EV financing, solarization of tube-wells and markup subsidy and first loss coverage for SME financing for a short-term and more immediate impact on the system.

Meanwhile, SBP Governor highlighted the progress achieved on various fronts in respect of various initiatives proposed by PBA for financing to priority sectors.

He argued that some of the proposals suggested by PBA were concrete in scope and the central bank had already issued necessary notifications on regulatory side to facilitate their implementation. He also proposed a more proactive consultation between stakeholders, particularly with telecos and power companies, on initiatives requiring data collection and building scorecard for agriculture and SME sectors for sustainable financing.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a virtual meeting with the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Mr. Jameel Ahmed, and the Chairman of the Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA), Mr. Zafar Masud, along with their teams, to discuss progress on financing for the priority sectors.

### Qaiser Sheikh says: Pakistan's ports significantly improved

ISLAMABAD (APP): Shipping, expressed his gratitude for the invitation. He thanked the Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping, Emmanuel Grimaldi, and the Hong Kong Transport and Shipping Department.

In his speech, the Minister stated, "About 90% of global trade depends on the shipping industry. He emphasized that Pakistan's ports have been significantly

improved."

"Due to these improvements, Maersk Line, Mediterranean Shipping Company, Hutchison, and Abu Dhabi Ports Company have signed memoranda of understanding and agreements to invest in Pakistan's maritime sector and shipping industry," he said. Sheikh also invited other international shipping companies to invest in Pakistan.

### CCP approves 50% acquisition of Total Parco by Gunvor Group

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) on Monday granted approval for the acquisition of 50 percent share-holding in M/s. Total Parco Pakistan Limited (TPPL) by M/s. Aquashore SA, a company operating under Switzerland's Gunvor Group. Under the terms of the sale and purchase agreement, these shares will be transferred from M/s. TotalEnergies Marketing Services to Aquashore SA, said a news release. In the

petroleum sector, this acquisition marks the latest in a series of high-profile transactions recently approved by the CCP.

Earlier this year, Saudi Aramco acquired 40 percent equity stake in GO Petroleum, while another Saudi group, Wafu Energy Holding Limited, acquired 77.42 percent share-holding and control of Shell Pakistan Limited.

These transactions highlight the growing interest of global energy giants in Pakistan's dynamic energy sector.

### PSX gains 232 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 232 points, a positive change of 0.24 percent, closing at 94,995.67 points as compared to 94,763.64 points on the last trading day.

A total of 765,206,618 shares were traded during the day as compared to 893,170,249 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 23,924 billion against Rs.30,811 billion on the last trading day. As many as 457 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 192 of them recorded gains.

### Rana, Shafay discuss industrial promotion

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain and Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain met here at PSIC House on Monday.

During the meeting, it was agreed to move forward together for the promotion of industry and technical education, and early settlement of the issue pertaining to 96 acres of federal land taken by TEVTA on a 99-year lease in Taxila. The Punjab government agreed to the proposal to revise lease of the land. The committee will determine suitable revised lease for the land

within a week.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said that the federal and Punjab governments will work together for the promotion of technical education and industry. Coordination between the two governments is essential for the promotion of technical education and industry, he said and added that the federal government will cooperate with Punjab in all possible ways. He said, "It is our commitment to equip the youth with quality technical education. The future of Pakistan is linked to the promotion of quality technical education."



HONG KONG: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh while addressing Global Maritime Trade Summit.

### FTT for reforms to save agricultural economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman, Fair Trade in Tobacco (FTT) here on Monday highlighted the importance of policy reform to support Pakistan's agricultural economy and the livelihoods of millions dependent on the tobacco industry.

He urged the government to rationalize excise duties on tobacco products in Pakistan to combat the rising share of illicit trade and protect the legitimate sector from further economic damage, said a news release.

"The legitimate tobacco sector in Pakistan is already heavily taxed," said adding that "Tier-I brands are paying 84% in

excise, while Tier-II brands face a 60% excise duty. However, the illicit sector pays nothing and continues to grow unchecked, depriving the national exchequer of Rs. 300 to 330 billion annually — equivalent to \$1.2 billion. This is a staggering loss for our economy."

He emphasized that the share of illicit trade in Pakistan's tobacco market has skyrocketed from 37% in 2021 to nearly 63% in 2024.

These illicit operators sell their products below the legal minimum price of Rs. 162.25, bypassing tax obligations and undercutting legitimate businesses.

### Current Account records a surplus of \$349 million in Oct 24: SBP

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan's external Current Account Balance witnessed positive improvement for the consecutive third month in October 2024 as Current Account recorded a surplus of \$349 million in the month while Current Account for the first four months of the financial year 2024-25 recorded as \$218 million, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported on Monday. Cumulatively the current account balance for July to October 2024, according to the latest SBP data, has shown significant improvement as a surplus of \$218 million was recorded during the first four months of FY 2024-25 as compared to the deficit of \$1.528 billion during the corresponding

period of last year. "The external Current Account recorded a surplus of US\$349 million in October 2024, after showing a surplus of US\$86 million and US\$29 million in September 2024 and August 2024 respectively," said SBP adding that accumulative current account balance for July-October 2024-25 also turned into surplus after a deficit of \$131 million in the first three months of the current fiscal year.

According to SBP figures, the merchandise trade deficit has declined on month-on-month as well as yearly basis during October 2024. The balance on trade in goods in October 24 has recorded a deficit of \$1,586 million.

### Over 4.8m cotton bales arrive at ginning units by 15<sup>th</sup>

MULTAN (APP): Seed Cotton (Phutti) equivalent to over 4.8 million (48,93,948) bales have reached ginning factories across Pakistan till November 15, registering a decrease of 33.60 percent as compared to corresponding period of last year. According to a fortnightly report of the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) issued to media on Monday, over 4.5 million (45,06,779) bales have undergone the ginning process i.e converted into bales Cotton arrivals in Punjab were recorded 22,44,880 bales registering a decrease of 34.53 percent as compared to the corresponding period of last year when arrivals were recorded 34,28,915 bales.

## KP CM expresses dismay over delay in resolving public complaints; warns strict action

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur on Monday expressed dissatisfaction and dismay over delay in resolving public complaints registered on "Ikhtiyar Awam Ka" portal and warned strict action for negligence.

Presiding over a meeting here at CM secretariat to review the status of public complaints the CM instructed that complaints from previous administrations also be shifted to the "Ikhtiyar Awam Ka" portal to ensure resolution without discrimination.

A statement issued here after the meeting said that he emphasized the importance of transparency and efficiency, stating, "The timely and satisfactory resolution of public complaints was the responsibility of officials, and any failure would not be tolerated."

During the meeting, the CM was briefed on the progress made so far. Officials reported that the portal had received 6,242 complaints, out of which 2,559 had been resolved while 3,683 complaints were in progress.

The briefing revealed that relief provided to 1,200 citizens, while 757 others received partial relief through the platform.

It said that 13,384 citizens were registered on the portal including around 300 women, adding that 1458 complaints were registered from Peshawar, 405 Mardan, 363 Bannu, 335 Dera Ismail Khan, 344 Abbottabad, 277 Mansehra, 237 Charsadda, 235 Hari Pur, 223 Swabi, and 185 Lower Dir.

The portal received 1966 complaints against, 1040 Education, 876 Implementation of public agenda, 602 corruption and 539 law and order.

The CM Gandapur reaffirmed his commitment to personally oversee the resolution of public grievances, ensuring citizens receive satisfactory outcomes. He urged the public to make greater use of the portal, emphasizing that their genuine concerns would be addressed.



LAHORE: The Spanish Parliamentary delegation meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

## Heartily appreciate Spain's support for achieving GSP Plus status: Maryam

LAHORE (APP): A Senate delegation from Spain called on Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz at the Chief Minister's Office here on Monday.

During the meeting, the CM discussed the promotion of bilateral relations, trade and tourism between Spain and Punjab. The chief minister said, "Spain is Pakistan's second largest export partner in the European Union, there are numerous opportunities to increase bilateral trade volume." An agreement to increase cooperation in the fields like economy, climate change, disaster risk management and environmental pollution was also discussed in the meeting.

Maryam said, "We heartily appreciate Spain's support for achieving GSP Plus status. Friendly ties with Spain are highly valued and we want to work together with Spain on early warning system, and rescue services to prevent flood damage."

We intend to further promote parliamentary diplomacy. We are making Punjab a tourist hub, will welcome Spanish investment in the sector. Special package is being prepared to facilitate foreign investors."

She said, "We are especially focused on women empowerment. The number of female parliamentarians has increased significantly."

## Punjab Governor says: Pakistan wants to benefit from Spain's expertise in olive cultivation

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: The Spanish Parliamentary delegation met with the Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan here today at the Governor House Lahore. Governor Punjab welcomed the delegation on their arrival at Governor House. During the meeting, both sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation in energy, infrastructure, Olive production and agriculture sectors.

Governor Punjab thanked the Government of the Spain for its cooperation with Pakistan in European Union.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the trade relations between the two countries are very old, however, there is need to increase the trade volume between the two countries. Governor Punjab said Pakistan wants to benefit from Spain's expertise in olive cultivation. Governor Punjab further said that Chakwal and Attock areas of Punjab province are very fertile in terms of olive production, adding that olive oil is also being extracted there. He sought Spain's cooperation in oil cultivation.



PESHAWAR: Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, Parliamentary Secretary of Information and Broadcasting, attending the Qul ceremony of the late Senator Ilyas Bilour.



LAHORE: Tehreek-e-Insaf Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly, Malik Ahmed Khan Bhachar along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Lahore press club.

## Two including one girl injured in SW house blast

PESHAWAR (APP): At least two people, including a minor girl, were critically injured when a blast occurred inside a house in South Waziristan on Monday. According to a police spokesman, the incident occurred in Ladhah tehsil of South Waziristan, where a minor girl and a man were critically injured in an explosion inside their house. The injured were rushed to the district headquarters hospital for treatment.

## Miscreants destroy school in S Waziristan

PESHAWAR (APP): Unknown miscreants detonated explosives inside a high school in the Azam Warsak area of South Waziristan during late-night hours, police informed on Monday. According to the police spokesman, miscreants planted explosive material inside Government High School, Azam Warsak, and escaped. The explosive was later detonated with a remote-controlled device.

## Spanish parliamentary delegation meets speaker Punjab Assembly

LAHORE (APP): A 4-member Senate delegation from Spain called on Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan in the Punjab Assembly here on Monday. The delegation comprised Vicente Azpitarte, Natalia Uero, Antonio Gutierrez and Luis de la Pena.

Pakistan Ambassador to Spain Zahoor Ahmed and Secretary General Chaudhry Amir Habib were also present.

PA Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan accorded a warm welcome to the delegation, and said the visit of the Spanish parliamentary delegation reflected the growing relationship between Pakistan and Spain. He said the exchange of parliamentary delegations would further strengthen bilateral relations between both the countries. Malik Muhammad Ahmad said that Parliamentary diplomacy could play a significant role in resolving global challenges, adding that steps had been taken to improve parliamentary tools in the Assembly.

## Two brothers killed in Jamrud firing

PESHAWAR (APP): Unknown assailants on Monday fired multiple shots on a car, killing two real brothers in Jamrud tehsil of Khyber district.

Police said two local brothers, identified as Falak Jan and Abdul Malik were travelling in their Mehran car when unknown assailants fired at their vehicle near Wazir Dhand check post, killing both the brothers on the scene.

Area police reached the area and shifted bodies of both the brothers to hospital for medico-legal procedure.

## PJA conducts training program on forensic science

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Judicial Academy (PJA) on Monday launched a six-day training program on forensic science, medico-legal procedures, post-mortem examination, and arms and ammunition analysis for judicial officers.

PJA Director-General Justice (Retd) Sardar Ahmad Naem addressed the inaugural session, emphasizing that dispensing justice was not merely a job but a sacred trust bestowed by Almighty Allah.

He stated that judges who fear Allah Almighty have no fear of any worldly power and can deliver justice without any external pressure.

DG Sardar Ahmad Naem highlighted the importance of post-mortem reports in criminal cases, noting that they are crucial in determining the fate of individuals.

## LG Minister to digitize accounts of local bodies

MARDAN (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Local Government, Arshad Ayub Khan Monday announced plan to digitize accounting process of local bodies for streamlining transfers, postings, and financial operations.

He expressed these views while presiding over a performance review meeting of tehsil municipal administrations (TMAs) of district Mardan.

The minister directed TMOs to increase property rents for local bodies, re-evaluate government land allotments according to the new lease policy, and preserve TMA resources with the approval of respective councils. He also directed to resolve the issue of distribution of assets between TMA Mardan and Garhi Kapura at the earliest. Arshad Ayub Khan emphasized zero-tolerance for negligence in public interest projects and urged municipal bodies to take immediate steps to boost revenue.

He directed authorities to intensify operations against illegal housing societies in the district.

# International News

## Biden lifts ban on Ukraine using US arms to strike inside Russia

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden's administration has lifted restrictions that had blocked Ukraine from using US-provided weapons to strike deep into Russian territory, said three sources familiar with the matter, in a significant change to US policy in the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

Ukraine plans to conduct its first long-range attacks in the coming days, the sources said, without revealing details due to operational security concerns. The White House declined to comment.

The move by the United States, which comes just over two months before president-elect Donald Trump takes office on Jan 20, comes after months of requests by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to allow Ukraine's military to use US weapons to hit Russian military targets far from its border.

The change follows Russia's deployment of North Korean ground troops to supplement its own forces, a development that has caused alarm in Washington and Kyiv.

The first deep strikes are likely to be carried out using ATACMS rockets, which have a range of up to 190 miles (306 km), according to the sources.

## Moscow warns US over allowing Ukraine to hit Russian soil with long-range weapons

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: President Joe Biden's decision to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia with U.S.-supplied long-range missiles was met with ominous warnings from Moscow, a hint of menace from Kyiv and nods of approval from some Western allies.

Biden's shift in policy added an uncertain but potentially crucial new factor to the war on the eve of its 1,000-day milestone. News of Biden's change came on the day a Russian ballistic missile with cluster munitions struck a residential area of Sumy, a city in northern Ukraine, killing 11 people, including two children, and injuring 84 others.

On Monday, another Russian missile attack started fires in two apartment blocks in Odesa, in southern Ukraine. At least eight people were killed and 18 were injured, including a child, regional Gov. Oleh Kiper said.

Washington is easing limits on what Ukraine can strike with U.S.-made weaponry. U.S. officials told The Associated Press on Sunday, after months of ruling out such a move over fears of escalating the conflict and bringing about a direct confrontation between Russia and NATO.

The scope of the new firing guidelines isn't clear. But the change came after the U.S., South Korea and NATO said recently that North Korean troops are in Russia and apparently are being deployed to help the Russian army drive Ukrainian troops out of Russia's Kursk border region.

## Philippines, United States sign military intelligence-sharing deal

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: The Philippines and the United States signed a military intelligence-sharing deal on Monday, deepening defence ties between the two nations facing common security challenges in the region.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin signed the agreement with his Philippine counterpart, Gilberto Teodoro, at Manila's military headquarters where they also broke ground for a coordination center that will facilitate collaboration between their armed forces.

Called the General Security of Military Information Agreement or GSOMIA, the pact allows both countries to share classified military information securely. "Not only will this allow the Philippines access to higher capabilities and big-ticket items from the United States, it will also open opportunities to pursue similar agreements with like-minded nations," said Philippines' defence ministry spokesperson Arsenio Andolong. Security engagements between the United States and the Philippines have deepened under President Joe Biden and his Philippine counterpart Ferdinand Marcos Jr, with both leaders keen to counter what they see as China's aggressive policies in the South China Sea and near Taiwan. China's foreign ministry said on Monday any kind of military agreement or security cooperation.

## Pope seeks international study into Gaza genocide

**Monitoring Desk**  
ROME: Pope Francis has suggested the global community should study whether Israel's military campaign in Gaza constitutes a genocide of the Palestinian people, in some of his most explicit criticism yet of Israel's conduct in its year-long war.

In excerpts published on Sunday from a forthcoming book, the pontiff said some international experts say that "what is happening in Gaza has the characteristics of a genocide."

"We should investigate carefully to assess whether this fits into the technical definition (of genocide) formulated by international jurists and organisations."



Palestinians, including rescuers, search for casualties at the site of an Israeli strike on a house, in Gaza City.

## NATO's largest artillery exercise underway in Finland

**Monitoring Desk**  
ROVANIEMI: Finland is hosting its first large-scale NATO artillery exercise since the Nordic nation joined the military alliance last year, with live fire drills starting on Sunday.

The exercise conducted in the northern Lapland region in November is part of Dynamic Front 25, the largest NATO artillery exercise ever held in Europe, with fire drills in Finland as well as Estonia, Germany, Romania and Poland.

Running from 4 to 28 November, it marks the first time NATO allies are practicing artillery fire at a large scale on Finnish soil.

The Nordic nation, which shares a border with Russia, joined NATO last year, dropping decades of military non-alignment after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

"We work on interoperability with our allies, to carry out artillery fire in coherence with our NATO allies," said Romain, a French army captain and unit commander of the Ecrins battery of the 93rd mountain artillery regiment, giving only his first name.

## Hezbollah spokesman assassinated in Beirut

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIRUT: An Israeli airstrike without warning on the office of Syria's Baath party in Lebanon's capital Beirut killed the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah's Media Relations Officer, Mohammed Afif, a Lebanese security source said.

"The strike on Ras al-Nabaa killed Hezbollah media relations official Mohammed Afif," the security source said.

Ali Hijazi, secretary-general of the Lebanese branch of the Baath party, confirmed the death of Hezbollah media official Afif.

## North Korea's Kim urges improved military capabilities for war

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un urged the country's military to improve capabilities for fighting a war in a speech last week, state media KCNA said on Monday, after Pyongyang dispatched thousands of troops to Russia. Kim delivered the speech to a conference of battalion commanders and political instructors held in Pyongyang on Friday, during which he called for building political and military strength and fighting efficiency to ensure that the armed forces can cope with a war.

Threats from the United States and its allies including South Korea and their military confrontation with North Korea have brought tension to "the worst phase in history," he said, calling the Korean peninsula "the world's biggest hotspot."

## UK to put Sudan resolution to vote by UN Security Council

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: Britain will seek backing from other United Nations Security Council members on Monday for its demand that Sudan's warring parties stop hostilities and allow deliveries of aid, the British foreign ministry said.

With London holding the rotating presidency of the council, British foreign minister David Lammy is due to chair a vote on a UK/Sierra Leone-proposed draft resolution.

## Israeli strikes kill 20 Palestinians in Gaza, some in attacks on tents, medics say

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip killed 20 Palestinians on Monday, including six people in attacks on tents housing displaced families, medics said.

Four people, two of them children, were killed in an Israeli airstrike on a tent encampment in the coastal area of Al-Mawasi, which is designated as a humanitarian zone, while two died in temporary shelters in the southern city of Rafah and another in drone fire, Gaza health officials said.

In the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya, medics said an Israeli missile struck a house, killing at least two people and wounding several others. On Sunday, medics and residents said dozens of people were killed or wounded in an Israeli airstrike on a multi-floor residential building in the town. Another airstrike on a house in Gaza City killed seven people and wounded 10, medics said. Later on Monday, an Israeli airstrike killed four people in the Nuseirat camp in the central area of the coastal enclave, they added.

The Israeli military, which has been fighting Palestinian militant group Hamas in Gaza since October 2023 in a war that has left Gaza in ruins, did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment on Monday's incidents.

On Sunday, the military said it had conducted strikes on "terrorist targets" in Beit Lahiya. Israel accuses Hamas and allied militants of operating within residential areas including hospitals for cover.

## UK PM Starmer seeks 'pragmatic' Chinese ties in meeting with Xi

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer called on Chinese President Xi Jinping to establish "consistent, durable" relations between their two nations on Monday, pressing on with efforts to thaw ties between London and Beijing at a G20 summit.

The meeting in Brazil was the first between the countries' two leaders since 2018, and Starmer struck an upbeat tone, saying he would like to engage with Beijing on areas such as trade, the economy and climate, and have broader engagement on science, technology, health and education.

The British leader also said he would start plans to have a "full bilateral" with Xi in either Beijing or London and hoped his finance minister Rachel Reeves could meet Vice Premier He Lifeng before the restart of the UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue early next year.

"We want our relations to be consistent, durable, respectful as we have agreed, avoid surprises where possible, and strengthened dialogue should provide stronger understanding," Starmer told Xi at the start of their meeting.

"The UK will be a predictable consistent sovereign actor committed to the rule of law and multilateral system," he said, adding he appreciated Xi's candour in a call in August and would match him in tone when raising differences between the two. Xi told Starmer the two countries enjoy a vast space for cooperation, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. The meeting's cooperative tone was in stark contrast to ties under the former Conservative government, which took a robust approach to differences with China, particularly over human rights, Hong Kong and allegations of Chinese espionage. Relations between London and Beijing deteriorated as Britain grew concerned that an open door to Chinese investment could pose national security risks.



Ambassador of Pakistan to China, H.E. Mr. Khalil Hashmi inaugurated the exhibition depicting 70 years of the Great Wall Diplomacy in Beijing.

## Govt. to introduce strict Umrah policy to curb begging in Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistani government is tightening its grip on begging in Saudi Arabia by introducing a stringent Umrah policy. As per details, the move aims to curb the begging mafia that has been tarnishing Pakistan's image in the holy land.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has decided to take drastic measures against beggars, including obtaining an affidavit from pilgrims before departing for Umrah, promising not to beg. Those who violate this affidavit will face strict legal action.

To further prevent begging, Umrah pilgrims

will only be allowed to travel in groups, not individually. This measure ensures that pilgrims are accountable for their actions and are less likely to engage in begging.

Tour operators will also be required to obtain affidavits from pilgrims, making them complicit in preventing begging.

Sources revealed that the government is serious about addressing this issue, as begging has harmed Pakistan's relationship with Saudi Arabia.

Earlier, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) conducted operations during various areas of Muz-

and arrested four travel agents involved in sending citizens to Saudi Arabia for begging.

According to an FIA spokesperson, the arrested agents, identified as Sadiq Hussain, Mohammad Ejaz, Ghulam, and Ghulam Yaseen.

The spokesperson explained that these arrests were made based on information provided by previously detained individuals.

The agents were allegedly sending citizens to Saudi Arabia with the purpose of begging and then collecting a share of the money earned through begging.

## Pakistan to continue unwavering cooperation to Syria in education, trade: Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz has said that Pakistan would continue its unwavering cooperation and support to Syria in education, trade, tourism, especially religious tourism.

During a meeting with the Ambassador of Syrian Republic in Pakistan Dr. Ramez Alraee, he said that Pakistan and Syria enjoy historic and brotherly relations, both countries are tied in the bond of shared religion, fraternity, history and culture.

The matters pertain-

ing to bilateral relations and important regional and international issues were discussed in the meeting.

The Speaker stressed the need for unity among the Muslim countries to cope with the challenges confronting to Muslim ummah. He said that the peace in the Middle East is linked with peace in Palestine. He noted that Pakistan fully supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and a desire for durable peace in Syria.

Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the importance of Pak-Syria Parliamentary

Friendship Group (PFG) and highlighted the role of PFG in the National Assembly as a significant platform for fostering mutual understanding and collaboration. He lauded the commencement of commercial flight operations of Syrian Airlines between Damascus and Lahore.

The Speaker was confident that flight operations of Syrian Airlines would promote people-to-people contact, trade and tourism between both brotherly nations. He also appreciated the hospitality extended by Syria to Pakistani Zaireen

visiting Syria for Zayaraat of Shrines. The envoy said that Syria values its historic relations with Pakistan and the Syrian Government wants to further strengthen the existing ties through enhanced cooperation in diverse fields.

While apprising the NA Speaker regarding the newly started flight operation, the ambassador said that this initiative would not only facilitate the Pakistani Zaireen & business community but will also strengthen the socio-economic cooperation between both countries.

He praised Pakistan's efforts for promotion of peace in the region. He expressed his gratitude to People and Government of Pakistan for supporting Syria in the field of education & religious tourism.

Later on, the Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Ibrahim Romani met with NA Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at the Parliament House. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest regarding enhanced cooperation in trade & energy sector and parliamentary diplomacy.

## Dr Mukhtar urges dialogue, unity among IIUI Officers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Acting Rector of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Professor Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, called for a renewed spirit of openness and accountability during his recent address to university officers.

Stressing the importance of candid dialogue and constructive engagement, he highlighted the need for transparent discussion on genuine concerns to bridge gaps between officers and the administration.

Dr. Mukhtar's address, marked by a call for equitable and merit-based progress, was part of a

broader initiative aimed at nurturing a collaborative environment within IIUI. Emphasizing his commitment to these principles, he encouraged officers to embrace a culture of self-responsibility, mutual respect, and accountability.

In response to officers' concerns, which were met with attentive listening, Dr. Mukhtar pledged to address them gradually and concretely, acknowledging the importance of constructive, ongoing dialogue. He underscored the role of educational institutions as "hubs of the legacy of the Prophets" and advocated for an Islamic renaissance that aligns with IIUI's unique identity.



ISLAMABAD: DG FDAASif Ghafour, Director Kamran Kohlo in a group photo with participants during closing ceremony of Waster Water Conference.

## PTA decides to give 2 weeks time for un-registered VPN

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has decided to give two weeks time for registration of non registered VPN.

According to sources this decision has been taken in review meeting of PTA following the issuance of directives from interior ministry for closure of non registered VPN. Sources said it was decided in the meeting to give time till November 30 for registration of non registered VPN. Later the crackdown will be launched against non registered VPN from December 01.

## Climate scientist blames emission of volatile organic compounds for smog

ISLAMABAD (APP): Climate scientist, Salaal Hasan, on Monday, blamed volatile organic compounds for creating smog as most of the industries were using these dangerous molecules. Talking to media, he said that volatile organic compounds, mostly chlorine, hydrogen, and sulfur produced from different sources, when reacted with sunlight caused ozone layer at the surface of the earth. "Quality of air index above 80 to 100 marks is considered health hazard," Hasan added. He also maintained that these chemicals directly affect the tissues of the lungs, which could result in deaths or irreversible disability and it could be very dangerous, especially for infants and pregnant women.

## Police nab 2,285 outlaws in rural zone over last 10 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Police rural zone police teams have carried out an extensive crackdown against criminal elements in the federal capital over the past 10 months to maintain peace and security.

During this period, the rural zone police teams arrested a total of 2,285 accused involved in various criminal activities and recovered cash and valuables worth over 135 million rupees from their possession, a public relation officer told APP on Monday.

Moreover, 250 accused of 98 criminal gangs were also apprehended.

## Senate body on IT discusses nationwide internet disruption

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology, chaired by Senator Palwasha Mohammad Zai Khan on Monday discussed the reasons behind the recent nationwide internet disruption and other pressing matters.

Senator Palwasha Khan criticized the absence of the Minister and Secretary for Information Technology, calling it negligence in defending the ministry's actions.

She noted that the internet disruption has significantly impacted the livelihoods of around 2.5 million free-lancers across the country. Despite multiple invitations, the Minister

for IT failed to attend the committee meeting for the third consecutive time.

The Committee decided to write to the Prime Minister, highlighting the Minister's repeated absence and inability to defend the ministry's decisions.

The committee reviewed a letter from the Interior Ministry directing the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to block VPNs without informing the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications. Senator Afnan Ullah questioned the legality of the directive, stating that VPNs do not fall under the scope of social media apps.

## PML-N coordinator vows to strengthen political activities in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Youth Coordinator for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) chapter, Idrees Sagar, on Monday, vowed to strengthen political activities to counter evolving strategies of opponents at the province.

During a press conference here, Sagar stressed the need to empower youth, proposing modern strategies for organizing efforts across all districts in the KPK, said Sagar urging the importance of unity among party workers.

He emphasized bridging the political gap between top leadership and party workers performing at gross rural levels. The party should work on an inclusive approach to strengthen the political influence.

Sagar, in his closing remarks, suggested considering Ikhtiar Wali Khan, on any appropriate position at the government level due to his devotion to the party for over three decades.

He was optimistic that his leadership skills always united the members under one umbrella.

## AGP to organize seminar on Workplace Harassment Protections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) office is scheduled to organize an awareness seminar on the Provisions of the Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010 here Wednesday.

The seminar, organized in collaboration with the UN Women would address key aspects of creating safe and inclusive work environments for women, according to press statement. The event will bring together esteemed speakers and specialists, including representatives from UN Women Pakistan, FOSPAH (Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment), and the Auditor General's Office. Keynote addresses and sessions will focus on gender stereotypes, respectful workplace practices, and international best practices for preventing workplace harassment.

The seminar will kick off with preliminary remarks on the workshop's objectives by Dr. Zahra Kamal, a prominent psychologist and gender specialist from UN Women.

Louise Nylén, UN Women's Country Representative, will deliver remarks to set the tone for the day. Other highlights include a presentation on workplace harassment laws by Ms. Meher Jamy of FOSPAH, and an engaging discussion on gender and social norms led by Dr. Zahra Kamal. The closing sessions will cover concepts and norms of respectful workplaces and international best practices with emphasis on situation in Pakistan by Muhammad Younas Khalid of UN Women.

## 62 cases registered in Islamabad against Imran: Police submits final report

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad Police have informed Islamabad High Court (IHC) that as many as 62 cases are registered against PTI founder Imran Khan in different police stations of Islamabad.

Islamabad Police have filed report in IHC containing details of cases against former PM Imran Khan.

The report said that 62 cases are registered against Imran Khan in different police stations of Islamabad.

This final report was presented in the court on Monday.

The petition seeking details of cases registered against Imran Khan came up for hearing in IHC Monday.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir took up for hearing petition filed by Noreen Niazi sister of Imran Khan.

DSP Legal of Islamabad police Sajid Cheema presented final report on court's orders in respect of the cases registered against Imran Khan in Islamabad.

It is pertinent to mention here that Noreen Niazi had filed petition seeking details of cases registered against her brother incarcerated in Adiala jail.

Police had verbally told the court the details of cases on previous hearing, however court had ordered to submit final report.

## FIA arrests man for sexual exploitation of child

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Monday arrested a suspect involved in the sexual exploitation of a young girl in Lahore.

According to the FIA spokesperson, this marks the first operation conducted under the International Child Sexual Exploitation Database (ICSEC) since Pakistan joined the international database on November 1.



ISLAMABAD: The students of Quaid-i-Azam University's Department of Defence & Strategic Studies in a group photograph with Managing Director APP Muhammad Asim Khichi, during their visit to the news agency's headquarters.

## Court extends interim bail of PTI founder in six cases

ISLAMABAD (Online): District Court Islamabad has extended interim bail of former Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan in 6 cases and Bushra Bibi in one case.

Bushra Bibi has been granted exemption from attendance as well.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka took up for hearing 6 bail before arrest pleas of Imran Khan and one bail before arrest plea of Bushra Bibi Monday.

The court extended the interim bail till December 7.

The exemption plea of Bushra Bibi from attendance for one day from court was accepted while Imran Khan was not presented through video links despite court's orders.

## IHC seeks response regarding FIA's officers' promotions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday served notices to respondents in a petition against the decision of the central selection board of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) regarding the promotion of officers.

The court instructed the secretary Ministry of Interior to submit a report on November 21, after deciding on the applications of petitioners. Justice Babar Sattar heard the case filed by FIA officers including Bakhtiar Cheema and others. The court said in its order regarding the hearing that the petitioners' lawyer said that they were affectees of the working papers sent by the establishment division and other respondents regarding the promotions from BPS-19 to BPS-20. They stated that the available cadre positions for the posts of director law BPS-20 were told wrongly. If the correct position was told then the petitioners could be considered for these posts.

## AIOU holds pilot phase workshop on "Art of Parenting"

ISLAMABAD (APP): A four-day workshop titled "Art of Parenting" was inaugurated at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Monday, aiming to familiarize master trainers with two guides developed by the university, "Aghosh" and "Parwarish".

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Dr. Khalid Chauhan, Director General of Research and Development at the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Pakistan, emphasized that Aghosh and Parwarish are crucial books for child upbringing. He encouraged master trainers to engage with the content and disseminate it to the community to realize the dream of an ideal society.

Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Raja Rashid Ali recited Amjad Islam Amjad's poem "Mere Betay Ne Aankhein Ek Nayi Duniya Mein Kholi Hain" and highlighted the increasing challenges of raising children in the modern era.

He stressed the importance of parents and teachers focusing on children's character building.

Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof. Dr. Fazal Rahman stated that tolerance and adaptability are key qualities to instill in children to create an exemplary society. He urged the master trainers to approach this task as a mission and a national need.

## Nadir advises PTI supporters to beware of exploitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): A prominent Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Sardar Nadir Nabil Khan Gabol on Monday advised Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters to beware of exploitation by their party leaders and issued a stern warning to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, stating that the federal government will not tolerate the misuse of public resources.

In an interview with the PTV news channel, he said that the government has made it clear that it will not tolerate the misuse of

government resources for PTI's personal agenda, adding, that the government will closely monitor PTI's actions to prevent any exploitation of public funds or resources for political gain. Gabol said that the government was making progress and would not be swayed by PTI's attempts to exploit the situation for their gain. He urged youth to distance themselves from the PTI protests, adding, that the country's progress and welfare should be the primary focus, rather than getting entangled in political unrest.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy binding steel at the construction site of an underpass along Khyaban-e-Suharwardi in the Federal Capital as part of ongoing development work.

## COMSATS University holds Convocation-2024

ISLAMABAD (PR): Convocation-2024 was held at COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), Abbottabad Campus on Monday, 18th Nov, 2024 in the Haroon Ur Rashid auditorium, Abbottabad campus. The founding rector of COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi was the chief guest of the ceremony.

Rector COMSATS, Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar along with director Abbottabad Campus, Meritorious Prof. Dr. Imtiaz Ali Khan graced the event. The distinguished guests included the members of senate, syndicate and academic council, deans' faculty of sciences, chairpersons and heads of different departments, faculty, and parents.

The convocation was conducted in two sessions (31st convocation in morning and 32nd convocation in the evening) in which a total of 1296 students who have passed out in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 appeared.

Students received degrees in disciplines of Engineering, Business Administration, Information Sciences and Technology, Sciences, and Health Sciences. The passed-out graduates included 954 Bachelors and 303 Masters students.

Moreover, 58 students bagged medals (gold, silver, and bronze) at institute and campus level for their outstanding academic performance in different fields. From session Fall 2023, at institute level, 3 gold medals, 2 silver medals, and 1

bronze medal while at campus level, 5 gold medals, 3 silver medals, and 1 bronze medal was given to the outstanding students. Similarly, from session Spring 2024, at institute level, 7 gold medals, 3 silver medals, and 1 bronze medal while at campus level, 12 gold medals, 11 silver medals, and 9 bronze medals were awarded to high achievers. Noteworthy, 39 students were awarded PhD degrees in the disciplines of Electrical Engineering, Computer Sciences, Management Sciences, Pharmacy, Chemistry, Environmental Sciences, Development Studies, and Biotechnology.

The ceremony started with the name of Allah followed by convocation proceedings by conferment of

medals and degrees to the passed out students (PhD, Masters and bachelor). Student representatives Mr. Changez Khan (morning session) and Miss Adnan Zeb (evening session) expressed their gratitude on behalf of their fellows to the respected director, faculty, and parents.

The honorable chief guest Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi is a well-known visionary academician who has 36 years of professional experience in the field of education. He realizes the worth of good education and its role in shaping up the personalities of youth, which was reflected in his speech. In a lighthearted conversation, he congratulated the graduates and showed his belief in their competence.

He advised the students to remain devoted and embark on the professional challenges with full enthusiasm and contribute to country progress. He also congratulated the parents and acknowledged their efforts in helping their child gain a professional degree. He also thanked them for putting their trust in COMSATS University Islamabad, Abbottabad Campus management and faculty in grooming and shaping up the future of their children. In the concluding remarks, Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi showed satisfaction towards the management and faculty of Abbottabad Campus for their continuous efforts in uplifting the name of COMSATS in higher education sector.



ISLAMABAD: Students cross very busy Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Road, during heavy traffic, which may cause any incident any time as needs to attention for concern authority, in the Federal Capital.