



# Islamabad POST

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

**President Marcos denies endorsing Taiwan independence**

Detailed News On Page-07

**Baloch protesters call off sit-in**

Detailed News On Page-08



**BPL: Babar Azam plays match-winning knock**

Detailed News On Page-06



**After 10 days closure**

## Pakistan-Afghan Torkham border crossing reopens

The border closure had come in the wake of Pakistan's decision to start expelling more than a million undocumented foreigners, mostly Afghans, on Nov 1, amid a row over accusations that Kabul harbours militants that launch cross-border attacks

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan-Afghanistan Torkham border, which was shut for 10 days due to the imposition of visa restrictions on truck drivers by Islamabad, was reopened on Tuesday, state-run media reported. The crossing was closed on January 13 after Pakistani officials at the crossing began asking for passports and visas from Afghan drivers under a new policy, prompting a reciprocal ban on Pakistani truckers by the Afghan Taliban authorities. The border closure had come in the wake of Pakistan's decision to start expelling more than a million undocumented foreigners, mostly Afghans, on Nov 1, amid a row over accusations that Kabul harbours militants that launch cross-border attacks. Islamabad claimed that Afghan authorities had conveyed the message on the imposition of the visa policy several times, but Kabul had failed to take any practical steps to adhere to international border crossing rules. According to traders, the border closure resulted in significant economic losses for people in both countries, with daily losses estimated at around \$100,000. This was not the first time that Torkham was shut. The border crossing has been closed several times in recent months, including in September when it remained shut for nine days due to clashes between border forces. In a report, Radio Pakistan said the border crossing was reopened for "commercial consignments". The decision was taken in a meeting between the Afghan consul general and Pakistani authorities in Peshawar.

Continued on Page 06

## Taliban restricting Afghan women from Working, says UN

The officials reportedly stated that "it was inappropriate for an unmarried woman to work

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The United Nations issued a new report detailing concerns about the human rights situation in Afghanistan, specifically focusing on the limited rights women are awarded under Taliban rule. Among those whose working lives have been upended, the Taliban "banned" approximately 400 women workers at a pine nut processing from the workplace and dismissed another 200 at a power plant, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in its quarterly report on the human rights situation. The officials reportedly stated that "it was inappropriate for an unmarried

Continued on Page 06

## ARMED FORCES DAY OF THAILAND



ISLAMABAD: Lt. General Muhammad Aqeel, Inspector General Communication and Information Technology, Ambassador of Thailand and others cutting cake to celebrate the Armed Forces Day of Thailand. - DNA

## Thailand, Pakistan enjoy excellent ties, says envoy

Colonel Thanaei Permpul envisioned that by harnessing this strategic positioning, two nations could synergize their power for mutual benefit

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan Chakkrid Krachaiwong has said Thailand and Pakistan have cultivated a long-standing friendship with over 70 years of our diplomatic relations and connection through Ghandhara civilization. 'As a major player in South Asia, Pakistan can play a crucial role in ensuring peace and security in the region amidst the current global volatility.' The Thai Ambassador expressed these remarks while speaking on the occasion of the Thai Armed Forces Day. Lt. General Muhammad Aqeel, Inspector General Communication and Information Technology, Pakistan Army, was the chief guest. The Defence and Military Attache of Thailand Col. Thanaei Permpul also spoke on the occasion. The ambassador further said, he would like to extend his heartfelt

appreciation to all guests for honouring the occasion with their presence. The purpose of celebration the Armed Forces Day is to recognize the bravery of men and women. These dedicated individuals, some of whom have made the supreme sacrifices deserve our most respect. It is imperative that we also recognize the families who stand as a pillar of the strength supporting their loved ones. The ambassador said, the military and security cooperation between Thailand and Pakistan is one of the important aspects of our cooperation, contributing to the promotion of stability and security for the global community. He thanked the defence and military attaches representing various countries who play a very important role in building trust and confidence, which is the cornerstone of the lasting peace.

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### Pakistan to be made Stronger

Shehbaz Sharif says PML N to form next govt

DNA

BAHAWALPUR: PML-N president and former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif has said Ahmadpur East will be made a district. Addressing a rally in Ahmedpur East on Tuesday, Shehbaz said Nawaz Sharif had served Bahawalpur in a very unique way, building roads and Danish schools, where every rich and poor could get education. Shehbaz said Nawaz had provided free medicine and CT scan tests in all hospital in Punjab. Shehbaz pledged to extend loans to the people to start new business. "I will build Danish schools in every district of South Punjab," he said, adding that he dedicated Rs1,000 stipends for girls in schools in South Punjab.

'PPP will return through public power' Gilani claimed that the PPP is the poor man's party

STAFF REPORT

MULTAN: Former prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani said on Tuesday that the PPP would come to power through the power of the people and not through backdoor. Talking to media here, he said that PPP started its election campaign from Multan city today. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's visit to Multan on January 26 would boost the drive. Bilawal has already undertook a difficult trip to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he continued. Gilani claimed that the PPP is the poor man's party and the leadership would inform the people here about the party's manifesto.

## Cabinet gives green signal

### Pakistan Army to be deployed during polls

According to the decision, Pakistan Army's personnel will be deployed as Rapid Response Force in "sensitive constituencies" across the country

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: With the general elections 2024 a little over two weeks away, the Federal Cabinet on Tuesday greenlighted the deployment of Pakistan Army's personnel as the country was facing a shortage of over 270,000 security personnel. The federal cabinet's meeting, chaired by interim Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar, approved the Minister of Interior's summary regarding the deployment of the armed forces during the upcoming general elections 2024. According to the decision, Pakistan Army's personnel will be deployed as Rapid Response Force in "sensitive constituencies" across the country. The development comes after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) sought 277,000 army personnel to be deployed across the country to maintain security, and law and order situation across the country. Sources told ARY News

Continued on Page 06

### 49 foreign journalists issued visas: Solangi

MEHTAB PIRZADA



Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said that certain elements were spreading rumours claiming no foreign journalists and observers were coming to Pakistan for coverage of upcoming general elections which was contrary to facts. He was addressing a press conference flanked by Secretary Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid,

Continued on Page 06

## Bilawal Bhutto calls for end to politics of hatred

"I know them [PML-N], they have hatred, malice and revenge in their hearts," warns PPP chairman

STAFF REPORT

CHINIOT: With political temperature rising due to ongoing election campaigns, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari Tuesday took a fresh jibe at Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif, saying the latter would harm the country via his "habitual revenge politics" if he comes to power once again. "Mian sahib is habitual of [taking] revenge. He would take revenge which no one can think of if he becomes the [country's] prime minister for the fourth time," Bilawal said while addressing a political gathering in Chiniot, Punjab. His remarks come as political parties, including former allies such as PML-N and PPP, have been engaged in a verbal showdown in their bid to disseminate their respective narratives ahead of the February 8 polls. Continuing his tirade against the PML-N supremo, the PPP chairman warned that the former's revenge-centric approach would adversely affect the masses, the country and its economy. "I know them [PML-N], they have hatred, malice and revenge in their hearts [...] Mian Sahib's first and second term was no

Continued on Page 06

## Imran reveals

Qureshi found out about cipher by 'chance'

PTI founder says cypher was intended for ex-army chief Gen Bajwa

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former prime minister Imran Khan on Tuesday that ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi found out about the diplomatic cypher by "chance", adding that it was intended for former army chief General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa. Talking to media in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, he claimed that all efforts were made to suppress the cypher issue as it would have exposed US diplomat Donald Lu.

Continued on Page 06

**TURKISH AIRLINES**

BEST PART OF THE JOURNEY

Stopover IN ISTANBUL

EASY VISA

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT: [TURKISHAIRLINES.COM](http://TURKISHAIRLINES.COM)

#Turkishairlines #Pakistanbul

+92 21 306 02 333 | [FREEHOTELQTRVY.COM](http://FREEHOTELQTRVY.COM)

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Economy FREE ACCOMMODATION Business



# ISSI hosts round table on false flag operations in Indian politics

The event aimed at assessing potential implications of such incidents on regional stability as well as underscoring the imperative of responsible actions in the South Asian geopolitical landscape

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD : As the general elections in India draw nearer, the India Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a Round Table discussion on "Unravelling the Nexus: False Flag Operations and Electoral Politics of India." The participants of the Round Table included eminent former diplomats, defence practitioners, think-tank representatives, and members of the media and academic community. The event aimed at assessing potential implications of such incidents on

regional stability as well as underscoring the imperative of responsible actions in the South Asian geopolitical landscape. The deliberations delved into the possibilities of another false flag operation in the run-up to Indian elections, the historical precedents, the modus operandi in previous instances, and the effect of such occurrences on public perceptions relating to issues of peace and security, bilateral relations, and national security. Experts analysed the events surrounding the Pulwama incident, Pakistan's swift response after Balakot strike, and the country's simultaneous engagement in the strategic,

diplomatic and information arenas. The participants highlighted both Pakistan's firm resolve as well as measured, timely and effective response, consistent with its commitment to ensuring regional stability. The range of Pakistan's response options across various domains was also considered. In essence, participants highlighted the importance of extreme vigilance and overall preparedness. The participants also underscored the importance of proactive diplomacy as well as the role of international community in recognizing and supporting Pakistan's efforts to maintain strategic stability in South Asia.



## PRCS and OGDCL form strategic partnership

ISLAMABAD : In a dedicated effort to elevate collaboration in humanitarian endeavors and fortify mutual relations, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The signing ceremony took place at the OGDCL central office in Islamabad on Tuesday. Attendees at the signing ceremony included Chairman of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, Brigadier (ret'd) Abdul Hadi, Managing Body Member, Muhammad Abidullah Khan, Secretary General, and representatives from OGDCL, including Abdul Razzaq Khattak, Shahzad Safdar, and Aamir Salim. The MoU symbolizes the unwavering commitment to strengthen collaborative efforts between OGDCL and PRCS. Ahmed Hayat Lakh, Managing Director/CEO of OGDCL, and Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari signed the document, highlighting the shared dedication to advancing humanitarian causes. Of significant note is OGDCL's financial support to the Red Crescent in 2016 and 2017, and their substantial contribution in 2023 toward the State-of-the-Art Ambulance service. This ambulance is currently deployed in flood-affected regions of Balochistan. The chairman of PRCS underscored the critical importance of bolstering cooperation and nurturing relations between both organizations to effectively address pressing humanitarian needs on a broader scale.—APP

## CM Baqar advocates inclusive society and education

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI : The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Ret'd) Maqbool Baqar has reaffirmed his commitment towards creating an environment where everyone regardless of their ability, can access quality education. This he said while speaking at a ceremony organized to hand over 23 Toyota Hiace vans to Govt Special Education & Rehabilitation Center operating across the province. The program was organized at Boys Scout Ground here on Tuesday. He said that this significant moment is the manifestation of our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility of Persons with Disabilities in Sindh. "Today, we gather here

for this ceremony to hand over 23 Toyota Hiace Vans to the Government Special Education and Rehabilitation Centers across the Province which operate under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPD), Sindh. Baqar said that these vans symbolized more than just vehicles; they represented our continuous dedication and commitment to providing pick-up and drop-off facilities to differently-abled students. "As we extend our outreach to enhance accessibility," he said. The CM said that his government re-affirmed its commitment towards creating an environment where everyone regardless of their ability, could access quality education. "The empowerment of persons

with disabilities has been a continuous key focus of the Sindh government and these vans will play a crucial role in ensuring that students with diverse needs can attend special education and rehabilitation centres without any barriers," he said and added that by facilitating transportation, he wanted to bridge the gap and make education more accessible for every citizen of the province. He appreciated the hard-work and dedication of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPD) for following the vision of an inclusive society in Sindh. "Let us continue working together to build a society where everyone can have the opportunity and right to learn, grow, and contribute to the progress of our great country," he added.

## CPDI condemns unlawful removal of PIC members

ISLAMABAD : The Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) strongly condemned the unlawful removal of Chief Information Commissioner Mehboob Qadir Shah and Information Commissioners Dr Arif Mushtaq and Chaudhary Shaukat Ali from their positions within the Punjab Information Commission. The removal, executed under section 5(8) of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013, through a notification by the Punjab Information and Culture Department is a matter of grave concern for the promotion of transparency and citizens' right to access information. In a press statement, Mukhtar Ahmad Ali, Executive Director of CPDI, emphasized that the removal of commissioners without providing a reasonable opportunity to explain any alleged misconduct is a direct violation of the provisions outlined in section 8 (sub-sections 9, 10, and 11) of the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013. These sections clearly stipulate that the government must provide commissioners the chance to present their positions, and if unsatisfied, may refer the case to the Provincial Assembly of Punjab for an open inquiry by a Special Committee. As the Punjab Assembly is dissolved, in case of such matter the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly shall constitute a special committee and such special committee may exercise the powers of a special committee of the Provincial Assembly until the election of the new Provincial Assembly, as mentioned in Section 8 (12) of the Act, he further added. The Punjab Information Commission plays a crucial role as a statutory and independent body responsible for implementing the Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013. The removal of information commissioners without adhering to the prescribed procedures poses a significant threat to citizens' fundamental right access to information within the province. Instead of unlawfully removing commissioners, the Punjab Government should initiate the process of appointing new Chief Information Commissioners, as the tenure of the unlawfully removed Chief Information Commissioner is scheduled to be completed in May 2024.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Convener, World Minorities Alliance (WMA) Julius Salik addressing during protest of Capital Development Authority (CDA) Sanitary workers, in favour of their demands at sector G-7 in the Federal Capital.—ONLINE

## Mushaal urges diplomatic boycott amidst ram temple

ISLAMABAD : Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Tuesday lashed out at the supremacist and RSS-inspired Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for inaugurating Ram temple at the site of demolished, five centuries-old Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, and called upon the Muslim world to announce diplomatic boycott of India for wiping out Islamic civilization from its soil. The SAPM for Human Rights and Women Empowerment in her strong reaction stated that the Indian PM Modi was using the inaugural of 'Ram temple' event as a political gimmick because his popularity graph did witness alarming decline due to his anti-minority policies. She said that Hindus and Muslims had lived in Ayodhya town in peace for centuries, but since the PM Modi powers in office, the Muslim community had been facing extreme hardship. She recalled that on December 6, 1992, a Hindu mob had razed the 16th century Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on the bogus claim that Muslims had built it over the place of an ancient temple. Mushaal said that the world community should also take notice of supremacist Indian government's coercive and genocidal policies and actions before it was too late.—DNA

## Governor visits fire affected Time Center plaza

PESHAWAR : Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali, was here Tuesday when the fire affected Time Center Shopping Plaza Saddar and listened to the complaints of people. He expressed sympathies with shop owners and said that the government desires the restart of activities in the fire-affected plaza. Assuring cooperation to shop owners, he said that the provincial government would be contacted to provide financial assistance, including interest-free loans, to owners whose shops were gutted in the fire. On the occasion, the governor was informed that 65 shops and 17 godowns in the time center have been turned to ashes, while 60 shops are gutted in United Market.—APP

## SCCI welcomes opening of Torkham border for trade

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) welcomed opening of Torkham border for trade early morning on Tuesday after successful Pak-Afghan talks and said that bilateral trade will be promoted after this important move. In a joint statement issued here on Tuesday, Fuad Ishaq, president Sanaullah Khan, senior vice president and Ijaz Khan Afridi, vice president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said the opening of Pak-Afghan Torkham will not only promote mutual

trade but difficulties were faced by traders and exporters owing to closure of the border since last 10 days will be removed. The SCCI office bearers hoped bilateral trade and export process will be sped up after the opening of Torkham border as result of successful talks between Pak-Afghan governments and administration. It is noted to mention here that the Torkham border had remained closed since the last ten days. Fuad Ishaq was of the view that hundreds of trucks-loaded with goods, especially perishable items were damaged at Torkham border, and caused huge financial

losses to traders and exporters and also bilateral trade and export were also adversely affecting owing to the closure of the border. The SCCI chief said opening of Pak-Afghan border will enhance bilateral trade and facilitation would be available to the trading community. The chamber president Fuad Ishaq along with his cabinet members thanked the prime minister, chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Corps Commander Peshawar, IGFC, border management authorities, security forces, customs and other relevant departments, because this important issue was resolved by their proactive role.

## KP CM launches Bannu economic zone

DNA

PESHAWAR : Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice (Ret'd) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah formally launched the Bannu Economic Zone here on Tuesday. The launching ceremony was held here in the Chief Minister's Secretariat wherein the Caretaker Chief Minister also distributed plot allotment letters among intending investors. Bannu Economic Zone is 14th zone of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Besides, Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Dr Amer Abdullah, Secretary Industries, Commerce & Technical Education, Zulfikar Ali Shah and Chief

Executive Officer (CEO) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC), Javed Iqbal Khatak, members of the Board of Directors also attended the ceremony. The economic zone would be established on 415 acres land comprising 265 units. Beside attracting an investment of Rs.10 billion it will also generate 16000 direct and 48000 indirect employment opportunities. Addressing the ceremony, the Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Arshad Hussain Shah said that Bannu Economic Zone would prove a milestone in the promotion of economic activities in the province, saying its commercial launching would new avenues of economic prosperity. He said

that due to its geographical location, the zone is of a higher importance and will play crucial role in the development of the southern districts and their adjacent newly merged districts. The chief minister said that the caretaker government is taking steps for provision of employment opportunities for the youth of backward districts and added that addressing the backwardness of the southern and merged districts to bring them in the mainstream of develop is the need of the hour. He said that the promotion of investment is included in the priorities' list of the provincial government and said in this connection would extend all possible facilitation to the intending investors.



ANYONE WHO'S SOMEONE...  
reads Centreline

MEMBER APNS Monthly ABC CENTRELINE  
CENTRELINE  
Largest Diplomatic Magazine

www.dnaneus.com.pk, www.centreline.com.pk

## CM Naqvi inspects public welfare projects

The CM conducted a detailed visit of 8-KM long LRR's SL-III from Maraka to Adda Plot to check the progress

ABID RAZA

LAHORE : Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inspected Lahore Ring Road's southern loop-III, Babu Sabu toll plaza, Liberty's Capri cinema and inaugurated the SPU's operations room at city traffic police lines at Manawan. The CM conducted a detailed visit of 8-KM long LRR's SL-III from Maraka to Adda Plot to check the progress, said a handout issued here on Tuesday. He checked the quality of asphalt work at various locations. Expressing optimism, he anticipated the project's swift completion, ensuring seamless traffic flow, given the accomplishment of both major and mi-

nor structures. In a related development, the Babu Sabu toll plaza is set to undergo enhancements aimed at improving accessibility and minimizing vehicle queues. The road connecting Babu Sabu Chowk to the toll plaza will be widened, accompanied by the construction of additional lanes. The toll plaza itself will be relocated from its current position. Responding to the chief minister's directives, upgrade work has already commenced, with Naqvi personally inspecting the construction progress, which includes the addition of lanes on both sides of the toll plaza. He emphasized the need to accelerate the upgrade to alleviate daily traffic congestion.

Simultaneously, the Capri Cinema building in Liberty Market will house the Punjab Council of the Arts, repurposing the space for commercial ventures. During his inspection of Capri Cinema, the CM instructed the removal of encroachments in the vicinity and urged initiatives to promote commercial activities within the building. Alongside this, the CM also inaugurated the special operations room for the special protection unit at city traffic police lines in Manawan. He reviewed the security arrangements through CCTV and asked the staff to work diligently. DIG (SPU) Tayyab Hafeez informed that the operation room operates 24/7, and 7,959 SPU officials are assigned

to protect foreign nationals. With the collaboration of the Chinese consulate, 378 officials have been trained in the Chinese language, he added. Provincial Minister Azfar Ali Nasir, ACS, secretary C&W, IG police, commissioner, Deputy Chinese Consul General Mr Cao Ke, CCPO, and others were present during the visits. Inspecting the Major Muhammad Ishaq Shaheed Flyover Project, Mohsin Naqvi directed swift completion and remarked on its positive impact on easing traffic flow on Walton Road. The flyover project, initially planned as two protected U-turns costing Rs 1.20 billion, was optimized through collaboration between CBD Punjab, NLC, and NESPAK, resulting in

a cost-saving of Rs 200 million. The Chief Minister emphasized that the project was named after Major Muhammad Ishaq Shaheed, a valiant national hero. Continuing his inspection, Mohsin Naqvi visited the CBD Punjab Bab District/Walton Road Upgradation Project, reviewing its progress and underscoring its vital importance. Provincial Minister Housing Azfar Ali Nasir, Secretary Housing, Commissioner, CCPO, MD WASA, Chief Executive Officer CBD, Executive Directors (Commercial and Technical) CBD, Director Project Management CBD, Director NESPAK, Project Manager of NLC, Contractor of Habib Construction, and other concerned officials were also present.



## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### JANUARY

Jan 01 / CUBA	Revolution Day
Jan 01 / Palestine	Palestine Revolution Day
Jan 01 / Sudan	National Day
Jan 04 / Myanmar	Independence Day
Jan 06 / Iraq	Armed Forces Day
Jan 12 / Tanzania	Armed Forces Day
Jan 14 / Uzbekistan	Armed Forces Day
Jan 15 / Nigeria	Armed Forces Day
Jan 20 / Mali	Armed Forces Day
Jan 20 / Laos	Armed Forces Day
Jan 25 / Thailand	Armed Forces Day
Jan 26 / Australia	National Day
Jan 26 / India	Republic Day

## Hotels & Restaurants



Serena Hotel.....111 133 133  
Marriott.....051- 2826121  
Monal.....0334-5421812



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



## Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15  
Bomb Disposal.....15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
Emergency Ambulance.....1122 & Rescue Services.4451122  
Motorway Police.....9266044  
Motorway Police.....9270601-20  
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596  
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



## Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115  
PIA Flight Info.....114  
PIA Cargo.....9280979  
Railway Inquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange.....9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489  
CAA.....9281092



## Hospitals

CMH.....5611111  
MH.....5611116  
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9261170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218300-09  
Shifa International 4603666



## Departments

CDA.....9221334-43  
CDA.....9208301-04  
Met Office.....9250360-6  
RDA.....5555864  
TMA.....5770886  
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Int'l Day of Education to be marked on Jan 24

The day will be celebrated through several activities including seminars, conferences, discussion programmes, rallies and competitions highlighting this year's theme "learning for lasting peace" which seeks to illuminate the path to global harmony through the voices of our youth

ISLAMABAD: The sixth International Day of Education will be celebrated across the globe including Pakistan on January 24 to emphasize the role of education in ensuring peace and development. The day will be celebrated through several activities including seminars, conferences, discussion programmes, rallies and competitions highlighting this year's theme "learning for lasting peace" which seeks to illuminate the path to global harmony through the voices of our youth. To mark the day, the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) organized the sixth annual 'International Day of Education English Speech Contest' on Tuesday where many students from Secondary School Certificate and

Higher Secondary School Certificates students shared their perspectives on fostering peace, tolerance, interfaith harmony and gender equality. Through this opportunity, the students exhibited their extraordinary oratorical skills, showing their eloquence and originality and igniting discussions on critical global issues while representing their institutions at a national level. The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has planned to celebrate the day by hosting celebrations at the National Library to promote the power of learning on Wednesday. The event will have awareness activities about social issues affecting youth and opportunities for vision screening and career counselling. The National Education Founda-

tion (NEF) will also be participating by setting up a stall with the help of their transgender learners and community school students. By providing education to vulnerable groups, NEF is helping fulfill the promise of quality education as a human right. The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has arranged a meeting to review the arrangements for celebrating the day under the supervision of Senior Joint Secretary, Syed Junaid Akhlaq. The meeting was attended by the senior officials of the ministry and its allied departments, different stakeholders and media teams. UNESCO has dedicated this year's International Day of Education to the crucial role education and teachers play in counter-

ing hate speech, a phenomenon which has snowballed in recent years with the use of social media, damaging the fabric of our societies. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 24 January as the International Day of Education, in celebration of the role of education in peace and development. Education is a human right, a public good and a public responsibility. Without inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong opportunities for all, countries will not succeed in achieving gender equality and breaking the cycle of poverty that is leaving millions of children, youth and adults behind. According to UNESCO, today, 250 million children and youth are out of school, and 763 million adults are illiterate. Their right to education is being

violated and it is unacceptable. It's time to transform education. The world is seeing a surge of violent conflicts paralleled by an alarming rise of discrimination, racism and hate speech.

The impact of this violence transcends any boundary based on geography, gender, race, religion, or politics, offline and online. An active commitment to peace is more urgent today than ever: Education is central to this endeavour, as underlined by the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development. Learning for peace must be transformative, and help empower learners with the necessary knowledge, values, attitudes skills and behaviours to become agents of peace in their communities.—Agencies

## Solangi condoles with Chief Editor Ausaf Group on brother's demise

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the sad demise of the elder brother of Raja Mehtab Khan, Chief Editor Ausaf Group of Newspapers. In a condolence message, the minister expressed heartfelt condolences and sympathy to Raja Mehtab Khan and his family. He said he was deeply grieved to hear the news of the death of Mehtab Khan's elder brother and he shared the grief of the bereaved family. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.—APP

## More Brits in Pakistan can now vote in the UK

DNA

ISLAMABAD: British citizens living abroad are now eligible to register to vote in UK general elections, regardless of how long they've been living outside the UK. A new law has removed the previous 15-year time limit. Supporting the awareness raising campaign of the UK's Electoral Commission, The British High Commission Islamabad is calling on British residents living in Pakistan to check if they are eligible. The Commission is the independent and impartial organisation that oversees elections in the UK. Those who have previously lived in or been registered to vote in the UK now have the right to vote in UK parliament elections. They can register online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) and will need to confirm their personal information every three years. Anyone on a UK electoral register is also considered a permissible donor to UK political parties and campaigners. The British High Commission Spokesperson said: "A change in UK law means that more British citizens living abroad are now eligible to vote in UK Parliament elections. It's important that eligible people are made aware of the changes so that they can register to vote and cast a ballot when the time comes. "If you used to live in the UK or know anyone who did, let them know they may be able to have their say at the next UK general election. It only takes five minutes to register, and it can be done online at [gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://gov.uk/register-to-vote). It's also now possible to apply online to vote by post or proxy."—APP

PPP's 10-point election agenda road-map to public prosperity; Sherry

ISLAMABAD, Jan 23 (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Sherry Rehman on Tuesday described the 10-point election agenda of her party to address the concerns of the working class and marginalized communities in the country. The PPP leader, in an interview with a private news channel, emphasized that her party chairman, Bilawal Bhutto, in his recent address at a public rally in Sahiwal, focused on ending the politics of hatred and division and advocated for solutions to economic crises. Rehman highlighted that Bilawal was committed to addressing the issues faced by the public rather than engaging in divisive politics. She emphasized that the PPP was dedicated to resolving the problems of the people through hard work and dedication. "We are not pursuing a politics of hatred or division; instead, we are striving to solve the problems of the people," remarked Sherry Rehman.—APP

## Sesame cultivation grew by 187%

ISLAMABAD: Owing to the well-coordinated efforts of federal and provincial governments, the sesame seed cultivation in the country during the current season witnessed unprecedented growth of 187 per cent as compared to the sowing of the corresponding period of the last year. During the period under review, the sesame seeds were cultivated in over 399,493 hectares as compared to the cultivation of 139,400 hectares in the same period of last year, said a press release issued by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research on Tuesday. The collaboration of provincial agriculture departments of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan has remained instrumental in attaining higher areas under oil seed production, it added. Sesame cultivation, once confined to limited districts across these provinces, expanded from 18,000 to 135,600 hectares between 1948 and 2019, accompanied by a production increase from 6,000 to 69,600 tons.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Editor Daily Islamabad POST/Centreline/DNA News Agency, Ansar Mahmood Bhatti met with the newly-arrived Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina Mr. Emin Cohodarevic, at his office. Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest. The Ambassador is keen to further strengthen bilateral relations.—DNA

## Gold imports fall by 6.02% to \$13.5 mln in 1st half

ISLAMABAD: The imports of gold decreased by 6.02 percent during the first half of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The gold imports during the July-December (2023-24) were recorded at \$13.562 million as compared to the imports of \$14.431 million during July-December (2022-23), according to PBS data. In terms of quantity, Pakistan imported 240 kilograms of gold during the period under review as compared to the imports of 239 kilograms last year, showing increase of 0.54 percent. On year-on-year basis, the gold imports decreased by 76.06 percent in December as compared

to the same month of last year. The gold imports during December 2023 were recorded at \$0.780 million compared to imports of \$3.259 million. In terms of quantity, the gold imports declined by 75 percent to 12 kilograms in December 2023 as compared to the imports of 48 kilogram during December 2022. On month-on-month basis, the gold imports during December 2023 decreased by 79.99 percent when compared to the imports of \$3.899 million in November 2023. In terms of quantity, the gold imports declined by 80 percent when compared to the imports of 60 kilogram during November 2023. It is pertinent to mention here that the country's overall merchandise trade

deficit contracted by 34.29 per cent during the first half of the current fiscal year compared to the corresponding period of last year. The Trade deficit from July-December (2023-24) was recorded at \$11.148 billion as against the deficit of \$16.965 billion in July-December (2022-23), showing negative growth of 34.29 per cent. During the period under review, the exports increased by 5.17 per cent to \$14.981 billion compared to the exports of \$14.244 billion during the corresponding period of last year, according to the latest PBS data. On the other hand, the imports narrowed by 16.28 per cent and were recorded at \$26.129 billion compared to \$31.209 billion last year.—APP

## ECP freezes local govt development funds

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has suspended the development funds of all local government departments to ensure election transparency. According to the notification issued by the Election Commission, the development funds of local government departments will remain suspended until the announcement of the general election results. The notification specifies that local governments are limited to handling daily sanitation and cleanliness operations, with no initiation or execution of local development schemes. The notification additionally mentions that local governments and cantonment boards are prohibited from awarding tenders until the results of the general elections are announced.—APP

## Minorities in Hindutva-turned India facing growing threat

ISLAMABAD: Turning from being a secular to Hindutva country under RSS-BJP nexus, India has become a great threat to its minorities. According to Kashmir Media Service, political experts and analysts while commenting on the inauguration of Ram Temple, built on the debris of centuries old Babri Masjid, by none other than the incumbent Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said that minorities are persecuted psychologically, physically and economically in India. The persecution of Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Dalits and other low-caste Hindus has increased manifold under state patronage and they are facing systematic oppression at the hands of Hindutva establishment and its political faces in India. BJP rule as violence, intimidation and harassment against minorities have become the order of the day, they added. "The rising attacks on minorities in Manipur, Punjab, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh and other BJP ruled states have unmasked the true face of the world's so-called largest democracy," said experts. Minorities are living in a perpetual state of fear due to the discriminatory policies of the Modi-led fascist Indian government. The RSS-backed Modi is on a mission to purge India of its minorities, they added. They urged the world to take notice of the plight of minorities in India and the global community should act to ensure basic human rights to the Indian minorities.—APP

## NayaPay, Alipay+ boost global payments into Pakistan

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: NayaPay, a rapidly growing financial platform, has partnered with Alipay+, a cross-border digital payments and marketing platform operated by Ant International. The collaboration between NayaPay and Alipay+ is set to make a significant impact by deploying QR codes compatible with both RAAST and Alipay+ payment partners, including e-wallets and bank apps, thereby enhancing incoming foreign exchange flows and integrating the cashless payment systems of global markets and Pakistan. This strategic alliance is specifically designed to streamline digital payments, tackling prevalent issues such as limited interoperability and elevated transaction costs. Through this partnership, NayaPay is well-positioned to provide Pakistani businesses of all sizes, particularly SMEs, with a seamless connection to more than 25 Alipay+ global payment partners, which reaches a total of more than 1.5 billion consumer accounts, in addition to RAAST. This initiative ensures that transactions are not only efficient but also secure, marking a major step forward in the digitization of commerce in Pakistan. Furthermore, this partnership is anticipated to empower businesses in Pakistan to transact seamlessly with global visitors through a low-cost and fast payment system. This will foster documented and cashless trade and tourism between the two countries. This initiative is in line with the State Bank of Pakistan's vision for the nation's economic advancement and digital evolution, setting a new benchmark in the region's financial sector.

## Jamal Shah shares plan of second CPEC cultural caravan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Jamal Shah, on Tuesday held a meeting with Ambassadors of Central Asian States Russia and China to discuss the initial plan of second 'CPEC Cultural Caravan 2024', aimed at strengthening cultural bonds between Pakistan, China, Russia and the Central Asian States. The high level meeting held here at Pakistan National Council of the Arts attended by Ambassador of Russia to Pakistan His Excellency Albert Khorev, Embassy of China Counselor Bao Zhong, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Atajan Movlanov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan H.E. Tohtuiev Ulanbek Asankulovich, Ambassador of Uzbekistan H.E. Aybek Arif Usmanov and Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan H.E. Khazar Farhadov. Federal Secretary National Heritage and Culture Humaira Ahmed, Advisor National Heritage and Culture Muhammad Kashif Irshad, Director General PNCA Ayub Jamali, Executive Director Lok Virsa Uzair Khan and Chairperson Pa-

kistan Academy of Letters (PAL) Dr Najeba Arif were also present on the occasion. Addressing the diplomats, Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah apprised that his ministry plans to organize a second China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Cultural Caravan aimed at promoting economic ties and strengthening cultural bonds between Pakistan, China and the Central Asian States. Jamal Shah said that CPEC Cultural Caravan will commence its journey from Xi'an, China, and traverse through Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, UAE, Gwadar, Karachi, ultimately concluding in Islamabad. "Cultural Caravan to Document Diverse Lives on CPEC, Silk Route" he added. "This cultural excursion will document the experiences and stories of the people along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Silk Route, covering Central Asian countries. He said that the Cultural Caravan will be composed of diverse groups of Pakistani, Chinese and Central Asian artists, musicians, photographers, anthropologists, writers and filmmakers. He said that the CPEC Cultural Caravan aims at promoting dialogue, cultural exchange, un-

derstanding, trust and respect between the nations, adding that it will also strengthen international relations in terms of protection of cultural heritage, cultural and academic exchange. He said that CPEC Cultural Caravan will also strengthen and support the promotion of arts and creative industries on the caravan route in fields of culture, history, education, and economic and heritage tourism. He said that the idea is this that cultural excursion under the title 'CPEC Cultural Caravan 2024' will be composed of diverse groups of Pakistani, Chinese and Central Asian artists, musicians, photographers, anthropologists, writers and filmmakers. The caravan will bring together a diverse group of artists, musicians, photographers, anthropologists, writers, and filmmakers from Pakistan, China, and Central Asia. In their separate remarks, the Ambassadors commended the idea of joint CPEC cultural caravan. They said that it was very important to promote people to people contacts by organizing such mega cultural activities. They assured full support in convening this important event and agreed to continue work on the overall plan of Cultural Caravan 2024.



## Briefs

ANF seizes  
190 kg  
drugs in six  
operations

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its crackdown against drug traffickers managed to recover over 190 kg drugs and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 3 kg Ice drug was recovered from three Doha-bound passengers in two different operations at Islamabad Airport. 500 grams heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Bacha Khan Airport. 52 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Doha at Allama Iqbal Airport. In another operation, 186 kg hashish was recovered from Toor Dara border Khyber area. In the sixth operation, 850 grams Ice was recovered from two women netted near Rohtas Road Islamabad. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the accused and further investigations are under process.

Sargodha  
Citrus Fest  
kicks off  
in capital;  
captivates  
fruit  
enthusiasts

ISLAMABAD: The first-ever two-day 'Sargodha Citrus Fest' kicked off at COMSTECH on Tuesday displaying around 45 varieties of citrus fruit and its products attracting a large number of visitors. The fest is being organized by the University of Sargodha and COMSTECH jointly where the visitors enjoy the products, especially citrus fruit-made cakes, juices, desserts, candies and green tea besides a variety of citrus fruit. The varieties of citrus fruit including Rangpur Lime, Carrizo Citrage, Gada Dahi, Rangpur, Gilgil, Mitha, Pishawari Mittha, Kinnow, Seedless Lemon, Jati Khati, Bara Masii, Ornad Blood, Mosambi, Murcott and many others were exhibited through several stalls.—APP

'Teachers  
play crucial  
role in overall  
national  
progress'

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Tuesday underscored the crucial role of strong institutions and competent teachers in expediting national progress and prosperity. Speaking at the convention "Youth - Pivot of National Integration" organized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), he urged the nation to work diligently and said hard work would eventually be rewarded. He lauded the HEC for bringing together a diverse group of individuals from across the country.—APP

Hungary wants increased  
bilateral trade ties with Pak

Bela Fazekas, Ambassador of Hungary welcomed the ICCI delegation and said that Hungary and Pakistan need to increase bilateral trade and economic relations to get mutual benefits

FAISAL SHEIKKH

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation, visited the Embassy of Hungary in Islamabad and held a meeting with H.E. Bela Fazekas, Ambassador of Hungary to explore avenues for promoting bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Hungary. Addressing the delegation, H.E. Bela Fazekas, Ambassador of Hungary welcomed the ICCI delegation and said that Hungary and Pakistan need to increase bilateral trade and economic relations to get mutual benefits. He stressed close collaboration between the national and regional chambers of commerce of both countries to explore all untapped areas for business cooperation. He said that direct B2B meetings between the private sectors of both countries can play an effective role in strengthening bilateral trade ties. He assured that his Embassy would cooperate in promoting business linkages between the two countries to further improve bilateral business and investment relations. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber



of Commerce and Industry said that bilateral trade of around US\$ 80 million between Pakistan and Hungary is not reflective of their actual potential and there is a great potential to increase it. He said that both countries should develop close cooperation between their SMEs that will help boost business relations to their real potential. He said that both countries should encourage Zoom

meetings between their SMEs, which will help improve bilateral trade ties. He said that Pakistan can export many products to Hungary including pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, sports goods, IT, and cutlery products, and stressed that Hungary should increase its imports from Pakistan to get quality products at competitive prices.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, ICCI said that Pakistan and Hungary have good potential to enhance cooperation in the tourism sector and they should capitalize on this potential. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan stressed reviving the Hungarian-Pakistani Friendship Association to strengthen the people-to-people and business relations. He said that both countries should establish direct air links, which are important to improve bilateral business relations. He said that regular exchange of trade delegations should be encouraged to explore new areas of trade promotion between the two countries. Dr. Istvan GRAFJODI Commercial Counsellor of Hungary, Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Ms. Shumaila Siddiqui, Malik Nadeem Akhtar, Tariq Jadoon and Yousaf Rajput were in the delegation.

Nusrat  
lauds army  
role

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Nusrat Khan has said that the problems of Pakistan are in mutual agreement and unity. In a statement, the



political and social leader said that the enemy wants to see us fighting with each other. In response to a question, Nusrat Khan said that elections are going to be held in the country, but we have to stop hating each other on political grounds.

Nusrat Khan said that the purpose of politics is to unite people and not to separate them. Nusrat Khan said that the fact that Pakistan Army is playing a responsible role in the current situation cannot be denied. In fact, the situation demands that we be wary of those elements who are trying to create distance between the army and the people.

Two days Sargodha Citrus Fest  
kicks off at COMSTECH

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Citrus Fest is being organized by the University of Sargodha and COMSTECH jointly, inaugurated at COMSTECH on Tuesday. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Sargodha Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas welcomed the participants of the inaugural ceremony. He said that this is first ever citrus exhibition being organized in Islamabad. Prof. Qaisar Abbas shed the light on the brief history of the University of Sargodha and said that the uniqueness of this university is that it has faculties of both medical and agricul-

ture. He informed that they have started a project to work on the scientific properties of the citrus fruit. Prof. Abbas said that in today's exhibition 45 varieties of citrus fruit have been displayed and he promised that in the next year exhibition there will be more varieties. Prof. Abbas recommended that we have citrus fruit but we need to develop value added products from this magic fruit to export. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH said that the University of Sargodha is playing a very important role being the member of COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence and has offered fellowships to the students from OIC states, and many scholars have been placed in the University of Sargodha. Prof. Choudhary said that citrus is a very highly nutritional fruit. He stressed the need of exploring the medicinal properties of this fruit. He appreciated the University of Sargodha's initiative to explore the medicinal properties of this fruit. He informed that COMSTECH has established a citrus processing unit in Nigeria. Prof. Choudhary thanked the diplomatic community for patronizing COMSTECH activities and initiatives. Prof. Dr. Irfan Ullah, Citrus fruit expert,

gave a comprehensive presentation on the nutritional importance of citrus fruit. He also talked about the challenges being faced by the farmers in the cultivation, and gave recommendation to overcome those challenges. He informed that the cultivation area and the share of provinces have been decreasing. He recommended to establish citrus market, expo center and a dry port to facilitate the export of this magic fruit. Ambassadors and diplomats from Sudan, Yemen, Iran, Azerbaijan, Palestine, Kyrgyzstan, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Kenya, and Russia participated in the inaugural ceremony.

ECP warns  
heavy fines  
for election  
hoardings

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has sternly instructed candidates and political parties to abide by the code of ethics, prohibiting the use of government buildings or electricity poles for erecting hoardings and banners. The ECP spokesperson, in a social media post on platform X, emphasized that fines will be imposed for any violations. The Election Commission is determined to ensure adherence to the code of conduct with uniform enforcement across the board. DMO Karachi and his teams have removed unauthorized hoardings and flags placed on electricity poles across different regions of Sindh, spanning from the areas of two sworn to Clifton. Monitoring teams, during their visit to Quetta-Kharan Road in Balochistan, removed banners and flags of various political parties.

Rehmani denounces  
India's Republic Day  
celebrations

ISLAMABAD: Senior All Parties Hurriyat Conference-Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) leader, Muhammad Farooq Rehmani, has expressed vehement opposition to India's Republic Day celebrations in the occupied territory. According to Kashmir Media Service, Rehmani in a statement issued in Islamabad today, emphasized that the people of Jammu and Kashmir categorically reject the festivities, citing India's failure to comply with UN Security Council resolutions on the Kashmir issue. Rehmani underscored that despite repeated assertions, the Kashmiri people are resolute in their pursuit of freedom, or electricity poles for erecting hoardings and banners. The ECP spokesperson, in a social media post on platform X, emphasized that fines will be imposed for any violations. The Election Commission is determined to ensure adherence to the code of conduct with uniform enforcement across the board. DMO Karachi and his teams have removed unauthorized hoardings and flags placed on electricity poles across different regions of Sindh, spanning from the areas of two sworn to Clifton. Monitoring teams, during their visit to Quetta-Kharan Road in Balochistan, removed banners and flags of various political parties.

Tensions were affecting both  
economics and millions of jobs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Iftikhar Khan, advisor to the President of the FPCCI, expressed his admiration on Tuesday for the decision made by the leadership of Pakistan and Iran to completely restore diplomatic relations between the two brotherly countries. Iftikhar Khan said that within the next few days, the ambassadors of both countries will report back to their respective capitals of Tehran and Islamabad. Moreover, both nations will work to improve their cooperation and close coordination about counterterrorism and other issues that are of mutual importance, he informed. In a statement issued here

today, the business leader said that this action on the part of leadership of both the countries is a commendable demonstration of the amount of political maturity that the leadership of both countries possesses. He went on to say that tensions were having a detrimental effect on both nations, that both economies were experiencing hardship, and that millions of people who relied on trade over the border were concerned. Iftikhar Khan stated that millions of individuals who are involved in the trade between the two countries have finally been able to exhale a sigh of relief and that the prices of things that have increased as a result of tensions are gradually decreasing after having increased. According to him, the two countries that are ge-

ographically close to one another have maintained strong relations for generations, and tensions were not in anyone's best interest because they will have an impact on the entire region in addition to the two countries. Iran imports grain, fruit, citrus, and a few other products from Pakistan, whereas Pakistan imports petrol, LPG, leather, plastic, tiles, iron, edible oil, medicine, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and a wide variety of other items from Iran. On the other hand, he stated that if this specific commerce is made legal, it will be beneficial for both countries. He said that the rumours about the postponement of the election owing to tensions between Pakistan and Iran were hot, which caused the people to become agitated; however,

the gossip have been put to rest. It may be recalled that following Tehran's strikes within Pakistan's Panjgur, Balochistan, which targeted what Tehran characterised as the "headquarters" of the militant group Jaish al-Adl, which is responsible for terror acts inside Iran tensions between the two neighbouring nations rose. The attack prompted Islamabad to launch a series of strikes inside Iranian territory in less than forty-eight hours, targeting "hideouts" used by terrorist organisations, specifically the Balochistan Liberation Army and the Balochistan Liberation Front in the province of Sistan-Balochistan. However, things soon improved at a rapid pace because of the positive attitude of the leaders of both countries.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf thanked party workers for supporting candidature of his brother.—Photo Mudassar Raja

**MOST EXPERIENCED  
MANUFACTURERS &  
EXPORTERS OF  
MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS  
IN  
PAKISTAN**

**WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED**

JUDO  
KARATE  
KUNG-FU  
JU-JUTSU  
TAEKWONDO  
UNIFORMS AND  
COLOURED BELTS

ASHRAF INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD  
127 C, Industrial Estate  
Sialkot-51340, Pakistan  
Phones: +92-52-3258000 / 3257708  
E-mail: info@ashraf.net.pk

**Ashraf**



## The view on Modi's Ayodhya temple

MONDAY'S inauguration of the new Ram Mandir in Ayodhya by India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, was a moment decades in the making. Yet it also came too early. Despite the grand spectacle of the ceremony, with celebrities, tycoons and politicians in attendance, the temple is still incomplete. There is an obvious explanation for this rushed endeavour, and it is not religious. India will go to the polls in late spring and while Mr Modi is all but guaranteed to win a third term, he wants a large majority for his Bharatiya Janata party (BJP). Mr Modi rode to power, and has entrenched it, on the back of rightwing Hindu nationalism. On Monday he went beyond the exploitation of ethno-religious sentiment. He did not merely attend the ceremony; he carried out rituals. Religion and authoritarianism have proceeded hand-in-hand in recent years. But few strongmen have melded the political and religious to quite this degree. As his biographer, Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, observed, the event cast him as "the high priest of Hinduism", disquieting some religious leaders. The constitution still calls India a secular republic. But the facts on the ground suggest otherwise. Mr Modi's supporters treat the idea of secularism as a foreign imposition on a grand civilisation, and as camouflage for the mistreatment and suppression of Hindus. In reality it is their aggressive chauvinism that has cost Indian society dearly, and it is Muslims who are treated as second-class citizens. Human Rights Watch warned last year of the government's "systematic discrimination and stigmatisation of religious and other minorities, particularly Muslims" and of increasing violence by BJP supporters against targeted groups. The new temple is not just a symbol of these political struggles, but part of them. It stands on the site of the 16th-century Babri Masjid mosque, built by the Mughal emperor Babur, and razed in 1992 by a Hindu nationalist mob who believed a temple previously stood there; Ayodhya is said to be the birthplace of the deity Lord Ram. The BJP had inflamed sentiment and BJP politicians stood and watched as thousands tore down the mosque. Its destruction sparked communal violence in which more than 2,000 people died. Then, in 2019, the supreme court ruled that the demolition of the mosque had been illegal – but that nonetheless the site belonged to Hindus, allowing the new building's construction. Ayodhya's story was central to the BJP's rise. But while Congress and other opposition parties boycotted the ceremony, they have failed to mount an effective challenge to Mr Modi's dangerous majoritarianism and have at times succumbed to its dominance. The message is not simply of Hindu triumph, but of grievance and revenge. "We must not bow down any more. We must not sit down any more," Mr Modi said on Monday. Despite the lengthy history of the Ayodhya dispute, he described the consecration as "the beginning of a new era". It is not merely that thousands more mosques are being targeted nor that Muslims in Ayodhya and beyond feel more vulnerable than ever. Many believe that the prime minister will rewrite the constitution if he gains a sufficient majority, though he has dismissed such speculation.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti  
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 05 Issue: 99

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



## Fake 'two-state solution' recipe for new disasters

THE conversation between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Joe Biden by telephone on Friday, clearly indicates that neither is ready to seek a cease-fire in Gaza. Although they showed a shared willingness to confer on the postwar order in Gaza, they stopped short of discussing how to end the war first. Due to the strong pressure from the international community over Israel's lasting offensive aimed at forcing Palestinians out of the Gaza Strip, as well as the rising discontent at home with his coalition government's inability to secure the release of remaining more than 100 hostages held by Hamas, Netanyahu dropped the hints in his dialogue with Biden that he was not foreclosing on the possibility of a Palestinian state. Although that appears to contradict with his long-term stance of rejecting the two-state solution and the Israeli leader insists his position regarding the Palestinian issue remains unchanged, the idea, according to various sources familiar with the conversation, is to demilitarize the future Palestinian state, in which Israel intends for Palestinians to govern themselves but without the capability to threaten Israel. To that end, Israel needs to have full security control of all territory west of the Jordan River. That entails the eradication of Hamas not only from Gaza but also rest of the West Bank which means the conflict will be further expanded if Hamas refuses to surrender. That might go well beyond the United States' capacity to provide assistance to Israel given the current already serious spillover effect of the Gaza conflict in the Middle East. The so-called postwar order the US and Israeli leaders envision for Gaza and the West Bank fundamentally contradicts with the sovereignty of a Palestinian state. The two-state solution proposed by the United Nations by no means empowers Israel to exercise de facto control over a Palestinian state. Both Washington and Tel Aviv should be reminded that the two-state solution, as stipulated by relevant UN resolutions, refers to the restoration of the legitimate national rights of Palestine, and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine that enjoys full sovereignty based on the 1967 border and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Any arrangement on the future of Gaza and the West Bank as a whole must respect the will and independent choice of the Palestinian people, and must not be imposed upon them. If not, the "two-state solution" the two allies are talking about will only be a recipe for further disasters.

## The UK cannot ignore the crisis in DRC

Jeremy Corbyn

Congolese officials have repeatedly accused Rwanda of plundering their country's natural resources. In an interview for the Financial Times, DRC's finance minister, Nicolas Kazadi, said Kigali exported almost \$1bn in gold, tin, tantalum and tungsten in 2022, despite having few of these mineral deposits of its own. The UN has previously documented how minerals mined in the DRC are smuggled into Rwanda where they are tagged as locally produced. While Belgium, France, and Germany have condemned Rwanda's support for M23, the United Kingdom government refuses to do so. How can they, when an honest recognition of these human rights abuses would expose the illegality of its flagship policy: to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda? Continuing to double down on this policy in the face of court rulings...

IN mid-December, I joined hundreds of thousands of people in central London calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. "We are united", I told the crowd, "in our demand for peace and justice for the Palestinian people." Looking out to a sea of Palestinian flags, I was buoyed by the determination of ordinary people to show solidarity with those living under systems of violence and occupation. And I was moved by their willingness to prove how these systems were global in scope and scale. "I want us all to be active as well," I concluded, "for peace and justice in the other wars that are fuelled by the arms trade – in Sudan, in Yemen, in West Papua, and in the Congo." Against the global backdrop of deafening silence, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is currently experiencing a harrowing humanitarian crisis. Nearly seven million people have been internally displaced in the DRC and 26 million need humanitarian aid. One in three children are out of school. Tens of thousands of civilians experience physical, sexual and gender-based violence, used as a tool of control and degradation. Meanwhile, the DRC remains one of the UNHCR's most underfunded operations worldwide. Today's humanitarian crisis in the DRC did not emerge out of nowhere. It is an enduring legacy of colonial theft, violence and exploitation. During the Atlantic slave trade, more than five million Congolese people were captured, transported to the Americas and enslaved. Descendants of those who evaded abduction and enslavement would endure the brutality of Belgian King Leopold II. Amassing enormous riches from slave labour, Leopold was responsible for the deaths of more than 10 million Congolese men, women, and children. Independence in the 1960s was supposed to be a turning point; Patrice Lumumba was democratically elected on the promise of a free Congo. Threatening the interests of Western nations who sought to exploit his country, Lumumba was assassinated on January 17, 1961, with the support of the United States and Belgium. For the Congolese people, colonial exploitation never ended. Today, the world relies

on the DRC for natural resources, including diamonds, gold, timber, copper, oil, and gas. It produces 70 percent of the world's cobalt, an essential element in almost every lithium-ion rechargeable battery present in mobile phones and laptops many of us use every day. These resources are largely controlled by foreign companies, which profit from resources that should otherwise be owned by the Congolese people. There is a reason why the DRC ranks 179 out of 191 in the Human Development Index – and it is not because the country lacks sufficient resources. It is because these resources are extracted to satisfy foreign corporate greed. Bloated private corporations do not lose little sleep over the resultant poverty, environmental degradation, or displacement, as communities are forced from their land to make way for mining operations. The continued exploitation of resources has also created a playground for various armed groups, which have used violence to maintain control over mines in the DRC. For decades, civilians have paid a particularly heavy price, most notably in the eastern regions of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. Most recently, on June 11, 2023, an attack on the Lala refugee camp in Ituri province killed 46 people and displaced 7,800. One of the most notable militia groups is the March 23 Movement (M23). Several human rights organisations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, as well as the United Nations, have reported that M23 has recruited child soldiers and committed unlawful killings, rape and other war crimes. The same human rights organisations have published evidence that M23 relies on financial and military support from DRC's neighbour, Rwanda. Congolese officials have repeatedly accused Rwanda of plundering their country's natural resources. In an interview for the Financial Times, DRC's finance minister, Nicolas Kazadi, said Kigali exported almost \$1bn in gold, tin, tantalum and tungsten in 2022, despite having few of these mineral deposits of its own. The UN has previously documented how minerals

mined in the DRC are smuggled into Rwanda where they are tagged as locally produced. While Belgium, France, and Germany have condemned Rwanda's support for M23, the United Kingdom government refuses to do so. How can they, when an honest recognition of these human rights abuses would expose the illegality of its flagship policy: to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda? Continuing to double down on this policy in the face of court rulings, the government does not just show contempt for people risking their lives to reach a place of safety. It is actively putting them back at risk of persecution. Our country has played an enormous role in generating the conditions for violence, discrimination and human rights abuses in the DRC, and indeed the Global South. Our government should recognise its responsibility to redress – not aggravate – this colonial trauma. That means, at the very least, fulfilling its international obligations towards the refugees, and their right to live in safety and peace. Indeed, we all have a responsibility to put pressure on our government to do so in the name of decolonisation. Many of the resources that we enjoy on a daily basis – including the technology you might be using to read this very article – rely on the DRC's exploitation. The least we can do is use this technology to effect change. That means writing to your local member of Parliament to ask them to demand that our government unequivocally condemns Rwanda for their support of M23, takes appropriate sanctions, and increases aid to the DRC. Many of those in positions of power and influence pretend as if the plight of people in the Global South simply does not matter. Whenever there is a crisis, if it is in Africa, then it may as well not have happened. How much more violence, death and displacement should the people of the DRC endure before the international community wakes up and takes action? The people of the DRC – just like the people of Palestine, West Papua, Yemen, Sudan and beyond – deserve to live in peace, justice and freedom. Their voices cannot be ignored any longer.

– Sourced by Al Jazeera News

## Don't sacrifice workers at the altar of AI

Ranvir S. Nayar

Certainly, AI will also create jobs, but they will tend to be roles for highly qualified, well-educated people, while most of the jobs being destroyed will be staffed by less-educated people. This will impact a section of society that is not just the most vulnerable, but also the one that has been hit the hardest by the recent series of global events, from COVID-19 lockdowns to inflation and rising economic insecurity. With the rapid adoption of AI having already begun in some countries, and with it expected to accelerate...

IT seems likely that the buzz phrase for 2024 is going to be "generative artificial intelligence." Since March last year, when ChatGPT-4, a multimodal large language model, was launched by OpenAI, a company that has subsequently been acquired by Microsoft, generative AI has dominated discussions in almost every corporate boardroom and at international conferences of politicians, businesspersons and academics, as well as among laypeople. It was no different at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum, which recently concluded in the Swiss resort town of Davos. AI was one of the four core themes at the famed meeting, with 30 separate sessions held in the Congress Centre and about 100 others taking place at side events during the week. The subjects covered were varied, ranging from governance and the regulation of AI to using AI as a tool in education, healthcare and beyond. At the forum, nearly half a dozen reports were presented by various groupings, each making one outlandish claim after another on the power of AI and how these organizations and others in their milieu were ready to harness the power of AI for the good of humanity. Certainly, generative AI will prove to be a boon for corporate bosses, as it will allow them to improve productivity and reduce costs, almost entirely by rendering many workers redundant through processes of automation. Most of the reports acknowledged that the technology was highly disruptive, with as many as 60 percent of workers vulnerable to it. Somehow, however, all the reports ended up claiming that AI would not only boost productivity – and hence the profitability of companies – but that it would also in the longer term generate far more jobs than it uproots, with numbers ranging from 12 million to 100 million. Generative AI will prove to be a boon for corporate bosses, as it will allow them to improve pro-

ductivity and reduce costs. As is usual in reports on such hyped-up phenomena, which are often prepared in a rush and with much more reliance on conjecture and estimates than realism, the papers on AI's job creation potential seemed very thin on details. It is clear that AI will render hundreds of millions of jobs redundant, at least partially, across many sectors of the economy, from banking and accountancy to media and law, besides manufacturing and even agriculture. Certainly, AI will also create jobs, but they will tend to be roles for highly qualified, well-educated people, while most of the jobs being destroyed will be staffed by less-educated people. This will impact a section of society that is not just the most vulnerable, but also the one that has been hit the hardest by the recent series of global events, from COVID-19 lockdowns to inflation and rising economic insecurity. With the rapid adoption of AI having already begun in some countries, and with it expected to accelerate around the world in the next year or so, millions of people could be caught unprepared for the ways in which their jobs could be threatened, or at least significantly altered, due to the use of AI. But little is being done to address these challenges, as company bosses seem to be focused entirely on increasing their profits. Meanwhile, governments are once again watching on from the sidelines rather than taking a major role in determining the rollout of AI and anticipating the social disruption that it is almost certain to bring. It will render hundreds of millions of jobs redundant, at least partially, across many sectors of the economy. AI is certainly not the first disruptive force to hit the world of work. There have been waves of change ever since the industrial era began about 300 years ago. Each wave has come with its own benefits and advantages for humans, while also leaving a lot of destruction in its wake. The sharp rise in global inequality,

notably in the past half a century or even just the last two decades, is a clear indication of exactly how disruptive these changes can be for the masses, while disproportionately benefiting a very thin slice of society. A report released by British charity Oxfam at Davos 2024 revealed the scale of the inequality and how the gulf is widening rapidly each year, especially since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Oxfam report stated that, in the last three years, the wealth of the world's five richest men has doubled, while more than 5 billion people – or more than 60 percent of the global population – have become poorer. The arrival of AI and its embrace by global businesses is set to worsen the deal for these 5 billion, while potentially generating trillions of dollars in additional profits and corporate dividends. And that is why it is imperative for governments to step in and play a crucial role in minimizing the social disruption AI seems set to cause. As corporate profitability around the world is at near-record, often eye-watering, levels, governments must make companies equal participants in ensuring that the workers rendered redundant by their adoption of AI are properly retrained or rehabilitated in other roles and that their wage levels are protected. This is because there is enough historical evidence to show that workers displaced by automation end up becoming significantly poorer and that the impact of their impoverishment is felt for generations, rather than just stopping with them. Thus, not only should companies be made responsible for retraining their workers and minimizing job losses but, in the case of a job being lost, the workers must also get their fair share of the profitability growth that the companies subsequently reap. It may be time to ensure that the bosses also feel the heat of disruption, not just the workers.

– Sourced by Arab News



## Briefs

## Pakistan-Afghan Torkham...

FROM PAGE 01  
Quoting Customs authorities, it said the first cargo vehicle had entered Pakistan through the Torkham while Afghan drivers of commercial vehicles had been given visa and passport relaxations till March 31. "No cargo vehicle will be allowed entry into Pakistan without travelling documents from April 1," report added. Separately, in a post on social media platform X, the JUI-F said the decision to relax visa requirements was taken on the request of Maulana Fazlur Rehman — who recently visited Kabul and discussed a range of issues, including bilateral trade, with the Afghan government. Business leaders from both nations were united in opposing the border closures. Khan Jan Alokozai, the vice president of the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, earlier told media that Pakistani and Afghan traders suffer losses of about \$100,000 daily due to Torkham's closure.

## Taliban restricting...

FROM PAGE 01  
woman to work." Many women were also not allowed to board buses or go to work because they were unmarried or because they did not have a 'mahram' to accompany them in public. The report also noted that several women were arbitrarily arrested in Kabul and other locations for "not wearing proper hijab". Most were released after their 'mahrams' signed a guarantee that they will adhere to the hijab decree in the future. "The measures taken by the de facto (Taliban) authorities contradict the hijab decree itself," UNAMA said. "For a first violation of the decree, a warning is to be issued to the individual's mahram (at the place of residence), for a second violation, the individual's mahram is to be summoned, for a third violation, the individual's mahram may be imprisoned for up to three days and for a fourth violation, the individual's mahram is to be brought before the de facto court for further action."

## Bilawal Bhutto...

FROM PAGE 01  
less than a dictatorship. "Their politics is based on violence," he added while warning the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers — who according to him are thinking that their difficult days are behind them — of disastrous consequences if Nawaz secures a fourth term as the country's premier. "The issue is that they [the Sharifs] only think about themselves. He [Nawaz] is [only] worried about how to sit on the prime minister's chair," the former foreign minister said while asking the masses to question the PML-N leadership about what they were doing in their past three tenures. Continuing with his "new politics" agenda, Bilawal once again lamented the divisive and hateful politics — adopted by "old politicians" — while promising to abstain from such a trend if he is voted into power.

## Qureshi found out...

FROM PAGE 01  
Imran said that Asad Majeed, the Pakistani ambassador, recommended demarche in an official meeting on Donald Lu's talk but now it is being said that there was no conspiracy. "If there was nothing in the cypher then why demarche was issued [to the United States]. Does anyone ever demarches the US," he questioned. Imran said that no country was issued a demarche during PTI's three-and-a-half-year tenure. However, he added, PTI members started defecting after the cypher issue. He said that Raja Riaz and other members had started visiting the US embassy after the issue emerged, claiming that this development was also confirmed in an Intelligence Bureau (IB) report.

## Djokovic, Gauff dig deep to make AO semi-finals

Serbian superstar beats 12th seeded American 7-6 (7/3), 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 to keep his bid for a 25th major crown on track

## SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic battled past Taylor Fritz into an 11th Australian Open semi-final and a record-extending 48th at Grand Slams on Tuesday, with Coco Gauff also forced to dig deep in searing heat. The Serbian superstar came through a probing test on Rod Laver Arena against 12th seeded American 7-6 (7/3), 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 to keep his bid for a 25th major crown on track. Djokovic almost always gets the evening slot on centre court, but was bumped to the afternoon on a day where temperatures soared to 32 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit) and the world number one admitted it was hard going. "Physically and emotionally very draining," he said after the three hour and 45 minute slog, adding that he "suffered a lot" in the first two sets. "He was serving well, staying close to the line and kind of suffocating me from the back of the court," he said. "I think I upped my game probably midway through the third set all the way to the end." The 36-year-old will face either Italian fourth seed Jannik Sinner or Russian fifth seed Andrey Rublev next, with the omens not good for either man. Djokovic has won all 10 previous semi-finals he has played at Melbourne Park, stretching back to his first title in 2008. Error-strewn US Open champion Gauff was also put through her paces before outlasting unseeded Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk after more than three scrappy hours 7-6 (8/6), 6-7 (3/7), 6-2. She will meet either power-packing defending champion Aryna Sabalenka or



ninth-seeded Barbora Krejčíková for a place in the final. But her performance will not strike fear into whoever she plays next, with the 19-year-old struggling on serve and wasting countless opportunities. She admitted it was below-par, giving herself only a 'C' rating. "Hopefully got the bad match out of the way and I can play even better," she said. The low standard was not confined to Gauff, with the pair making a staggering 107 unforced errors between them — there were 16 service breaks. Kostyuk ried missing her chances, letting slip a 5-1 lead and squandering set points in the first set, but said she was proud of how she fought. "Very proud of myself. I won for myself today, and I think it's the most important

thing," said the 21-year-old, who has been vocal at the tournament about keeping people's focus on the conflict in her homeland. Gauff also faltered at crunch moments, broken when serving for the match at 5-4 in the second set before keeping her cool as Kostyuk became more agitated in the deciding set. It extended her winning streak this year to 10 matches after she won at Auckland in the lead up, and her unbeaten run at Grand Slams to 12 after her title-winning exploits at Flushing Meadow. "Really proud of the fight I showed today," said the American, who had never progressed beyond the fourth round at Melbourne Park in four previous attempts. "I really fought and left it all on the court."

She will need to step up a level should she face Sabalenka, who has been ruthless so far in Melbourne, conceding just 11 games in her march towards another title. But the Belarusian world number two is expecting a thorough examination from Krejčíková, the 2021 French Open champion, who is yet to go beyond the last eight at Melbourne Park. "Barbora, we played a lot of matches. She plays really well. I think she's coming back after injuries, so also super-motivated. Always a tough battle," she said. Lautaro Martinez propelled Inter Milan to a third consecutive Italian Super Cup title after scoring in the final moments of Monday's 1-0 victory over a furious Napoli in Riyadh. The Argentina striker, Martinez, tucked away Benjamin Pavard's low cross in the first minute of stoppage time at Al-Awwal Park, overcoming Napoli, who played the final half-hour with 10 men after Giovanni Simeone was sent off for two bookable offenses. Martinez's winning goal marked his 21st tally in all competitions this season for Inter, who relinquished their Serie A lead to Juventus while in Saudi Arabia for the four-team tournament. He jubilantly removed his shirt in celebration after tying with Christian Vieri at ninth place in Inter's all-time goalscoring charts, registering 123 strikes since his arrival in 2018. "The emotion took over, and I couldn't think," Martinez told Mediaset. "It was a unique moment; I scored my 100th goal in the Italian Cup Final and my 123rd goal in the Super Cup, allowing me to match a legend like Christian Vieri." This year's edition was the first to adopt a four-team format but failed to capture the imagination of the Saudi public.

## Thailand, Pakistan enjoy...

FROM PAGE 01  
He thanked the government of Pakistan for taking care of the foreigners very well. He said that whoever he interacted expressed his or her satisfaction the way they had been accepted and facilitated in Pakistan. He said he was optimistic that cooperation or friendly tie between the defence and military attache in Pakistan will continue to deepen and contribute to the wellbeing of the global community. Colonel Thanaei expressed his gratitude to Lieutenant General Mohamed Aqeel, the Inspector General of Communication and Information Technology, for honoring the occasion as the chief guest. He highlighted the strategic locations of Pakistan and Thailand within the region, emphasizing the potential for leveraging this advantage. Colonel Thanaei envisioned that by harnessing this strategic positioning, the two nations could synergize their power for mutual benefit. He also talked about various exchange programs and hoped to further cement military ties with Pakistan even in the days to come.

## Section 144 imposed...

FROM PAGE 01  
Carrying and display of all kinds of weapons including the licensed ones. All types of firing. Violation of any clause of Code of Conduct issued by ECP Earlier in the day, public rallies and corner meetings ahead of elections 2024 were banned in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tank district amid law and order situation. Deputy commissioner Tank has slapped Section 144 to ban public rallies and corner meetings of the political parties due to law and order concerns. The political parties have been directed to obtain prior permission from the district administration so that the security of the public gathering can be ensured. The ban will remain enforced for 21 days, the notification issued by the Tank DC read.

## Pakistan Army to...

FROM PAGE 01  
that the country was facing a shortage of over 277,000 security personnel, whereas only 328,000 police personnel were currently available. The Feb 8 elections are surrounded by doubts over the security and safety of both candidates and voters, with several violent incidents including attacks on candidates were being reported across the country. Several politicians have also expressed concern over the law and order situation — with some even moving the Senate seeking poll delay in this regard. The Upper House of Parliament adopted a resolution, which was moved by independent Senator Dilwar Khan during a session with only 15 lawmakers in attendance. It sought delay in general elections in the light of extreme weather in hilly areas and the deteriorating security situation.

## 49 foreign journalists...

FROM PAGE 01  
Executive Director General External Publicity Wing Amreen Jan, Director General Radio Pakistan Saeed Sheikh and Principal Information Officer Dr Tariq Mehmood. He said that several foreign media representatives were already in Pakistan who would cover the elections in Pakistan. Many foreign journalists have applied for visas to cover the election, Murtaza Solangi said adding that 49 visas have been issued to observers and foreign journalists so far whereas 32 visa applications were under process. He said 24 visa applications for coverage of elections were under process at the Pakistan High Commission New Delhi. A total of 174 applications have been received from various media organizations, the minister added. He said that in the non-journalist category, 25 applications were in process from UK alone, eight applications from Russian Federation whereas 13 applications from Japan were under process.

## Pakistani players absent from ICC 2023 teams

## DNA

DUBAI: After failing to make a cut in the International Cricket Council (ICC) T20I Team of the Year 2023, no Pakistan player could make it into the recently unveiled ICC Men's ODI and Test Teams of the Year 2023. The apex cricketing body on Tuesday, recognized 11 players each from across the globe, who impressed with either their batting, bowling or all-round exploits throughout 2023 in Tests and ODIs. Australia's all-format captain Pat Cummins was named the skipper of the ICC Test Team of the Year 2023, majorly dominated by his compatriots. Be-

sides Cummins, four more members of the Australian squad, which won the World Test Championship (WTC) 2021-23, were included in the Test Team of the Year, namely Usman Khawaja, Travis Head, Alex Carey and Mitchell Starc. The lineup further features two Indians — Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin — and two Englishmen — Joe Root and Stuart Broad. Sri Lanka's Dimuth Karunaratne and New Zealand's Kane Williamson were the other players inducted into the Test Team of the Year 2023. ICC Men's Test Team of the Year 2023: Usman Khawaja, Dimuth Karunaratne, Kane Williamson, Joe Root, Travis Head, Ravindra Jadeja, Alex Car-

ey (wk), Pat Cummins (c), R Ashwin, Mitchell Starc, Stuart Broad. The ICC also announced the ODI Team of the Year 2023 under the leadership of Rohit Sharma. Despite ending up on the losing side in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 final against Australia, the Men in Blue dominated the ODI Team of the Year at the back of sublime collective and individual performances in the previous year. India's Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj and Mohammed Shami accompanied their national team's captain Rohit. The ODI Team of the Year 2023 further features Australia's Travis Head and Adam Zampa, South Afri-

ca's Heinrich Klaasen and Marco Jansen and New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell. ICC Men's ODI Team of the Year 2023: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill, Travis Head, Virat Kohli, Daryl Mitchell, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Marco Jansen, Adam Zampa, Mohammed Siraj, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami. Earlier this week, the ICC also unveiled the Men's T20I Team of the Year 2023 which too, did not feature a single Pakistan player. ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year 2023: Yashasvi Jaiswal, Phil Salt, Nicholas Pooran, Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Mark Chapman, Sikandar Raza, Alpeesh Ramjani, Mark Adair, Ravi Bishnoi, Richard Ngarava, Arshdeep Singh.

## Pakistan hockey climbs FIH rankings amid salary struggles

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan men's hockey team has ascended one place in the International Hockey Federation (FIH) rankings, landing at 15th after their recent participation in the Paris Olympics qualifiers held in Muscat, Oman. Despite the disappointment of failing to qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympics, the Green Shirts have shown resilience in the rankings. The current top three teams according to FIH are the Netherlands, Belgium, and India, with Germany, England, and Australia securing the fourth, fifth, and sixth positions, respectively. However, the joy of this achievement is marred by the revelation from the team's captain, Ammad Butt, who disclosed on Monday that the players have not received their salaries from the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) for the past six months. This financial setback has raised concerns about the treatment of the players who have been representing the nation on the international stage. In an Instagram post, Captain Ammad expressed gratitude to the fans for their unwavering support and shed light on the challenges faced by the players. He highlighted the lack of facilities and government support, emphasizing the absence of sponsorship, media coverage, and a proper professional system for the past decade. Ammad Butt concluded his post by calling for support for the team, emphasizing their commitment to performing well for the country in the future. The plea comes as the team faces financial struggles and strives to overcome the disappointment of missing out on Olympic qualification for the third consecutive time. — DNA

## Miandad criticizes PCB appointments, calls for fairness

LAHORE: Cricket legend and former Pakistan Captain Javed Miandad has voiced his concerns over the recent appointments in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). In a press conference held in Karachi, Miandad stressed that the current scenario in Pakistan cricket is unprecedented and does not align with the practices followed in other cricketing nations. "It does not happen anywhere in cricket what is happening here in our Pakistan," Miandad remarked, highlighting the need for substantial efforts to be directed towards the betterment of cricket. Miandad's remarks come in the wake of the nomination of Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi as the new chairman of the PCB, following the departure of Zaka Ashraf. Expressing his views on the recent appointments, Miandad regretted that individuals in power tend to bring their own associates into key positions within the cricketing body. "Whoever becomes the Prime Minister should work for the progress of the country and cricket," Miandad stated, urging for a more impartial and merit-based approach in making appointments within the PCB. Responding to questions from reporters, Miandad asserted that given the opportunity, he would rectify the current state of affairs in the PCB. — DNA

## Babar plays match-winning knock in his first BPL game

DHAKA: Rangpur Riders secured a triumph over Sylhet Strikers, propelled by an outstanding performance from former Pakistan captain Babar Azam, in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) 2024. The excitement was noticeable when Rangpur captain Nurul Hasan Sobhan confidently announced Babar's inclusion in the playing XI during the toss, confirming, "Obviously King Babar is in for the match." Upon being instructed to bat first, Sylhet Strikers were restricted to a total of 120 runs, having lost eight wickets in the first innings. Babar made his presence felt when he executed a direct hit to remove Dushan Hemantha in the final over. Meanwhile, the Rangpur Riders faced a challenging situation from the start of the chase as they lost six wickets at the score of 39. However, Babar and Azmatullah Omarzai combined efforts to forge a match-winning partnership

of 89 runs, ultimately steering Rangpur Riders to triumph in a closely-contested match. Their robust partnership and proficient batting paved the way for an exhilarating victory by four wickets as they achieved the target in 18.2 overs. Babar played a crucial role, staying unbeaten with a well-executed 56 runs from 49 deliveries, featuring six boundaries, at a striking rate of 114.28. Full list of Pakistan players featuring in BPL 2024 Chattogram Challengers: Muhammad Haris, Mohammad Hasnain, Comilla Victorians: Mohammad Rizwan, Iftikhar Ahmad, Zaman Khan, Khushdil Shah, Naseem Shah, Durdanto Dhaka: Saim Ayub, Usman Qadir, Fortune Barishal: Fakhar Zaman, M. Amir, Abbas Afridi, Shoaib Malik, Khulna Tigers: Faheem Ashraf, Rangpur Riders: Babar Azam, Ihsanullah, Sylhet Strikers: It must be noted that many Pakistan players have not received NOCs to feature in this tournament due to PCB's rule of allowing players for only two leagues in a year. — DNA



## PRCS, OGDCL join hands to advance humanitarian initiatives

## MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: In a dedicated effort to

elevate collaboration in humanitarian endeavors and fortify mutual relations, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and Oil & Gas Development Company Limited

(OGDCL) officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The signing ceremony took place at the OGDCL central office in Islamabad on Tuesday.

Attendees at the signing ceremony included Chairman of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, Brigadier (Retd) Abdul Hadi, Managing Body Member, Muhammad Abidullah Khan, Secretary General, and representatives from OGDCL, including Abdul Razaq Khattak, Shahzad Safdar, and Aamir Salim. The MoU symbolizes the unwavering commitment to strengthen collaborative efforts between OGDCL and PRCS. Ahmed Hayat Lak, Managing Director/CEO of OGDCL, and Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari signed the document, highlighting the shared dedication to advancing humanitarian causes. Of significant note is OGDCL's financial support to the Red Crescent in 2016 and 2017, and their substantial contribution in 2023 toward the State-of-the-Art Ambulance service. This ambulance is currently deployed in flood-affected regions of Balochistan. Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari underscored the critical importance of bolstering cooperation and nurturing relations between both organizations to effectively address pressing humanitarian needs on a broader scale. In response, Ahmed Hayat Lak acknowledged and commended the valuable humanitarian services provided by the Red Crescent. He expressed OGDCL's unwavering commitment to sustaining and expanding mutual cooperation in the pursuit of shared humanitarian goals.





## Briefs

## 31 dead in southwest China landslide

BEIJING: The death toll from a landslide that struck a remote and mountainous part of southwestern China reached 31 on Tuesday, state media said, as rescuers raced to find those still trapped under the debris. The pre-dawn landslide buried 18 homes and sparked the evacuation of more than 200 people when it struck in Zhenxiang county, Yunnan province early Monday. Nearly 36 hours since the disaster, 31 people have been confirmed dead, state news agency Xinhua said. An earlier report Tuesday afternoon by state broadcaster CCTV, which announced the toll had risen to 20, added that 24 people were still missing at that time. Xinhua said rescue workers were in a "race against time" to find those still missing, after a night of sub-zero temperatures. "Search and rescue efforts persisted through the night," firefighter Li Shenglong told Xinhua. Death toll in China landslide rises to 11, rescuers still search for missing Wu Junyao, director of the natural resources and planning bureau of Zhaoqing, told Xinhua that the disaster "resulted from a collapse in the steep cliff area atop the slope".—APP

## Spain's SC deems deportation of child migrants illegal

MADRID: Spain's Supreme Court ruled that authorities broke the law when they sent unaccompanied child migrants back to Morocco following a mass border crossing into the tiny Spanish enclave of Ceuta. Dozens of unaccompanied migrants were among the more than 10,000 people who forced their way into Ceuta from neighboring Morocco in May 2021 by scaling a border fence or swimming around it as Moroccan border guards stood by. Many had used inflatable rings and rubber dinghies. The mass border crossing came amid a spat between Spain and Morocco over Madrid's decision to provide medical treatment for the ailing leader of the independence movement of Western Sahara, a territory occupied by Spain until 1975 when Morocco annexed it. Following legal action by rights campaigners, a court in Ceuta in August 2021 suspended the repatriation of a group of unaccompanied minors who had arrived in May. Spain's Supreme Court Monday dismissed the government's appeal against this ruling, arguing the minors' expulsion violated domestic immigration laws as well as the European Human Rights Convention. Under Spanish law each minor is entitled to an "individual administrative procedure" before they can be deported, as well as an "intervention" on the part of public prosecutors, the court said in its ruling.—APP

## IMF urges Finland to reduce deficit

COPENHAGEN: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is urging Finland to take further action to balance general government finances and thus bring down budget deficits, the fund said in a report about the Finnish economy on Tuesday. While the Finnish economy recovered rapidly from the pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has caused high inflation and rising interest rates, which are weighing on household purchasing power, the IMF said in a statement. Current policy measures fall short of reducing the government's fiscal deficit, the IMF said, pointing to the need for additional measures to close the gap. More policy rate hike likely if price pressures reemerge, IMF told The Bank of Finland in September said the country's economic downturn would last longer than expected, driven by weaker export demand and a rapid slowdown in construction activity in the face of high interest rates.—APP

## Marcos denies endorsing Taiwan independence stance

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said he does not endorse Taiwan independence and reiterated his country was committed to its One-China policy

## NEWS DESK

MANILA : Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said he does not endorse Taiwan independence and reiterated his country was committed to its One-China policy, a response to China's outrage over recent remarks in congratulating Taiwan's election winner. Marcos said in an interview on Tuesday that his congratulatory comment to Lai Ching-te earlier this month, where he referred to him as president, was a "common courtesy". "The One-China policy remains in place. We have adhered to the One-China policy strictly and conscientiously since we adopted (it)," Marcos said. "We are not endorsing Taiwanese independence. Taiwan is a province of China." The congratulatory message, however, drew a sharp rebuke from China, with its foreign ministry spokesperson telling

Marcos last week to "read more books to properly understand the ins and outs of the Taiwan issue". That prompted a fierce response from the Philippines defence minister, who criticised the Chinese official for "low and gutter-level talk". Marcos in the interview added he was for peace and "does not want conflict" in the region. The Philippines and China have been at loggerheads this past year, coinciding with Marcos making overtures to defence ally the United States, including widening base access to the U.S. military. China has seen that as a provocation and part of a challenge by Washington to its Taiwan policy. The Philippines and Taiwan have unofficial ties as both maintain an "economic and cultural office" in Taipei and Manila serving as a de facto embassy. Meanwhile, The Philippine government will not cooperate with the International Criminal



Court's (ICC) investigation into a brutal anti-narcotics campaign, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said on Tuesday. "I consider it as a threat to our sovereignty. Therefore, the Philippine government will not lift a finger to help any investigation that the ICC conducts," Marcos told reporters, reiterating his earlier position. The ICC in July rejected an appeal by Manila and allowed an investigation to resume into the thousands of killings during former Presi-

dent Rodrigo Duterte's 'war on drugs' and other suspected rights abuses. Marcos said ICC investigators can come and visit "as ordinary people" but the government will not assist them. Marcos' remarks followed a statement made by his justice minister who last week told Kyodo News the government may allow an ICC probe if legal procedures were followed, a move which Duterte's camp maintained was illegal. In a statement, Vice President Sara Duterte echoed the position long held by her father that foreigners should not be allowed to meddle in the country's affairs, adding she will refuse to be a part of a process that would put shame the country's courts and judicial system. "Allowing the ICC to conduct its probe in our country, in brazen violation of the constitution, is an absolute surrender of our birth-

right as a sovereign nation," Salvador Panelo, Duterte's former presidential spokesperson, said in a message. The Philippines officially withdrew from the international tribunal in 2019 after then President Duterte questioned its authority to investigate the campaign against illegal drugs that killed thousands of people. Police say they killed 6,200 dealers who resisted arrest during anti-drug operations during Duterte's term. Many thousands more users and peddlers were gunned down during the crackdown, in what authorities said were vigilante killings. Rights groups and some victims accuse the police of systematic cover-ups and executions, which they deny. In November, Marcos said he was studying the Philippines' return to the ICC's fold, months after saying he would cut off contact with the tribunal.

## NATO secures 1.1bn euro artillery ammunition deal

BRUSSELS: NATO has signed a 1.1 billion euro contract for 155mm artillery ammunition, the alliance said on Tuesday, with part of the shells to be supplied to Ukraine after complaints a shortage of munitions was hampering its war efforts. "The war in Ukraine has become a battle of ammunition," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said after a signing ceremony at the alliance's headquarters in Brussels. NATO struck the deal on behalf of several allies who will either pass on the shells to Ukraine or use them to stock up their own depleted inventories. Bulk buying ensures lower prices. NATO's Steadfast Defender exercises mark return to Cold War schemes, Russia says The contract will likely buy some 220,000 rounds of artillery ammunition, with the first deliveries expected at the end of 2025, a NATO official told media reporters. The ammunition will be supplied by French arms maker Nexter and Germany's Jughans, according to an industry source.—Agencies

## Dutch reporter murder suspects on trial

THE HAGUE : The trial began on Tuesday of nine suspects in the murder of high-profile Dutch crime reporter Peter R. de Vries, whose killing stunned the Netherlands and spotlighted the country's drug gang underworld. De Vries, 64, was shot in the head on a busy Amsterdam street in July 2021, shortly after leaving a television studio where he was appearing as a guest. Authorities believe gang leaders ordered his murder due to his role as adviser to a key witness in the trial of alleged drugs baron Ridouan Taghi, who was arrested in Dubai in 2019. Two suspects, identified only as Dutch man Delano G. and Kamil E. from Poland, were arrested shortly after the incident. Prosecutors have called for them to serve a life sentence. Prosecutors believe Delano G. pulled the trigger and Kamil E. drove the getaway car and carried out surveillance prior to the shooting. Just before the verdict against the pair, new information emerged that prompted judges to reopen the case. Seven men suspected of organising and facilitating the killing have been added to the trial, in addition to Delano G. and Kamil E.—Agencies

## Italy to leverage G7 chair for Ukraine support boost

## WEB DESK

ROME : Italy will use its presidency of the Group of Seven major democracies to challenge growing perceptions that Russia is winning in Ukraine and that the West is tiring of the war, a source familiar with Italy's G7 plans said. Italy will chair the G7, which also groups the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France and Canada, throughout 2024 and will host a summit in June. Laying out Italy's priorities for the first time, the source said core issues on the leaders' agenda would include conflict in the Middle East, food security, climate change, development in Africa, engagement with China and Artificial Intel-

ligence. As in the last two G7 presidencies, the war in Ukraine will also be a major consideration, said the source, who was not authorised to go on the record talking about Italy's plans. The West's on-staunch wartime support for Kyiv has appeared to waver in recent months amid political wrangling in Washington and Brussels that has held up the delivery of badly needed arms and funding. However, the source said G7 leaders were determined to show they remained fully committed to Kyiv and could not risk showing signs of weakness two years after Russia invaded its neighbour.

"We must change the narrative on Ukraine," the source said, adding that Russian President

Vladimir Putin had lost significant financial, military and diplomatic clout since the invasion. Italy is planning to stage 20 ministerial meetings during its G7 presidency, kicking off with a three-day gathering from March 13-15 on industry, technology and digitalisation, which will put a spotlight on the fast-paced AI revolution. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has already said that the dangers posed by AI will be a key issue for Italy's G7 presidency and she will dedicate one session to the subject at the June 13-15 summit in Puglia, the source said. Italy wants to focus on the impact of AI on jobs and inequality, while also laying down "ethical guardrails" for the development of the technology. Rome will also

propose creating a steering committee to ensure greater G7 coordination on AI. The source said G7 leaders were "pretty much on the same page" over AI, adding that there was broad consensus on most of the major issues facing the wealthy-nation club, including on how to deal with China. There was a determination on all sides to avoid tensions with Beijing, the source said, adding: "Nobody wants to impede or put obstacles towards Chinese growth." There was also agreement, the source said, on the need to develop economies in Africa and try to stem illegal immigration - a domestic priority for Meloni, who is struggling to honour an 2022 election pledge to stem migrant flows.

## Hungary's Orban invites Swedish PM for NATO talks

BUDAPEST : Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Tuesday he had invited his Swedish counterpart to visit and negotiate his country joining the NATO military alliance, a process that Hungary and Turkey have delayed. Asked about the invitation, a spokesperson for Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said in a text to media persons that Stockholm had not yet decided how to respond. "Today I sent an invitation letter to Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson @SwedishPM for a visit to Hungary to negotiate on Sweden's NATO accession," Orban said on the X social media platform. No specific date was proposed for the visit. The aim of the visit would be "to build trust", Hungary's Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto told reporters on Tuesday. "Political and security cooperation needs unconditional trust," he added. Sweden applied to join NATO in May 2022 in a historic shift in its security policy prompted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February that year. But Turkey and Hungary both raised objections, holding up a process that requires unanimity among NATO's member countries. Finland finally joined last year but Ankara pressed Stockholm to toughen its stance on members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) based in Sweden, which the United States and the European Union as well as Turkey deem a terrorist group. Turkey's parliament was set to approve Sweden's NATO application later on Tuesday and President Tayyip Erdogan was expected to sign it into law in the coming days.—APP

## Russia at UN denies deporting Ukrainian children

GENEVA: Russia insisted at the United Nations on Tuesday that it had not forcibly moved any Ukrainian children to Russia since its invasion in February 2022, contradicting claims by Kyiv and NGOs. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child asked Moscow how many children have been "evacuated" to Russia or within Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine since the invasion began. Kyiv estimates that 20,000 Ukrainian children have been forcibly moved to Russia. "From February 2022, since then, the Russian Federation has not been involved in the deportation of citizens of Ukraine on the territory of the Russian Federation," Alexey Vovchenko, Russia's deputy minister of labor and social protection, told the UN committee. The panel of 18 independent experts is examining Russia's record as part of a regular review that all countries have to undergo. "Just over three million residents of Ukraine - a number of them were children - these were accepted into the Russian Federation," said Vovchenko, head of Moscow's delegation at the hearing. "Most of the children came with their families or the guardians. They were placed in temporary shelters or with relatives." But he indicated that checks were under way concerning the situation of "over 5,000 children." Of the children moved by Russia since the invasion, only about 400 have so far been repatriated, says Kyiv. The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against President Vladimir Putin in March 2023 on the war crime accusation of unlawfully deporting Ukrainian children. The ICC has levelled similar charges against Maria Lvova-Belova, Russia's presidential commissioner for children's rights. Russia is not a member of the ICC and insists the warrant against Putin is "void." "Placements for evacuated children are arranged, first and foremost, at their request and with their consent," Russia told the UN committee in a written response in October last year. As for the eastern regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, which the Kremlin says are now part of Russia, Vovchenko said around 2,000 residents of orphanages and boarding homes were "moved to the Russian Federation." They were "accompanied with the directors and staff of the boarding homes where they had lived previously," he said.—DNA

## Canada caps foreign student visas amid housing strain

TORONTO: Canada on Monday announced a two-year cap on international student visas to ease the pressure on housing, health care and other services at a time of record immigration. Immigration Minister Marc Miller said that there will be a 35 percent reduction in new study visas in 2024. He said that the international students program has been exploited by institutions offering "sham" degrees, putting pressure on housing and

health care. "It's a bit of a mess, and it's time to rein it in," Miller said. The number of new visas handed out will be capped at 364,000. Nearly 560,000 such visas were issued last year. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Cabinet retreat in Montreal this week will prioritize affordability and housing, according to a government statement. The government said that there are about 1 million foreign students in the country now,

and without any intervention this number would keep increasing. The total number of foreign students is more than three times what it was a decade ago. Miller said that officials have been working on stabilizing the number of people entering the country yearly as housing pressures mount. Canada grew by about 1 million people last year, reaching a record of 40 million, as many Canadians struggle with an increased cost of living, including rents and

mortgages. The Immigration minister said that there are unscrupulous schools that accept high tuition fees from foreign students without offering a solid education in return. In some cases, the schools are a way into Canada for students who can parlay their visas into permanent residences. "It is not the intention of this program to have sham commerce degrees or business degrees that are sitting on top of a massage parlor.—APP



LAHORE : Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi praying after inaugurating the Special Operation Room of Special Protection Unit at City Traffic Police Lines Manawan.—DNA

## Tokyo shares open higher

TOKYO : Tokyo stocks opened higher Tuesday, chasing Wall Street shares overnight with focus on the Bank of Japan's policy decision to be announced later in the day. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index added 0.59 percent, or 214.75 points, to 36,761.70 in early trade, while the broader Topix index rose 0.66 percent, or 16.74 points, to 2,561.66. Investors were cheered after the Dow and the S&P 500 hit new record highs on growing optimism for the US economy ahead of a heavy week of US corporate earnings. "Tokyo shares are expected to surge higher on the back of strong US shares," brokerage house Monex said. Investors awaited the outcome of the policy decision by the Bank of Japan, expected to be announced late morning or early afternoon. The BoJ is largely expected to maintain the current easy money policy. But the meeting is attracting attention as investors try to gauge how a recent deadly earthquake disaster in Japan's central region might affect the bank's move towards possible rate hikes in the near future, Monex added. The dollar was at 148.14 yen, little changed from 148.13 yen in New York. Among major shares, Toyota rose 1.24 percent to 3,019 yen. Nintendo gained 0.85 percent to 8,172 yen. Tokyo Electron, which makes tools to build semiconductors, added 0.10 percent to 28,730 yen. Sony Group rose 0.10 percent to 14,815 yen. SoftBank Group fell 0.33 percent to 6,701 yen. Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing edged down 0.08 percent to 39,580 yen.—APP

## Sunak defeated in vote on Rwanda asylum treaty delay

The treaty and an accompanying bill are the pillars of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's bid to overcome a block on the deportations by the UK Supreme Court

## FOREIGN DESK

LONDON : British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak suffered a setback to his plans to deport some asylum seekers to Rwanda after parliament's upper house backed a largely symbolic motion to delay ratification of a treaty aimed at overcoming a legal block. Under the Rwanda plan, which has yet to be carried out, asylum seekers who arrive on England's southern coast in small, inflatable boats would be sent to Rwanda. It's a largely symbolic move but signals more opposition to come for the stalled and contentious plan to send some asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to the African nation. The House of Lords voted by 214 to 171 on Monday evening to delay the treaty that paves the way for the deportation plan.

The treaty and an accompanying bill are the pillars of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's bid to overcome a block on the deportations by the UK Supreme Court. Members of the Lords, who are appointed not elected, backed a motion saying Parliament should not ratify the pact until ministers can show Rwanda is safe. John Kerr, a former diplomat who sits in the Lords, said the Rwanda plan was "incompatible with our responsibilities" under international human rights law. "The considerations of international law and national reputation... convince me that it wouldn't be right to ratify this treaty at any time," he said. Strength of opposition The vote has little practical impact, because the House of Lords can't block an international treaty, and the government says it will not delay. However, ignoring the demand



could later be used against the government in a legal challenge. Lawmakers in the House of Commons approved the bill last week, but only after 60 members of Sunak's governing Conservatives rebelled in an effort to make the legislation tougher. Monday's vote indicates the strength of opposition in the House of Lords. Many

there want to water down the bill - and, unlike in the Commons, the governing Conservatives do not have a majority of seats. The Lords will begin debating the bill next week. Ultimately the upper house can delay and amend legislation but can't overrule the elected Commons. The Rwanda policy is key to Sunak's pledge to "stop the boats" bringing unauthorised migrants to the UK across the English Channel from France. Sunak argues that deporting unauthorised asylum-seekers will deter people from making risky journeys across the English Channel and break the business model of people-smuggling gangs. Human rights concerns London and Kigali made a deal almost two years ago under which migrants who reach Britain across the Channel would be sent to Rwanda, where they would stay permanently.

Britain has paid Rwanda at least \$305 million (240 million pounds) under the agreement, but no one has yet been sent to the East African country. Human rights groups have criticised the plan as inhumane and unworkable. After it was challenged in British courts, the UK Supreme Court ruled in November that the policy was illegal because Rwanda isn't a safe country for refugees. In response to the court ruling, Britain and Rwanda signed a treaty pledging to strengthen protections for migrants. Sunak's government argues the treaty allows it to pass a law declaring Rwanda a safe destination. If approved by Parliament, the law would allow the government to "disapply" sections of UK human rights law when it comes to Rwanda-related asylum claims and make it harder to challenge the deportations in court.



## Briefs

### Vote for PPP to uplift farmers: Aseefa

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari on Tuesday urged the people to vote for her party in a bid to see the uplift of farmers. Addressing the workers' convention in Lahore, Aseefa said, "We want to see that the benefits will reap for the labourers for all the hard work they put in." "If you [masses] want access to the health card, then do cast for Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. Opt for the PPP to get the BhookMitoProgramme initiated," Aseefa said. She asserted, "Only the PPP thinks about the poor segment of society. People from all over the country are coming in Sindh to receive treatment from the hospitals." Aseefa emphasised the need for free medical treatment for all. "We will change the country's destiny." Few days back, the PPP leader said on Thursday that her party stages politics to "uplift" the masses. Addressing the public gathering in Tando Muhammad Khan, Aseefa said, "The PPP is fighting against skyrocketing inflation and poverty." She took a swipe at the political opponents, saying, "The rest of the political parties have the greed to rule."

### ECP freezes development funds of municipal institutions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahead of the February 8 polls, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday froze the development funds of municipal institutions. The uplift funds for the local government (LG) institutions would be frozen until the announcement of the election results, the poll organising authority issued a notification in this regard. The new order read that the local governments would only perform routine affairs of sanitation and cleanliness across the country. The ECP also banned the launching of any LG development schemes and work on previous projects. Additionally, the local bodies and cantonment boards have been barred from issuing tenders until the conclusion of the entire electoral process. In another development today, the top electoral body informed the candidates and political parties contesting the nationwide polls that there will be no poll campaign after February 6 at midnight. "According to Section 182 of the Elections Act 2017, no person shall hold or participate in any public meeting, procession, corner meeting or such political activity after midnight on February 6, 2024, and February 7, 2024," The News reported quoted ECP's spokesperson as saying.

### IHC dismisses plea to transfer contempt of court case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Tuesday rejected the plea to transfer contempt of court case about the arrest of former federal minister Shehryar Afridi under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO). Justice Babar Sattar of the IHC heard the contempt of court case against Deputy Commissioner Islamabad and SSP Jameel Zafar. Rejecting plea of defence counsels about the court, Justice Babar Sattar said that specific technicalities would not be considered in this case. The court noted the objections, and added the defence counsel might challenge the judgment of this court later. Justice Babar Sattar said that he would not transfer the case to another bench. Subsequently, the court adjourned the hearing until January 24.

# Two dozen Israeli troopers killed in Gaza clashes

## The resistance however affirms that the number of the Israeli deaths is much higher than the announced

DNA

GAZA CITY: The Israeli army announced on Tuesday that at least 21 of its officers and soldiers were killed in fierce battles in Central Gaza. Military spokesman Daniel Hagari said the soldiers were killed when a rocket-propelled grenade fired by Hamas hit a tank near two buildings the soldiers were in near Kissufim in Central Gaza. "We have allowed the release of ten names so far, and we will publish the names of the rest in the coming hours", Hagari added. He also acknowledged that the military is engaging in fierce battles in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. This announcement comes hours after the spokesman for the so-called "Israeli Rescue Service" admitted the killing and wounding of 22 soldiers in Khan Yunis. Israeli sources previously confirmed the killing and wounding of about 20 officers and soldiers in bombing of two buildings and the collapse of a third. On Monday, the Israeli military admitted the killing of 3 of its officers in Khan Yunis, which brings the number of the officially acknowledged officers and soldiers who were killed in Gaza to 24 in the past 12 hours. The resistance however affirms that the number of the Israeli deaths is much higher than the announced. Meanwhile, The Qassam Brigades, the

armed wing of the Palestinian group, has said it carried out an attack yesterday that matches Israel's description of the incident that killed a large number of its troops. The group said its fighters targeted a building housing Israeli soldiers with an anti-personnel mortar shell in the al-Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, resulting in the complete demolition of the house with engineering and military equipment inside it. "Simultaneously, our fighters destroyed a Merkava tank with a Yasin-105 shell as they blew up a minefield against an Israeli force that was present at the same place, leading to killing and injuring all of them," the Qassam Brigades said in a statement. "And our fighters were able to withdraw to their bases safely." Meanwhile, Ashraf al-Qudra, the spokesperson for the Health Ministry in the Gaza Strip, says that Israeli forces are isolating the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis, exposing the lives of staff, patients, and displaced people to danger. "Medical teams are unable to transfer serious cases from the Nasser Medical Complex to the Jordanian field hospital next to it as a result of the continuous bombing," he said in a post on Telegram. Earlier, al-Qudra called for "urgent intervention" to protect Nasser Hospital and El Amal Hospital, and to facilitate the movement of ambulances to and from the buildings. A high-ranking member of the

Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement has hailed the resistance fighters' operation in the al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, saying Israel's heavy losses in a single day show the regime has failed in all its goals in the war against the besieged territory. Ihsan Ataya, a senior member of the political bureau of Islamic Jihad, made the remarks in an interview with Palestine al-Youm broadcaster on Tuesday, after resistance fighters killed 24 Israeli troopers in Gaza earlier in the day. "The occupation regime of Israel is in shock due to the deaths of its soldiers in the recent battle with the Palestinian resistance fighters," he said. The senior Islamic Jihad official also noted that since the start of the Israeli aggression against Gaza in early October, there has been complete coordination between the Palestinian resistance forces to confront the occupying regime. Ataya went on to say that the resistance fighters are aware that "unity in the battlefield is the essential pillar for victory against this occupying regime," emphasizing that this movement will continue to fight along with other resistance groups against Israeli forces. As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 109 on Tuesday, massive aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound neighborhoods, homes and shelter centers and massacre more civilians, mostly chil-

dren and women. Palestinian Information Center (PIC) said that the Israeli occupation army continued to attack different areas of Gaza last night and on Tuesday morning, killing and injuring dozens of citizens. The health ministry said that the Israeli occupation army committed, over the past 24 hours, 22 massacres in the Gaza Strip, which resulted in the martyrdom of at least 195 civilians and the injury of 354 others. According to the health ministry in Gaza, four civilians were martyred after an Israeli tank bombed a car they were aboard in Khan Yunis. Meanwhile, the Israeli army issued new displacement instructions ordering the residents of Khan Yunis refugee camp and al-Amal neighborhood in western Khan Yunis to walk to al-Mawasi area, although its forces killed and injured a number of citizens today and yesterday in this area. Local sources said that the Israeli army killed eight citizens and injured others when Israeli tanks carried out attacks in al-Mawasi area on Tuesday morning. An Israeli drone also opened fire towards the entrance of Al-Amal Hospital in Khan Yunis, killing one citizen and causing panic among the civilians inside the hospital. The Red Crescent said that Israeli army drops open fire at any person or vehicle moving around Al-Amal Hospital, while ambulance crews at the hospital are unable to provide help for the wounded citizens in other areas of Khan Yunis.

### Lavrov talks ME with Iran, Turkiye, Lebanon

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met with his counterparts from Iran, Turkiye and Lebanon ahead of the United Nations Security Council meeting on Tuesday due to discuss the Middle East, the Russian foreign ministry said. The bilateral meetings focused on the Gaza Strip, Syria and "the tense situation" in the Red Sea, the ministry said on the Telegram messaging app on Tuesday. The meetings took place in New York on Monday. The ministry said Lavrov and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian agreed on the need for a swift ceasefire in Gaza and conditions for providing humanitarian assistance to civilians. "General concern was expressed about the tense situation in the Red Sea, which has sharply degraded," it said. On Monday, the United States and Britain carried out an additional round of strikes against Yemen's Houthis over their targeting of Red Sea shipping, the Pentagon said. Lavrov and Lebanon's Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib talked about the importance of collective efforts of countries in the region toward an immediate ceasefire, the ministry said.

## Tajik outgoing envoy in Pak calls on PM



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of Tajikistan in Pakistan Ismatullo Naserdin Tuesday called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. The prime minister, appreciating the role of Ismatullo Naserdin in promoting bilateral relations between the two countries, expressed his best wishes for him in future. He hoped that the up-

coming ambassador would also play a key role in strengthening the bilateral relations. Ismatullo Naserdin on the occasion termed the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan as historic. He also appreciated the hospitality of Pakistan during his stay. The outgoing envoy thanked PM Kakar for the best wishes for him. - DNA

## Imran Khan gets interim relief from LHC

LAHORE: Granting an interim relief, the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday restored the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's bail in seven cases related to the May 9 riots. A two-member bench headed by Justice Aalia Neelum announced the verdict reserved on the disqualified prime minister's plea challenging the cancellation of bail in seven cases related to the May 9 events. Moreover, the high court ordered the trial court to give a verdict on Khan's interim bail pleas.

The verdict comes after an anti-terrorism court (ATC) had rejected the petitions seeking bail extension for the politico, who was ousted from his office through a parliamentary vote in 2022, in seven cases, including the May 9 riots and the attack on Jinnah House. The trial court's judge Ijaz Ahmad Butar had given the verdict on August 11 last year, after hearing arguments from both sides. The incarcerated politician and the top leadership of his party are facing a plethora of cases ahead of the February 8 nationwide polls. Besides, the Imran-led party has also faced a blow after losing its legal battle to get back its iconic "bat" electoral symbol and the legality of its intra-party elections. A major voter driving force was taken away following the top court's verdict followed by another setback as the party - PTI-Nazriati - with which it sought an alliance also backtracked from its commitment earlier this month. But as the embattled PTI faces uphill tasks, its major rivals - the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) - have already commenced nationwide campaigns and distributed tickets for national and provincial constituencies.

## No educational institution, market closed in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Police said on Tuesday no educational institution, market or private institution had been closed in the federal capital due to security concerns. The Islamabad police issued a statement on social media platform X, formerly Twitter, emphasizing that the situation was fully under control in the city and there was no disruption in daily routine. Saying Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan a day earlier had also issued a clarification in a video message, the police have asked people to avoid spreading rumours. "Islamabad police are all busy to maintain law and order in the city," reads the statement. In the video message, Mr Khan had reassured, "There is nothing to worry about. Everything is under control. People should not disrupt their daily routines and stop going to schools or colleges."

## SC reserves verdict on ex-IHC Judge Siddiqui's plea against dismissal

### "If a judge is removed for giving a speech, then half of the judiciary will go home," chief justice remarks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

### SC summons Qasim Suri

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday reserved its verdict on former Islamabad High Court judge Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui's plea challenging his dismissal from the post. A five-member bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan conducted proceedings on the plea. After reserving the verdict, CJP Isa dictated order of the today's proceedings in the open court. The written verdict sought responses to questions raised during the court proceedings from parties in the case. In the order, the SC also questioned if the SJC conducted an inquiry. "If the inquiry was not done under the Constitution and law, what would be the result?" the order stated. The court also mentioned the former judge's date of retirement in the order, according to which he has already reached his age of superannuation on June 30, 2021. In its order, the SC asked the following questions: What relief can be given if Shaukat Siddiqui's appeal is approved? Can the Supreme Court refer the matter back to Supreme Judicial Council?

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) summoned former deputy speaker of the National Assembly and PTI leader Qasim Suri on Tuesday in person next month, as well as sought a report from the apex court registrar over a plea accusing the former of rigging 2018 elections. Taking exception to the case not being listed for five years while Suri enjoyed the perks and position of a deputy NA speaker, Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa questioned why the court should not take serious action for treason against the former deputy speaker of the National Assembly and PTI leader in the disqualification case. A three-member bench of the apex court, presided by CJP Isa, heard the alleged election rigging case against Suri and also instructed him to submit a written response by the next hearing. The court also sought an answer from the registrar's office in this regard.

## Baloch protesters call off sit-in from outside NPC

"We will hold a rally in Balochistan on January 27," says Mahrang Baloch



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) on Tuesday called off their over 30 day-long sit-in outside the National Press Club (NPC) in Islamabad, Geo News reported. Baloch protesters had been protesting in the federal capital since December 20, 2023 against "enforced disappearances and extra-judicial killings". Activist Dr Mahrang Baloch, one of the protest organisers, said they are returning to Balochistan from Islamabad. "We will hold a rally in Balochistan on January 27," she added. The development comes a day

after NPC Islamabad on Monday lodged a complaint with the Kohsar Police Station requesting to remove the Baloch protesters from the open park in front of the NPC. According to The News, the club's administration, in its complaint, felt a security threat due to certain reasons as many political and social personalities of national stature visit the NPC to attend different functions. The NPC administration said that the protesters' sit-in had been going on for over two months, causing financial loss as the people belonging to political and social sectors, avoided holding press conferences and other political and social functions at the NPC. Last month, Islamabad police launched a crackdown on Baloch protesters and dismantled their camps set up outside the National Press Club. Most of the protesters were arrested by the police, a move that sparked anguish across the country. The government had initially defended the crackdown, declaring it a necessary measure to avoid a "catastrophe". Following the outcry over the crackdown, all Baloch protesters were released after a week-long detention. Earlier this month, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had ordered local authorities and police to refrain from creating any hindrance or using force to remove the Baloch marchers. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani had issued orders on a petition filed by a Baloch activist Sammi Deen Baloch, who was also among the protesting families in Islamabad, against harassment and attempts to remove marchers by force.

**NOW IN PAKISTAN**

**Invisible Braces  
Dental Implants**

**Dr. Abrar & Associates  
DENTAL SURGEONS**

House # 6-A, Ismail Zabeeh Road, (Service Road Parallel to Faisal Avenue) F-8/3, Islamabad.  
e-mail: abrar\_associates@yahoo.com | www.drabrarassociates.com  
Ph: +92 51 228 7691 | +92 51 228 7692 | Fax: +92 51 228 7693