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Zelensky cheers Ukraine's EU accession talks

Detailed News On Page-07

Trump opens up lead over Biden in Rematch: Poll

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Sinner ends Djokovic Grand Slam history bid

Detailed News On Page-06



International Court of Justice rules

Israel must stop genocide in Gaza

Pakistan welcomes ICJ decision; ICJ delivers verdict with 15-2 majority; Ugandan, Israeli judge oppose; Court rules it has jurisdiction to hear cases against Israel under genocide convention; Tel Aviv ordered to ensure humanitarian aid to Gaza people; wants Hamas to release hostages



DNA / FOREIGN DESK

THE HAGUE: The United Nations' top court has ordered the Israeli regime to take all measures within its power to prevent genocide in Gaza, but stopped short of ordering a ceasefire. The order by the International Court of Justice was part of its interim ruling on the emergency measures requested by South Africa in its genocide case against Israel over its war on the Gaza Strip. The court demanded Israel try to contain death and damage in the Gaza Strip and warned it to "take all measures in its power to prevent" acts that could fall under the UN Genocide Convention set up in 1948.

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The court also ordered Israel to take measures to prevent and punish direct incitement of genocide in the Gaza Strip. Israel must take "immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians," the court said. It ordered the regime to report back in one month on the measures it has been asked to carry out. Palestinians appear to be a protected group under the genocide convention, the court said, noting that it has jurisdiction to rule in the case.

State of Palestine welcomes ICJ ruling

CENTRELINE REPORT

RAMALLAH: The State of Palestine has welcomed the historic judicial decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to impose provisional measures in the case brought by South Africa against the Israel regarding the latter's breach of the Genocide Convention. The ICJ acknowledged the responsibility of Israel, the occupying power, to prevent any acts of genocide in Gaza and to take measures to improve the humanitarian situation, demanding Israel to report to the court within a month on what it is doing to uphold the order. The State of Palestine hailed the ICJ's landmark ruling, describing it as a reminder to the world that no state is above international law. It said the decision puts an end to a culture of impunity for the State of Israel, reflecting decades of occupation, ethnic cleansing, persecution, and racial segregation. The State of Palestine emphasized the Israel's failure to provide any convincing evidence to the court that it did not

'Victory for rule of law', terms SA

DNA

JOHANSBERG: January 26, 2024 marks a decisive victory for the international rule of law and a significant milestone in the search for justice for the Palestinian people. In a landmark ruling, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has determined that Israel's actions in Gaza are plausibly genocidal and has indicated provisional measures on that basis.

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Briefs

Pak, Iran envoys return to embassies

Iranian FM to visit Islamabad on Jan 29

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office (FO) Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Friday said the envoys of Pakistan and Iran had arrived at their respective embassies in Islamabad and Tehran "as per understanding between the two countries". The Iranian foreign minister is due to visit Islamabad on January 29. The development comes days after tensions escalated between the neighbours following an Iranian air strike in Pakistan, leading Islamabad to strike terrorist hideouts in the neighbouring country's Sistan-Baluchestan province.

PTI's Abro withdraws in Bilawal's favour

Party serves show Cause notice to Senator ABRO

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: In another setback for the Imran Khan-led PTI, its candidate from NA-194 (Larkana I) Saifullah Abro Friday announced his decision to "withdraw" in PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's favour ahead of the upcoming February 8 polls. The PTI has issued a show cause notice to Senator Abro. Taking to social media platform X, Abro confirmed the development saying that he has decided to withdraw from the said constituency after meeting the PPP chairman on Thursday.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor

Nawaz promises to address inflation as Bilawal promises unity

Nawaz said that with the support of the people, his party would bring Pakistan back to a prosperous state, with employment in every household



STAFF REPORT

BUREWALA: In the run-up to next general elections, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supreme Nawaz Sharif on Friday stated his party will address the prevailing issues of inflation and unemployment upon assuming power in the Feb 8 elections. The former three-time premier, while addressing a huge gathering in Burewala, promised to reduce inflation, make electricity cheaper and gas available in every household, as well as lower prices of bread and sugar.

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Govt taking measures to ensure free polls

Solani meets Gohar Ijaz to discuss security

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solani called on Caretaker Minister of Interior Dr. Gohar Ejaz here on Thursday. Both the ministers reviewed arrangements being made for holding the general election on February 8. During the meeting, they also discussed measures to strengthen security for holding next elections in a peaceful environment.

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PM requests China to roll over \$2bn loan

Deposit time for loan will end on March 23, 2024

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: After requesting the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to roll over \$2 billion in loans for Pakistan, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has also written a similar letter to his Chinese counterpart Li Qiang. In his letter to China's premier, the prime minister has requested that Beijing roll over Pakistan's \$2 billion loan for a year. The Chinese government, according to the sources, is expected to roll over the aforementioned loan amount for a year soon. The deposit time for the loan is slated to complete on March 23, 2024.

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Elahi, Sanam among PTI candidates allowed by SC to contest Feb 8 polls

Elahi nomination papers were rejected from National Assembly constituency NA-64 (Gujrat-III) and Punjab Assembly's constituency PP-34 (Gujrat-VIII)



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) secured major relief from the top court on Friday as five of its candidates including incarcerated party president Parvez Elahi, were granted permission to contest the upcoming February 8 elections.

Besides Elahi, the Supreme Court on Friday approved appeals of PTI candidates Umer Aslam, Major (retd) Tahir Sadiq, Sanam Javaid Khan, and Shukat Basra against returning officer decisions to reject their nomination papers from different constituencies. Elahi has been allowed to contest the general election from the PP-32 constituency of Gujarat district. The former Punjab chief minister had approached the Supreme Court to contest the upcoming general elections and challenged the verdict of the Lahore High Court (LHC), upholding the Election Tribunal's decision of rejecting his nomination papers. The PTI president, presently confined in Adiala Jail, filed a petition in the apex court under Article 185(3) of the Constitution for leave to appeal against the judgment dated January 13, 2024, passed by the LHC in his petition. Elahi nomination papers were rejected from National Assembly constituency NA-64 (Gujrat-III) and Punjab Assembly's constituency PP-34 (Gujrat-VIII). A three-member bench of the Supreme Court comprising Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Justice Athar Minallah heard Elahi's plea.

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ISLAMABAD: The ongoing ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Ismatullo Nasredin, pays a farewell call on The President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Tajik envoy's farewell call

President calls for greater cooperation among OIC states

Speaking to the Ambassador, the President said that Pakistan attached great significance to its relations with Tajikistan as it was Pakistan's closest Central Asian neighbour

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has urged the need for increasing cooperation among Islamic countries to overcome the issue of Islamophobia in the world. He also called for greater cooperation among the OIC member states in the areas of science and technology to meet modern-day challenges. The President expressed these views while talking to the outgoing Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Mr Ismatullo Nasredin, who paid a farewell call on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Speaking to the Ambassador, the President said that Pakistan attached great significance to its relations with Tajikistan as it was Pakistan's closest Central Asian neighbour. He highlighted that there was great potential to increase bilateral trade and economic cooperation that needed to be fully exploited. He called for exploring new avenues of economic cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. The President expressed satisfaction over the steadily expanding bilateral relations between Pa-

Tajik envoy meets FM Jilani

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Ismatullo Nasredin of Tajikistan paid a farewell call on Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani. The Foreign Minister appreciated the contribution of Ambassador Nasredin in promoting bilateral relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan and wished him success on his new assignment as First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Tajikistan.

Pakistan and Tajikistan in all areas of mutual interest, especially in trade, energy and defence. Taking about the situation in Gaza, the President said that Pakistan deeply shared the pain of the people in Gaza where Israeli forces had been committing genocide and gross human rights violations.

Continued on Page 06

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46 children died from pneumonia in KPK

PESHAWAR : With the increase in the severity of the cold, the infection is becoming viral, and so far, 46 children have died of pneumonia in three major hospitals in the city. Hospital officials told media here on Friday that pneumonia was affecting children with low immunity, and a total of 46 children died of pneumonia in three hospitals in the city, including 20 patients each in Lady Reading and Khyber Teaching Hospitals and six in Hayatabad Medical Complex. The hospital's officials said that more than 700 children affected by pneumonia are being brought to OPD on a daily basis, and more than capacity children are being treated at Lady Reading Hospital. "Most of the affected children belong to adjoining areas," the officials confirmed. —APP

DG BISP visits Mohmand, Haleemzai, Baizai offices

PESHAWAR : Director General (DG) Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Zehra Aslam, visited the teshit offices of BISP in Upper Mohmand, Haleemzai, and Baizai on Friday. She discusses the existing situation of the registration process and proposes suggestions to improve it further. Officials of the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) were also present on the occasion. During the visit, DG BISP was also briefed about efforts being made to engage area elders and local government representatives to get support. She also visited DRC in Ghalanai, reviewed the registration process, and listened to the problems and concerns of staff. Speaking on the occasion, she said that BISP is endeavoring to support the needy and poor by providing them financial assistance. She directed staff to be polite with people and said the facilitation of poor people is the prime responsibility of BISP. She also stressed transparency in disbursement and said that BISP has been launched to reduce poverty, address social inequality, and bring positive change in the lives of poor and deserving segments of society.—DNA

Governor urges doctors to work with dedication

PESHAWAR : Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali Friday reiterated his commitment to address the problems of young doctors urging them to serve the ailing community with utmost dedication and professionalism. He was talking to a 15-member delegation of the Young Doctors Association that called on him at Governor House. The delegation included Dr. Faisal Barakzai, Dr. Adnan, Dr. Karamat and Dr. Mudassar Khan. The delegation apprised the governor about their issues including depriving them of training and inadequate facilities of induction in Post Graduate Medical Institute. The governor listened to their concerns patiently and assured them of cooperation and assistance.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Stephanie Urchick, the Rotary International President talking to media to unfurl flagship programs of Rotary International being executed in Pakistan. —Photo Mudassar Raja

RCCI President meets Pak HC at Pak-UK business conference

president Saqib Rafiq had a meeting with High Commissioner for Pakistan to the United Kingdom who called on during his visit to the High Commission in London

DNA

RAWALPINDI : The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) president Saqib Rafiq had a meeting with H.E. Dr. Mohammad Faisal, High Commissioner for Pakistan to the United Kingdom who called on during his visit to the High Commission in London on the sidelines of 6th Pak-UK business opportunities Conference held at a local hotel in Leeds, West Yorkshire, England.

During the meeting RCCI President Saqib Rafiq briefed HC Dr. Faisal on RCCI current and upcoming events and also shared a brief summary of 6th Pak-UK business opportunities Conference aiming to promote trade relations, networking and B2B meetings. He also informed about business facilitation centers in Punjab and particularly in Rawalpindi and termed it a key initiative towards ease of doing business. Matters related to the

bilateral trade, facilitation under SIFC for Pakistani exporters and trade and investment opportunities came under discussion. Meanwhile, Industrialization is vital for economic stability. The country's economy can be put on the path of stability by promoting industrialization in the country. There is no doubt that the industry plays a major role in the success of any country's economy. Faisal Shahzad, Acting President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(RCCI) said in a statement that there is no doubt that industry plays a major role in the success of any country's economy, however, the SME sector being an important component of any industry, helped the industry to grow manifold. He said that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play an important role especially in developing countries. SMEs are a major part of business worldwide. They are a major source of job creation and a major contributor to global economic growth. SMEs

account for about forty percent of GDP, he added. Faisal Shahzad said that lack of access to finances is a major obstacle for SME development. Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA) estimates that there are more than 5 million SMEs in Pakistan. He added that SMEs contribute 40 percent to Pakistan's GDP and 25 percent to total exports. After the agricultural sector, the SME sector provides the most employment to the working population in the country, he further added.

Punjab govt and PWCTA sign MoU for manpower to Canada

ABID RAZA

LAHORE : The Punjab government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Pakistan Western Canada Trade Association (PWCTA) to send manpower to Canada. The MoU was signed by Provincial Minister SM Tanvir and Ms Bushra Rahman at the Canadian Consulate in Vancouver, Canada. Consul General Janbaz Khan also

attended the ceremony. In his message, Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi congratulated the ministerial delegation and termed it as the beginning of a new era for economic development. The request for sending labor to the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Alberta was made by the Pakistan Western Canada Trade Association, and an agreement was reached for cooperation in promoting religious and educa-

tional tourism for mutual benefits. The provincial cabinet has already approved to sign the MoU. Provincial Minister SM Tanvir stated that the MoU aims to promote economic ties between Punjab, and British Columbia & Alberta provinces. Provincial Minister Amir Mir noted that the bilateral trade, investment and tourism will also be promoted with the signing of the agreement. It may be noted that a 3-member

delegation from the Punjab government is visiting Canada. meanwhile, CM connotes death of senior journalist Parvez Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has condoned the death of senior journalist Parvez Shoukat and extended sympathies to the bereaved family. He has prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the heirs to bear the loss with equanimity.

CS Balochistan visits election control room

QUETTA : Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan on Friday visited the Election Control Room established in the provincial IT Department to inspect the preparedness plan for the upcoming general polls 2024. Provincial Election Commissioner Muhammad Fared Afridi, Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem, Secretary Local Government Noor Ahmad Perkani, Secretary Finance Babar Khan, and Secretary S&GAD Syed Faisal Ahmed accompanied the chief secretary. Shakeel Qadir Khan, on the occasion, said conducting free, fair, and transparent elections is the main responsibility of the caretaker provincial government for which it is fully prepared. He directed that "it must be ensured that data regarding the initiation and completion of voting at the polling station must be displayed on the screens of the control room. Besides, he added the location of highly sensitive, sensitive, and normal polling stations of all divisions should also be given on the control room screen.—APP

Art reminds us of beauty in a world data

KARACHI : The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar believed that in an era that is often dictated by numbers and data, the arts serve as a reminder of the beauty, emotions, and stories that make us human. This, he said on Friday while speaking at Arts Council Academic Convocation-2024 organised by the Arts Council of Pakistan (ACP), Karachi. The program was attended by Minister of Information & President Mohammad Ahmed Shah, diplomats from different countries, faculty, alum-

ni, students and parents. The CM said that this convocation was meant to celebrate the achievements of the talented graduates from the ACP Academies, who would be receiving their diplomas in music, theatre, dance, fine arts and textile. He said, "This is a special day, not just for the graduates, but for the entire community that supports and values the arts." The disciplines are the heartbeat of our cultural identity—expressions of the soul, reflections of our rich heritage, and gateways to creativity, the CM said

and added that in a world often dominated by numbers and data, the arts reminded us of the beauty, the emotions, and the stories that make us human. Baqar told the graduates that their journey has been more than acquiring a diploma; it has been a voyage of self-discovery, a pursuit of passion, and a commitment to excellence. "You have polished your craft, pouring your heart and soul into your work, and today, we celebrate the fruits of your dedication," he said. The Arts Council of Pakistan

has been a steadfast ally in nurturing and promoting these disciplines, the CM said and added that through tireless efforts, the Council has played a pivotal role in the cultural development of our nation, serving as a catalyst for change and artistic expression and providing a platform for artists to flourish. "It is heartening to see that this institution has actively been working to ensure that the future of arts and culture in the country is safeguarded by future generations of artists," he said.—DNA

WCCI Malir, IU foster youth entrepreneurship

The MoU was signed by KWCCI Malir Founder President Nazli Abid Nisar and Director Iqra University Airport Campus Athar Iqbal. Afzala Shaheen, SVP KWCCI Malir, VP Yasmin Arif and Dr. Toubia were also present on this occasion

NAZIR SIYAL

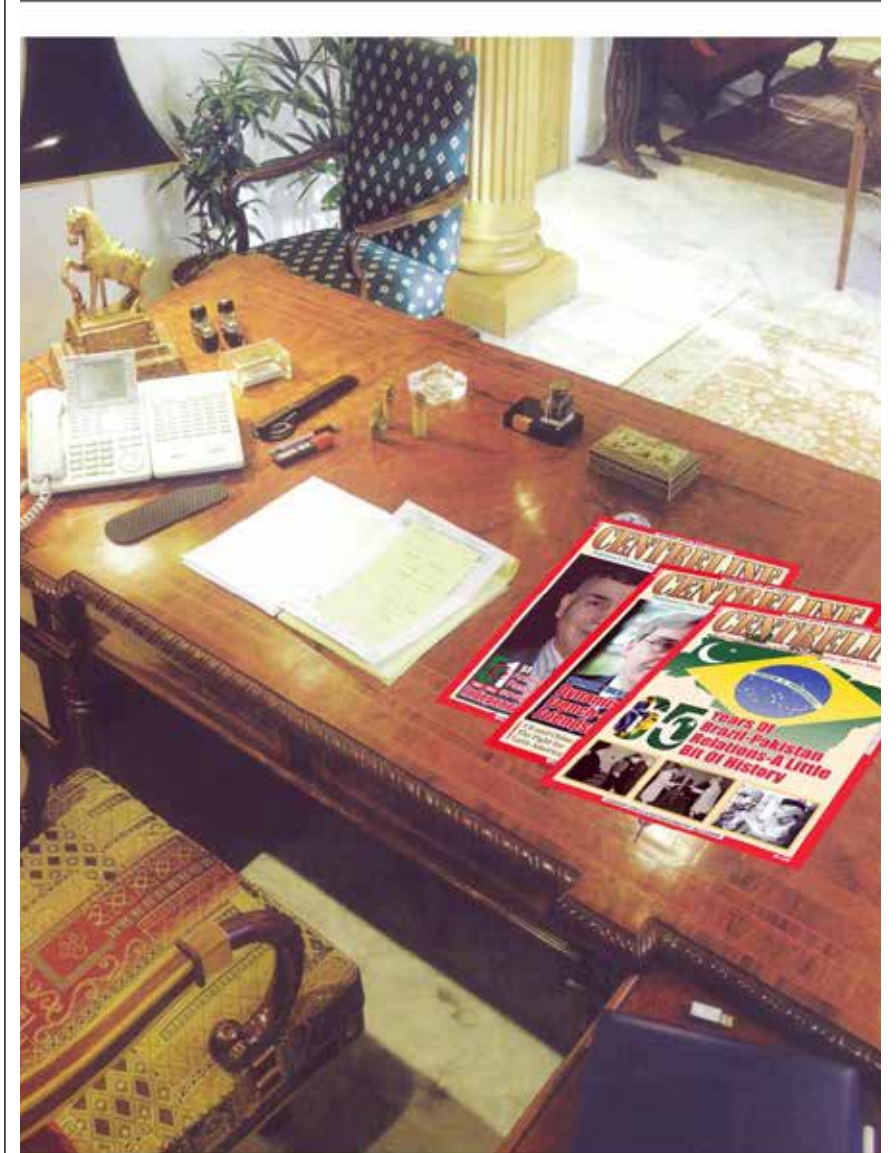
KARACHI : Karachi Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry Malir (KWCCI) and Iqra University Airport Campus have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at providing technical training to the youth, guidance in employment seeking, and fostering entrepreneurship among student's post-education. The MoU was signed by KWCCI Malir Founder President Nazli Abid Nisar and Director Iqra University Airport Campus Athar Iqbal. Afzala Shaheen, SVP KWCCI Malir, VP Yasmin Arif and Dr. Toubia were also present on this occasion. In conjunction with Iqra University Airport Campus, the "Creative Cultural Fair 2024" was organized under the auspices

of KWCCI Malir, witnessing substantial student participation. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), along with Vice Presidents Amanullah Paracha and Asif Sakhi, Former VP Khurram Ejaz, Chairman of Pakistan Indonesia Business Council Abid Nisar, and Shakila Niaz from First Women Bank attended the event. Chief Guest Saqib Fayyaz Magoon visited various stalls, distributing prizes to the winning students of diverse competitions. Nazli Abid Nisar, former VP FPCCI and Founder President of KWCCI Malir, expressed her appreciation for the students' enthusiasm, emphasizing the youth's pivotal role in shaping Pakistan. She announced plans for establishing a training center soon, catering to

both men and women, with a focus on computer and other technical fields. She extended gratitude to Director Athar Iqbal and First Women Bank for their collaborative efforts in organizing the Fair 2024. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, hailed students as the future of Pakistan and invited Iqra

University Airport Campus students to visit the federation and commended the role of Iqra University

in contributing to the country's economy. He emphasized the significance of product branding. Shakila Niaz of First Women Bank encouraged women entrepreneurs to approach the bank for loans on favorable terms to expand their businesses.



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Ashrafi led Salat al Istisqa to seek relief from diseases

ISLAMABAD : Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Affairs and Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Muslim Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, on Friday led a special prayer for rain (Salat al Istisqa). Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council, said Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar's special directives and appeal resulted in the observance of the rain prayer across the country. He emphasized that the prayer was offered nationwide to seek relief from the ongoing drought and diseases. He led the congregation at Jamia Masjid Bahria Town, where he made special supplication for rainfall and an end to the drought affecting the country. "Let us pray earnestly today, seeking forgiveness for our sins and mercy from our Lord," stated Ashrafi, urging the community to beseech Allah Almighty for rainfall and forgiveness of their transgressions.—APP

Rs 5bln provincial budget needed for 4-month

PESHAWAR : A request has been made to the Finance Division, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), for the release of Rs 5 billion for the provincial budget for four months for 36 government sector departments, with Rs 900 million recommended for the health department and Rs 600 million for the construction of roads. According to a letter addressed to the Finance Division, Government of KP, a detailed budget is needed for 36 government sector departments, including Rs 500 million for multi-sectoral development, Rs 500 million for the water sector, and Rs 350 million for the Department of Primary, Secondary, and Higher Secondary Education. Likewise, Rs 250 million has been released for drinking water and sewage drainage projects, while it has been requested to release Rs 250 million immediately for energy and power. Similarly, it is recommended to release Rs 350 million for the Higher Education Department, Rs 200 million for Livestock and Dairy Development and Urban Development, Rs 50 million for agriculture, tourism, forests, and local governments.—APP

Briefs

Pakistan ignoring benefits of youth bulge

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Brig. (ret'd) Aslam Khan, Chairman of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) said on Friday that Pakistan is blessed with a sizeable youth population which can be of great economic benefit. However, he said, such a youth population is a great window of opportunity that is not being taken advantage of otherwise Pakistan's economic situation would have been different. Aslam Khan said in a statement today that it is imperative to take prompt action to take advantage of this prospect since its loss could have far-reaching consequences. He said that 240 million people are living in Pakistan, and the country's population is expanding steadily at a pace of 2 per cent. In contrast, the population growth in the South Asian region is 1.2 per cent. Based on estimates, 38% of Pakistan's population is under 15 years old, while 4% is 65 years of age or more. This results in a youth bulge since 58 per cent of those in the working age group are between the ages of 15 and 64. Despite this gift, the population is not benefiting us, which is why the unemployment rate is very high which is resulting in social problems, he observed.

Easypaisa Empowers Women with First-Ever Audio Nikahnama in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Easypaisa has just created ripples across the financial services industry. In a historic move that shatters taboos and empowers women, Pakistan's leading digital financial services platform has unveiled the "easypaisa Audio Nikahnama", a groundbreaking initiative that provides women unprecedented access to their crucial matrimonial rights. This first-of-its-kind innovation in Pakistan leverages the power of technology to overcome literacy barriers and ensure education of the most important contract of life's most significant moments. According to the Pakistan Commission on the Status of Women, two-thirds of Pakistani women cannot comprehend their Nikahnama due to literacy limitations, and the remaining 1/3 do not get timely access to the document. easypaisa Audio Nikahnama tackles this head-on by offering a free, simple, and accessible solution. Women can access this audio tool through a free helpline by giving a missed call on the dedicated number (0341-1171222) or download the easypaisa App and listen to the Nikahnama in 7 different languages. In addition to this, there is a sign language option available in the app to ensure accessibility by all. This empowers women, regardless of their socio-economic class or digital divide to access this information, to understand their rights and obligations within the marriage contract. —APP

GB governor calls on president

ISLAMABAD: Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah on Friday called on President Dr Arif Alvi and discussed the overall situation in the region including wheat subsidy and other issues. In the meeting, they also deliberated over the matters related to Baltistan University and Skardu, a President House statement said. The president told the governor that he had taken up the matter of wheat subsidy with the caretaker prime minister and finance minister and expressed the hope that the problems would be resolved soon. The elected members of the GB Council had also called on the president on Thursday to discuss the wheat subsidy and other matters. —APP

Climate of peace is way forward: Jalil Abbas Jilani

The Foreign Minister also emphasized exploration of potential avenues of cooperation on climate change. The three-day event was inaugurated by Dr Arif Alvi, President Islamic Republic of Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: While Climate crisis is the reality of our times, peaceful coexistence is the only way forward for enhanced regional cooperation, said Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani, Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was addressing the concluding ceremony of Regional Dialogue 2024 titled Climate Crisis: Shaping South Asia's Resilience organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS). He said that peaceful coexistence could be achieved if bold and courageous decisions were made by statesmen. The Foreign Minister also emphasized exploration of potential avenues of cooperation on climate change. The three-day event was inaugurated by Dr Arif Alvi, President Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The conference had six main themes encompassing South Asia's Climate Vulnerability, The Commitment on Regional NDCs, Climate-Conflict Nexus, Adapting to Climate Calamity, Climate Financing and South Asia's Climate Future. The conference brings together academics, practitioners, and policy makers from within Pakistan and across the region to discuss the aforementioned subject areas. Mr Ahmed Kamal, Chairman, Federal Flood Commission while addressing the participants of the Conference commented that South Asia continues to remain under the influence of a high degree of vulnerability and exposure to climate hazards, in particular, to floods, cyclones and droughts. The high degree of both vulnerability and exposure could be attributed to the region's high population growth rate and narrow levels of adaptive



capacity. He added that Integrated Drought Management should include promotion of drought tolerant crops, extended research on weather patterns, impact of climate change, regular drought monitoring on regional level, emphasis on ground water recharge, and the implementation of Adaptation Plan. Mr Abdul Basit, Head of South Asia Desk at the International Centre for Political Violence and Ter-

rorism (ICPVTR), Singapore was of the opinion that climate change was a development issue and that 'securitizing' it could prove to be disastrous. He said that there was a dire need for security policymakers and practitioners to acknowledge the fact that there was an unmistakable connection between the two necessitating the need to map the impact of climate change on terrorism and vice versa.

Dr Mazhar Hayat, Deputy Secretary Ministry of Climate Change stressed the need to set sectoral-based baselines and promote mitigation and then adaptation. Other sessions for the day included speakers from Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, the US and Singapore who discussed the various aspects of climate change in South Asia.

COMSTECH organizes OIC SESAME users meeting

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH inaugurated OIC SESAME Users 2-day Meeting on Friday. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH welcomed the participants of the meeting. Prof. Choudhary said that the SESAME (Synchrotron Light for Experimental Science in Middle East) is the most important and most expensive scientific facility available in the entire developing region. He said that SESAME is an elaborate, expensive and impactful facility in the OIC region. He expressed thanks to the government of Jordan hosting this facility. He said that SESAME has the potential to transform the entire scientific landscape of the Middle East and OIC region for good. Prof.

Choudhary said that by using this huge infrastructure, researchers can perform experiments not only in a much better, precise and efficient manner but they can conduct scientific studies which are not possible without such facility. He said that OIC-COMSTECH is pleased to work with SESAME and its users to facilitate its use in the least developed member states. Prof. Choudhary mentioned that we are discussing the possibility of holding three SESAME users meetings in Nigeria for Anglophone Africa, Senegal for Francophone Africa, and Kazakhstan for Central Asia. Prof. Choudhary mentioned that the COMSTECH offered 25 travel grants annually to SESAME users from LDC OIC countries. The Ambassador of Jordan, H. E. Dr. Maen Khreasat was the Chief Guest of the inau-

gural session. He said that our collective focus is on the future on advancing our understanding of the scientific and technical marvels within the domain of synchrotron beamlines and their diverse applications. He said that SESAME stands as a beacon for collaboration, bringing together minds from across the OIC member states to push the boundaries of knowledge and innovation. Dr. Khreasat said that Jordan, as the host country for SESAME, has played a pivotal role in fostering an environment that encourages scientific inquiry and cross-cultural collaboration. He said that Jordan has committed itself to providing the necessary resources and support to ensure the success of SESAME. Dr. Khreasat said that the partnership between COMSTECH and SESAME serves as a shining exam-

ple of diplomacy through science. This collaboration is a testament to the belief that by working together, we can overcome obstacles and build a brighter future for all. He said that the collaboration between COMSTECH and SESAME holds immense promise for the Middle East. Dr. Khreasat said that as we celebrate the achievements of SESAME, it is crucial to highlight the bilateral relations between Jordan and Pakistan. The ties between the two nations are deeply rooted in history, culture, and shared values. He said Jordan and Pakistan can explore opportunities for joint research initiatives, academic exchanges, and technology transfer. He said, let us continue to build bridges, both scientific and diplomatic, and work towards a future where the pursuit of knowledge knows no borders.

Solangi, Shahera grieved over demise of senior journalist Pervaiz Shaukat

"She 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

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of PFUJ (Workers) President and senior journalist Pervaiz Shaukat on Friday. In a condolence message, the minister for information expressed his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the family of the deceased. He said that he was deeply saddened to hear the news of Pervaiz Shaukat's death, who was a strong voice for journalists. Murtaza Solangi said, "He will always be remembered for his services to the field of journalism and the welfare of journalists." He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the soul of the deceased in peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude. Meanwhile, the Federal Secretary of Information and Broadcasting, Shahera Shahid, expressed grief and sorrow over the death of senior journalist Pervaiz Shaukat on Friday. The federal secretary of information expressed heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family over his demise. Shahera Shahid said, "It is sad to hear that Pervaiz Shaukat's is no more. Indeed, he was a talented and hardworking journalist. She said the deceased dedicated his entire life to the profession of journalism and the rights of the journalist community. Shaheera Shahid said, "His valuable services in the field of journalism will always be remembered." She 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

Climate change is a major threat to the world

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Friday that the planet faces a severe threat from climate change. He said that Inflation and conflicts keep many nations too busy to address this issue, while Western nations responsible for the problem act carelessly. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the effects of climate change are pushing the world into poverty, while pandemics and diseases have also increased. Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the global temperature is constantly rising and serious efforts are needed to solve the problem. The world is witnessing more floods, storms, famine, hunger, fires, and other problems, and according to the World Bank, climate change can displace 216 million people by 2050. The business leader said that climate change is affecting the land system

and crop patterns, pollution is increasing, and the shortage of natural resources is increasing. However, many policymakers are still not bothered to think about this important subject. Mian Zahid Hussain added that a report by the World Economic Forum states that climate change could result in a loss of \$ 12.5 trillion by 2050 and result in 150 million deaths. The report states that floods could result in 85 million lives, and droughts could claim 3.2 million lives, and heat waves could cost the global economy \$ 7 trillion. He added that Pakistan has lost \$ 30 billion as a result of floods in 2022, which were the result of climate change; more than 300 million people have been displaced, and 1839 killed. The international community still needs to fulfill its promises to provide the necessary support to Pakistan after the floods. According to global organizations, more losses are likely, as many developing nations in Asia and Africa need to prepare to tackle the problem or lack resources. Poor nations need hundreds of billions of dollars to finance projects that will reduce damage caused by climate change.

2 dead, one injured in bus-motorbike collision in Rawalpindi

ISLAMABAD: At least two people died on the spot and another one suffered critical injuries when a bike they were traveling on was hit by a speeding Rawalpindi-bound bus on Friday morning. Rescue sources informed that the bus was en route when it hit a motorcycle while taking a sharp turn near the IGP road. As a result, two people lost their lives, a private news channel reported. The bodies and injured were shifted to a nearby hospital. The police reached the spot and started a search for the bus driver, who fled the scene quickly after the accident. Police officials said they had seized the bus. —APP

Several injured in Metro bus-coaster collision in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Several people were critically injured after a horrifying crash between a Metro bus and a passenger coaster near Bhara Kahu, here Friday morning. As per details, rescue sources 1122 said that a metro bus collided with a coaster near Bhara Kahu, and as a result several people received serious injuries, a private news channel reported. The coaster was carrying employees when it met with the accident, the sources added. —APP

Fake cigarette manufacturing factory in Rawalpindi

ISLAMABAD: The recent discovery of a fake cigarette manufacturing factory in the Jhangi Syedan area of Rawalpindi has raised significant concerns regarding the illicit activities of the tobacco industry. The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) addressed the broader implications of this disturbing revelation. Malik Imran Ahmed, Country head of Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK), stated that the existence of such clandestine operations underscored the insidious tactics employed by the tobacco industry to evade regulations and profit at the expense of public health and economic stability. The production and distribution of counterfeit cigarettes represented a tactic by the tobacco industry to confuse the government and compel them to lower taxation on tobacco products. Whether taxation was lowered or not, the industry benefited, leaving the people of Pakistan at a loss, said in a Press Release issued here on Friday. Malik Imran emphasized the detrimental impact of counterfeit tobacco products on public health and the economy. He stressed the urgent need for heightened vigilance and enforcement measures to thwart the tobacco industry's deceptive practices and protect the well-being of communities across Pakistan. Dr. Khalid Ahmad Dogar, Program Manager at SPARC, condemned the tobacco industry for its relentless pursuit of profits at the expense of public health. He added that the discovery of the fake cigarette manufacturing facility served as a stark reminder of the urgent need for comprehensive regulatory measures and enforcement mechanisms to curb illicit activities within the tobacco industry. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Governor Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. —DNA

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Briefs

PTI says its websites 'blocked' in Pakistan

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The PTI on Friday alleged that its websites were "blocked" in Pakistan and demanded an answer from the federal authorities. The PTI, deprived of its iconic 'bat' symbol for the upcoming polls, has fielded its leaders as independent candidates with different electoral symbols. To combat confusion among voters and to ease access to election-related information, the party launched an online portal on its website insaf.pk, as well as a "back-up site", ptcandidates.com. It also introduced a feature whereby voters can message on Imran Khan's official Facebook account to get information about PTI-backed candidates. The party's official X account tagged the official handles of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), interim information minister Murtaza Solangi and interim IT minister Umar Saif. "Can you explain why PTI's websites are blocked in Pakistan?" the party asked in the post. "People are still getting symbol information from Imran Khan's Facebook page so the question is what purpose is this block serving?" it asked.

Khattak pledges agricultural reforms in KP

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Parliamentarians Chairman Pervez Khattak on Friday vowed to bring agricultural and industrial reforms to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Expressing his thoughts in Nowshera, the former KP chief minister asserted, "Our manifesto is the solution to all the problems that the masses are facing. We are ready to end the inflation, unemployment, and unrest in the province." "We will also create employment opportunities for youth in the province," he said. Emphasising the need to focus on health and education, Khattak said, "Providing health and education facilities is part of our party's manifesto." PTI Parliamentarians Chairman Pervez Khattak asserted on Thursday that the PTI founder-led government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) was formed because of him. Addressing the public gathering in Nowshera, the former KP chief minister said, "But when I parted ways with the PTI and its founder, neither the PTI founder nor the government remained active. I will only be relaxed by ending completely the entity of the PTI and its founder from KP."

Nawaz can solve myriad problems: Maryam

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz said on Friday that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif can solve the myriad problems. Addressing the public gathering in Burewala, Maryam said, "There is a responsibility to slash the prices of roti, sugar, flour, vegetables, and meat. It is part of our manifesto to upgrade hospitals, providing free medicines." At the outset of her speech, Maryam said, "You know that I have arrived in Burewala for the first time. I would like to express my gratitude for the way you people have welcomed me. Vote for the PML-N so that the party can serve you all." She took a swipe at the opponents, saying, "Many people came and befuddled people by taking the name of South Punjab. The PML-N has served South Punjab in a real context. Other political parties had kept South Punjab to stage their politics."



ISLAMABAD: Charge d'Affaires of India Geetika Srivastava along with Ambassadors and High Commissioners of the SAARC countries cutting the cake to celebrate the Republic Day of India. A large number of guests hailing from various walks of life attended the reception. - DNA

Gaza genocide continues amid global call for ceasefire

The death toll as a result of the Israeli ongoing aggression on Gaza since October 7 has risen to 26,083 martyrs while the wounded number surged to 64,487

NEWS DESK

GAZA: The Israeli occupation forces continue to commit the crime of genocide in the Gaza Strip for the 112th consecutive day Friday. They have carried out dozens of airstrikes, artillery bombardments, and fired rockets, committing brutal massacres against civilians and carrying out horrific crimes in invasion areas. This is happening in the midst of a catastrophic humanitarian situation resulting from the siege and the displacement of over 90% of the population. The Ministry of Health in Gaza announced that Israeli occupation forces committed 19 new massacres against families in the Gaza Strip, claiming the lives of 183 civilians and wounding 377 others in the past 24 hours. The Ministry said in a brief statement on

Friday, which marks the 112th day of the Israeli aggression, that a big number of other victims are still under the rubble and on the roads, as Israeli troops are preventing ambulance and civil defense crews from reaching them. The death toll as a result of the Israeli ongoing aggression on Gaza since October 7 has risen to 26,083 martyrs while the wounded number surged to 64,487. Local media reported that the Israeli aircraft and artillery continued their intense airstrikes and shelling on various parts of the Gaza Strip over the past 24 hours, with a focus on Khan Yunis. They targeted houses, displaced people's gatherings, and streets, resulting in hundreds of martyrs and casualties. The Israeli warplanes also carried out an airstrike around the Safatawi intersection in northern Gaza. The occupation forces demolished houses and structures in western

Khan Yunis. The Israeli occupation forces occupied residential buildings surrounding the Al-Amal neighborhood in western Khan Yunis and opened fire on any moving object, while continuing to besiege the Al-Amal Hospital affiliated with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society. Fierce clashes broke out in the western area of Khan Yunis camp. The occupation forces besieged the Al-Amal School, which accommodates displaced people in western Khan Yunis. The journalist Iyad Ahmed Al-Rawagh, a correspondent and presenter on Sawt Al-Aqsa Radio, and members of his family were martyred as a result of targeting his house in the Al-Hassaina area of the Nusairat refugee camp last night. Meanwhile, massive demonstrations were held in the cities of Saada, al-Marazem, and the Razih and Gharm Districts west of northern Yemen, under the slogan: "Yemen

and Palestine are in one trench," in support of Palestinian people and condemnation of American-British aggressions against Yemen. The statement of the demonstrations confirmed "the unity of the path and destiny for the Yemeni and Palestinian peoples." The statement said, "We will continue at all levels to support Gaza and the Palestinian people until victory, and we denounce the positions of those who are silent." The statement also lauded "the operations of the Yemeni armed forces and those of Resistance movements in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq." It also stressed that "the American and British strikes on Yemen are a violation of Yemeni sovereignty, whose aggression will not go unpunished," urging the people to continue "the economic boycott campaign of American and Israeli goods and the companies that support them."

France set to tighten immigration law

AGENCIES

PARIS: The French government says it will push through a controversial immigration law "in the coming hours", despite many of the measures being struck out as invalid. Most of the 35 measures rejected by France's nine-member Constitutional Council were added to the bill because of right-wing and far-right pressure. But the new law still represents a hardening of the immigration rules. Foreigners legally in France could now be deported with criminal convictions. Even those who came to France before they were 13 or those who have lived in France for more than 20 years could be expelled if they are given substantial jail terms and deemed to be a "grave threat to public order". Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said the Constitutional Council had validated all the government's measures and it was now time to put the law into practice.

Pak HC meets Maldivian defence minister

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Pakistan in Maldives Vice Admiral (R) Muhammad Fayyaz Gilani on Friday met with Defence Minister of Maldives Mohamed GhassanMau-moon and held "productive" discussions on matters of mutual interest. "High Commissioner held productive discussions with Mohamed GhassanMau-moon and team. Looking forward to working closely for further enhancing the cooperation and strengthening the bilateral ties," the high commission said on its X account. - DNA

Zulfi calls out 'Western hypocrisy' on 'HRs abuses' in Pakistan

US wanted to put visa sanctions on Bangladesh but decided to term Pakistan's situation as "internal affair", he laments

DNA

LONDON: As Pakistan gears up for February 8 polls, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Zulfi Bukhari called out "Western hypocrisy" for its silence on "human rights abuses" in the country. Speaking at Oxford University Majlis, a forum for intellectual exchange at the prestigious varsity in London, Bukhari decried the double standards of human rights organisations and Western powers for failing to raise voices against human rights violations in the country as opposed to the developments in other nations. Acknowledging that the media has given coverage to PTI founder Imran Khan-related developments, Bukhari lamented that human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, have "written very few" about human rights abuses in Pakistan. Recalling Amnesty's coverage of recently concluded general elections in Bangladesh, the PTI leader said that the human rights watchdog raised its voice on the absence of a transparent democracy and crackdown against opposition parties. "They [US] wanted to put visa sanctions on Bangladesh as the country wasn't fitting the exact outfit what a democratic country should be [...] but Pakistan is termed as an internal affair. "This hypocrisy that's being used between Pakistan and other countries [...] is most worrying," the former minister said while responding to a question seeking his message for the Western governments. However, the body failed to do the same over the situation in Pakistan, he maintained while referring to the countrywide crackdown against PTI workers and leaders following the May 9 riots triggered last year as a result of Khan's arrest in a graft case.

AHEAD OF POLLS

US concerned over reports about lack of free expression

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States State Department has expressed concern over reports citing the lack of press freedom and free expression in Pakistan with the general elections in the country just days away. The country's eligible population will vote to select the next government during the upcoming polls, slated to be conducted on February 8, a moment when the role of the press and media is critical to educate and inform citizens. Addressing a press briefing in Washington on Thursday, State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel said: "We also have not been ambiguous about how we feel very strongly that a free and independent media are vital institutions that undergird healthy democracies by ensuring that elector can make informed decision and hold govt to account." Patel added that the US believes journalists play a critical role in covering fair and transparent elections.

Trump opens up lead over Biden in rematch many Americans don't want

Poll shows Trump leading Biden 40% to 34% with rest unsure



WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump leads Democratic President Joe Biden by six percentage points in a Reuters/Ipsos poll that showed Americans are unhappy about an election rematch that came into sharper focus this week. The nationwide poll of 1,250 US adults showed Trump leading Biden 40% to 34% with the rest unsure or planning to vote for someone else or no one. The poll had a margin of error of three percentage points. That represented a gain for Trump after a Reuters/Ipsos

poll conducted earlier this month showed him and Biden tied, though a nationwide survey does not capture the subtleties of the electoral college contest that will be decided this fall in just a handful of competitive states. As Trump handily beat his sole remaining primary challenger, Nikki Haley in New Hampshire on Tuesday, some 67% of respondents polled Monday through Wednesday said they were "tired of seeing the same candidates in presidential elections and want someone new." Still, just 18% said they would not vote if Biden and Trump were their choice. "I hate to

think that we're constantly navigating the lesser of two evils," said Kimberly Sofge, a 56-year-old project manager in Washington, D.C., this week. "I honestly feel that we can do better." The two candidates themselves seem ready for a rematch following Trump's back-to-back wins in Iowa and New Hampshire, with the White House regarding Trump as a beatable challenger, and Trump fuming because Haley did not immediately drop out of the Republican race. Trump's six-point lead held even when respondents were given the option of voting for third-party candidates, including anti-vaccine activist Robert F. Kennedy Jr., with Trump drawing 36% support, Biden 30% and Kennedy 8%. Slightly more than half of respondents said they were dissatisfied with the US two-party system, with just one in four satisfied by it. Whitney Tallarico, 33, a consultant interviewed in Washington, is among those considering an alternative. "The independents don't really have a voice. Polarizing characters usually take the front seat, and it's a little sad for our country," Tallarico said this week. Asked whether she would vote for Biden or Trump, she said, "I'll probably go for a third party."

ECP grants ROs, DROs powers of magistrate

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: As preparations for the February 8 polls enter the final stages, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday granted the returning officers (ROs) and district returning officers (DROs) deputed across the country the powers of the magistrate for the conduct of polls. With almost all arrangements for security and

organisation of polls made, the country is set to stage the national-level elections next month. The top electoral body has issued a notification for empowering the election officials, stating that the ROs and DROs will the step has been taken under Section 193 of the Elections Act, 2017. The notification stated the ROs and DROs have been authorised to exercise the powers of the magistrate of the first class under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, with immediate effect until the consolidation and announcement of official results of the general elections. "The aforesaid officers shall exercise the powers of Magistrate First Class in respect of the offences defined in Section 169 and Section 171 punishable under Section 174 of Elections Act, 2017 (Act No. XXXIII of 2017).

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