



# Islamabad POST

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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**South Africa's freedom tied to Palestine's, says President Ramaphosa**

Detailed News On Page-07

**Austin admitted to critical care, hospital says**

Detailed News On Page-0

**Gladiators remove Sarfaraz as team captain**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Concerns over rigging in elections

# US, UK, EU have no right to interfere in internal matters

Says next government to take charge in 8-10 days; avoids question about his future plans; admits PTI enjoys sizeable support



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker PM Anwaar ul Haq Kakar talking to media, on Monday. – DNA

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said Monday defended the delay in election results, noting that mobile services were disrupted – which hampered the gathering of votes – due to security threats. He further said that US, UK, EU or any other country had no right to interfere in Pakistan's internal matters. The PM said this in reply to a question about the concerns of these countries about the manner in which 2024 general elections were held. The prime minister expressed these views while addressing a press conference at the PM House, on Monday. "We could afford delay, but terrorist attacks, we could not delay does not mean rigging," Kakar, whose government was appointed to oversee the country through elections until an elected set-up takes charge, said during

a post-election press conference. Moving on to the allegations of foreign governments, who deplored the disruption in connectivity and the events that transpired in the lead-up to elections, Kakar said they would be probed if need be. "These friendly countries, unfortunately, frame their initial assessment on the fabricated and fractured information available on social media and the digital space." "A responsible government should take time and then have a position; that would have been better. If we have to investigate, we will not do it on the demand of the United States, United Kingdom, or the EU." He added, the next government may be formed in next 8 to 10 days depending on the outcome of the negotiations currently in progress among various political parties. To a question about his future plans he simply said 'no comments'. He said there was no doubt that the PTI enjoys public support. He hoped the PTI leadership would act in a responsible manner and play its role in the nation building. Political parties – including the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), whose candidates contested as independents, the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) – had deplored the delay in the results of the election, claiming that it was tantamount to rigging. The complete election results – despite the passing of more than three days – are still awaited as the total vote count from 264 constituencies is in, but one seat remains. Amid the delay, PTI, JI, and JUI-F held countrywide elections, with the former two warning of more demonstrations. Kakar, recalling instances of election results' delays in Sweden and Indonesia, wondered whether their polls were "rigged". "We are a country of 240 million with 92,000 polling stations [...] this entire process had to consume some time, which should and can be explained."

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## Briefs

### No decision on PM yet, Marriyum

Name would be decided after due consultation

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: PML-N spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb has said senior party leader Khawaja Muhammad Asif's statement is being presented out of context as the party has yet to decide the name for PM's candidature. She said the name would be decided after due consultation with the political allies. Marriyum assured that the final decision would be taken after due process of consultations. "The nation will be taken into confidence once the party reaches consensus on the name of PM," she assured. Earlier, PML-N leader Khawaja Asif said Shehbaz Sharif would be the PML-N candidate for the PM slot.

### PTI lauds JI Karachi chief decision

Demands resignation of CEC

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson highly appreciated Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi chief Hafiz Naemur Rehman for showing grace and courage to expose the malicious plot of a daylight robbery of public mandate and scandalous role of the electoral watchdog in this regard. Reacting to the JI Karachi Amir, PTI Spokesperson expressed gratitude to Hafiz Naemur for forfeiting his provincial assembly seat and exposing the criminal tampering with the election results along with the scandalous role of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

## Rigging allegations

# GDA rejects poll results, announces vacating seats

Protest announced on Friday at Hyderabad Bypass; Abbasi says we will not let next government run

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: The Pakistan Muslim League-Functional (PML-F) and Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) chief, Pir Sibghatullah Shah Rashidi, popularly known as Pir Pagara, has announced his refusal to accept the results of the recent general elections. In a press conference held at Pagara House in Karachi on Monday, Pir Pagara declared his intention to vacate his two Sindh Assembly seats, citing concerns over alleged election rigging and result manipulation. "We will not take any charity seats," asserted Pir Pagara during the media briefing, expressing his discontent with the electoral process. He went on to claim that the manipulation of election results was not the work of Returning Officers (ROs) but rather the result of interference by unidentified entities. "I don't feel like giving a speech. This election has come after the worst government, and we reject this election," Pir Pagara declared, emphasising the severity of his disapproval.

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## JI's Hafiz Naem withdraws from Sindh Assembly seat

Says PIT candidate had won the seat according to Form 45

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Hafiz Naemur-Rehman on Monday announced he would be relinquishing his provincial assembly seat, PS-129, from Karachi as he did not win the seat rather it was the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed candidate that had won the seat. Addressing a press conference in Karachi, Naem claimed that his PTI-backed opponent won the seat and he does not want a "charity" seat. He said he was returning the seat, but would continue the legal and

Continued on Page 06

# Tareen quits politics, Siraj steps down as JI chief

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Parliamentarians (PTI-P) chief Pervez Khattak announces taking a break from politics



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: After facing setbacks in the February 8 general elections as both the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami failed to show any electoral progress, IPP's Patron-in-Chief Jahangir Tareen and JI's Emir Sirajul Haq announced resigning from the party offices on Monday. Subsequently, Pervez Khattak – the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Parliamentarians (PTI-P) chief and former aide of PTI founder Imran Khan – also announced "taking

a break from politics" after the election setback. Tareen, an influential politician who was once a close aide of incarcerated former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, has faced humiliation in the nationwide February 8 general elections as his newly-formed party grabbed only two National Assembly (NA) and one provincial assembly seats. Citing poor electoral performance, the IPP founder announced quitting politics and his party position in a post on X. "I would like to thank everyone who supported me in this election and want to offer my congratulations to my opponents. I have immense respect for the will of the people of Pakistan. Therefore, I have decided to resign from my position as Chairman IPP and step away from politics altogether," the senior politician wrote on his official X handle. "My gratitude to all the members of IPP. I wish them the absolute best. By the Grace of Allah, I will continue to serve my country to the best of my ability in a private capacity. May the next few years see Pakistan prosper IA. Pakistan Zindabad," he added. In another development on the political landscape today, the chief of the

Continued on Page 06

## IRANIAN NATIONAL DAY



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Jalil Abbas Jilani, Caretaker Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador of Iran Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam and others cutting cake to celebrate the 45th Anniversary of the Glorious Victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and the National Day, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. – DNA

## Pakistan values ties with Iran

FM Jilani says this relationship to grow stronger

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani has said Pakistan and Iran enjoy cordial relations adding this relationship shall further be strengthened even in the days to come. He expresses these views on the occasion of the 45th Anniversary of the Glorious Victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and the National Day. He added, both believe in a serious engagement and hoped to continue bilateral cooperation at various forums. Ambassador of

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## Two terrorists killed in Mardan

SHAMIM SHAHID

Peshawar: Security forces killed two terrorists during an intelligence based operation in Mardan District, said a statement issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Monday. According to ISPR, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Mardan District on reported presence of terrorists. During the conduct of operation, after intense fire exchange, two terrorists were sent to hell. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in

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# Mohsin Naqvi warns Some people want to repeat May 9 incident

Holding peaceful protests is everyone's right, says CM Punjab

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Following Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) threats of launching protests against alleged rigging in polls, Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday said that a "few people" are planning to carry out riots similar to the ones that took place on May 9 of last year. The May 9 riots were triggered across the country after the arrest of deposed prime minister Imran Khan in the £190 million settlement case. Hundreds of PTI workers and senior leaders were put behind bars for their involvement in violence and attacks on military installations.

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## PML-N undermining democracy to seize power

What kind of magic turned a lead of 0.1 million into 12,000," the electoral candidate questioned

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Slamming the PML-N led by Nawaz Sharif, Salman Akram Raja, a PTI-backed independent

Continued on Page 06

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# RCCI hopes new govt to bring economic stability

Saqib Rafiq demanded that the new government should consult with the stakeholders to formulate a medium and long-term economic plan

DNA

RAWALPINDI: President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Saqib Rafiq, on Monday expressed hope that the newly elected government would work for the improvement of the economy.

In a statement issued here, he said that a coalition or national government would be formed through consensus, which will restore the confidence of investors. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq said that Pa-

kistan was facing many challenges including the IMF program while 40 percent of the population lived below the poverty line and inflation had skyrocketed to more than 30 percent. Saqib Rafiq demanded that the new government should consult with the stakeholders to formulate a medium and long-term economic plan and continuity of policies. He said "We hope that the new government will take immediate steps to solve the problems of the business community; the country has to facilitate business to move on the path of develop-

ment and prosperity." The scope of business facilitation centers (BFC) should be spread across the country, he added. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq said that the cost of doing business had increased manifold which needed to be addressed and the prices of electricity, gas and petroleum products have to be reduced.

Regional trade should be promoted, and non-traditional sectors such as IT, gems and jewelry, marble, poultry, tourism and service sectors should be given preferential treatment, he urged.



ISLAMABAD : Federal Minister for Interior and Commerce, Dr. Gohar Ejaz and Saudi Ambassador, H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Al Malkiy visiting different sections of Faisal Mosque.—DNA

## Commissioner reviews facilities at Pirwadhai bus stand

DNA

RAWALPINDI : Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta on Monday visited Pirwadhai bus stand and reviewed the arrangements made to facilitate the passengers. During the visit, he also inspected the ongoing construction work regarding the up-gradation of the General Bus Stand. The Commissioner made a detailed review of male and female waiting rooms, washrooms and other administrative matters including cleanliness arrangements. The open area of the general bus stand was in poor condition as it could not be upgraded for last 20 years, the Commissioner said adding, more than Rs 110 million were being spent on the construction and repair work of the main entrance, exit gate and open area of the General Bus Stand. Liaquat Ali Chatta directed the officers that same size signboards should be displayed at the vehicle workshops in the bus stand area. No encroachment would be tolerated in any area of the General Bus Stand, the Commissioner warned. The Punjab government was spending huge amount for the up-gradation of the general bus stand, he said and instructed, efforts should be made to maintain it. The administration was making all-out efforts to provide relief to the citizens, Liaquat Ali Chatta added.

## Shah Faisal mosque to be renovated: Gohar Ejaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior and Commerce Dr. Gohar Ejaz on Monday said that 40 years ago, the government of Saudi Arabia gave a gift of Shah Faisal Mosque to Pakistanis, now the mosque would be renovated to make it more beautiful. He expressed these views on the occasion of visiting Shah Faisal Mosque along with Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Pakistan,

Nawaf Saeed Al Malki, Federal Interior Secretary, Aftab Akbar Durrani, Chief Commissioner Islamabad and CDA officials were also present at the occasion. The minister along with the Saudi Ambassador offered Zuhur prayer and latter visited the main hall and spacious courtyard of the mosque. Talking to the media persons, the minister said that when he assumed charge of the minister, he offered Jumma prayer at the mosque and latter he

met with the Saudi ambassador and informed him that the mosque needed to be renovated. "We are grateful to the Saudi Ambassador who took personal interest and decided to renovate the Shah Faisal Mosque, which will begin soon" the minister said. Nawaf Saeed Al Malki said that the Shah Faisal Mosque was given as a gift to Pakistanis by the Saudi government. Now the renovation work of this mosque would be started soon, he added.

## LESCO upgrades website to solve complaints timely

DNA

LAHORE : Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has upgraded the official website on modern lines to solve the problems of the customers in a timely manner. According to LESCO spokesman here Monday, the company has upgraded

the official website to facilitate the provision of information and timely redressal of customers' complaints, asserting that now it would be easy to have access to relevant information and redressal of their grievances.

Director General (IT) Tahir Nadeem, Director (Credit Management Unit) Rai Masood Kharl, Manager

(MIS) Wasim Iqbal, Manager (Network) Tanveer Ahmed and Additional Manager (MIS) Durdana Yousaf played a pivotal role in the website up-gradation. He said that IT officials briefed the LESCO CEO Engineer Shahid Haider about the up-gradation of the website. The CEO said that the purpose of upgrading the

website by LESCO is to provide accurate information to the customers in a timely manner. All information related to bills would be available on the website, while complaints could also be registered on the website, while the information about power shut-down and load-shedding schedule would also be available on the website, he mentioned.

## PSX, LCCI organize awareness session for business growth

LAHORE : Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in collaboration with Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) organized an awareness session on "Potential Avenues for Business Growth", here at LCCI on Monday. The LCCI President Kashif Anwar presided over the session while the PSX Director Ahmed Chinoy, CEO Farrukh Khan, General Manager Raeda Latif and Javed Qureshi also spoke on the occasion. LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that stock exchange is an important indicator to examine the economy of any country. Currently Pakistan Stock Exchange is performing well. He said that the purpose of this awareness session is to inform the LCCI members about Pakistan Stock Exchange.—APP

## 30 Mepco employees caught aiding illegal connections

The sources hinted that the only way to stop electricity theft was the imposition of heavy fines and permanent disconnection of electricity

MULTAN : Electricity pilferage remained a gigantic challenge for Multan Electric Power Company (Mepco) despite a relentless operation help to apprehend 11,923 thieves in 16521 cases since the campaign commenced on September 7th. According to official sources, the Mepco authorities traced 30 black sheep in the organization who were found involved in facilitating the electricity theft. A hefty fine totaling Rs 7.96 billion has been imposed on perpetrators involved in pilfering approximately 2.6 million units of electricity. Of this amount, Rs 653 million has already been recovered. In a series of grand operations across various districts, 421 villages were caught red-handed engaging in electricity theft. Furthermore, to curb large-scale theft, trans-

formers and high-tension jumpers were confiscated. Disruptions were also noted, with 142 villages in the jurisdictions of DG Khan and Rajanpur experiencing power outages due to rampant theft. Similarly, in Rahim Yar Khan district, 279 villages witnessed power disconnections, with transformers and jumpers removed to deter theft.

From September 7, 2023, to February 1, 2024, Multan Circle alone collected fine amounting to Rs 201.19 million from 2,144 electricity thieves, with Rs 12.86 million already recovered. A total of 2,056 cases were registered, leading to the apprehension of 1,515 individuals. In DG Khan Circle, 3,879 consumers were fined Rs 188.39 million, with Rs 101.96 million recovered. Additionally, 3,784 cases were filed, resulting in the

arrest of 2,942 thieves. Similar crackdowns were conducted in other circles, including Vehari, Bahawalpur, Sahiwal, Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Bahawalnagar, and Khanewal, resulting in fines imposed, recoveries made, and perpetrators apprehended. Apart from this, during the period from January 1 to January 31, 2024, an amount of Rs 919 million was recovered from 51,164 defaulters, including domestic consumers, traders, industrialists, and agricultural tube well owners. Despite the strict action, the electricity pilferage is still in progress, said sources. The sources hinted that the only way to stop electricity theft was the imposition of heavy fines and permanent disconnection of electricity.—APP

## IG Punjab praises DG Khan police's performance

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar encouraged DG Khan Police team for excellent performance in fight with dangerous criminals while talking to them through a video call. IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar appreciated the RPO DG Khan Captain Sajjad Hasan Khan (ret'd) and DPO Ahmad Mohiuddin for the excellent command of the operation and announced a reward of Rs 05 lakh for the police team who conducted the operation against the dangerous criminals. IG Punjab received the details of the operation from the police team on video call and paid tribute to them for bravely fighting the dangerous criminals. IG Punjab paid special tribute to the courage and bravery of police martyr Shehryar who embraced martyrdom during the competition. IG Punjab, while giving instructions to give immediate support to the family of the martyr, said that department will provide all possible support to the family of the martyr. IG Punjab said that the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the protection of the lives and property of the citizens are pride of the department, department will always support them and will provide best possible welfare. Meanwhile, Inspector General Police Punjab took notice of the incident in which 3 people were killed by firing in Sheikhpura. IGP asked RPO Sheikhpura for a report on the incident.

IG Punjab directed DPO Sheikhpura to investigate every aspect of the incident and arrest the culprits as soon as possible. IG Punjab directed that justice should be ensured to the family members of the killed people on priority basis. The financial assistance for police employees suffering from medical problems continues, in continuation of which IG Punjab issued another 1.3 million rupees for the medical expenses of police employees of various districts including Lahore. According to the details, constable Mohsin Raza Shah, who suffered from paralysis, was given 02 lakh 45 thousand rupees for the purchase of an electric bed. ASI Raja Shahid Mehmood was given Rs 02 lakh for the treatment of his wife's breast cancer. Driver Constable Muhammad Hanif's wife and constable Ghazi Ijaz Ahmed was given 01 lakh rupees each for cancer and liver treatment respectively. Constable Ghulam Rasool and wife of ASI Asif Nadeem were given one lakh each for spinal cord and cancer treatment. Sub-Inspector Zulfiqar Ali Awan and constable Muhammad Ramzan was given Rs. one hundred thousand each for medical expenses. Constable Qaiser Abbas Khan and Head Constable Saeed Ahmed were given Rs.01 lakh each for medical expenditures. Naib Qasid Shabbir Ahmed was given 70 thousand rupees for the treatment of his wife.—APP

خاندانی منصوبہ بندی میں ہے  
آنے والی نسلوں کا خوشحال مستقبل  
پاکستان کا روشن کل  
تیزی سے بڑھتی آبادی  
اوپر کی وسائل میں توازن لانے کیلئے خاندانی منصوبہ بندی  
کے محفوظ طریقے اپنائیں  
خاندانی منصوبہ بندی۔۔ اولین ترجیح

متوازن خاندان۔۔ خوشحال پاکستان  
محکمہ بہبود آبادی، حکومت پنجاب  
بیلپ لائن: 1793  
SPL# 259

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Population Welfare Department Punjab | www.pwd.punjab.gov.pk | pwdpunjab

## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### FEBRUARY

Feb 04/Sri Lanka	National Day
Feb 06/N. Zealand	National Day
Feb 06/Uganda	Army Day
Feb 11//Iran	Revolution day
Feb 16/DPR Korea	National Day
Feb 16/Lithuania	National Day
Feb 18/Gambia	National Day
Feb 19/Nepal	Democracy Day
Feb 23/Uzbekistan	National Day
Feb 23/Brunei	National Day
Feb 23/Guyana	National Day
Feb 23/Russia	National Army Day
Feb 23/Tajikistan	Armed Forces Day
Feb 25/Kuwait	National Day

## Hotels & Restaurants



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



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



## Emergency

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Bomb Disposal.....15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122  
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Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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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

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Met Office.....9250360-6  
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Cantonment Board 9270151-3

## Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# NAVTTTC, ICCI to collaborate to produce skilled manpower

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan stressed for the skilled development of women for various industries including pharmaceuticals for their economic empowerment

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Gulmina Bilal, Chairperson, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) along with her team visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and discussed collaboration with the Chamber to produce skilled manpower for the local industry. She agreed with the proposal of Acting President ICCI for formation of an Advisory Council giving representation to major stakeholders and said that its modalities will be further discussed with ICCI. She said that NAVTTTC is ready to open its Facilitation Desk in ICCI to know about the demand of industry for skilled manpower and provide training accordingly. She said that ICCI should cooperate in the placement of 20-23 trained people as interns in the industry. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the role of NAVTTTC is important for improving industrial growth. He said that NAVTTTC should form an Advisory Board representing all major industries to meet



the skilled manpower needs of various industries. He said that all training programs should be developed in consultation with the stakeholders to achieve win-win results. He assured that ICCI would cooperate in promoting linkages between NAVTTTC and

local industry to produce need-based manpower for the industrial sector. Both sides also discussed potential areas of cooperation for the betterment of local industry. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan stressed for the

skilled development of women for various industries including pharmaceuticals for their economic empowerment. Mian Akram Farid, former President ICCI said that ICCI has already worked with NAVTTTC on various projects and it would like to fur-

ther collaborate with it to produce skilled manpower. Ch. Muhammad Ali, Hamayun Kabir, Mohsin Khalid, Mian Waqas Masud and others also spoke on the occasion and gave useful proposals for the skilled development of people as per needs of the business entities.

# First phase of mandatory Hajj ritual training begins

ISLAMABAD: The first phase of mandatory Hajj ritual training for prospective pilgrims of the Government Scheme commenced, with Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed joining the session in Hyderabad. Aneeq Ahmed, speaking on the occasion, mentioned that Hajj training programs will be conducted nationwide, spanning from Karachi to Khyber. He emphasized that Allah Almighty

judges our intentions, and it is imperative to perform Hajj with utmost devotion. "Hajj is a form of supplication to Allah." This year, the Pakistani government has expanded facilities for pilgrims compared to the previous year, resulting in a reduction of expenses by Rs 100,000 from the previous year. He expressed that Hajj pilgrims serve as fortunate ambassadors of Pakistan, tasked with upholding the nation's honor

in Saudi Arabia and keeping Pakistan in their prayers. Assembling such a significant number of pilgrims in a single location poses considerable challenges, thus the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Government of Pakistan are exerting maximum effort to guarantee a seamless experience for the pilgrims. They are providing comprehensive information regarding transportation, accommodation, and provisions

for food and beverages. It's worth noting that more than 69,000 pilgrims under the government scheme will receive training in two stages across different districts of the country. The second phase of training will commence after the conclusion of the holy month of Ramadan. Successful intending pilgrims will receive details of the training schedule through mobile messages and the Hajj app. Pilgrims will have the opportunity to attend training workshops at convenient local venues. The training has prioritized instruction on Hajj rituals, as well as addressing discipline and administrative matters. The ministry has already finalized the training curriculum. Hajj training will take place across seven Hajj camps located in different districts.

# APHC praises IIOJK people

ISLAMABAD: Illegally detained Chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Masarrat Aalam Butt and senior leaders Shabbir Ahmad Shah and Nayeem Ahmad Khan have commended the resilient people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) for steadfastly engaging in a robust political struggle against India, both domestically and internationally. According to Kashmir Media Service, the leaders in their messages from New Delhi's Tihar jail highlighted the political maturity, wisdom, and practical approach demonstrated by the people of IIOJK, particularly in their observance of the shutdown on February 11 to honor the martyrdom anniversary of the revered liberation leader, Muhammad Maqbool Butt. It is worth noting that Muhammad Maqbool Butt was executed in New Delhi's Tihar Jail on February 11, 1984. Another Kashmiri leader Muhammad Afzal Guru met a similar fate on February 9, 2013. Both the leaders were executed without fair trials for their pivotal roles in the ongoing freedom movement of Kashmiris. The APHC leaders reiterated their unwavering commitment to the cause of freedom, stressing that heroes like Maqbool Butt and Afzal Guru, unjustly executed, remain integral to the resistance movement's spirit. In condemning the recent surge in arbitrary arrests across the occupied territory, the leaders said that such oppressive tactics cannot deter the Kashmiri populace from their pursuit of freedom from Indian subjugation. Furthermore, Masarrat Aalam Butt, Shabbir Ahmad Shah and Nayeem Ahmad Khan called upon the United Nations to take decisive action to compel India to halt its atrocities, including genocide, extrajudicial killings and gross human rights violations perpetrated by its troops in IIOJK. It stressed the urgent need for a resolution to the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and the UN resolutions.—DNA

# US ambassador calls on health minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan Calls on U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome-Pak, U.S. collaboration in Health discussed. Federal Minister of Health Dr. Nadeem Jan met with US Ambassador Donald Blome. Issues pertaining to health sector and of mutual interest were discussed in the meeting. The US Ambassador appreciated the actions and reforms taken by the Health Minister in a short period of time. Dr. Nadeem Jan took important steps to keep the country and world safe from epidemics and diseases, said the US Ambassador. The Minister informed

that the Government of Pakistan has successfully organ-

Security Agenda and said that this was the need of the hour.



ized the Global Health Security Summit in Islamabad. The US ambassador appreciated the vision of the Global Health

In this context USA will cooperate to advance the agenda of global health security. The situation of nutrition in Pakistan

was also discussed between the both dignitaries. Dr. Nadeem Jan informed that Ministry of Health has formulated an integrated strategy to control malnutrition. A task force on nutrition has been formed which will ensure coordinated actions between the federation and the provinces, donors, stakeholders, said the Health Minister. The Health Minister also informed that we have formulated an integrated strategy to eradicate polio. He said that our polio workers are working on the frontlines. Under this integrated strategy, the services of polio workers will be utilised in other areas of health sector like Family Planning, Nutrition, Immunization Program etc.

# Webinar on 'Women in Science: Shaping Tomorrow's Innovations'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) commemorated the International Day of Women and Girls in Science by holding a Webinar titled "Women in Science: Shaping Tomorrow's Innovations." The event, held in a hybrid format at the COMSATS Secretariat in Islamabad, brought together a diverse panel of speakers to explore the pivotal role of women in Science, Technology, Innovation, and Engineering. Participants from around the globe joined the webinar. Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director of COMSATS, delivered the opening remarks, stressing the importance of women's equal participation alongside men in addressing global challenges. Dr. Zakaria reiterated COMSATS' commitment to advocating for and promoting gender equality in the realm of science, technology, and innovation worldwide. He highlighted the significance of this day as a call to action, acknowledging women's invaluable contributions to science and the ongoing journey towards gender equality in the field. Dr. Zakaria emphasized that women bring a unique perspective to scientific endeavors, enhancing them with diversity in thought and experience, thereby contributing



to a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues. H.E. Senator Dr. Sania Nishtar, a distinguished member of the Senate of Pakistan and recently appointed CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, expressed appreciation to COMSATS for organizing this significant event. In her video message, Dr. Sania underscored that achieving gender equality in science, technology, and innovation is not only a matter of social justice but also essential for fostering economic prosperity and sustainable development. She highlighted the evolving nature of innovation, which now encompasses a broader range of influences beyond traditional science and technology advancements, particularly environmental and societal challenges. In this new paradigm, the socio-economic empowerment of women emerges as

a crucial catalyst for driving innovation forward. Prof. Dr. Quarraisha Abdool Karim, President of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), shared valuable insights into her three decades of research contributions that have significantly influenced the global HIV prevention efforts. She highlighted that the developing countries must maximize the potential of their Research and Innovation systems while promoting gender equality in scientific fields. Integrating gender considerations into the Science, Technology and Innovation landscape can provide developing countries with a significant competitive edge. Professor Dr. Rana Dajani from Hashemite University in Jordan emphasized the importance of nurturing an inclusive environment in academia and research. She shared with audience her experience of introducing a simple yet impactful model and activity 'We Love Reading' an inter-generational initiative, promoting healing, connection, and positive self-development through the joy of reading. Further, Dr. Dajani highlighted that a significant imbalance in women's representation persists across various levels of the professional hierarchy, particularly in leadership roles. Despite these hurdles, women and girls are increasingly empowered to contribute to addressing global challenges, from poverty alleviation to climate change.

# 10 outlaws held, drugs, illegal arms recovered

RAWALPINDI: Police arrested ten outlaws during crackdown and recovered more than 3.5 kg drugs, illegal arms from their possession here on Monday. According to police spokesman, Naseerabad police recovered 1.5 kg drugs from Faisal. Similarly, Wah Cantt police recovered 1.2 kg drugs from Shahzad. While, Saddar Barooni police recovered 800 grams of charas from Raheel. Following operation, Sadiqabad police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Wasim and 01 pistol 30 bore was recovered from Waqas while 01 pistol 30 bore was also recovered from Razaqat. Mandra police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Ghafran. Police registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress.—APP

# UNDP chief calls on chair IPO

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Samuel Rizk, UNDP Resident Representative in Pakistan, along with MS. Liu-Win, Program Analyst of South-Cooperation, UNDP called on Ambassador (r) Farukh Amil, Chair IPO-Pakistan, at the IPO-Pakistan Headquarters. They reviewed various aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), including copyrights, patents and Geographical Indications (GIs). It was noted that Intellectual Property was critical in protecting innovation, creative work, and unique products. They discussed their mutual interest in exploring collaboration between UNDP and IPO-Pakistan.

# 3 suspects apprehended for house theft

RAWALPINDI: Police arrested three suspects involved in house theft in the jurisdiction of Airport police station here on Monday. The prime suspect, identified as Akram, an employee, allegedly orchestrated the break-in at his own's house alongside his accomplices Imran and Rizwan. The stolen items, including two Kalashnikovs, camera, and a mobile phone were also confiscated from their possession by the police. Imran and Rizwan had already been challaned, according to a police spokesman.—APP

**FEDERAL EMPLOYEES BENEVOLENT AND GROUP INSURANCE FUNDS (ESTABLISHMENT DIVISION)**

**TENDER NOTICE**

Federal Employees Benevolent & Group Insurance Fund (FEB&GIF) invites sealed bids from experienced well reputed bidders/suppliers having NTN and Sales tax registered with FBR, for the timely Supply of "Stationery and Miscellaneous items" during financial year 2023-2024.

- Bidding will be conducted under National Competitive Bidding process pursuant to Single stage single envelope procedures "as per Rule 36(a) of Public Procurement Rules 2004 and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Public Procurement Rules 2004.
- Bids must be accompanied by a bid security of Rs. 500,000/- of bid price in the shape/form of pay order/bank draft in favor of "Board of Trustees, FEB&GIF" Islamabad must be attached with bid.
- The Bidders are requested to give their best and final prices (item wise) as no negotiations shall be allowed. The rates quoted will remain valid during the Financial Year-2023-2024 after opening of tenders and till signing of agreement etc. whereas, supply order will be issued on need basis of each item to the lowest approved bidder in accordance with the approved samples/quality by inspection/quality control committee of FEB & GIF.
- The bidders must quote rate against all items either for Part-A or Part-B or both parts as mentioned in section-III of tender documents.
- The bidders should have documented track of completing at least 3 similar assignments in the last 3 years.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain the bidding documents including detailed specifications without any charges on the submission of a written application to the address mentioned below. These documents can also be downloaded from <https://eprocure.gov.pk> and [www.febgif.gov.pk](http://www.febgif.gov.pk) as well.
- Copies of active registration with Income Tax Department and Sale Tax Department should be enclosed with bid. Non submission of this document is liable to declare the bidder non responsive.
- Bidders must be registered with E-Pak Acquisition & Disposal System of PPRA and bids must be submitted through EPADS portal of PPRA.
- Bidders should be financially sound having proper office, telephone number and fax number in Islamabad.
- Late bids will be rejected. Bids submitted without signed Bid Form by the bidder/authorized nominee of the bidder will also be rejected.
- Every bidder will deliver samples of stationary and miscellaneous items at his own cost with the bids.

Bids must be uploaded to the EPADS Website <https://eprocure.gov.pk> on or before 11:00am, February 29, 2024. Bids will be opened at 11:30 am on the same day in the presence of bidders/their representatives (who may like to attend) at the Committee Room of Federal Employees Benevolent & Group Insurance Fund, BF Building, Shahrah-e-Suharwardy, Zero Point, Islamabad.

**PID 14799/23**

**(M. Shoaib Rauf Hashmi)**  
Director (Admin)  
Federal Employees Benevolent & Group Insurance Fund (FEB&GIF),  
BF Building, Shahrah-e-Suharwardy, Zero Point, Islamabad  
Tel: 92-51-925 2308 Fax: 92-51-925 2354

## Briefs

ANF recovers  
340 kg  
drugs in five  
operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 340 kg of drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that 158 kg hashish and 99 kg opium were recovered from the possession of an accused arrested near Kohat Road Peshawar. 30 kg hashish was recovered from Jeevani Road, Gwadar and 28 kg opium, 4 kg heroin and 2 kg Ice drug were recovered from G.T. Road Nowshera and an accused was arrested during the operation. In two other operations, 19 kg of hashish was recovered from the Jarobi Zakhakhel area. Separate cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—APP

PR collects  
Rs 74.8  
mln from  
ticketless  
passengers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has collected an amount of Rs 74.8 million from ticketless passengers in a crackdown during the three two months with the help of railway police and train staffers. "Around 58,446 passengers found travelling without tickets in different trains and collected the said amount from them, which is deposited in the official bank account of the department," sources in the Ministry told APP. They said that it was not the first time that action was taken on a large scale against ticketless passengers, adding that these types of crackdowns had taken place daily. The sources said that ticketless travelling was illegal, and those who were caught without a ticket were charged a ticket price for the whole journey of the train besides the penalty. Those who do not pay are handed over to the railway police. To a question, they said that Pakistan Railways Police claimed to have arrested a total of 3,923 accused due to their involvement in violations of rules and laws and also registered some 3,625 cases against them in eight Railways divisions over one year. "Around 658 cases were registered in Peshawar Division, 577 in Rawalpindi, 1,044 in Lahore, 326 in Mughalpur workshops, 393 in Multan, 208 in Sukkur, 346 in Karachi, and 73 in Quetta Division," they added. They said the Railways Police Help Desks had been established at all the major railway stations across the country, and the performance of the Railways Police has been quite satisfactory during the last year.

CDA to  
develop  
housing  
scheme for  
private firms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to develop a housing scheme with the participation of a private firm. The housing scheme, to be named 'Kurri Enclave Housing Scheme', would be developed over an area of 10,000 kanals in Kurri village. According to sources, the land is owned by the CDA but the project costing billions of rupees would be developed as a joint venture with some leading real estate developer or with a consortium of more than one firm. The board of CDA had already approved to launch and develop housing schemes with the participation of the private sector. The civic body had also invited Expression of Interests (EOIs) for the selection of reputed firms to execute the project. The selected real estate firm would invest while developing and planning the project.



ISLAMABAD: Feb12- A vendor is displayed strawberry attraction for customers on his pushcart alongside a road in the Federal Capital.—ONLINE

Pak expert installs research  
equipment at university abroad

The installation of this equipment is a new initiative of the Agence Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique et de l'Innovation (ANRSI). It is aimed at promoting and supporting scientific research, logistics, and technical support with the resources needed to achieve the maximum benefit from laboratories

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Engr. Syed Muhammad Hussain Rizvi, a Pakistani expert is visiting Mauritania under COMSTECH Mauritania S&T Cooperation Program. He has installed research equipment at the Nawakchott University in Mauritania. The installation of this equipment is a new initiative of the Agence Nationale de la

Recherche Scientifique et de l'Innovation (ANRSI). It is aimed at promoting and supporting scientific research, logistics, and technical support with the resources needed to achieve the maximum benefit from laboratories. Where the ANRSI seeks to provide valuable, versatile, research equipment to the researchers of all disciplines. Engr. Syed Muhammad Hussain Rizvi, had previously visited Nawakchott, in the same

context last year. His competence and experience in evaluating and maintaining research equipment in a number of countries such as Yemen, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Saudi Arabia, is well known. His work has been recognized with awards by Brucker AXS Germany and outstanding technical support shield by KRL, Islamabad. COMSTECH signed a memorandum of understanding with ANRSI last year,

since then it is supporting visits of experts to Mauritania to develop institutional capacities. The visiting experts install and repair the scientific instruments, and impart training to Mauritanian manpower on the use and maintenance of the equipment. ANRSI is the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation of Mauritania. Its aim is to make scientific research a lever for overall economic and

social development. Its mission is to implement State policy for the promotion of scientific research and innovation. It is notably responsible for supporting all research and innovation activities in Mauritania. COMSTECH aims to enhance co-operation among OIC member states in the field of science and technology, and improves capabilities through training in modern fields.

12 women  
elected  
MNAs after  
tough  
competition

ISLAMABAD: A total of 12 women having affiliations with four different political parties have been elected directly as Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) after defeating strong male candidates in their respective constituencies in general elections across the country. "Among them, five women has contested polls as independent backed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), four belongs to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), two from Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and only one candidate contested election from Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM)," said an Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) data available with APP. It said that out of the total, four women including Chief Organizer PML-N Maryam Nawaz, Aneeqa Mehdi Bhatti, Ayesha Nazir Jatt and Amber Majeed Niazi would sit in the National Assembly for the first time. PTI backed candidate Shandana Gulzar from Peshawar, Aneeqa Mehdi Bhatti from Hafizabad, Ayesha Nazir Jatt from Vehari, Amber Majeed Niazi from Layyah and Zartaj Gul from Dera Ghazi Khan have won after a tough competition. The women belonging to PML-N have reached the house by defeating the opposition candidates, Nosheen Iftikhar from Sialkot, Maryam Nawaz from Lahore, Shezra Mansab from Nankana Sahib and Tehmina Doulatana from Vehari. In Sindh, three women have won after the contest, in which Shazia Marri and Dr Nafeesa Shah from PPP have won from Sanghar and Khairpur, while Aasia Ishaque of MQM has won from Karachi.—DNA

Difficult for a coalition  
govt to improve economy

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 Monday the coalition government will have a hard time making the economy better. The political unrest will continue, and the economy will continue to head towards catastrophe as privatization and reform processes in several sectors will be hampered, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the split mandate has disappointed the masses and the business community, and now they are looking forward to a messiah. Talking to the

business community, the veteran business leader said that it is worrisome that no party gets a complete and clear majority in the elections. Now a coalition government will be formed, which has reduced the hope of improvement in the political and economic situation. He said that due to the coalition government, the pace of tax reforms may slow down and the process of privatization may stop, due to which failed state-owned companies will continue to lose trillions of rupees annually. Moreover, the business leader said that electricity and gas losses will remain, and the public will continue to bear the burden. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the coalition government will not be able to get the economy and the people out of the problems in the

way that is needed; it will be more focused on dealing with the allies and political opponents. Many people fear that the new government will not be able to continue the tough decisions of the current caretaker government, which are very important for the economic future of the country. Mian Zahid Hussain said that during the election campaign, the PPP had promised to give free electricity to the people, while the PML-N had promised to give cheap electricity to the people. How will these promises be implemented when it is evident that electricity will become more expensive at the behest of the IMF, he questioned. He noted that it is enough to gauge the seriousness of the political parties, as none of them mentioned the new program of the IMF in its manifesto,

while the ground situation is that the survival of the country is impossible without the new program of the lender. As part of the coalition government, the political parties will not be able to fulfill their tall claims and promises, and the political forces, including PTI and institutions, will not be able to ignore the harsh economic realities for long, he remarked. Mian Zahid Hussain added that the new government will have to increase exports in any case because the policy of paying off old debts through new debts cannot last long. The tax system also needs to be improved so that government revenue can be increased without increasing the burden on the public, as debt servicing is higher than revenue; thus, at least doubling the tax-to-GDP ratio has become necessary.

Pakistani internet influencer  
embraces spring festival

*Spending the period of the Spring Festival in China was an incredible experience," he said*

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Usman Khan, a Pakistani diplomatic correspondent and internet influencer who is studying

at a Chinese University is undergoing a memorable experience as he celebrates the Chinese Spring Festival, also known as the Lunar New Year in China. He has participated in various Spring Festival activities, such as making dumplings, watching dragon and lion dances, and setting off fireworks. "Spending the period of the Spring Festival in China was an incredible experience," he said. "It was an honor to celebrate with my Chinese friends and learn more about their culture and traditions. The festival was a vibrant

display of colors, sounds, and joy, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have been part of it." According to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Monday, during his stay, Usman Khan visited various Chinese cities, including Shenzhen, Chongqing and Chengdu to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese history and culture. While experiencing the vibrant juxtaposition of ancient traditions and modern advancements, he was impressed by the hospitality shown by the Chinese people.

Expert stresses family counseling  
of parents having autistic children

ISLAMABAD: The health expert on Monday stressed the need for awareness to cope with the autism disease, as early detection and therapy are the keys for the management of children with autism. While talking to PTV News, a Psychiatrist Dr Uzma Masroor explained that autism is a spectrum disorder that refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with speech, nonverbal communication, social skills, and repetitive behavior. "Children with autism are capable of learning like any other children," she said, adding that there is a stigma that people are usually judgmental towards such kids and pass unwanted advice to the caretakers. She said that consistent media campaigns are raising awareness which is opening doors of opportunities for the children challenged with autism. She said that autism rehabilitation services are helping in providing support and training to the families for managing their kids with patience. Dr Uzama underlined that biomedical therapy helps a child in healing gradually from autism. Answering a question, she said that most of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) cases are detected in the developing years of children, and early intervention plays an extremely.—APP

Pakistan cannot afford  
more political instability

DNA

ISLAMABAD: D President of United Business Group and former president of Federation Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Zubair Tufail expressed regret over the political confrontation in the country after the results of the general elections on February 8. He has said that Pakistan, burdened by debts, cannot afford more political instability. He described the struggle for power between political parties in the country since the elections as very harmful for the country and said that instead of political fighting. The establishment

of a broad-based national government should be implemented so that economic stability and electoral reforms can serve the nation best, especially for the proportional electoral system. The economy needs a sustainable long-term broad-based national government, all major political parties and winning independent candidates must work together to pull the country out of political and economic crises. President UBG said that there is a need to prioritize national interests over personal interests, elections and expression of freedom of opinion is a healthy sign for democra-

cy, the youth played an important role in the recent elections and we believe that the youth in Parliament They will go and play their role in the better interest of the country. He said that even before the deterioration of public order, political and economic uncertainty and instability in the country, investors are transferring their capital to Dubai and other countries, which will increase the country's income. and jobs are being lost and now the situation may worsen due to political instability. In these circumstances, it is important that all political parties sit at a table and take better decisions for the country.

World Radio  
Day to be  
observed  
on Feb 13

DNA

ISLAMABAD: World Radio Day will be observed on Tuesday, February 13 across the globe including Pakistan to highlight the importance of Radio as a key medium of imparting education, provision of information, and entrainment to people. This year's theme of World Radio Day is, Radio: A Century Informing, entertaining and Educating. To mark the Day, Radio Pakistan will broadcast special messages from the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Secretary of Information, and Director General Radio Pakistan along with special live programs to highlight the importance of Radio in the modern digital age. In connection with the World Radio Day, a special ceremony will be held at Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation Islamabad. Radio Pakistan will also broadcast a special seminar, featuring the national broadcaster's role in providing information, entertainment, and education to people.

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**Ashraf**

## Polarization unfolds in US Congress

**I**n a US Congress which is already divided on partisan lines, further chaos unfolded on the subject of border security. Senate Republicans with their conservative, myopic worldview have resisted advancing a bipartisan proposal tabled by the Biden administration which seeks to clamp down on illegal border crossings from the border with Mexico. Such resistance prompted President Joe Biden to seek executive action to deter illegal border migration yet the question on border security remains- why have Republicans chosen to thwart a proposal which they have long advocated for and what purpose does it serve? For skeptics, the answer is a clear one. On national security, the Republicans have opted for political wrangling and point-scoring instead of principle. US far-right neo-cons led by Donald Trump went against Senate negotiators who had otherwise sought to placate skeptics of the Border Security Bill and released the text of the proposal, claimed that the border policy proposal is grossly insufficient. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell failed to move forward with his conference to support a \$118 billion package of border enforcement policy, funding for Ukraine, and aid to the Zionist regime in "Israel" and other American allies across the world. This Trump surge indicates how American US policymaking continues to be hijacked by spoilers in Republican party and neo-cons which have opted to defang the Biden administration and push their bigoted agendas instead. This chaos is also indicative of where US politics is headed. As US Congressional history suggests, Republicans and Democrats have continued to degrade and downplay their rivals for political gain. For the Trump faction of the GOP, this Border Security proposal became an ideal opportunity to rob Joe Biden of his weak Presidential standing among the American people. For American nationalists, both on the left and the right, the proposal to add \$20 billion in additional enforcement on the US border with Mexico is ideal and fits in perfectly with Trump's rallying cry of 'building the wall' during his campaign promises and presidential statements. Yet in this case, Congressional politics is more about seeking electoral gains rather than religiously adhering to party stances. This chaos is ironic as the subject of immigration remains a major consideration for voters on both sides of the aisle in the United States particularly as underemployment reaches alarming levels in 2024. The influx of migrants which are fleeing persecution, drug cartels and violence remains a political talking point for the average American and is a frequent subject for Congressional bickering. What cannot be denied however, is that Mitch McConnell sought to include border security in the overall American national security funding package yet Democrats were quick to seize on this in 2024 by embracing the idea of stricter border enforcement. However, by picking up on Biden's vulnerabilities, the neo-cons in the GOP are seeking to exploit the President's declining approval rates and his controversial foreign policy to cement themselves as frontrunners under the Trump administration.

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## Growing support for Palestinians in West media

**P**RO-Palestinian support is building in the United States. Some 70 US cities, including Chicago and Seattle, have passed resolutions calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, despite facing immense pressure for adopting such brave and courageous positions against Israel's slaughter of Palestinians. Meanwhile, a California federal court ruled Israel's military campaign in Gaza "plausibly" amounts to genocide, but dismissed the case to stop American military support for Israel on grounds of jurisdiction. This unprecedented opposition to Israel is grudgingly reported by media organisations in the United States. Many outlets have sunk to a new low in their partisanship to Israel's globally denounced industrial-scale death and destruction of Palestinians in Gaza. The catastrophe in Gaza is covered by newspapers that need to fill space, but broadcasters have largely abandoned the starving millions of Gazans and embraced the cult figure of Donald Trump and his political peccadilloes. Editorials and opinion columns now blackball and defame pro-Palestinian advocates. Anyone who opposes Israel's violence is smeared as a Hamas supporter and an advocate of extremism. But there has also been pushback against those who imply pro-Palestinian supporters are anti-American and anti-patriotic. Lectures and sermons by US Muslims criticising Israel are feverishly denounced as anti-semitic. One would not be mistaken in thinking that support for Israel was part of the Pledge of Allegiance, if not for the fact that the pledge advocates "justice for all," which includes Palestinian Americans and others. Subtle media imagery and keywords suggesting the Middle East is a "troubled" or "difficult" area is another way to denounce Arabs - whether they are Christian or Muslim - as being incapable of governing themselves, while highlighting that Israel is the region's only democracy. Even pro-Palestinian Jews are not spared. If any of the language and negative descriptions used in today's media ecosystem were to be used against any other race, ethnic, religious group, or nationality it would spark moral outrage. But for too long, it has been open season to slander Arabs, Islam and Middle Eastern politics under the fig leaf of free speech in the US and Europe. New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, who frequently hoodwinks his audience into believing he operates with an air of evenhandedness despite being skillfully partisan, is exhibit number one. Friedman can no longer withhold his bile as Israel loses significant support worldwide as well as inside the United States. In a recent op-ed, his metaphor of choice was to liken the Middle East region to the animal kingdom. If Israel's choicest hostility is reserved for Iran for resisting its settler colonial policies, then Friedman joins Tel Aviv's choir by likening Iran to a wasp that parasitically feasts upon other organisms. Insect-like organisms, in his view, are those groups in the Middle East known as the Axis of Resistance who rally against Israeli aggression and US neo-imperial designs in the region. Units of these forces are now in Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, and Syria. The Axis of Resistance are the only forces that have militarily resisted (in mostly symbolic ways) to protest the genocidal Israeli assault on Gaza.

# Election 2024: Navigating political turbulence

Qamar Bashir



Political analysts are speculating that the same aggressive measures previously employed to coerce key figures and allies of Imran Khan into leaving PTI—prompting some to exit politics or join the newly established IPP—are now being applied to pressure elected candidates associated with PTI, despite their unique election symbols, to switch allegiance to PML(N). This strategy aims to consolidate PML(N)'s strength, ensuring it secures majority needed to form governments both at the center and in Punjab, thereby reshaping the political landscape to its advantage

**P**AKISTAN'S economic and financial turmoil persisted, despite stabilization efforts of the post-PTI government. The 2024 elections, instead of heralding stability, resulted in a split mandate, leaving no party capable of forming a strong government. This division has plunged the political landscape into chaos, surpassing current leadership's ability to manage. Consequently, it's been decided to temporarily take control to stabilize the nation economically and financially. Post-achievement of these goals, new elections will be called, offering the people another chance to elect a decisive government. This could be the text of the speech of the new martial law administrator, if we had some ambitious chief of army staff in the country. But nonetheless, the establishment, blaming civilian bureaucracy inefficient, sluggish and lacking discipline and innovation have taken control of important institutions of the country directly and indirectly. This is general perception, irrespective of right or wrong, that the establishment's influence extends to significant civilian roles and decision-making processes, indicating a hybrid governance system where the lines between military and civilian domains are blurred. The overwhelming victory of PTI in the 2024 elections, as interpreted by a prominent anchor, was seen not merely as a win for PTI or a loss for its competitors, but as a significant statement against the establishment. This perspective stems from the alleged hardships faced by PTI leaders, supporters, and the broader voter base, including attempts to undermine the party's former Chairman, his close allies, and the extensive network of its supporters. The anchor's comments highlight a public sentiment seeking accountability and change, reflecting a collective pushback against perceived injustices and the desire for a more equitable political landscape. The anchor's analysis suggests that the establishment's efforts to suppress PTI not only failed but also backfired, exacerbating the situation rather than resolving it. This persistence in employing the same failed strategies to overturn the people's mandate for PTI underscores a lack of adaptability and learning from past mistakes. He invoked a well-known adage to emphasize his point: when power fails to resolve an issue, the establishment's instinct is often to double down and apply even more force, leading to more significant failures. This cycle of using power ineffectively, rather than seeking alternative solutions or reevaluating strategies, highlights a critical flaw in handling crises and challenges, ultimately resulting in greater setbacks. The anchor posited that the ongoing conflict transcends a mere confrontation between the establishment and PTI or its leadership; it has escalated into a direct clash between the establishment and the Pakistani populace. This scenario is particularly alarming

given historical precedents of unrest, such as the turmoil in Sindh following the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, the enduring insurgency in Balochistan, and the sense of alienation in KP. Punjab, traditionally seen as aligned with the establishment, has also been alienated. The anchorperson highlighted the gravity of the situation, urging the establishment to reconsider its involvement in political matters and allow for a return to normalcy by stepping back from political interference. This call for a hands-off approach emphasizes the need for the political process to unfold naturally, without external manipulation. The critique extends to the harsh treatment of PTI leaders, including the incarceration of Imran Khan in multiple cases, which, according to PML(N) Punjab President Rana Sanaullah, played a significant role in PTI's surprising electoral success. This scenario underscores a critical moment for the country's governance, advocating for a reevaluation of the establishment's role in politics to foster a more democratic and unimpeded political environment. Political analysts are speculating that the same aggressive measures previously employed to coerce key figures and allies of Imran Khan into leaving PTI—prompting some to exit politics or join the newly established IPP—are now being applied to pressure elected candidates associated with PTI, despite their unique election symbols, to switch allegiance to PML(N). This strategy aims to consolidate PML(N)'s strength, ensuring it secures the majority needed to form governments both at the center and in Punjab, thereby reshaping the political landscape to its advantage. Analysts are highlighting instances where Independents, once affiliated with PTI, are now aligning with PML(N), exemplified by Wasim Qadir's recent shift. This move has been notably endorsed by Maryam Nawaz given her previous condemnations of political defections and horse trading, underscoring a complex political landscape where allegiances are fluid and often contradict previous stances against such practices. Sardar Latif Khosa vehemently criticized Wasim Qadir's switch to PML(N) as "shameless, heinous, and disgusting," cautioning him about potential severe legal repercussions and voter backlash. Khosa underscored that Qadir's election victory stemmed not from his own credentials but from his association with Imran Khan, implying that voters' loyalty was to the party and its leadership rather than to individual candidates. Sardar Latif Khosa highlighted significant risks, both political and economic, if PTI, which, according to Form-45, holds a majority in the national and Punjab assemblies, is barred from forming a government. He emphasized that any loss of faith in the electoral process could drive the populace to seek alternative means of expressing their discontent, frustration,

and distress. Sardar Latif Khosa made it clear that if the state continues to obstruct PTI from forming the government, PTI would opt to be the opposition rather than exiting the assemblies. He affirmed that PTI intends to vigorously pursue its agenda from this position while simultaneously employing every constitutional, legal, and political avenue available to reclaim the seats it alleges were unjustly taken. Should PTI be denied its rightful representation, the nation could plunge into severe political turmoil, further exacerbating the fragile economic situation. In such a scenario, forming a government might only be feasible through a PML(N) and PPP alliance. However, this coalition could lead the country into another predicament due to the stark differences in their ideologies, visions, and governance approaches. Such an alliance, with each party pulling in different directions, could result in a weak and ineffective government, unable to implement the necessary and tough decisions required to steer the country back on a path of stability and growth. A coalition between PML(N) and PPP, reminiscent of their brief alliance in 2009, may face inherent instability due to their contrasting political ideologies and governance styles. Such an arrangement, potentially more tenable under Shahbaz Sharif's leadership, could still falter quickly, especially if Nawaz Sharif takes the helm. This precarious political landscape does not bode well for the parties involved, the nation, or its citizens. Instead, it could inadvertently serve the interests of the establishment, enabling it to further entrench its influence over critical state institutions. This dominance allows for easier manipulation of the state's foundational pillars and the indirect imposition of its agenda, maintaining control while appearing to remain in the background. The evolving political narrative of Pakistan post-Election 2024 underscores a pivotal moment in its democratic journey. Amidst the turmoil, a stark reminder emerges: the essence of democracy lies in the will of its people and the integrity of its institutions. The current impasse, marked by allegations of manipulation, defections, and the establishment's overreach, not only tests the resilience of Pakistan's political fabric but also presents an opportunity for introspection and reform. For a nation to thrive, it must foster an environment where political discourse is driven by policy, not power plays; where governance is inclusive, not coerced; and where the voices of its citizens shape its destiny. As Pakistan stands at this crossroads, the path it chooses will not only define its democratic credentials but also its legacy in the annals of history.

— Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)  
Former Press Minister at Embassy  
of Pakistan to France  
Former MD, SRBC

## Unpacking Iran's Role in the Yemeni Conflict

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The Houthi insurgency escalated in 2014 when the group took control of the Yemeni capital, Sanaa and subsequently expanded its territorial control. This led to a military intervention by a coalition of Arab states led by Saudi Arabia in support of the Yemeni government. The conflict has resulted in a devastating humanitarian...

**T**HE Houthi movement and its relationship with Iran play a significant role in the complex geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. The Houthi movement also known as Ansar Allah is a Shiite rebel group based in Yemen. The group originated in the 1990s led by the Houthi family, and has been involved in a series of conflicts with the Yemeni government. The Houthi movement is primarily composed of Zaidi Shia Muslims, a minority sect in Yemen. The group has historical grievances related to political and economic marginalization, as well as religious differences. Over the years, the Houthi rebels have clashed with the Yemeni government and their grievances have evolved into a broader struggle for power, autonomy, and influence in Yemen. Iran's involvement in the Houthi insurgency is a contentious and debated issue. While Iran has provided political and ideological support to the Houthi movement, the extent of its military assistance is a subject of contention. Iran and the Houthis share a common Shiite identity and Tehran has used the Houthi rebellion as a means to exert influence in the Arabian Peninsula and counter Saudi

Arabia's influence in the region. Iran has been accused by regional actors, including Saudi Arabia and the United States, of providing financial aid, weapons and training to the Houthi rebels. The transfer of ballistic missiles and other military support has been a particular point of concern for those critical of Iran's role in the conflict. However, Iran has denied direct military involvement, emphasizing its political and humanitarian support for the Houthi cause. The Houthi insurgency escalated in 2014 when the group took control of the Yemeni capital, Sanaa and subsequently expanded its territorial control. This led to a military intervention by a coalition of Arab states led by Saudi Arabia in support of the Yemeni government. The conflict has resulted in a devastating humanitarian crisis, with widespread displacement, famine and a collapse of basic services. The Yemeni conflict and Iran's alleged involvement with the Houthi rebels have contributed to heightened tensions in the broader Middle East. The situation has exacerbated regional rivalries, particularly the longstanding Saudi-Iranian rivalry and has drawn in other actors, including the United States

which supports the Saudi-led coalition. The recent airstrikes led by the United States in Yemen against Houthi elements were seen as necessary to protect international shipping in the Red Sea. This waterway is crucial for global economic stability. The United States felt compelled to respond forcefully to attacks by Iranian allies on American military elements in Iraq and Syria. Failing to do so might have undermined the credibility of U.S. warnings about the consequences of such activities. However, while these strikes were deemed necessary, they are not considered a complete solution. The Houthis, originally a Yemeni tribal group, are now part of Iran's broader network of allies, including Hezbollah, Hamas and Iranian militias in Iraq. Despite the impact of the U.S. strikes on the Houthis, the larger Iranian network remains largely intact. The challenge for the U.S. extends beyond addressing maritime attacks; it involves countering Iran's ability to wield influence through its regional allies and proxies. As long as Iran can sustain and enhance this network, strategically important regions like the Red Sea will remain vulnerable and the U.S. cannot defend everything.

## Briefs

US, UK, EU  
have no right  
to interfere  
in internal...

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The prime minister informed the journalists that in 2018, the entire result-gathering process took 66 hours; however, in 2024, it was completed in 36 hours — however, the official Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) deadline was around nine hours. Kakar noted that Pakistan has its law and will deal with it accordingly. "We did not ask a judicial inquiry in Capitol Hill riots. It is not for us to demand it and it is not for them. For me, the demand of a PTI individual than the US, UK, and EU combined." The premier noted that these nations have their own issues in elections, but that's not for Pakistan to comment on, and neither should these countries issue statements on Islamabad's domestic affairs.

Tareen quit  
politics,  
Siraj steps  
down as...

FROM PAGE 01  
politico-religious party, Sirajul Haq tendered his resignation citing "failures to get the targeted electoral results." The Siraj-led party failed to win a single NA seat, however, it grabbed five provincial seats. Qaiser Sharif, JI's Central Secretary Information of, confirmed the development regarding the party chief's resignation which he tendered after taking responsibility for disappointing electoral performance in the general polls. Sharif said that JI's Secretary General Ameerul Azeem summoned an emergency session of the central shura on February 17 at the party's headquarters — Mansooria Lahore. "The central shura's session will commence at 10am and mull over the situation [post-resignation of the JI emir]."

GDA rejects  
poll results,  
announces  
vacating seats

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Describing the election as "anti-state", Pagara drew parallels with the historical 1971 elections, where he claimed that the losing side had refused to recognise the mandate. He highlighted that he had faced pressure to dissolve the GDA before the election and had even been offered an alliance with PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari. However, he rejected these proposals, asserting his commitment to the GDA's independent political stance. Commenting on the alleged manipulation of results, Pagara stated, "All this is not the work of the ROs but of someone else," indicating his belief that external forces played a role in shaping the election outcome. GDA leader Safdar Abbasi echoed Pir Pagara's sentiments and announced plans for a protest against election rigging and result changes. Abbasi mentioned that the protest is scheduled for Friday at 11am at Hyderabad Bypass, emphasising their commitment to peaceful demonstrations until transparent elections are conducted. "We will not let the next government run... we will continue to protest peacefully until transparent elections are held... we will expand the scope of the protest," affirmed Abbasi, underlining the GDA's determination to challenge the election results and demand electoral integrity.

Two  
terrorists  
killed in  
Mardan

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numerous terrorist activities in the area. Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area. Local populace appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to security forces in eliminating the menace of terrorism.

Khawar Hyat Khan Junior  
c'ship continues in capital

45 players boys & Girls from Kazakhstan, Turkey, USA, Hongkong, China, Russia, Belarus, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Romania, Switzerland, Sri Lanka and Thailand are participating in Championships



DNA



the Championships. 27 Pakistani boys &amp; girls are also participating in the Championships.



Varaksa (RUS) 6-1,6-1; Hamza Roman (PAK) bt Par Chandragholic(THA) 6-0,6-0; Jiwan Park (KOR) bt Doruk Elbirlik(TUR) 6-2,6-1; Xiuyuan Guo (CHN) bt Amir Mazari(PAK) 6-1,6-2; Ju Hun Choo(KOR) bt M. Salar Khan (PAK) 6-2,6-1; Akmal Arabdjanov (UZB) bt Kaigaoge(CHN) 6-0,6-2; Ilya Kryukov (RUS) bt Asad Zaman (PAK) 6-1,3-6,7-6(3); Howard Chan (HKG) bt M. Haider Ali Rizwan(PAK) 3-6,6-3,6-2; Dong Hyeon Euom(KOR) bt Shehryar Anees (PAK) 6-1,6-0; Hamid Israr (PAK) bt Narathip Rueangsri(THA) 6-2,4-6,6-0.

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tennis Federation is pleased to inform you that the ITF Pakistan Khawar Hyat Khan Memorial World Junior Championship Leg-1 continued at PTF SDA Tennis Complex Islamabad. 45 players boys & Girls from Kazakhstan, Turkey, USA, Hongkong, China, Russia, Belarus, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Romania, Switzerland, Sri Lanka and Thailand are participating in

Quetta Gladiators remove  
Sarfaraz Ahmed as captain

DNA

KARACHI: Quetta Gladiators have decided to remove Sarfaraz Ahmed as captain ahead of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season nine, owner Nadeem Omer confirmed to media reporters. "Sarfaraz wants to take a break from captaincy with new head coach Shane Watson set to decide who will lead the side after consulting with the team management," Nadeem said. Reportedly, South Africa's Rilee Rossouw and Pakistan's middle-order bat-

ter Saud Shakeel are the two contenders to replace Sarfaraz. The official announcement will be made in the upcoming days. It is worth mentioning that Quetta played three finals under Sarfaraz's leadership and also clinched the title in 2019. Meanwhile, Nadeem is happy to see Watson coming back to Gladiators as a coach and wishes to bring Kevin Pietersen too. "The old family of Quetta Gladiators has started coming together again. Pietersen should also come with Quetta Gladiators in some role," he said. Quetta Gladiators'

PSL 9 squad: Rilee Rossouw (Platinum), Mohammad Wasim, Jason Roy, Wanindu Hasaranga (all Diamond), Sarfaraz Ahmed (Brand Ambassador) Abrar Ahmed, Mohammad Hasnain (all Gold), Mohammad Amir, Will Smeed (Silver) Saud Shakeel, Sajjad Ali, Usman Qadir, Adil Naz, Khawaja Nafay, Akeal Hosen, Sohail Khan, Omair Yousuf, Sherfane Rutherford, Bismillah Khan (partial replacement for Wanindu Hasaranga), Sufiyan Muqem

and Rawalpindi — with the final of the event taking place at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi on March 18. Like the previous edition, the PSL 9 will take place in two legs with Multan Cricket Stadium and Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium hosting 14 matches between them from February 17 to 27. The action then moves to Rawalpindi's Pindi Cricket Stadium and Karachi's National Bank Stadium, where 16 matches will be held from February 28 to March 12. The event will then move to Karachi in its entirety for the playoffs.

Nayza Armwrestling  
Season 2 advances  
to Grand Finale

ISLAMABAD: The enthralling second phase of the Nayza Armwrestling Championship Season 2 concluded at Nayza Amaan Square setting the stage for a grand finale on February 24. The grand finale promises to be a thrilling contest with a double elimination format, featuring top contenders from the initial rounds across various weight categories. In the second phase competitions, emerging victorious in the -60 kg youth category were Murtaza, Sajjad, Shams, Danish, and Mian Ahmed, all securing their spots in the finale. The -75 kg youth category saw Haider King, Abdullah Nisar, Muhammad Umair Iqbal, and Moosa Butt advance, showcasing their strength and skill. In the -85 kg division, Hammad Butt and Hamza Butt earned their places in the final round, while the 85+ kg category will see Shazil Ali and Muzammil Khawar vying for the title. Additionally, Usman Ghani triumphed in the 80+ kg senior category, adding to the roster of talented athletes set to compete in the championship's culmination. With contenders now preparing for the ultimate challenge, the Grand Finale of the Nayza Armwrestling Championship Season 2 is poised to be a spectacular display of power, technique, and determination. —Agencies

Kenyan marathon  
Kiptum dies  
in car crash

NAIROBI : Tributes poured in on Monday for Kelvin Kiptum, the Kenyan running prodigy and world record holder in the marathon, who tragically lost his life in a car accident at the young age of 24. Kiptum, who was viewed as a top contender for the Paris 2024 Olympics, was driving from Kaptagat to Eldoret in Kenya's Rift Valley late on Sunday when his vehicle veered off the road and collided with a tree around 11 p.m. local time. The accident claimed the lives of Kiptum and his Rwandan coach, Gervais Hakizimana, while a female passenger, Sharon Chepkurui Kosgei, sustained serious injuries, according to police reports. According to an official police statement from Elgeyo Marakwet County, where the crash occurred, Kiptum lost control of his vehicle, veering off-road into a ditch before striking a large tree. The impact was fatal for Kiptum and Hakizimana, while Kosgei was rushed to the hospital for treatment. Images circulating in Kenyan media depicted the wreckage of the vehicle, showing the extent of the damage, with the windshield shattered and the roof and doors severely mangled. Kiptum burst onto the marathon scene when he ran a world record of 2:00:35 in Chicago in October, shaving 34 seconds off fellow Kenyan star Eliud Kipchoge's previous record. Kiptum also won his other two races — his debut in Valencia in 2022 and a follow-up in London the following year. Kipchoge said he was "deeply saddened" by the death of the "rising star" who surpassed his record. "An athlete who had a whole life ahead of him to achieve incredible greatness," Kipchoge said in a statement on X. Kenya's President William Ruto described Kiptum as "one of the world's finest sportsmen who broke barriers to secure a marathon record." "An extraordinary sportsman has left an extraordinary mark on the globe," he said on X. Incredible Athlete From herding goats just a decade ago, Kiptum had announced he would attempt in April to become the first man to run an official marathon under the mythical two-hour mark. — Agencies

Clarke joins HBL PSL  
9 commentary team

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Former Australian captain Michael Clarke is all set to make his HBL PSL debut behind the mic as he joins a star-studded commentary panel. 42-year-old Clarke has been an active broadcaster after hanging up his boots as a player. The foreign commentators' roster involves the dynamic Ian Bishop, known for his insightful and gripping commentary, along with Danny Morrison, Simon Doull, Pommie Mbangwa, Mark Butcher, Dominic Cork and Mike Haysman. Bishop will return to the HBL PSL for the second time after

having called the 2017 season. Morrison is a well-known name among the local fans and a regular voice in the tournament while Doull has made trips to Pakistan not just for HBL PSL but also for various international series. Mbangwa will return after having called the 2022 edition of the HBL PSL. Butcher, Cork, and Haysman are also synonymous names with the HBL PSL and they'll light up the tournament with their vocals and thrilling calls with the mic in hand. The Pakistani commentators also make up an exciting lineup with Ramiz Raja, Waqar Younis, Bazid Khan, and Aamir Sohail joining Urooj Mumtaz, Sana Mir and Marina Iqbal.

Tariq Saeed and Ali Younis will call the action in Urdu. Erin Holland and Zainab Abbas will be the presenters during the course of the HBL PSL 9. The HBL PSL production is set to maintain its standards of broadcasting this season as well. A total of 30 high-definition cameras, including the buggy cam will stream high-quality action to the HBL PSL fans around the world. Spidercam will not only bring dynamic angles to the TV audiences but it has also been upgraded with a microphone and speaker enhancement for conducting on-field player interviews during the matches. The DRS technology will also be available throughout the HBL PSL while drone cameras will be used to add to the quality of streaming. The fans will see a change in the on-screen graphics during the matches with the integration of revamped augmented reality graphics and player video headshots.

## Iga aims to win Qatar Open

*Swiatek also shed light on the pressures that come with being the top-ranked player on the WTA Tour*

PARIS : Iga Swiatek is aiming to win a third straight Qatar Open title this week but the world number brushed aside the notion that she was entering the tournament with the mindset of a double defending champion as this year's event is a "totally different story". The four-time Grand Slam winner, who is once again the top contender to lift the trophy in Doha, told report-

ers on Sunday previous editions of the event had no effect on this one. "I learned from last year that there is no point on focusing on defending anything, so it's a totally different chapter and totally different story," said Swiatek ahead of her opening match against Romania's Sorana Cirstea. "I'm going to take it step by step and not really think about what happened last year or two years ago, because we are all at different points in our lives. "It would be nice if I could play well here, but I already learned that you can't expect a lot in tennis because it's going to surprise you."

Swiatek also shed light on the pressures that come with being the top-ranked player on the WTA Tour. "I feel like because I'm at the top of the WTA I should have some standards," the 22-year-old said. "Sometimes it's a little bit harder to kind of take it easy, because you feel like everybody is chasing you. "There is some stuff that's changed because of the position that you're at, but on the other hand, I always try to remind myself that I'm still the same person no matter what my ranking is and no matter what the number next to my name is." — Agencies

Ivory Coast win 2023 AFCON after beating Nigeria 2-1  
Kessie, Haller complete comeback for team's victory

SPORTS DESK

ABIDJAN: Ivory Coast won the 2023 CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) after beating Nigeria 2-1 in the final. Nigeria's skipper William Troost-Ekong gave his team the lead with a well-executed header seven minutes before half-time at Alassane Ouattara Stadium. Nigerian goalie Stanley Nwabali and Ivory Coast captain Serge Aurier were both shown yellow cards in the 53rd minute after an argument. Nwabali made several critical saves to prevent Ivory Coast from equalizing. But despite his best efforts, Ivorian midfielder Franck Kessie's bouncing header from the center of the box following a corner equalized the score in the 62nd minute. Ivorian attacker Sebastien Haller's spectacular bicycle kick missed Nigeria's goal by inches in the 74th minute. The Elephants of Ivory Coast came from behind to complete a dramatic recovery and redemption on home soil at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations as they claimed a third continental title by beating Nigeria 2-1 in Abidjan on Sunday. The Super Eagles had taken a first-half lead, against the run of play, through their captain

William Troost-Ekong, but goals from Franck Kessie and Sebastian Haller condemned Nigeria to their fifth defeat in eight appearances in AFCON finals. For striker Haller, and for even the most ardent Nigeria fan, it was a fitting finale to a journey back to full health having been diagnosed with testicular cancer in July 2022. Ivory Coast were on the brink of

elimination in the group stage, for which Haller was injured, and lost their coach Jean-Louis Gasset as a result. Their victory secured against a Nigerian side that were heavy favourites, also marked the first win by any hosts since Egypt claimed the crown in 2006. Let the Elephants' party begin The triumph, all the sweeter for so many side stories,

left the people of the West African nation, gripped by a five-year civil war until 2007, dancing long into the night. Heavy traffic jams with cars blaring horns and the sound of vuvuzelas, a horn instrument blown by football fans, took over a 3km radius of the Ebimpe area of Abidjan. "No team was better and we deserve to win against Nigeria. We are ready to party all night long," a sweaty Maimouna Yaya added. On the pitch, Nigeria had taken the lead through Troost-Ekong's powerful first-half header before Kessie equalised with his aerial effort from a corner just past the hour-mark for the hosts. Haller, who returned to playing in January 2023 after four rounds of chemotherapy and surgery in November 2022, steered Simon Adingra's cross into the net to break Nigerian hearts with less than 10 minutes to play. "It's the power of the group and the mindset that put us through," said Ivorian man of the match Adingra. "We had some challenging moments but we rescued ourselves, although it wasn't easy. The mental fortitude saw us restore our chances and do what we achieved today. "Our people deserve this victory because they stood with us even when many thought we were dead."

JI's Hafiz  
Naeem  
withdraws...

FROM PAGE 01  
political battle to reclaim all the seats that his party lost due to rigging. "You cannot change the people's mind through fake mandate," he said. In the February 8 general elections, he won the Sindh Assembly seat PS-129 from Karachi Central. However, he said it was the PTI-supported candidate who won on PS-129, not him. "I do not want a seat in charity. It should be given to the one who has the right to it," he said. Naeem said the PTI candidate received more votes, so he was accepting PTI's victory and mandate. He added that he had enough dignity within himself to accept that the independent candidate had won on PS-129. The JI leader also announced that he would not take oath as an MPA on the seat. As per the Form 45, the PTI affiliated candidate won PS-129, hence he should take oath on that seat, he said. He said according to the ECP's Form 47, he bagged 26,000 votes, whereas, he bagged 30,464 votes as per Form 45s.

Some  
people want  
to repeat...

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During the protests, the miscreants targeted the civil and military installations including — Jinnah House and the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. The military termed May 9 "Black Day" and decided to try the protesters under the Army Act. "Holding peaceful protests is everyone's right but if incidents of May 9 are repeated then strict action will be taken," said Naqvi while taking the media after inaugurating a drug storage facility in Lahore. He also assured that no one would be stopped from holding peaceful protests. The caretaker CM also shared that the decision to shut down mobile phone services in the country was taken by the federal government, adding that his caretaker government served their time as an obligation. Naqvi also stated that anyone who has any objections to the election results can reach out to the related forums. People across the country went to polls on February 8 amid the suspension of mobile phone services across the country.

PML-N  
undermining  
democracy...

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candidate from Lahore's NA-128 constituency, on Monday asserted that those who once advocated for the integrity of the vote were now aiming to seize power by undermining the very essence of democracy. The senior lawyer, while speaking to media outside the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) office, alleged that the election was rigged, stating that he was winning by a wide margin according to the Form 45, but his victory was turned into defeat the following day. Raja called this (rigging) an insult to the millions of people who used their franchise right on the polling day, recalling that he had been forcibly removed from the office of the RO (returning officer) so that the results could be manipulated. "What kind of magic turned a lead of 0.1 million into 12,000," the electoral candidate questioned, asserting that the election was rigged and "we know how it was done".

Pakistan  
values ties  
with Iran

FROM PAGE 01  
Iran Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam in his speech said Pakistan was the first country to recognize the Islamic Republic of Iran after the victory of the revolution. The ties between the two countries have been established in such a way that there has been no territorial and border dispute between the two, and now we have strong relations in various fields. He said, having been built upon such solid foundations and given Iran's foreign policy to accord priority to neighbors, ephemeral incidents can never fluctuate the relations between the two countries.

## Briefs

## Zelensky appoints 4 new military commanders

KYIV : Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced the appointment of four new military commanders, a shake-up he earlier said was necessary. According to a decree published by the presidency on Sunday, Zelensky appointed Oleksandr Pavliuk as the new commander of Ground Forces, after the post was vacated by Oleksandr Syrskiy. Last week, Syrskiy was appointed as the new commander-in-chief after the dismissal of Valerii Zaluzhnyi. Separate decrees also announced Yuriy Sodal, Ihor Skibiuk and Ihor Plahuta as the new commanders of Ukraine's Combined Forces, Airborne Assault Forces and Territorial Defense Forces, respectively. Zelensky had declared the need for a "reset" in the country's leadership, increasing speculation over a large reorganization of the military command as the war with Russia is set to enter its third year.—Agencies

## Turkish army eliminates 4 terrorists in Syria

ANKARA : Four people affiliated with the PKK terrorist group's Syria wing YPG were eliminated in northern Syria, the Defense Ministry announced on Monday. The ministry said in a social media post that the terrorists were preparing for an attack on the "Euphrates Shield region." Euphrates Shield is the name of a cross-border military operation by Türkiye conducted between August 2016 and March 2017. The operation, in coordination with the Syrian opposition army, cleared an area in Syria's north of the Daesh and YPG terrorist groups. Since 2016, Ankara has launched a trio of successful counterterrorism operations across its border in northern Syria, including Olive Branch in 2018 and Peace Spring in 2019, to prevent the formation of a terror corridor and enable the peaceful settlement of residents. PKK terrorists often hide out in northern Iraq to plot cross-border attacks in Türkiye and northern Syria. YPG terrorists have targeted locals and Turkish soldiers present in the region to help maintain order and stability. In its more than 40-year terror campaign against Türkiye, the PKK — listed as a terrorist organization by Türkiye, the U.S. and the EU — has been responsible for the deaths of more than 40,000 people, including women, children and infants.—Agencies

## RSF imposed telecoms blackout in Sudan

CAIRO : A communications network blackout in Sudan, blamed on the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, has hobbled aid delivery and left the war-weary population of almost 50 million unable to make payments or contact the outside world. The RSF has been fighting Sudan's army for control of the country since April in a war that has killed thousands, displaced almost 8 million, and sparked warnings of famine. Four industry sources told media reporters that the RSF began shutting down the networks on Feb. 5, completing the blackout two days later. After 10 months of conflict, the RSF controls most of the capital Khartoum and some of Sudan's infrastructure that is based there, including the headquarters of the telecom providers. The RSF did not respond to requests for comment. An RSF source said on Feb. 5 the paramilitary had nothing to do with the outages. The sources said that RSF soldiers had threatened the blackout unless engineers restored service to the western Darfur region, which the RSF controls and which has experienced a blackout for months. A telecom industry official blamed the situation there on lack of fuel and dangerous working conditions. Devices hooked up to Elon Musk's Starlink satellite internet system have proliferated, despite a government order against them.—Agencies

## South Africa's freedom tied to Palestine's: Ramaphosa

'We are following in the footsteps of Nelson Mandela, who said to us and taught us that ...our freedom will not be complete until the freedom of the Palestinians is also achieved,' says president Ramaphosa

## NEWS DESK



JOHANNESBURG : South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has said the majority of his country's people, as well as the government and the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party, support the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom. "We are following in the footsteps of Nelson Mandela, who said to us and taught us that ...our freedom will not be complete until the freedom of the Palestinians is also achieved," Ramaphosa told soccer fans at the "Football for Hu-

manity" match between Palestine and South Africa in Cape Town on Sunday. Ramaphosa said South Africa cannot be considered fully free unless Palestine achieves freedom. "So we, too, are not entirely free until the Palestinians are free... we will stand by them and will struggle with them (and) that's why we went to International Court of Justice (ICJ)," he said amid loud cheers from fans at the Athlone Stadium in Cape Town. South Africa hosted the Palestine national team in Cape Town for the Football for Humanity game, which pitted them against South Africa's Western Cape XI invitational team. The game ended with one goal scored by the hosts. The next solidarity match, titled the "Freedom Cup," will take place at the same venue on Feb. 18. In late 2023, South Africa filed a case at the ICJ in The Hague, accusing Israel of failing to uphold its obligations under the 1948 Genocide Convention. In its interim ruling in January, the top UN court found South Africa's claims plausible. It ordered Israel's government to cease genocidal acts and to take steps to ensure that civilians in Gaza receive humanitarian assistance.

## Dutch court halts F-35 parts delivery to Israel

LONDON: The Netherlands must stop the delivery of F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel within seven days, a Dutch appeal court ordered Monday. The verdict, delivered by an appeals court on Monday, said there is a "clear risk" that the parts the Netherlands is exporting are being used in "serious violations of international humanitarian law". The court said it is likely that Israel was using its F-35s in attacks on Gaza, which are leading to unacceptable civilian casualties. It dismissed the Dutch state's argument that it did not have to do a new check on the permit for the exports. The ruling followed an appeal by Amnesty International and Oxfam against a lower court decision last year that rejected their argument that supplying the parts contributed to alleged "contributing to wide-scale and serious violations of humanitarian law by Israel in Gaza". Human rights organisations have accused the government of being complicit in war crimes by maintaining the deliveries. In December, a court dismissed the case. It said the government had a large degree of freedom in weighing political and policy issues on arms exports. However, that was dismissed by the appeals court, which said political and economic concerns did not trump the clear risk of violations of the laws of war. The appeals court instead ordered the government to block all exports of the fighter jet parts to Israel within seven days. "It is undeniable that there is a clear risk that the exported F-35 parts are used in serious violations of international humanitarian law," Judge Bas Boele said in the ruling, eliciting cheers from several people in the courtroom. srael has repeatedly denied allegations that it is committing war crimes during its military operation in the enclave. However, the International Court of Justice in January called on Israel to guard against any activities in the enclave that could constitute genocide. The Ministry of Health in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip on Monday said at least 28,340 people have been killed in the besieged territory during the war, including 164 in the past 24 hours. A total of 67,984 people have been wounded since the start of the hostilities on October 7 after Hamas killed about 1,100 people and took 240 or so captive in an attack on Israel. Dutch authorities said last year that it was unclear whether they had the power to intervene in the deliveries. The Netherlands houses one of several regional warehouses from which US-made aircraft parts are distributed to countries on request. The Dutch facility has supplied Israel with at least one shipment since the start of the war. Government lawyers also argued that Israel could easily procure parts for its F-35s elsewhere if the Dutch facility did not supply them. The court ruling ordering the government to halt the exports can be appealed by the Dutch authorities.

## NATO can't be dependent on the whims of a president: Borrell

## WEB DESK

BRUSSELS : NATO "cannot be an alliance a la carte," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said after Donald Trump downplayed his commitment to NATO's security umbrella in Europe if he becomes US president again. Trump ignited a political firestorm and sent a chill through the United States' European allies on Saturday when he said he would "encourage" Russia to attack any NATO country that does not meet financial obligations. "Let's be serious. NATO cannot be an a la carte military alliance, it cannot be a military alliance that works depending on the humour of the president of the US" day to day, Borrell said. "It exists or it not exists," he said, adding that he was not going to keep commenting on "any silly idea" emerging from the US presidential election campaign. France,

Germany, Poland to launch Ukraine anti-disinformation drive. The top diplomats of France, Germany and Poland were set to launch a joint initiative to fight Russian disinformation attacks as Moscow's war on Ukraine enters a third year. French Foreign Minister Stéphane Sejourne said at the weekend that France, Germany and Poland would unveil a new cooperation agreement to combat foreign disinformation operations, particularly those originating in Russia. "Our three countries have been victims of the same destabilisation strategy," Sejourne said in an interview with French regional daily Ouest-France published on Saturday. Sejourne said that the three countries would reveal "the attacks that have been committed," adding such disinformation attacks were designed to divide public opinion. Russian exports to Europe down two-thirds in 2023

Russian exports to Europe dropped by more than two-thirds in 2023, as the EU drastically cut its purchases of Russian oil and gas, Russia's customs agency said. EU countries have halted the vast majority of their energy purchases from Russia in a bid to heap economic pressure on Moscow over its military offensive against Ukraine. Russian exports to Europe dropped 68 percent in 2023 to \$84.9 billion, the Interfax news agency cited Russia's federal customs agency as saying. Meanwhile, exports to Asia — which has replaced Europe as the country's main energy client — were up 5.6 percent to \$306.6 billion, the agency said. Poland's Tusk heads to Paris, Berlin as security concerns, Trump loom large. Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk travels to France and Germany as the three European Union members seek to bind

closer in the face of mounting security risks and concerns at the possible return to the US presidency of Donald Trump. With the war in Ukraine soon to enter its third year, Trump sparked outrage among Western partners on Sunday after suggesting the United States might not protect NATO allies who are not spending enough on defence from a potential Russian offensive. Warsaw, Paris and Berlin see EU unity on defence and a ramping up of the 27-member states' support for Ukraine as crucial at a time when the US backing of Kiev is wavering amid political infighting in Washington. Moldova says it found fragments of Russian drone near border with Ukraine. Moldova said it found fragments of a Russian drone near its border with Ukraine, as the conflict between Moscow and Kiev is set to enter its third year.

## UK lawmakers warn Rwanda plan violates human rights

LONDON : The UK government's latest legislation to revive its controversial plan to send migrants to Rwanda is "not compatible" with the country's rights obligations, a watchdog panel of British lawmakers warned. The ruling Conservatives introduced the so-called Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill late last year, shortly after the Supreme Court ruled that deporting asylum seekers to Kigali is illegal under international law. If passed after ongoing scrutiny in both Houses of Parliament, the legislation would compel UK judges to treat Rwanda as a safe third country. It would also give government ministers powers to disregard sections of international and British human rights legislation. But after a detailed review, parliament's own Joint Committee on Human Rights said in a new report that it had various concerns. "By denying access to a court to challenge the safety of Rwanda the Bill is not compatible with the UK's international obligations," the committee concluded in its 52-page report. It noted the proposed law appeared incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights and the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, in particular, as well as domestic rights law. The committee, which features five Conservative lawmakers among its 12 members, warned enacting it held many pitfalls, including "undermining the rights-compliant culture that should exist in all public bodies" in the UK. Globally, the law also "risks damaging" Britain's hard-earned reputation for rights protections and "encouraging other states who are less respectful of the international legal order." Meanwhile, the report criticised allowing ministers rather than judges to determine whether a country like Rwanda is safe or not.—APP

## Bahraini hackers target US Fifth Fleet

MANAMA : Bahraini hackers have penetrated into the systems of the US Navy's Fifth Fleet and gained access to confidential documents. The hacking group al-Toufan (Flood) Team carried out an operation against the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, which is endangering maritime navigation in West Asia.

The group said that it had obtained documents containing pictures and detailed maps from inside the American military base in Bahrain. It released a small part of the documents, saying, "What we have is greater, and it will reach those [who are] concerned and support ... the operations of the Axis of Resistance against the American Axis of Evil." The leakage is for "the heroes of the valiant and honorable resistance in Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq, and the righteous martyrs ... on the road to Jerusalem (al-Quds)," it added. Tensions have ratcheted up in West Asia due to the United States' support for Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, which has killed at least 28,176 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 67,784 others since October 7. Resistance groups, in retaliation, have launched attacks on bases housing US occupation forces in Iraq and Syria.—APP

## Musk ordered to testify in SEC probe

WASHINGTON : A.U.S. judge has ordered tech billionaire Elon Musk to comply with a subpoena to answer questions from regulators regarding his purchases of Twitter shares in 2022, giving the two sides a week to agree on a date and location for the interview. The order comes after Musk, who beamed up his stake in Twitter — now called X — before buying the company for \$44 billion, did not show up for a scheduled deposition in September with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), according to a legal filing. "The court grants the SEC's application to enforce the subpoena," the decision by California judge Laurel Beeler, published on Saturday and seen by Agence France-Presse (AFP), stated. The billionaire boss and the SEC now have a week to agree on a time and place for Musk to give testimony, it added. The SEC investigation pertains to all of Musk's purchases of Twitter stock in 2022 as well as his statements and filings with market regulators, court documents stated. Musk took part in two half-day depositions in July with the SEC, which told the court it has since received "thousands of documents" that have raised questions they want him to answer.—Agencies

## Türkiye's 1st astronaut arrives back home

ANKARA : Türkiye's first astronaut arrived back home to a hero welcome on Monday, just days after he returned to Earth after successfully completing the nation's inaugural space mission. Alper Gezeravc was greeted by bouquet-laden children at Ankara's Esenboğa Airport as he returned from a three-week mission to the International Space Station (ISS). In return, he handed out Turkish flags he had carried with him into space. The SpaceX Dragon spacecraft carrying Gezeravc and three other members splashed down into the Atlantic off the coast of Florida on Friday. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has closely followed Gezeravc's mission, declaring it a "new symbol of a growing, stronger and assertive Türkiye," after the country marked its centenary last year. Erdo has spoken several times to Gezeravc since he left for Florida to prepare for the mission. They were expected to meet in person later on Monday. Türkiye celebrated Gezeravc's launch from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Jan. 19 on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. A former fighter pilot and captain for Turkish Airlines (THY), he became the first person from his country to fly to space.—Agencies

## Ukraine plan to produce long-range drones in 2024

KYIV : Ukraine is planning to produce thousands of long-range drones capable of deep strikes into Russia in 2024 and already has up to 10 companies making drones that can reach Moscow and St. Petersburg, the country's digital minister said. Mykhailo Fedorov spoke about the wartime drone industry he has championed in an interview in Kyiv in which he revealed new details about the sector, after a spate of Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian oil facilities in recent weeks. "The category of long-range kamikaze drones is growing, with a range of 300, 500, 700 and 1,000 kilometers. Two years ago, this category did not exist ... at all," he told media reporters. Fedorov, 33, has been at the heart of Ukraine's effort to nurture private military startups to innovate and build up the drone industry as the war goes into its third year and Ukraine seeks new ways to fight back against well-dug-in Russian forces. The recent series of strikes on oil facilities, he said, reflected the government's progress in rapidly deregulating the drone market and increasing funding for it, with the state acting as a venture investor. Some \$2.5 million in grants were allocated to military tech startups via the BRAVE1 initiative set up by the government last year, an amount set to be increased roughly tenfold in 2024, he said. "We will fight to increase the financing even more," he added.—DNA



MINSK: Ambassador of Pakistan in Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan met with Foreign Minister of Belarus Sergei Aleinik and discussed the ways to further boost bilateral relations.—DNA

## Erdogan set to travel to UAE, Egypt for boosting ties

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is set to embark on a Middle East tour that will take him from UAE to Egypt where he aims to advance ties and discuss international developments, primarily the situation in Gaza

## FOREIGN DESK

Ankara : Taking a break from the election campaign for municipal elections, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is set to visit the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Egypt. His first stopover is Dubai where he will attend the World Governments Summit, an international event that will be participated by prominent names, from the WHO director to the Rwandan president, as well as high-ranking representatives from the Gulf countries. Türkiye, along with India and Qatar, are guests of honor of the summit between Feb. 12 and Feb. 14. On Feb. 14, the president is scheduled to visit Egypt, in his first visit in more than a decade and at a time of normalization of ties between Ankara and Cairo. In Dubai, the president will address the summit as a keynote speaker. On the sidelines of the event, he is expected to hold bi-

lateral talks with his counterparts attending the summit and a meeting with UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Türkiye and the UAE intensified diplomatic efforts to rebuild links and trade and sought to ramp up cooperation in various industries, particularly in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic. The rapprochement was marked by intensified bilateral visits, crowned with President Recep Tayyip Erdo an's trip to Abu Dhabi last July as part of his Gulf tour, including stops in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The tour came after Erdogan secured reelection in late May and builds on Ankara's diplomatic efforts since 2021 to normalize strained ties with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The Abu Dhabi visit saw the signing of 13 agreements covering investments worth \$50.7 billion (TL 1.53 trillion), encompassing deepened collaboration in energy, transportation, infrastructure, logistics, e-commerce, finance, health care, food, tourism, real estate,

construction, the defense industry, artificial intelligence and advanced technologies. Türkiye's exports to the UAE rose by almost \$2.7 billion in 2023, according to the data compiled by Anadolu Agency (AA) from the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM). The shipments rose to nearly \$5.92 billion from \$3.65 billion in 2022. The momentum stems mainly from the comprehensive economic cooperation agreement that entered into force last September, providing an extra boost expected to help the bilateral trade eventually reach \$25 billion. In Egypt, the president is scheduled to hold talks with President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi. His meetings there will focus on improving Turkish-Egyptian relations and reviving high-level cooperation mechanisms. Erdogan's meetings will inevitably include discussion on the current situation in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories. He is expected to exchange views with

his counterparts on the issue. Erdogan is a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause, namely the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, which Türkiye views as the best solution to the ongoing Palestine-Israel conflict. Türkiye leads efforts for an immediate humanitarian pause and escalated its criticism of Israel after indiscriminate killings by Israel in the Palestinian territories. Ankara contributes to diplomatic efforts to stop Israel and seeks to hold it accountable for war crimes and genocide in Gaza. Erdogan is critical of the West for support to the latter's oppression of Palestinians and seeks to rally the Muslim and Arab world to take a stance against the Netanyahu government's "crimes." Erdogan's visit will be his first since Ankara and Cairo upgraded relations by appointing ambassadors last year, after maintaining diplomacy at the level of charge d'affaires since the

2013 military coup, which overthrew the late Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi. After Morsi was toppled, diplomatic ties were downgraded but economic ties remained largely unharmed. In 2022, Türkiye was the largest importer of Egyptian goods, totaling \$4 billion. In 2023, Cairo allowed Turkish citizens to obtain a visa on arrival, paving the way for advanced tourism. Normalization accelerated after Erdogan and el-Sissi shook hands in Doha at the World Cup in 2022 and gained further pace following the deadly February 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye. Erdogan's reelection in May and the appointment of ambassadors to each other's capitals in July. Since then, the two leaders met on the sidelines of the G-20 leaders summit in September and held conversations over the phone, particularly on the latest round of the Palestine-Israel conflict that broke out on Oct. 7.

## Briefs

### PML-N has simple majority in Punjab: Tarar

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz has gained simple majority in Punjab to form its government, PML-N leader Ata Tarar said on Monday. Addressing a news conference he said the PML-N has emerged as the single largest party adding that the members joining the party. He said that six MPAs have joined the PML-N and the number of the party's MPAs in Punjab has reached to 146. He said that the members' count will reach to 150 today thus the number required for formation of government in Punjab will be reached. Ata Tarar said that the PML-N will announce the prime minister's name after consultation with the People's Party and the MQM. "We are also holding consultations with other parties along with the PPP and MQM for formation of the federal government," he said. He said the opponents announced their victory over 25 percent results, while Nawaz Sharif given his victory speech after announcement of 90 pct results. PML-N's Javed Latif, Shaikh Rohail Asghar, Khawaja Saad Rafique and Rana Sanaulah have also lost the election, but we have accepted results in good stead. "We have emerged as single largest party in Punjab and the centre, our government in Punjab is likely to be established," he said.

### Dutch court orders halt to F-35 parts exports to Israel

THE HAGUE: A Dutch appeals court has ordered the government to block the delivery of parts for F-35 fighter aircraft to Israel over concerns they are being used to violate international law. The court sided with human rights groups who argued the parts provided from a Dutch warehouse contributed to law violations by Israel in Gaza. Israel denies committing war crimes. The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza says more than 28,100 Palestinians have been killed in just over four months. Israel launched its operations in Gaza after about 1,200 people were killed by Hamas on 7 October, who also took 253 people hostage. "It is undeniable that there is a clear risk the exported F-35 parts are used in serious violations of international humanitarian law," the Appeals Court in The Hague said. "Israel does not take sufficient account of the consequences for the civilian population when conducting its attacks," the court added. The Dutch government has to comply with the order within seven days, but it could launch an appeal at the Supreme Court. The case against was brought by several groups, including the Dutch affiliate of Oxfam, in December. - Agencies

# PTI delegation meets Alvi to discuss 'election irregularities'

## The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf delegation informed the President about the alleged rigging in the General Elections



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of PTI, comprising of Raouf Hassan and Umair Niazi, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

### STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, comprising of Mr Raouf Hassan and Mr Umair Niazi, called on Pres-

ident Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf delegation informed the President about the alleged rigging in the General Elections. The delegation also apprised the President of the party's position regarding the al-

leged irregularities in the election process. They opined that Form-45s issued in different constituencies reflected the actual facts of the election results. "Despite the suppression of the party, confiscation of the election symbol and arrests,

the Party has achieved success in the elections", the delegation added. It was highlighted that despite the excesses, the people of Pakistan had expressed confidence in the party's candidates in the General Elections.

## ECP sets up complaint cell

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set up a complaint cell outside the ECP office to address complaints in the aftermath of general election. The ECP has set up separate counters for all four provinces in the complaint cell. It says the complaint cell will be helpful in solving complaints regarding poll results, and applicants will be able to get information about their constituencies. The ECP has formed two benches for hearing appeals about poll results and will hear 67 appeals today (Monday). A two-member bench will hear 29 appeals related to Punjab and KP and another bench will take up 38 appeals of Sindh and Balochistan.

## Austin admitted to critical care, hospital says

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin was admitted to a critical care unit in Washington on Sunday for treatment of "symptoms suggesting an emergent bladder issue," officials of Walter Reed Military Medical Center said. Austin, 70, later transferred the duties of his office to Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks, Pentagon Press Secretary Major General Pat Ryder said in a statement. Both Republican and Democratic lawmakers criticized Austin last month for failing to disclose a cancer diagnosis and subsequent hospitalizations in December and January, including to President Joe Biden. Some prominent Republicans, including former President Donald Trump, called for Austin to be removed from his job. The incident was an embarrassment for Biden, and Austin apologized during a televised news briefing. He is scheduled to testify before Congress on Feb. 29 about the situation. Biden, a Democrat, has said he has confidence in Austin despite what the president agreed was a lapse in judgment. With its announcement of the secretary's trip to the hospital and the quick decision to transfer his duties to a deputy, the Pentagon appeared determined to avoid a repeat of last month's political uproar.

## UK announces sanctions on four 'extremist settlers' in West Bank

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Britain on Monday announced sanctions on four "extremist Israeli settlers" accused of committing human rights abuses against Palestinians in the West Bank, following a similar move by the United States earlier this month. The curbs follow what the UK called "unprecedented levels of violence by extremist settlers in the West Bank" over the past year by some residents of illegal Israeli settlements and outposts there. The sanctions represent a rare move by London and Washington against Israelis, as war rages with Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The transatlantic allies' steadfast support for Israel's military action in the territory has drawn heavy criticism both internationally and among sections of their domestic populations. Announcing the new curbs - which comprise UK asset freezes alongside travel and visa bans - British Foreign Secretary David Cameron said that "Israel must also take stronger action and put a stop to settler violence." He added: "Too often, we see commitments made and undertakings given, but not

## Palestinian MFA welcomes sanctions

RAMALLAH: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates today welcomed the United Kingdom's decision to impose sanctions against four Israeli colonists involved in terrorist attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank. The Foreign Ministry, in a statement, considered the decision as "an important step" and "in the right direction", stressing that the sanctions must cover the entire colonial system on the land of the State of Palestine. The Ministry further called for the need to prevent the entry of colonists into British territory and place their terrorist organizations on British national, European and international terrorist lists. - Agencies followed through." Cameron said "extremist Israeli settlers" are threatening Palestinians, often at gunpoint, and "forcing them off land that is rightfully theirs," branding the behavior "illegal and unacceptable."

## Qatar frees 8 ex-Indian navy officers

DOHA: A Qatari court has released eight former Indian naval officers previously on death row for unspecified charges. Seven of the men have already returned to India, Delhi's foreign ministry said on Monday. In January, authorities said their death penalty had been converted into prison sentences of "varying" lengths. Neither Qatar nor India revealed the charges against the men, who were working for Dabra Global, a private firm in Qatar. But Financial Times and Reuters have reported that the men were charged with spying for Israel. "We appreciate the decision by the Amir of the State of Qatar to enable the release and home-coming of these nationals," Delhi's foreign ministry said in a statement. The arrest of the men had made front-page headlines in India in 2022. India said in October last year that it was "deeply shocked" after the Court of First Instance in Qatar sentenced the men to death. The Indian foreign ministry subsequently filed an appeal against the sentence. India and Qatar are close allies. Delhi recently signed a \$78bn (£62bn) deal to import liquefied natural gas from Doha until the end of 2048. - Agencies

## ECP stops final result of NA-71 amidst rigging allegations



SIALKOT: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has stopped the final result of NA-71 constituency, where PML-N leader Khawaja Asif was declared the winner in the Feb 8 elections. The ECP requested a report from the returning officer (RO) concerned following allegations of irregularities and discrepancies in the electoral process.

In Islamabad, the commission postponed the hearing on this matter until February 14, in response to an application filed by Rehana Dar, a candidate supported by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the NA-71 Sialkot constituency. The commission issued a notice to the RO regarding Rehana Dar's request and has sought a response. According to Rehana Dar's advocate, discrepancies were noted between the results recorded in Form 45 and Form 47, as Form 45 allegedly indicated a victory for Dar with a lead of 50,000 votes, while Form 47 prepared by the RO purportedly showed a defeat by 47,000 votes. Furthermore, the counsel stated that a revised Form 47 was uploaded to the election commission's website on Monday afternoon, raising questions about the consistency of the electoral data. During the hearing, when asked about the impact of the new Form 47 on their request, Rehana Dar's lawyer confirmed that their request remained unchanged despite the update. The decision to halt the results and postpone the hearing underscores the Election Commission's commitment to ensuring fairness and transparency in the electoral process. - DNA

# Israel occupation committing 'genocidal' massacre in Rafah

## Pakistan strongly condemns Israel's military aggression against Rafah city

RAFAH: The health ministry in Gaza said on Monday that the Israeli occupation army committed new massacres in different areas of the Gaza Strip during the past 24 hours, killing at least 164 civilians and injuring over 200 others, while a large number of victims are still under the rubble of bombed buildings or lying on roads. In a statement, the health ministry added that the death toll from the ongoing Israeli bombardments, which started on October 7, climbed to 28,340 martyrs and the number of the wounded surged to 67,984 people. Every day, the Israeli army escalates its air and ground attacks on the Gaza Strip, which has been under relentless bombardment since a cross-border operation was launched by Hamas's armed wing, al-Qassam Brigades, on October 7. Besides the large number of casualties and the huge displacement of peo-

## Yemen says fired missiles at US bulk carrier in Red Sea

WEB DESK

SANA'A: The spokesperson for the Yemeni Armed Forces says the country's naval units have launched several missiles that struck a US merchant vessel in the Red Sea just off the coast of the Arab nation. Brigadier General Yahya Saree said in a televised speech broadcast live from the Yemeni capital Sana'a on Monday that the Yemeni military had carried out an operation against Star Iris bulk carrier with a number of "appropriate" naval missiles, and that the strikes were accurate and direct. He added that the missile attack came as part of the Yemeni forces' religious, ethical and humanitarian duties, reiterating that the Arab nation's naval units will continue their attacks in the Red Sea and the Arab Sea against Israeli-affiliated ships until the Tel Aviv regime halts its aggression on Gaza and lifts its tight siege against Palestinians in the territory. Saree further noted that the Yemeni Armed Forces will not hesitate to carry out more operations in response to the relentless Israeli onslaught against the oppressed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and in response to joint American-British aggression against the Republic of Yemen. Its genocidal war and its attempts to forcibly displace the population." In a statement on Monday, Hamas warned that the Israel army's attacks on Rafah would increase the humanitarian suffering of the displaced people and residents in the area, where there are about 1.4 million citizens already living in harsh and tragic conditions. - Agencies

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